

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**John Melser Charrette School**

**Elementary School 003**

**490 Hudson Street  
New York  
NY 10014**

**Principal: Lisa Siegman**

**Dates of review: May 26 – 27, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Daria Rigney**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

John Melser Charrette School is an elementary school with 625 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 12% Black, 13% Hispanic, 65% White, and 8% Asian students and 2% American Indian. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school embodies a set of deeply held beliefs and values about student learning resulting in high expectations across all classrooms.
  - Teachers collaboratively plan lessons that provide extended periods of time for students to read and practice comprehension skills. Whether in upper grades where the qualities of fantasy literature are explored or in lower grades where the properties of non-fiction texts are investigated, students spend long periods of time reading challenging texts resulting in students' improved abilities in comprehension, analysis and synthesis of ideas.
  - Instruction is carefully tailored to match students' strengths and needs across the school. The school's emphasis on project-based work whether students are creating colonial characters or conjuring arguments over taxes ensure high levels of engagement that result in students' enhanced ability to extend and explain their ideas.
- The principal uses resources judiciously and strategically resulting in enhanced opportunities for students to engage in a broad spectrum of engaging studies thus increasing academic success of students.
  - The administrative team's dynamic use of resources including coaches, part-time specialty teachers and parent sponsored grants broadens the curricular choices for all students resulting in an enhanced ability to meet all students' learning needs.
  - The principal has lengthened the day for all students effectively creating a forty minute block of time during which students can receive support in specific curricular areas. These include improving writing assignments or working with a math club on algebra problems. As a result, students progress is accelerated as evidenced by work products and formative assessments.
- Administrators and teachers continuously analyze a wide repertory of data in order to gauge progress and fine tune instructional decisions that promote academic achievement for all students.
  - Teachers are facile at using assignments and projects as formative assessments. For example, in Grades 2-3, teachers have transformed a weekend news assignment into an ongoing assessment of students' ability to formulate coherent paragraphs, summarize their thoughts and use English language conventions appropriately. This cycle provides critical information for teachers in designing targeted lessons.
  - Teachers routinely use detailed checklists as they confer with students in order to identify students' strengths and needs. This data expands upon periodic assessments and forms the basis for curricular and pedagogical adjustments that refine and target next learning steps for students.

- The principal and her staff have developed a set of goals that are organic to the school's mission and originate from a rich menu of data points that strengthen student achievement outcomes.
  - The principal can point to the data sources each school goal. For instance, the goal of improving teachers' knowledge of differentiated instruction comes from an examination of formative and summative assessments. The alignment of data and goals results in the school's ability to angle all resources towards improve instructional outcomes.
  - The principal has a warm, positive and productive relationship with her staff and parent community as evidenced by her close collaboration and effective communication with staff at grade team meetings, her involvement in grade planning and curriculum revision and her support of parent involvement in classroom instruction.
- The school provides a safe, respectful and nurturing school culture that emphasizes the relationship between academic success and personal growth, resulting in a collaborative, supportive school environment.
  - The principal has deployed resources to give teachers powerful tools for creating emotionally supportive classrooms that promote academic success. One example is her use of a staff social worker whose regular professional development sessions offer teachers specific strategies for collaborative problem solving and conflict mediation.
  - Among the many external partnerships the school has fostered is the "Go Project" which provides, each summer, 6 week cycles of academic intervention as well as sports and arts activities providing an enriched camp experience for students who need additional opportunities to develop socially and academically.
- The principal and her staff have built a deep and trusting relationship with the community resulting in parents occupying an active and valuable place in the school's daily life promoting student outcomes.
  - There is an ongoing and frequent exchange of information between the school and the parent community. Weekly teacher newsletters, principal letters and daily emails ensure that parents are well-informed about student progress and curricular plans. This results in high level of added support at home for improving student outcomes.

One of the school's prized initiatives is the development and implementation of student reflections as evidence of students' growth in self-awareness and independence. These reflections are shared in teacher team meetings and used as assessments of both skills and knowledge acquired as well as documentation of students' improved ability to manage their learning progress and set rigorous goals.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Align the curriculum across the grades to ensure instructional coherence in the school.

- At this time, curriculum is rich, engaging and rigorous with students expected to develop deep content knowledge and strategic thinking. However, there is curricular variability within and across grades resulting in an uneven and inconsistent course of study for students as they progress through the grades.
- Although student tasks are thoughtfully planned and higher level thinking skills are stressed throughout the school, there is a lack of alignment within and across grades in creating a cohesive progression of increasing challenge for students as they move from grade to grade. This hinders the school's ability to effectively create a blueprint for grades to build on each other in developing students' skills and knowledge.
- Implement strategies to support strategic improvement in teacher evaluation and performance.
  - While the administrative team devotes a great deal of time to classroom observation and collaborating with teachers, there is no comprehensive system in place for providing teachers with actionable feedback on their performance. Consequently, there is a lack of clarity that identifies next steps for improvement.
  - Although the principal is dedicated to the continuous improvement of staff and provides an abundant menu of professional development opportunities, these are not differentiated to address the needs of all staff members thus impeding the school's ability to target teachers' needs for professional growth.
- Refine systems for school wide analysis of data in order to create a clear and detailed picture of the school's strengths and needs.
  - Although the administrative team study both summative and formative data this analysis does not yield a detailed and complete portrait of trends and patterns in student achievement. This results in a diminished capacity to adjust instructional strategies to meet the needs of students.
  - The principal and the teachers regularly analyze the results of Periodic Assessments and classroom data. However these data are not analyzed through the lens of subgroups preventing the school from adjusting instructional practices to improve achievement of all students.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the school's assessment practices and data collection systems in order to improve student outcomes.
  - Currently, the school is working hard to develop useful assessments and integrate tasks based on Common Core Standards. At this time, there is a gap between the assessments and the project based work inhibiting the school's ability to create coherence between what students have been taught and how they are assessed.
  - The principal and her staff routinely use data, including student work, to measure student achievement. However, the link between the knowledge gleaned from these data and the effectiveness of collaborative teacher teams is tenuous. This prevents the school from using the data to improve teacher practice and improving outcomes for students.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name:</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		<b>X</b>		
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?				<b>X</b>
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				<b>X</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?				<b>X</b>
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?				<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?				<b>X</b>			
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?				<b>X</b>			
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?				<b>X</b>			
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?				<b>X</b>			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>							
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			<b>X</b>				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				<b>X</b>			
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?				<b>X</b>			
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				<b>X</b>			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>							
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			<b>X</b>				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			<b>X</b>				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?				<b>X</b>			
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>							
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>△</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>▶</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>