

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The John M. Harrigan School

Elementary School K029

**425 Henry Street
Brooklyn
NY 11201**

Principal: Melanie Raneri-Woods

Dates of review: January 25 - 26, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The John M. Harrigan School is an elementary school with 710 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 7% Black, 16% Hispanic, 65% White, and 10% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 95.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards have been reflectively integrated into the school's already robust curriculum school wide. (1.1)
 - The school's long standing partnership with Teachers College and its finely honed implementation of Reader's and Writer's workshop is the cornerstone that supports rigorous standards for reading and writing. All students, including students with disabilities and English language learners write extensively in a variety of genres. For example, all grades craft persuasive essays, using an interdisciplinary focus. This requires students to make an argument and support it with details. Most run for several pages as early as grade two and are aligned to the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. As a result, students are well along the trajectory leading to post secondary readiness.
 - Challenging academic tasks in all content areas consistently include an accountable talk component and the expectation that students will explain and defend their thinking. In a math class students freely shared their solutions to a given problem and were able to self correct their work, based on the comments of their colleagues. Consequently, students are uniformly and cognitively engaged and have real ownership of, and interest in their learning.
- All students, including all subgroups school wide, are offered a wide range of diverse entry points into equally rigorous learning experiences, especially in the lower grades. (1.2)
 - The school is universally committed to the use of the workshop model and to providing individualized support for all children. In addition, school culture reflects the belief that children learn best when supported in developing and expressing their own inquiry-based opinions and ideas. Teachers skillfully support students through individual conferences that encourage deeper levels of thinking and students consistently share their use of strategies and ideas in all content areas. In addition, students consistently develop and articulate their own solutions to math problems and craft extremely well written essays on self selected topics. Further, teacher standards are consistently high for all students, including subgroups, and are shared and enhanced through reflections and work review at regular grade level team meetings. Accordingly, students transition easily from grade to grade, deepening their level of learning, and even the youngest students are challenged to produce strong work products, maintaining high levels of student proficiency and accelerating student growth.
- The school consistently emphasizes improved student achievement in English language arts, math and all content areas and directs all resources, organizational and instructional decisions towards this goal. (1.3)

- All resources are strategically aligned to the school's overarching goals and are reflective of key priorities. Personnel in the person of a fulltime intervention specialist, professional development through the partnership with Teachers College, and arts enrichment cluster teachers support these objectives. In addition, a partnership with a community based organization focuses on social emotional support training for all teachers. The intense focus on these targeted goals has resulted in significantly higher levels of rubric-based student writing in all content areas by all students. (a)
- Teacher assignments are reflectively focused on the academic needs of students. Selected integrated collaborative teaching teams have moved up to the next grade with their students, appreciably lessening transitions and enabling teachers to use their knowledge of the students to individualize support right at the beginning of the school year. Further, teachers were strategically moved from upper grade classes to the lower grades, raising the level of expectation and rigor for both classroom instruction and achievement. Additionally, scheduling changes to teacher team meeting times have provided greater opportunities for extended collaboration. Thus the school has a culture where teachers have a deep connection to the progress of their students and a strong commitment to school wide goals. (c)
- A broad range of targeted assessments, well aligned to the curriculum, provides extensive data around student performance at the classroom and grade levels. (2.2)
 - Grade specific, teacher-made writing rubrics are utilized school wide, as are pre, post, and mid unit assessments in math, all of which are specific to the curriculum and school goals. In addition, individual student reflections, a built-in component of each writing assignment, provide insightful data into student understanding of units of study. As a result teachers consistently identify student needs and adjust instruction to meet those needs, improving student achievement.
 - Teams of teachers and individual teachers regularly diagnose subgroup and student specific needs and track trends, utilizing the revised team meeting schedule which provides an additional period each week to reflect on student work and formative assessments, This formative data includes design your own periodic assessments, running records and conference notes. Prescriptive strategies are then implemented at both the grade and classroom level. Consequently, student work is consistently reflective of deep levels of understanding by all students.
- The school's passionate commitment to the social, emotional and academic growth of all students is exemplified by the warm and nurturing tone of the building and all members of the school community. (1.4)
 - Responding immediately to data from the Learning Environment Survey, the school has developed a collaborative partnership with the Morningside Center, selected a social emotional leader on each grade level and initiated the "responsive classroom" program. These protocols, coupled with the school's Diversity Committee, ensure that students understand the impact of their actions on others. Students proudly state

that “people who work here are really nice,” and “kids look after each other.” Accordingly, incidents have declined and the academic success of every child is the school’s focus.

- Students at the school feel intensely supported by their teachers and the principal of the school. “Teachers form a bond with us,” explained one fifth grader. “Teachers help a lot,” stated a younger student. Student reflections and collaborative interactions exemplify their ownership of their learning. In addition, students are perfectly comfortable writing or visiting the principal with suggestions and concerns. Currently, students serve as partners on the Schoolyard Redesign Committee. As a result, students are eager to come to school and the year to date attendance is 95.8%.
- Parents and students are seen as equal partners in education and are consistently involved in school decision making and in the continuous dialogue between all constituents. (2.4)
 - The school leadership team and a wide range of parent committees, such as the Diversity Committee, the Arts Committee, and the Food and Farming Committee engage in ongoing planning with the school administration to provide all students with extensive educational and social emotional opportunities. The Diversity Committee arose from this collaboration as a means of ensuring that the school was a welcoming environment for all populations. Parents comment that “teachers treat us as peers” and explain that they are always welcome to share ideas. Consequently, there is a universal commitment to student success.
 - Workshops are held twice a year that train parents in the use of ARIS Parent Link. Further, the Parent Coordinator consistently instructs new parents in use of the system on an individual basis as soon as students enter the school. School-created report cards that are extensively narrative as well as numeric are translated into Chinese and Spanish and shared with parents, detailing student progress in depth. Therefore, parents understand the venues available to access information and are well informed as to student progress and next steps.
- School leaders and staff effectively use data from ongoing observations and carefully defined feedback to continuously improve teacher practice resulting in greater student success. (4.1)
 - The school consistently provides professional development through a broad range of opportunities for all teachers both new to the profession and highly experienced. These needs are identified as a result of frequent classroom observations, both formal and informal, and are in line with a clearly delineated framework that includes timely feedback with collaboratively defined goals. The principal is seen as a coach and the school provides targeted, highly specific support to address the diagnosed needs through mentoring. Selected teachers serve as literacy leaders, and school wide professional development with recognized authorities from Teachers College and network workshops provide training in identified areas based on observation data. This cycle of observations, targeted feedback, aligned support, and follow-up observations has resulted in a culture of high expectations, self reflective practice and improved student achievement on math unit assessments and standards- based student writing across content areas.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand the current data analysis process to enhance the ability of school leaders to analyze school wide trends and subgroup data in the area of mathematics. (2.1)
 - Data from a wide variety of sources and in all areas is collected by school leaders and used to reflect on student progress. In addition, an extensive electronic database is used to collect and disaggregate English language arts information that enables the school to assess student progress by individual skills and reading levels. In spite of this in depth analysis of reading proficiency, no such technology exists for math. As a result, the school's ability to disaggregate data with the same level of facility and depth is hindered, and adjusting instruction and curriculum to address subgroup trends is more limited in the area of math.
- Refine interim goals for subgroup students at the school level to facilitate the monitoring of ongoing progress towards long term goals. (3.2)
 - Individual student goals are defined by and aligned to the data from rubric driven units of study in writing, and pre and post unit assessments in math. As a result of this data review, teaching strategies are then differentiated and targeted to meet student specific needs. Nevertheless, interim goals are frequently highly individualized and do not adequately reflect interim goal setting for subgroups, hampering the ability of teams to consistently assess the success of specific instructional practices for targeted groups of students.
- Deepen the process of evaluation for the mathematics enrichment program to ensure that the level of challenge is sufficiently high. (5.3)
 - The school engages in ongoing yearly and long-term reflective planning sessions and then reviews and adjusts plans based on the results of summative assessments and other data streams. In response to data from last year's New York State math assessments, and in line with the challenges of the Common Core Learning Standards, the school implemented a math enrichment program to accelerate the achievement of level three and four students. At this time, however, the school has just begun to develop a systemic protocol to evaluate the quality of the enrichment tasks and the effect of the enrichment program on the identified students. As a result, the impact of the program is not yet subject to rigorous appraisal, and its value in raising student achievement is unclear. (a, c)

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The John Harrigan School	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score				X
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?				X
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?				X
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?				X
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
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.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?				X
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?				X
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?				X
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.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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?			X	
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?			X	
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?				X

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.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
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?				X			
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				X			
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?				X			
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, guidance/advisement support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X			
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.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
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, with particular attention to the CCLS?			X				
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?			X				
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?			X				
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed