



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

William T. Harris School

Public School 011

**320 West 21st Street
New York
NY 10011**

Principal: Robert Bender

Dates of review: January 16 – 17, 2007

Reviewer: Stephen M. Drakes

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The William T. Harris School is an elementary school that serves 486 students from pre-kindergarten to grade 5. Thirty-nine per cent of its students are Hispanic, 30.75% are white, 21.79% are Black and the remainder are Asian and other groups. Approximately 18% are special education students and less than 1% are English language learners. The recent immigrant rate is considerably lower than both similar schools and City schools. China, the Dominican Republic and Guatemala represent the places of birth of most of these immigrant students. Student attendance parallels that of similar and City schools. Currently, 61% of students are eligible for Title 1 funding.

The building that houses Public School 11 also houses a middle school, the Clinton School for Writers and Artists and the Ryan Center, a community health clinic. The faculty has taken advantage of this arrangement and has embraced these institutions as partners in their educational program. In addition to the extensive extra-curricular academic and arts programs Public School 11 offers its students, it also offers a unique in-house swimming program.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is an effective leader who, along with his administrative team, has worked hard to develop a school that is well organized, safe and friendly.
- A clear vision and high expectations are shared by all in the learning community.
- The administration's open-door policy enables staff members, students and parents to feel supported, empowered and part of a team focused on improving academic achievement.
- Faculty members are well versed in the matter of data, as they know where to find it, how to generate it, how to interpret it and how to use it to shape instruction.
- Student progress is monitored on a daily basis, and mechanisms are in place for administrators, teachers, parents and students to talk about academic performance.
- The school is organized for maximum efficiency and around what is best for its students.
- The school has put into place an extensive menu of professional development opportunities helping staff members to better use data.
- Relationships with many community partners have enhanced the school's instructional program.
- There is an impressive list of extra-curricular activities used to enrich the educational experience for the whole child.
- A culture of positive reinforcement and incentives has produced high student attendance and reduced instances of poor student behavior.

What the school needs to improve

- Create more opportunities for parent involvement, especially the parents of children who do not live in the immediate community.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The principal is an effective leader who, along with his administrative team, has worked hard to develop a school that is well organized, safe and friendly. Programming accommodates students in a range of classes to meet their needs, and the school has successfully integrated many special education students into mainstream and other classes.

The school community has become acutely aware of the importance of data as it relates to shaping instruction and the monitoring of student progress toward established benchmark goals. Data is embedded in the school's culture, is used on a daily basis in all classes and has become part of the school staff's everyday language. In support of this direction, the administration has provided the necessary ongoing professional development to assist teachers in the appropriate use of all data.

This school provides its students with a full menu of co- and extra-curricular offerings six days a week. This school offers additional programming in an effort to "Find as many entry points to a child as possible." The principal has fostered a 'kind and gentle' theme that is embodied in all aspects of the school community. This coupled with high expectations of all of its stakeholders makes this school a successful learning institution.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well-developed.

Data gathering at this school is systemic. Faculty members are well versed on the matter of data, as they know where to find it, how to generate it, how to interpret it and how to use it to shape instruction. The administration and teachers establish baselines for each student using standardized test and school-designed interim assessment instruments, tracking students over time. This information is then used to craft appropriate instructional programs for each student. This practice enables school personnel to effectively maintain an accurate academic performance profile for all students including groups of students and individual students. Particular care is taken to identify students who are at risk and monitor their progress. The principal and assistant principal model data-focused behavior by becoming familiar with the academic profile of each student. They are then able to engage their staff members in cogent discussions about all students.

Teachers effectively monitor student performance using assessment tools administered on an ongoing basis throughout the school year and by keeping track of this information using monthly checklists. Class and individual student assessment binders and conferencing record sheets are maintained by all teachers. In addition, the administration has designed a color-coded folder system that aids in the effective collection of student data and promotes valuable communication between the classroom teacher and academic

intervention services team. This team meets on a weekly basis to assist in data monitoring, interpretation and academic intervention services recommendations.

Current data is collected by the classroom teachers on an ongoing basis using a wide assortment of evaluative rubrics and customized record-keeping forms. The data the school gathers is compared across the grade, among grades and among schools in order to get a more accurate academic picture of each student. The data is shared amongst staff members and the parents of students to further define student performance and plans for next steps. The school does a good job collecting and analyzing other available data including the results of family and staff surveys.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is well-developed.

A clear vision and high expectations are shared by all in this learning community. All of the school’s efforts center on improving the academic performance of all students. Stakeholders representing all of the school’s constituents use this information to collaboratively create a Comprehensive Education Plan. This plan outlines long- and short-range goals for improving student achievement that target the whole school, groups and individual students in need. The effectiveness of this plan is reflected in improved student performance in most standardized tests.

The school has established a process by which a student that is identified as at risk is referred to the academic intervention service. The team meets weekly to review referral forms, assess referred students and to recommend next steps. Teachers and parents are included in this process. As a result of these measures, these students are provided with support that best address their needs. Strategies may take the form of differentiated instructional approaches, small group work, a specialist push-in approach, limited student pull-outs or referral to one of the school’s morning programs scheduled during the contractual extended day.

The school works very well with its parents and does much to engage them in various activities. A core group of supportive parents is extraordinarily active and involved in most aspects of school life. The school continues to create more opportunities for parent involvement, especially the parents of children who do not live in the immediate community. This is intended to strengthen the partnership between the school and parents and help to further the school’s plans for improving student performance.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is well-developed.

This learning community is constantly adapting its selected curricula, as it is informed by student needs. It is designated an exempt mathematics school, and has selected a mathematics program which includes investigations to promote problem-solving skills. The core programs at the school include general education, gifted and talented, collaborative

team teaching, self-contained special education and English as a second language. Students are assigned to these programs based on their needs as reflected in the data. Content area teachers use data to plan units of study, assisted in this process by the school's academic coaches and the administration. They adapt and adjust their plans when data deems it necessary. In addition, the school is supported in its planning by one of its community-based partners.

The administration is closely involved in each teacher's instructional program. Teachers are held accountable for their students' progress. The principal and the assistant principal meet with each teacher on an individual basis to discuss their students' achievement. At these meetings, teachers articulate their students' academic status and needs. They are prepared to answer 'why' as it relates to particular instructional approaches and to 'show' the results. In addition, teachers submit class data to the administration every six weeks. This information is constantly reviewed and updated, so that the administration have an up-to-date knowledge of achievement.

Careful budgetary, staffing and scheduling decisions are made to support the school's goal of improving achievement for all students, especially those identified as in need. An impressive list of extra-curricular activities is used to enrich the educational experience for the whole child. The school's programming enables students to take many non-academic courses including swimming, studio art, music, and theater. Arts programs such as Circle in a Square help to accelerate academic learning by enabling students to utilize skills learned in authentic ways. Its programming also supports science lab, computer lab and a host of other exciting electives. The structure this cluster program provides allows grade teachers to meet for instructional planning during common preparation periods. The school's scheduling also accommodates academic intervention support provided by a full-time reading specialist, two reading recovery teachers and a science teacher.

Overwhelming, students feel respected and cared for at this school. The administration's open-door policy enables staff members, students and parents to feel supported, empowered and part of a team focused on improving academic achievement. The instructional program is exciting, engaging and challenging. The school culture promotes good student attendance and behavior using positive reinforcement incentives and careful monitoring.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is very well-developed.

The principal, in cooperation with the school's personnel committee, hires the most qualified teacher candidates available. Consideration is given to those candidates who are familiar with data-driven instructional practices and who strongly believe in high expectations for all students. Candidates should also be familiar with the Teachers College reading and writing program or with an investigative mathematics methodology. Prospective teachers are interviewed by the committee and teach a demonstration lesson before being considered.

The school has put into place an extensive menu of professional development opportunities throughout the year to help staff members to better use data. Staff members are encouraged to engage in as much professional development as is available to better meet the needs of their students. In addition, the administration facilitates and encourages

inter-class visitations, lab sites, 'lunch and learns' and learning walks. Teachers are committed to honing their instructional craft to better meet the need of their students. They have a vested interest in mastering the use of data to assist their students in academic achievement. In addition, the administration frequently conducts formal and informal observation of classes and provides teachers with constructive criticism and useful strategies. Teachers College provides professional development for the school's staff in the teaching of reading and writing. This collaboration has resulted in students at this school outperforming those at similar schools and City schools in English language arts. Student performance in these tests has improved consistently over the years in every student grouping.

The effectiveness of the instructional program and individual student progress are constantly discussed and analyzed at bi-weekly grade meetings, faculty conferences, professional development workshops, study groups and at one-on-one meetings with the academic coaches. These data-focused meetings result in purposeful reflection on practice and the revision of plans based on what these teams know about student performance.

The school is organized for maximum efficiency and around what is best for its students. It runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The principal is respected for the safe and welcoming school he has brought about, with a clear focus on the whole child.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is well-developed.

The principal has established a data-informed learning community, focused on optimum student performance. The Comprehensive Education Plan outlines the school's academic priorities and is used by teachers and administrators as a guide for accomplishing established goals. Lessons aligned to the plan are designed to include interim goals and assessments that enable staff to continually monitor all student progress. The Comprehensive Education Plan is revisited on an ongoing basis to ensure that all aspects of the plan are working well and to provide opportunities for revision when target groups needs have to be met in different ways.

Student progress is strictly monitored by the principal and the assistant principal. They know their students by name and by their academic performance. Monitoring occurs in individual meetings with the administration and coaches, as well as during other teacher meetings. Staff members frequently compare student performance among classes, grades and other schools and quickly recommend remedies for students who are struggling. This prompt action addresses at-risk students without delay, to move them closer to established goals. This school community is committed to accomplishing its goals. To this end, it remains flexible and prepared to adapt its plans.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: William T. Harris School (IS 11)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score			X

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 			X
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 			X
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 			X
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.			X
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.			X
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.			X
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X