

**NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

<b>BEDS Code/DBN:</b>	05M285
<b>School Name:</b>	Harlem Renaissance High School
<b>School Address:</b>	22 East 128 <sup>th</sup> Street New York, New York 10035
<b>Principal:</b>	Nadav Zeimer
<b>Restructuring Phase/Category:</b>	Persistently Lowest-Achieving/School Under Registration Review (PLA/SURR)
<b>Area(s) of Identification:</b>	Graduation Rate
<b>Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:</b>	February 15-16, 2011

**PART 1: INTRODUCTION**

**A. Community and School Background**

Harlem Renaissance High School serves 225 students in grades 9 through 12. The school enrollment is 64 percent Black and 36 percent Hispanic students. There are no English language learners (ELLs) in the school, and 13 percent of the students are students with disabilities. Some of the students attending the school live outside the borough.

Harlem Renaissance High School’s administrative team includes an Interim Acting (IA) Principal and an IA Assistant Principal (AP) who has been there for less than six months. This is reflective of a high turnover rate of administrators at the school. There are 18 teachers on staff at the school, including one new teacher, two teachers who have been at the school for one year or less, and two teachers who have been at the school between one and three years. Of these teachers, 100 percent are highly qualified. Teacher turnover is high, at a yearly rate of 17 percent.

**PART 2: ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL’S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

**A. Performance on Key Indicators of Student Achievement Trends and School Progress**

<b>Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)</b>	<b>School Performance Indicators</b>	✓
	<b>NYSED Quantitative Performance Measures</b>	
+	Positive trend data for all identified subject/areas and subgroups for the past two consecutive years), as demonstrated by an increase in the percentage of students performing at or above Level 3 and/or a Performance Index increase of five or more points.	✓
-	School is ten or more points away from meeting its Effective Annual Measurable Objective (EAMO) for one or more identified subgroups in subject/area(s) of identification (ELA and Math).	✓

<b>Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)</b>	<b>School Performance Indicators</b>	✓
-	For 2010-11, the school was identified as a <u>Persistently Lowest-Achieving school.</u>	✓
-	2005 Total high school Cohort Graduation rate is below 60%	✓
<b>NYCDOE Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Measures</b>		
-	Grade of C on the 2009-10 NYC Progress Report	✓
+/-	2009 – 10 NYC Quality Review Score of Proficient	✓

## B. School Strengths

- Students are respectful and have a positive relationship with the adults in the building.
- The school has some community-based organizations that provide valuable services for students and their families.
- The school's student weekly progress report policy gives students and parents current information about student academic progress.

## C. Key Findings and Recommendations

**Summary of the key issues (causal factors), and other areas of concern, identified during the on-site diagnostic review that are negatively impacting student achievement in identified areas, as well as recommendations, as related to the seven JIT Indicator Categories:**

### I. Curriculum

#### Findings:

- The elective elements of the curriculum that are designed by teachers are not aligned with New York State (NYS) Standards. Observed lessons were not rigorous enough to ensure sustained student achievement and progress.
- Although lesson plans were aligned with the NYS Standards in core subjects, the lesson plans were not aligned in elective courses.

#### Recommendations:

- The Network should work with the school on the development of a curriculum in each elective subject that is aligned with NYS Learning Standards. Knowledgeable and trained individuals who understand the key elements of curriculum development should develop all the electives.

All teachers and administrators should participate in Professional Development (PD) on how to plan and implement a curriculum for electives with rigor, as well as delivery methods that are student-centered. The curriculum should be used as the basis for assessing individual student mastery and progress. Walkthroughs and formal observations should evaluate how well each teacher knows and implements the curriculum for the subjects taught.

- Administrators, with the support of the Network, should devise a lesson template for electives that aligns with NYS Standards. All teachers should use the template, and administrators should regularly review lesson plans to ensure teachers are using it for planning and delivering lessons.

## **II. Teaching and Learning**

### **Findings:**

- Most teachers did not use data effectively to differentiate their instruction to meet identified student needs. Most teachers were instructing the whole class and not setting tasks and activities for groups.
- Teaching in the majority of lessons failed to maximize instructional time. There was a loss of instructional time as teachers transitioned from one activity to the next in a majority of classes, and many students arrived late to their classes.
- Interviews with students revealed a lack of understanding of learning goals.
- There was little evidence of students reading or writing in lessons as most of the lesson time was dominated by direct teacher instruction. In some classes, students were not actively engaged in their learning and disassociated themselves from the lessons.
- The majority of teachers employed questioning techniques that required short, factual responses and did not require higher order thinking skills from their students.
- Most teachers did not use content specific vocabulary in their instruction. Few lessons provided time for student self-reflection.
- In most classrooms, there were no exemplars of annotated student work or academic rubrics on display.
- The school does not have a uniform grading policy. Currently, teachers design their own systems, leading to inconsistency of practice both within and across content areas and a lack of clarity for students with regard to expectations.
- In a co-teaching class, only one teacher was involved in presenting the day's lesson. The other teacher acted as observer.

**Recommendations:**

- The school leaders, with the support of the Network, should provide PD on differentiated instruction during the school day. The Network should identify schools in the Network with exemplary differentiated instruction and arrange visits to these sites. The administration should provide PD on using assessment data to group students for instruction. Teacher lesson plans should include time allocated to provide for enrichment and remedial activities in order to match the identified needs of subgroups in their classes, appropriate challenge for the more able students and support for those who are struggling. Teachers should include a variety of resources in their daily planning to support differentiated instruction. Teachers should bring the guidance from PD into their classroom practice. Walkthroughs and observations by administrators should monitor and evaluate how well teachers are implementing the instructional strategies learned in PD.
- Teachers and administrators should establish classroom routines and expectations at the beginning of the school year and ensure that they are assiduously followed. Support for teachers in implementing good classroom routines and smooth transitions should be provided by ensuring that hallways are monitored by administrators during lesson changeover times to limit tardiness. Lesson plans should include time allocations for each planned activity. Teachers should limit their 'do now' time or transition activities, regardless of the number of students present or tardy. Administrators should monitor practice through observations, walkthroughs and evaluations of teacher planning.
- Teachers should ensure that all lessons include mid-lesson and final summaries to provide an opportunity for students to clarify their learning goals. Teachers and support staff should expand student understanding of short and long-term goals through dialog so that all are clear about what they are expected to do and the strategies to be used to achieve these goals.
- Teachers should be required to include reading and writing in their lesson plans so that students are more directly involved in the learning process and engagement is improved. Homework assigned should direct students to complete a reading and writing component. Teachers should provide a model of a good writing sample. The school should develop a literacy plan and incorporate it into their Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) so that skills learned in literacy are reinforced across the curriculum.
- Administrators should seek support from the Network, or other external consultants, in providing PD that helps teachers to make questioning a far more effective strategy in engaging students in the learning process. Teachers should ensure that lesson plans include higher order thinking questions to challenge the students and that these are used during instruction. Students should be required to explain their answers and respond to more "why" type questions. Teachers should be given an opportunity to observe colleagues who effectively use questioning techniques in order to improve their practice. Administrators should model effective questioning techniques during departmental or staff conferences. Teachers should make it a regular practice to call on as many students as possible during the course of a lesson and should expect students to justify their responses with extended

answers as well as responding to other students' questions. Administrators should make effective and challenging questioning a focus of walkthroughs and observations.

- Every teacher should have a word wall in their classroom to highlight content specific vocabulary and ensure that students use it as a learning aid. In addition, lessons should be paced in a way that allows time for student self-reflection. Teachers should use an "exit" slip or summary question to provide feedback on student understanding of concepts.
- The Network should provide PD for teachers in creating academic rubrics for all content areas. These should reflect standard expectations for each level. Teachers should work with students to ensure that they understand how best to use the rubrics to continuously aim for the next level and should refer to these rubrics when annotating student work. Teachers should ensure that feedback on student work makes clear the next steps that are needed for a student to improve and move to a higher level. Administrators should make the quality of feedback a specific focus when carrying out walkthroughs.
- The administration should collaboratively establish a uniform grading policy that is communicated to all students and parents. Samples of graded work should be clearly displayed in all classrooms and hallways, with the associated rubric, so that students have exemplars and clear direction for improvement. Teachers should implement the grading policy consistently and with fidelity.
- Teachers who co-teach should receive PD in co-teaching strategies designed to meet the identified learning needs of students to maximize their potential. Co-teachers should be provided with time to plan together. The administration should observe the co-teaching classes and provide instructional support to the teachers. With Network support, visits should be arranged to peer schools where best practices in Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) are being implemented.

### **III. School Leadership**

#### **Findings:**

- The school leaders do not set high enough expectations and do not have the necessary skills or capacity to turn around the school or to lead the school through a phase-out process. The Principal recognizes that instruction is poor but has done little to bring about improvements.
- There is little sense of shared vision and unity to improve the school at a fast pace. The Principal stated that he wrote the CEP by himself without collaborating with the School Leadership Team (SLT). In addition, the Principal did not share the CEP goals with members of the SLT, or seek feedback from them before submission. The SLT is, therefore, unaware of the school goals. Available documentation indicated that the SLT had only met three times through the first five months of school.

- The Principal does not have a clear and strategic awareness of the areas that need to be urgently addressed to bring about school improvement. The Principal does not prioritize the need to improve instruction and student achievement. The goals chosen for the CEP do not directly respond to the most urgent academic improvements required to raise student achievement, as identified through data analysis. The CEP goals are not intrinsic to learning. For example, one goal is to increase the number of students eating school lunch by 10 percent.
- The school leaders are not strong instructional leaders. The systems in place for teacher evaluation are weak and do little to bring about improvements in instruction. During the first five months of the school year, the Principal had conducted one formal observation and twelve informal observations as indicated in the documentation provided for the review team. The documents did not include a satisfactory or unsatisfactory rating for the majority of the observation reports provided. No follow-up observation was arranged for a teacher who received an unsatisfactory rating during an observation three months ago. The lesson was verbally discussed but no written observation report with an unsatisfactory rating or a written plan for assistance and support was provided. The administration's lack of observation reports, containing clear recommendations, indicates that teachers have not been made instructionally aware of what is expected of them. The Principal agreed that instruction is poor but provided no evidence of how he has been working with teachers to improve the quality of their practice.
- Procedures for ensuring that PD impacts instruction are poor. A structured PD plan has not been created by the administrators, nor have they surveyed the teacher needs or reviewed student performance trends to provide appropriate PD. The Principal stated that walkthroughs revealed that teachers were not incorporating PD strategies into their instructional plans. However, there was no follow up plan to address this problem.
- The Principal does not ensure that financial resources are used in the most effective way to impact student achievement across the school. The school spent \$20,000 this year to purchase consultation services for a group of 20 students who are involved in a first period leadership class. The money was spent on an improvisation comedy troupe and a video project presented by a community organization. The intent of this first period class was to increase attendance for this select group of students. The average attendance of this group is less than 50 percent. This expenditure of one-third of the consultation money benefited less than 10 percent of the total school population.
- The Principal does not promote a collegial approach in providing opportunities for teachers to work together to help improve student achievement and the quality of instruction. The Principal articulated that he had no plans to change the present school schedule that does not provide common planning time across curriculum areas or between support staff and teachers.

- The school leaders' low expectations are reflected in the fact that there is no requirement for teachers to develop a learning environment in which they are expected and encouraged to display and celebrate exemplary student work.

**Recommendations:**

- The school leaders, with the support of the Network, should work with all stakeholders in setting a culture of high expectation that is rooted in high student achievement. This should be the driving force for the work of the school. School leaders should inject a sense of urgency into all work so that the needs of all students are met. School leaders should address weaknesses in instruction as a priority and, through a rigorous system of observation, work with the Network in providing differentiated PD and constructive feedback to bring about much needed improvements in teaching and learning.
- The Principal should share a vision and mission of academic excellence so that the whole school community has a clear direction for continuous improvement. The development of the CEP should be a collaborative activity, involving the SLT in important decision-making processes to secure academic improvement across the school. School leaders should share the CEP goals through faculty meetings, Parents Association meetings, student government and SLT meetings. The SLT should meet monthly, as per mandates, to monitor progress towards CEP goals and should be actively involved in evaluating the success of action plans in achieving academic improvement for all students.
- School data should be carefully analyzed to identify the most urgent issues to be addressed in the development of CEP goals. The goals should be selected to ensure rapid improvement in students' academic progress, particularly for subgroups who are not meeting AYP. The identified, overarching goals should lead to the creation of action plans with clear success criteria, measurable outcomes and monitoring arrangements to regularly check progress in order to make adjustments and modifications to programs as appropriate. The Network should regularly monitor the school's progress towards its stated goals.
- The Network should provide PD to support administrators in becoming effective instructional leaders. The administrators, supported by the Network, should conduct frequent informal and formal observations to monitor the delivery of instruction. These observations should be followed up with written documents that provide clear steps for improvement, with support as appropriate. The school leaders should conduct follow-up observations to ensure that the recommendations are implemented. School leaders should include a rating on all observation reports. School leaders should create a written plan for teachers who receive an unsatisfactory observation rating. The teacher should be provided with a written document with a rating of unsatisfactory following the observation. In addition, the observation report should include concrete steps that will lead to improved instructional practice.
- The school, with support from the Network, should create a differentiated PD plan based on surveyed teacher needs, as well as information from classroom observations and data analysis. The school leaders, through frequent observations and walkthroughs, should

ensure that strategies from PD opportunities are incorporated into instructional practice, and that teachers understand that they are accountable for successful implementation to improve the quality of their instruction.

- The school leaders should use funding for consultants in a way that has the greatest impact on student learning and teacher practice.
- The school leaders should create a schedule that provides common planning time across departments to ensure vertical alignment of the curriculum for all content areas. Support staff should be involved in common planning periods at each grade level to allow for conversations about student progress and achievement so that interventions are more carefully planned to address the specific learning needs of students. School leaders should attend the meetings and ensure that strategies agreed to in meetings are being implemented.
- Graded student work should be displayed in classrooms and hallways. The displays should include rubrics explaining NYS Standards for all content areas and provide feedback for improvement so that all students are aware of the next steps to achieve the next performance level. School leaders should monitor the quality of feedback on walkthroughs.

#### **IV. Infrastructure for Student Success**

##### **Findings:**

- Interviews with students and staff, and observations of classroom lessons across the disciplines showed that the staff and school leaders had insufficiently high expectations for the academic achievement of students.
- There is no evidence of Academic Intervention Services (AIS) during the school day to address the specific needs of at-risk students.
- There is no dedicated library and media center for student use, although there are some classroom libraries and a computer lab available to students.
- The laboratory facilities did not have adequate safety provisions in place.
- The school has a parents association but the attendance at meetings is very low. Interviewed parents expressed a desire to foster more parental involvement in school activities and issues regarding their children's education.
- The parents serving on the SLT were not consulted in the planning and writing of the CEP.
- Although weekly progress reports are given to students to take home, there is no system in place to share formative assessment data. The school has not provided Achievement Reporting Innovation System (ARIS) training sessions for parents.

- Information sent home to parents is not routinely available in all relevant home languages.
- Parents are not regularly surveyed by the school on topics related to school improvement.

**Recommendations:**

- The school leaders should conduct regular formal observations with all teachers as well as informal observations to ensure curriculum rigor and high expectations in order to prepare students for college and careers.
- The school leaders should develop criteria for the rapid identification of at-risk students. These identified students should be provided with a full range of AIS supports during the school day to enable them to maximize their potential. School leaders should evaluate the quality of support and services provided for these students.
- The Principal should seek funds or reallocate existing funds to provide a dedicated library and media center to support research and learning for all students.
- The Principal should purchase a first aid kit for the laboratories, and the Earth Science room should be equipped with a fire extinguisher, fire blanket, first aid kit and an eye wash station to comply with safety regulations.
- The school leaders should provide more opportunities for parents to visit and be involved in the school. They should sponsor workshops of interest to parents, as well as special events and other celebrations that reward the students for excellence. The school administration should also seek guidance from the Network on best practice used in other schools that have led to greater parental involvement in the school community.
- The school leaders should work with the Network in developing strategies that would enable the SLT to become an intrinsic part of the process to develop the school's CEP. Parents should be informed of the school's goals for improvement, as well as other school initiatives.
- The school leaders should hold regular training for parents to use the ARIS system for the retrieval of school data regarding their child. School leaders should make certain that parents are aware of the weekly progress reports and contact the school if they do not receive a report. Additionally, parents who are not regularly receiving the reports via their child should be able to request mailed copies.
- All information regarding school programs and activities should be made available in both English and Spanish to reach all parents.
- The school leaders and the Parent Coordinator should regularly survey parents regarding topics related to their child's education. Additionally, the school should make a greater

effort to encourage parents to return the Learning Environment Survey in order to get more input for strategic planning for improvement.

## **V. Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data**

### **Findings:**

- The school does not use data to analyze performance trends or to assess the effectiveness of the current programs. Data is only used to analyze student credit accumulation. There is no comprehensive schoolwide data collection process in place.
- There is no system in place to assess students as they enter the school. This delays the identification of at-risk students.
- No assessments of student classwork are in place to regularly and systematically determine student progress, therefore data is not used to impact instructional planning or practice. A 'mock Regents' is the only formative assessment given to student in Regents classes. In non-Regents classes, teacher-made assessments are used.
- Teachers are not using assessment data to identify and address the specific learning needs of struggling students. In addition, AIS services are not being offered during the current school year.
- Weekly progress reports are given to all students; however no detailed analysis of their needs is performed, nor are they given next steps for improvement. Progress reports are not sent home to parents in Spanish due to the limitations of the software.

### **Recommendations:**

- The school leaders should adopt a schoolwide system for collecting data to examine performance trends to assess the effectiveness of programs on student achievement. PD support should be provided to all teachers. School leaders should monitor the use of the data in classrooms and should make use of the Network in assisting teachers with data collection and analysis.
- The school leaders should seek expertise from the Network to develop an assessment tool to measure student academic capacity on entry so that at-risk students are identified early and appropriate supports are provided. School leaders should ensure that teachers make the best use of this information to inform classroom groupings and instructional practice.
- The school leaders and teachers should administer regular, formative assessments to all students to closely monitor their progress. Teacher-made assessments should be uniform within each content area and should be closely aligned to the NYS Standards and to external, summative tests.

- In order to differentiate instruction to meet the identified student learning needs, teachers should regularly analyze student assessment data. School leaders should provide support to teachers through PD and should monitor implementation across the school. A schoolwide procedure should be immediately put in place to identify the specific needs of struggling students, including students with disabilities. AIS supports should be provided for all the identified students as required.
- The weekly progress reports should be revised to include specific student needs and information for students on how they can improve in their identified areas. The Network should assist the school in developing this new system of reporting.

## **VI. Professional Development**

### **Findings:**

- There is no PD plan in place that is aligned with school goals.
- The school schedule provides limited time for PD. The last period on Wednesday that is available for PD is not currently structured or efficiently used.
- There are no feedback mechanisms in place, based on document review, that allow for the design of PD to be adjusted to meet the changing needs of teachers and students.
- Formal and informal observation reports indicated that strategies learned at PD sessions were not incorporated into the instructional program. In addition, teachers are not being held accountable for continuously improving their instructional practice.
- There was little evidence of a systemic and planned approach to supporting individual teacher needs for growth. A limited variety of PD activities were offered to help teachers of at-risk students, including students with disabilities. Special education teachers do not receive specific, relevant PD opportunities.
- It was evident that there have been only two meetings of the technology inquiry team that were attended by two teachers. There were no prior minutes or agendas provided to the JIT team.

### **Recommendations:**

- The school administration should create a comprehensive PD plan, aligned to the school goals to meet the needs of teachers and students. The plan should focus on themes that will have the greatest impact on increasing student achievement and take into account information gathered from data analysis, lesson observations and surveyed teacher needs.
- The school should provide additional structured time for PD that is supervised and allows teachers to develop effective educational practices. School leaders should ensure that PD affects practice and impacts student achievement.

- Teachers should have regular opportunities to provide feedback to school leaders about the quality and value of the PD to meet their instructional needs and improve student achievement.
- Lesson observations and walkthroughs should be used as a vehicle in monitoring implementation of PD and in identifying best practices that can be shared across the school.
- The school should provide sufficient PD opportunities for staff to meet the needs of the students, especially those who are designated as specialist teachers of students with disabilities.
- The school should allow for more meetings of the technology inquiry team, and ensure that the membership is broadened to include members from all disciplines. Clear direction should be given to the team as to expected outcomes of meetings and how information about successful strategies can be shared schoolwide to improve student outcomes.

## **VII. District Support**

### **Findings:**

- The Network has provided various PD opportunities for the staff; however, observations indicate that differentiated pedagogical support is needed to support a successful academic program.
- The Network has trained the school data specialist and programmer; however, there was little evidence of on-going data analysis by teachers.
- There was no evidence provided to indicate that the support given by the Network has had an impact on the quality of either the academic program or teacher instructional practice.

### **Recommendations:**

- The Network should provide PD opportunities for the staff that focus on meeting the needs of individuals and groups of teachers to improve their instruction. Activities and supports should focus on strategies that will have the greatest impact on student progress in all content areas.
- The Network should provide training for the school staff in the collection and use of formative and summative data to guide their academic instruction. The data specialist should be closely involved in these sessions to train teachers in the analysis and use of data to effect improvement in student outcomes.
- The Network should support the school in the implementation of the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) recommendations.

**PART 3: OVERALL FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION**

**A. Overall Finding**

Reference	Review Team Finding	
(d)	The school has not made sufficient progress in identified areas, and is unlikely to make AYP without further significant change.	✓

**B. Overall Recommendation**

Reference	Review Team Recommendation	
(d)	Phase-out - close the school.	✓

**C. In the space below, include specific information to support the District in determining how the above recommendation should be accomplished.**

- The school should be phased-out and closed because there is a lack of capacity in school leaders or teachers to turn around the school or to address the systemic and significant weaknesses that are embedded in the culture of the school. It would take an inordinate amount of time to address these serious and entrenched weaknesses.
- An administrator who has experience in working with similar student populations and who has demonstrated the capacity to lead a school through the phase-out process should be selected to oversee the phase out.
- A structured PD plan should be immediately instituted. Teachers should be provided with PD to support them in using data to inform their instructional practice to best meet the needs of all students in their classes.
- Support from the Network should be increased in identified areas.