



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**William T. Harris**

**Elementary School 011**

**320 West 21<sup>st</sup> Street  
New York  
NY 10011**

**Principal: Robert Bender**

**Dates of review: November 7- 8, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Anne Evanoff**

## 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**

Progress made since the last review

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 with 511 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 21% Black, 39% Hispanic, 30% White, 9% Asian students and 1% other. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance for the school year 2006-2007 is 94%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 61% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal and staff have a clear vision for the school and have developed procedures and structures to implement and regularly track student achievement.
- The principal has gathered and analyzed student performance data from a variety of sources and created systems to easily manage and use it.
- The school has good monitoring and tracking systems which inform planning for students in greatest need
- The administrative team provides outstanding instructional leadership and support for both new and seasoned teachers in their professional growth and development.
- The principal and staff set interim goals and use periodic assessments to measure the progress of students in the core subjects at regular intervals.
- Students are highly involved in setting goals for learning with teachers and develop plans for how to achieve those goals.
- The school provides a broad and interesting curriculum, including the arts, to extend learning within and without the school day.
- Parents and students respect and trust the principal and staff and support the vision of the school.
- Procedures are in place that allow the school to operate smoothly; as a result, attendance is high and students are well behaved.
- The school has established productive relationships with a variety of outside agencies and organizations to enrich the academic and personal growth of students.

### What the school needs to improve

- Specify interim goals and time frames in reading, writing and math that can be realistically met in order to achieve the current target of 100% of students achieving at level 3 or higher.
- Continue to engage students in evaluating their own work and clarify the expectations of what good work looks like.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

### Overall Evaluation

#### This school is well developed.

Students really enjoy attending William T. Harris Elementary School. This shows in their high level of cooperation, positive attitudes and their willingness to engage in school and classroom activities. Students are enthusiastic about their education. There is a shared perception that this is a school where “we can express ourselves and be who we really are.”

Areas for further development from the previous review have been addressed. The school has implemented strategies to reach parents whose children attend but who do not live in the area. The principal operates the school with an open door policy communicating effectively with parents through newsletters, email, phone calls and the school website to keep stakeholders in the “information loop”. The PTA has also supported this outreach by hosting a number of events such as Literacy Night, Family Fridays, and Movie Night.

The principal and the assistant principal are very good instructional leaders who use data effectively to drive the teaching and learning goals of the school. They have established structures and systems for tracking goals and monitoring student progress over regular intervals. They hold teachers accountable for their teaching practices and follow up with staff to support differentiated planning and the use of appropriate interventions to meet the learning needs of students. The Inquiry Team has made good use of data to set up its interventions and procedures for monitoring student progress.

The after school program offers a menu of activities focused on students’ personal, social and leadership development that is exemplary. Parents wholeheartedly support the school.

### 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 the student’s progress over time.**

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

The principal knows all of the students by name and is familiar with how well they are learning. He is committed to drawing together data from a variety of sources to better understand their learning needs. School leaders regularly compare data from year to year, cohort to cohort and in relation to similar schools across gender groups, ethnic groups and

other subgroups to better understand and plan instruction. The school received a New York State award for closing the achievement gap in 2007.

The principal incorporates different sources of data to build individual student profiles in order to better understand what skills students have acquired to date and where they need to go next. He undertakes a rigorous analysis of this data and organizes it for the staff. This ensures that teachers have a rich understanding of their students and a common baseline from which to measure growth. He does not want “to leave any stone unturned”.

Training for staff in understanding and using data is well planned. Teachers use benchmark and periodic assessments to measure student growth and establish next steps. The principal has developed highly effective systems to manage the data, including color-coded folders for tracking and monitoring interventions and a system for special education and English language learners that allows students to move into special education services and programs and language interventions on the first day of school in September. The school is also advanced in using technology to manage information from the City's new data management system, ARIS, and has already set up spread sheets on flashcards to facilitate the tracking of student progress and to plan instruction more efficiently for each teacher.

The principal has created a vision that reflects the school's deep commitment to ensuring success for all students. This is clearly demonstrated in his tireless effort to use data purposefully to improve student learning.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.**

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

The principal analyzes the data to identify the trends and patterns for the school by grade, ethnicity and gender and for those students in the greatest need of improvement. With this information at hand, the teaching staff and intervention teams meet to develop strategic action plans detailing learning goals, instructional plans, roles and responsibilities and timelines for monitoring and assessing next steps. There is high level of collaboration in planning since the school's philosophy is that a “team approach works best”. From these meetings, the principal has also been able to establish future directions including a need for alternative assessments for English language learners in order to better understand how they acquire a second language; and the development of a process to track the progress of students in gifted and talented programs.

High expectations are communicated and reinforced at planning meetings and the same expectations are translated into action throughout the whole school. Continue to engage students in evaluating their own work and clarify the expectations for what good work looks like. Students are keenly aware that the principal, the assistant principal, and teachers want them to aim high. While students work hard, the school does not provide them with sufficient examples of good work to which they can aspire or involve them enough in evaluating their own work to encourage them to achieve even more.

The school has a well-developed outreach strategy to communicate whole school goals with parents and to involve them in supporting their children as effective learners. Teachers have conferences with their students to set individual goals. These goals become the focus of parent/teacher/student meetings to discuss progress and establish

next learning steps. Parents feel comfortable sharing information with staff because they know that it will be used to make a positive difference for their children.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.**

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

Staffing, budgeting and scheduling decisions are based on the analysis of data to support the achievement of the school’s goals. New staff are hired based on their desire to work hard and commit to life long learning; resources are purchased that support teaching and learning goals, and scheduling is targeted well to promote the school’s focus on “educating the whole child”.

The school uses a school improved version of the Teachers’ College Program in reading and writing and supplements the math program with other resources and approaches. Since both of these approaches incorporate the use of data that is collected on a regular basis to assess next steps, the staff is on top of where the children are on the learning continuum and where they need to go next. The school’s emphasis on “authentic learning and on exploring meaning at deeper levels” results in a variety of interesting and compelling learning experiences for students.

Students have many reasons for wanting to come to school. There is a significant focus on the integration of the arts that includes trips to museums, cultural centers and events. The Julliard School provides staff to teach the music program within the school day while the after school program offers an extensive menu including technology, sports, swimming, creative yoga, ballet, hip hop, drama, theatre arts and English language learning. Students enjoy these “extras” and feel that such experiences enrich their lives. The school has a high attendance rate and there is a good procedure in place to track absence and reward good attendance.

There is a culture of mutual respect and trust between administrators, staff and students that is modeled by administrators and fostered through an atmosphere of openness and transparency. The emphasis on life long learning and shared responsibility creates an exciting climate in the school. Because students feel safe and secure on so many different levels, they are free to be themselves and express who they are.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school’s work is outstanding.**

The principal and assistant principal are very well respected and have established clear expectations and procedures that allow the school to run smoothly. Because the staff is so focused on creating meaningful learning experiences that engage students, there are very few issues related to misbehaviour.

The respect that the principal has for students is evident in the way in which he engages students in conversation. Students are at ease when they speak with him about their personal goals. Teachers also follow his example in celebrating good work and in using

mistakes as “learning opportunities”. As a result, students have confidence to ask for help or seek clarification. They trust their teachers and recognize their usefulness as a “resource to improve their work”.

The very well-planned professional development schedule is aligned with the school's goals to improve student achievement in the core subject areas. New teachers are very well supported through a helpful mentor program. Coaches regularly provide support and assistance and are available to model lessons. Teachers make good use of grade conferences which provide a common time to review student progress collaboratively, identify obstacles and plan strategies for improvement. Teachers visit each other's classrooms and use data to plan together. They frequently engage in focused conversations about demonstration lessons related to what worked well and what did not. Administrators regularly engage in classroom observations and provide direct feedback to staff about the quality of instruction. Staff members welcome and use the feedback to improve their practice.

Because the instructional leadership is outstanding, teachers are encouraged to try out new ideas and take risks in their planning. As a result, lessons are stimulating, exciting and challenging for all students.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.**

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

The school is very effective in analyzing and using data to set goals, plan instruction, monitor progress and determine the next steps to improve student achievement. The administration is adept at using data to make comparisons of student performance as individuals, between groups and across classes. Teachers willingly examine their practices, based on the data, to take immediate action to address achievement gaps. Support staff are similarly actively engaged in monitoring interim goals and reviewing data from periodic assessments to track progress towards the school's goals and to identify appropriate next steps. As a result of this strategic focus and a co-ordinated team approach, students make good progress each year.

The principal and faculty use the data to create class lists and provide classroom teachers with baseline information to begin the planning process. This data is also used to identify students who would benefit from a summer reading program to maintain reading levels. The school goes to great lengths to ensure that no time is wasted and that every student is set up for success from day one. The staff also collaborate to make effective use of data to plan for school improvement from one year to the next. However, the school does not always identify the interim goals to be achieved within a shorter time to keep the school on the right track. The school has not, for example, determined what goals in reading writing and math will need to be reached, and by when, to ensure that it meets its current goal of 100% of students achieving level 3.

The principal has articulated and shared a powerful vision for the school in the three years he has been at the school and has implemented systems, structures and procedures that are making a positive difference for students.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: William T. Harris</b>	△	▶	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				X	

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?				X	
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				X	

### Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?				X	
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				X	

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>▶</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?					X
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?				X	
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				<b>X</b>	

<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>▶</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?					X
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?					X
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?					X
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?					X
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?					X
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?					X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>					<b>X</b>

<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>▶</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to make strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?					X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>				<b>X</b>	