

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

John Harvard

**Elementary School 034
104-12 Springfield Blvd.
Queens
NY 11429**

Principal: Pauline Shakespeare

Dates of review: November 17 – 18, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Michael L. Schurek

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

John Harvard is an elementary school with 520 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 78% Black, 13% Hispanic, 2% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 93.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is a safe place where students are highly engaged in learning and appreciate the excellent level of support they receive for their personal and academic development. (1.4)
 - All grade teachers regularly conference with students and work through the school's Response-to-Intervention model to ensure that all students are progressing. In addition, paraprofessionals support students both individually and in small groups in the lower grades. Extended day, after-extended day, and Saturday programs promote further student learning in the upper grades. As a result, students feel well supported and are known by multiple adults, thereby facilitating steady reading level gains as evidenced by ongoing running records data and Progress Report advancements.
 - The school's guidance counselor conducts respect campaigns and personally provides needed student/youth services that maintain the school's affable milieu. Dances, family nights, publishing parties, class productions, and honors assemblies further support students' social-emotional needs. These practices have enabled the school to achieve steadily decreasing student suspension rates since 2006.
- The principal communicates high expectations to all stakeholders, thus impacting positively on student achievement and enabling the school to perform in the top tier of all schools citywide. (3.4)
 - Parents articulate that the school has high expectations and choose to send their children to this school to receive a superior and rigorous education. Homework completion is viewed as tantamount to student success and many parents willingly obtain assignments for their absent children to expedite and maintain their children's progress.
 - The school's motto that every child can achieve is evident by the recent raising of its passing grade from 70% to 75%, thus influencing student expectations. Consequently, honor roll assemblies, that are highly attended events, now include large number of students, and the school has earned 7.5 progress report extra credits for closing the achievement gap.
- There is very effective communication with families, who have high praise for the academic and personal support their children receive from the school's staff. (2.4)
 - Ongoing conferencing practices across grades and classes enable teachers to identify strengths, weaknesses, and next steps for students, including tasks associated with the Common Core Learning Standards. Progress reports sent home twice each marking period, and parent-teacher conferences focusing on students needing additional support, provide for opportunities to share specific areas of concern.

- Workshops conducted for parents enable them to use ARIS Parent link and Acuity to understand their children's performance levels, and facilitate in helping their children use Acuity to remediate areas of need. A 40% parental participation rate contributes to high rates of progress in the areas of English language arts and math.
- Students benefit from standards-based curricula that utilize Common Core Learning Standards to engage them in rigorous tasks and prepare them for further education. (1.1)
 - School leaders and staff meet each summer to refine English language arts and math curriculum maps and pacing calendars. Teacher grade teams meet regularly throughout the year to create accompanying lessons, assessments, and homework assignments integrating Common Core Learning Standards and emphasizing literacy to successfully accelerate student outcomes.
 - Three grades have completed one CCLS literacy task and are analyzing authentic, varied-ability student works as a springboard to the common core math task to ensure that identified gaps in student performance are addressed in the next round of unit planning. Teacher teams use project-based learning to build curricular and instructional alignment across grades. As a result, student progress and performance have increased from level B to level A on the progress report.
- Students demonstrate high levels of engagement in well-matched lessons, good behavior, and enthusiasm for learning to reach their potential. (1.2)
 - All teachers use data to develop low, medium, and high level activities and differentiated questioning during English language arts and math classes, thus providing students with well-matched multiple entry points, meeting the needs of all learners. A fifth grade teacher, while assisting a group of students in writing a persuasive letter to the King and Queen of Spain around funding a voyage to the New World, uses a clipboard to record student strengths and needs.
 - Students are generally well engaged in learning in most classes as evidenced by their conversations during cooperative learning and their ability to explain and discuss their work. A second grade student explained the steps he took to write a multiple-component report on the topic of dinosaurs. Hallway and classroom bulletin boards contain copious displays of student work, demonstrating the excitement expressed by the students about their work.
- Leaders make informed and effective organizational decisions across many aspects of the school to support improvements in learning. (1.3)
 - Staff and student time is structured to establish 2.5 hours of literacy and 1.5 hours of math per day, aligned with the principal's belief that establishing strong literacy skills by first grade will ensure overall academic success. In addition, weekly, teacher teams have one scheduled grade team meeting, and up to four common preparation periods that are used to identify student gaps and design strategies that improve instruction.

- School leaders focus on staff expertise to assign and match teachers with student groupings. Nurturing, skilled teachers provide instruction to students demonstrating extra need, and senior staff provides instruction to Level 4 students, thus supportive of and maintaining high levels of student achievement and self-esteem.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the school's use of rubrics by aligning them across grades to provide clear expectations and self-assessment opportunities for students while enabling teachers to provide next steps for students to improve work quality. (2.2)
 - Most teachers use rubrics of varying forms to guide student work. However, these tools are generally not used by teachers to indicate next steps for students to improve work quality, and not all students use rubrics to self-assess their work. In addition, not all rubrics indicate performance levels, limiting the scaffolding of expectations within each level to ensure student work shows rigor and is comprehensive.
- Strengthen the use of the school's observation tools by providing explicit next steps for teachers to promote professional growth and reflection to improve pedagogy. (4.1)
 - School leaders support teachers with walk-through feedback that is loosely aligned to a research-based rubric, provides a rating and correlated evidence in each area of focus, but does not yet include explicit next steps to enhance practice. A poorly organized classroom visit required the immediate intervention of the principal to bring it to focus. Thus, there are missed opportunities to elevate school-wide instructional practice to a level that maximizes improved student outcomes.
- Expand professional development plans to ensure that effective teaching practices become embedded in a coherent way across grades and classes. (4.3)
 - Although the principal, assistant principal, and literacy coach, oversee professional development, differentiate topics as per teacher need, and align activities with school goals and the Common Core Learning Tasks, the system does not yet account for all grades receiving professional development on an ongoing basis, thus impeding efforts to improve instruction. Additionally, targeted professional development is not yet in place to support fully entrenching effective teaching practices in daily routines. Consequently, although parents support the school's homework policy, there are some concerns that current pedagogical practices rely on students' rigorous three to four hour homework requirement to accelerate academic outcomes.
 - School leaders select teachers as grade leaders who through demonstrated competency direct a lot of work on their grade levels. While this practice places selected personnel in positions of leadership, it

limits opportunities for all team members to develop these skills, thereby impeding school capacity building.

- Refine action planning by developing interim goals and benchmarks for all plans so that progress can be monitored, adjustments made, and performance evaluated. (5.3)
 - School action plans, inclusive of grade and student levels, list intervals and instruments of periodic review, but do not include projected gains for each interim measure of progress. The lack of these structures provides missed opportunities for the school to determine the effectiveness of their actions, to make timely adjustments to further improve outcomes, and compare year-to-year interim assessment benchmarks, thus limiting the school's ability to align planning from one year to the next.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The John Harvard 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