



HERRON
HIGH SCHOOL

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A STRONG START FOR STRONGER STUDENTS

An update on Herron High School containing abridged findings from the Mayor's Evaluation Team Site Visit Report on Herron High School

HERRON HIGH SCHOOL
2006 – 2007 Academic Year

INTRODUCTION

The Mayor's office recently concluded a study of Herron High School's progress and issued a report detailing their findings. The results, to say the least, were impressive. The school received high marks across the board, and the report affirmed that Herron High School's approach to education is working and, in many ways, exceeding expectations.

A STRONG START

Herron High School has had an excellent, strong opening. Both administrative and instructional staff are well-qualified for their roles and positions, the curriculum is well developed, the building is orderly, and a variety of evidence indicates that the organization and board are functioning at high levels.

Parents who attended focus groups reported strong satisfaction because of the school's small size, one-on-one interaction between students and teachers, college preparation, highly qualified and dedicated staff, rigorous curriculum, orderly opening, and staff openness. Several parents used the word "amazed" to describe their feelings about Herron High School.

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HERRON HAS A NUMBER OF INNOVATIVE STRUCTURES AND PRACTICES IN PLACE, INCLUDING:

A block schedule for core classes and seminars, which provides time within a set schedule to respond to individual student learning needs

A full-time position for a "graduation coach" who works with students—especially minority male students—on engagement and learning issues

A non-traditional early college partnership with Marian College, which allows students to take college courses when they demonstrate readiness rather than only taking them in their junior or senior year

A policy that encourages teachers to engage with their own professional organizations and systematically share information back with the school's staff

THE RIGHT TEAM

Herron High School has a well-qualified and excellent staff. Administrators report that they spent a year selecting the core staff, and the team believes that their efforts were successful in that they have highly qualified and experienced administrators (CEO with an Ed.D. & Curriculum Director/Instructional Leader with administrative qualifications), one National Board Certified teacher, qualified math and science teachers, a teacher with a Ph.D. and a graduation coach. Activities observed in the classrooms support the idea that the staff are competent and qualified.

Herron High School has a full-time technology/information management staff person who oversees a well-developed student information system that makes accurate and timely information available to staff.

A BRIGHT FUTURE

A number of teachers, students, and parents used the phrase "learning how to learn" to describe Herron High School's learning orientation (e.g., teachers help students learn how to learn instead of only learning content). Teachers at Herron High School have time each day for planning and collaboration. Teachers report a high level of communication and common work time that focus on improving the curriculum and learning experiences that are provided students.

Herron High School has developed a strong partnership, plan and process to provide an early college experience for students. Team members and classroom observers observed consistently high levels of rigor across classrooms and high levels of engagement among both faculty and students. All constituents express appreciation for using the Art History timeline as the organizing principle for the liberal arts curriculum. Teachers and parents report that they already see progress among some students related to their attitudes about being in school and their levels of engagement and effort.

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* Dr. Ruth Green, Chair (University of Indianapolis)