



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

Herbert H. Lehman High School

High School X405

**3000 East Tremont Avenue
Bronx
NY 10461**

Principal: John Powers

**Date of review: April 12, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Heidi Pierovich**

The School Context

Herbert H. Lehman High School is a high school with 1,100 students from grade 9 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 12% Asian, 22% Black, 54% Hispanic, and 11% White students. The student body includes 11% English Language Learners and 26% students with disabilities. Boys account for 64% of the students enrolled and girls account for 36%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 79.4%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	Additional Findings	Proficient
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	Focus	Developing
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels	Additional Findings	Developing
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Additional Findings	Proficient
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in organized inquiry-based professional collaborations. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Professional collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, and they strengthen the instructional capacity of the teachers who have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Meeting daily, teachers are engaged in team meetings both by grade and content areas. The work of the teams varies and encompasses planning lessons, using data, sharing best practices, and analyzing student work using Writing is Thinking Strategic Inquiry (WITsi), all with the goal to determine next instructional steps. During a grade 9 English Language Arts (ELA) and social studies WITsi team meeting, teachers analyzed student work and determined if students had met the criteria for use of an appositive. After tallying the results, teachers determined next curricula and instructional steps for their targeted group of students, including the addition of an appositive to the criteria being analyzed in student work, and then to re-teach that an appositive does not change the course of sentence. A teacher stated and others agreed, "Through this granular approach to inquiry with sentences we really do see students' writing improve, and they are clarifying their own understanding within the sentence."
- Teachers stated that they appreciate everyone's input as "we are growing together." To that end, the master teacher, model teachers, and/or peer-collaborative teachers facilitate team meetings, evidencing distributive leadership. Additionally, teachers have selected the new ELA textbooks, and a group of teachers who were trained in the WITsi strategies turnkey this professional development to their colleagues during team meetings.
- Each grade team conducts WITsi cycles, analyzes data, and uses data to inform instruction and curricula on sentence structure using "but, because, so" (BBS). To date, in a comparative inquiry, there is a positive uptick in data. The STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) team includes science and math teachers of students in grades 10, 11, and 12. Their analysis shows that for cycle one, comparing the pre- and post-assessment, target students improved 10% overall and, in the use of some sentence skills, the increase ranged from 3 to 50%. Additionally, the team concluded that the questions posed for sentence expansion, a method to enhance sentences from simple to more complex, had caused a decrease in achievement. To that end, teachers identified research-based methods to refine questions helping them as educators improve their practice, as "this was a new experience for math teachers to focus on grammar." Further, teachers also inter-visit to share observed implementation of instructional strategies. "We are a co-team," one teacher stated and others agreed. "I created a lesson and went to another teacher for an inter-visitation, observing her implementing it a different way and getting better results. We shared it and all learned from it."

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Lessons inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula so that tasks and discussions are not always accessible to all students.

Impact

As defined by the instructional shifts and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, are not yet sufficiently engaged in high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Staff believes that students learn best when they are engaged in lessons that start with a relevant hook and provide multiple entry points and multiple opportunities to pose higher-order thinking questions to support student-to-student engagement. However, these practices are just beginning to be implemented across classrooms.
- In some classes, the level of rigor and questions was evident and provided students with student-to-student discussion opportunities, while in others it was uneven. In an honors ELA class for the Do Now activity, students were to write and justify their decision on whether they would have their uninvited enemy thrown out of a party or let them stay in preparation for a discussion to mirror the situation of Lord Capulet when Romeo attended the Capulet party uninvited. Aligned to the aim, the hook also provided students an opportunity to discuss and clarify their responses, using the “compose, confer, and clarify” protocol. In an ELA integrated co-teaching (ICT) class with many struggling students, they were to answer a Do Now activity using CEA, “claim, evidence, and analysis.” However, although lines were provided to write answers, there were no scaffolds provided for the students to answer this question, “How would you characterize Hamlet?” Additionally, no graphic organizer was provided for students to catch their thinking before they shared their opinions and evidence with partners. Similarly, in a history class for students with disabilities, although the teacher modeled how to conduct the partner discussion, not all pairs were able to discuss in detail for an extended period of time as discussion prompts were not evident. Thus, there were missed opportunities to support students in having a high-level discussion.
- In a science class, students were in data-determined groups with task roles and tiered worksheets regarding global warming in a weather lab. However, as the pacing of the lesson was off, when the bell rang students still had not finished the summary or started the exit ticket. Similarly, in a history ICT class, students received worksheets translated into Spanish to support their access to the curricula. However, because of uneven pacing, the bell rang as some students had not finished writing and posting their notes on the board about the success of the League of Nations. In an algebra class for students with special needs, students were sitting in rows spread throughout the room, and all had the same worksheet without differentiation. During the classroom visit, the teacher was at the board and did not follow the lesson plan, which included students engaging in a think-pair-share. Although a few students verbally answered low-level questions with single word answers, the class did not have opportunities to share their thinking by completing the CEA from the Do Now, nor did they have time to respond to the summary question.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Collaborative planning builds coherence and alignment of the curricula to Common Core Learning Standards and content standards while emphasizing challenging tasks that encourage higher-order thinking for all learners.

Impact

All students benefit through planning for access to engaging and rigorous tasks across content areas and grades, preparing them for college and career.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers and administration have collaboratively determined to adapt the Common Core-aligned curricula to the needs of their students. Staff uses *EngageNY* for grades 9 and 10 for ELA and has recently adopted the *HMH Collections* program for grades 11 and 12. For algebra and geometry, teachers are using *EngageNY*. For science and social studies, staff implements the New York City Scope and Sequence. To meet the needs of English as a New Language (ENL) students, 11% of the population, teachers utilize *Achieve 3000* and are piloting using *ReadingPlus*.
- Curricular planning documents demonstrate a set of components including, but not limited to, essential questions, questions promoting critical thinking covering all four levels of *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK), big ideas, pivotal questions, learning objectives, Do Now, vocabulary terms, mini-lesson, guided or independent practice, summary, homework, and assessment. To maintain a focus on moving lesson plans from teacher-centered to student-centered, lesson components have time allocations and intentionally include a motivation and relevance component to communicate to students why they are engaged in a lesson. Some lessons include components for multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement and list groupings, the rationale, and relevant tiered student worksheets. Often lesson plans identify groups with specific student names, inclusive of English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, along with the differentiated instruction plan using Universal Design for Learning techniques, discussion prompts, and/or graphic organizers.
- Staff and administration have collaboratively created a Common Core-aligned instructional strategy called CEA, which stands for “claim, evidence, analysis” to engage all students through the argumentative writing and thinking process as a support for them to be able to demonstrate their thinking and to improve their reading and writing levels. This schoolwide initiative is evident in lesson plans across grades and subjects, and it occurs in the Do Now, mini lesson, guided practice, and exit tickets. For example, in an algebra Do Now that asks, “How can we tell if the inequality symbol reverses when solving this problem?” the lesson provides a sentence stem for the CEA response. Also, in an ELA lesson, an activity included a graphic organizer to help students gather evidence to characterize Hamlet using CEA. In addition, the focus on implementing a strategy for sentence creation and refinement using conjunctions, appositives, and expansion techniques, is evident for lessons and unit plans across grades and subjects. To further support reading, writing, and discussion across the curriculum, lesson and unit plans include multiple opportunities for reading, writing, and discussion of materials.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The school is developing their use of common assessments to measure student progress toward instructional and individual goals. Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Teachers inconsistently use results to adjust curricula and instruction or make effective in-the-moment adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- In an ELA class, the teacher asked higher-order questions of students, following the “compose, confer, clarify” (3C) strategy, allowing for checking of students' understanding. However, several teachers asked whole-class, low-level DOK questions and accepted one or two responses then moved on, such as in the class that was discussing an African king or the class in which students were solving a transformation of functions. Thus, most students did not have an opportunity to share their thinking, nor did the teacher have an opportunity to make any adjustment of practice to address students' learning. In several classes, teachers moved from group-to-group checking on completeness of a task. In a science class, while students worked in groups, the teacher walked around and asked students in the groups to elaborate on their weather predictions by stating their agreement or disagreement about a question based on their reading. However, after asking these same questions to each table, the teacher noted that students were ready to move on to writing predictions without making a needed adjustment to the lesson; this decision led to pacing being off, so the exit ticket was saved for the next day. In an algebra class for students with special needs, the teacher asked each student about their level of completion for a CEA, walked around looking at their work, and accepted that all were done; yet only one out of the six students had completed the task. The opportunity for any sharing was missed. Although several teachers carried a clipboard to jot notes, checkmarks, or tally scores regarding students' responses, participation, or progress, this information was not used to adjust instruction during the lesson on the day of the review.
- Consistent monitoring of student progress based on instructional adjustments is beginning to become a regular practice. When asked, students explained that they know how to use rubrics and checklists, “We use them to grade ourselves and the teacher uses it to grade us, [noting] what's missing, how we are doing, and how we can improve our work.” While rubrics and checklists exist for assignments, in only two classes did students use such tools to self-assess. For example, a worksheet for an ELA class had the BBS from a 3C assessment at the bottom for both student and teacher assessment.
- Teacher teams have developed common assessments and performance tasks across grades and subjects. For example, staff in grades 9 and 10 and the STEM program, have incorporated the BBS method (WITsi), as noted in grade teacher team agendas. However, there is only some evidence in all other subject and grade team agendas of using data from common assessments to inform instructional planning or pedagogy. Therefore, schoolwide, all teachers are not yet able to track student performance and progress towards meeting instructional and individual student goals.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness and offer ongoing feedback.

Impact

Relative to schoolwide expectations, school leaders provide training and have a system of accountability for staff, and provide ongoing feedback to help families understand their children's progress.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders, via a staff handbook, memos, bulletins, and feedback from classroom observations aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Learning* domains, provide staff with clear expectations. Additionally, administration provided two whole-school professional development sessions, outlining staff expectations related to student engagement, lesson planning, and use of agreed-upon instructional strategies. Teachers view these sessions as time to learn alongside their colleagues. Staff attends professional development given by both Renewal and school-based consultants, in order to build capacity and receive needed support around the initiatives for improving student achievement and effective pedagogy. Professional development occurs during teacher team meetings, and in addition staff members plan and implement additional sessions for colleagues to support them in achievement of schoolwide expectations.
- Administrators and teachers discuss high expectations during the initial individual planning conferences, which are also used to develop teacher's goals. Classroom observations are followed-up with debrief meetings to provide specific and actionable feedback so there can be further focus on the implementation of schoolwide initiatives: argumentative writing and the "claim, evidence, and analysis" (CEA), writing is thinking through strategic inquiry (WITs and BBS), using transitional words, appositives, sentence expansions, "compose, confer, clarify" (3C), and double-entry journals. As evidenced by agendas from weekly team meetings, teacher leaders share the expectations and offer inter-visitations so that teachers can observe implemented initiatives.
- Teachers reach out to parents weekly to communicate their children's progress and areas of needed support. Most parents agreed that they are pleased with the consistent communication they receive from the staff especially that it is in their home language. Further, most parents stated they check their children's grades through *PupilPath*, an online grade book. Students stated that they check *PupilPath* weekly and a few stated they check daily. However, a few parents voiced some concerns about a few teachers who do not upload grades in a timely manner while also noting that this has been changing for the better. Teachers share syllabi, which outline the class expectations and grading policy, with parents and students. The school also provides yearlong parent workshops based on parents' needs, including financial aid and college applications, college trips, first aid training, motivation and self-esteem, and building a strong community. Additionally, the school's Renewal partner community-based organization has organized multiple sessions on the college and financial aid application process, college tours, and family literacy. Both parents and students spoke about attending college trips. Students spoke about attending these sessions and stated that they felt supported during the college and financial aid application process.