

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

John M. Harrigan School

Elementary School 029

**425 Henry Street
Brooklyn
NY 11201**

Principal: Melanie Raneri Woods

**Dates of review: December 8 - 9, 2008
Lead Reviewer: Ann Marie Lettieri-Baker**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

John M. Harrigan School is an elementary school with 651 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 11% Black, 24% Hispanic, 58% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 9.6% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 95.5%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The principal, supported by the assistant principals, has built an effective learning community. Continuous and varied professional development has led to the implementation of instructional practices that enable students to achieve well and to grow socially, emotionally and academically. Relationships in the school are respectful and professional, which ensures high levels of collaboration and a strong commitment to improvement. This school is an extension of the community at large where environmental stewardship is celebrated through the establishment of many committees, such as the Food and Farming and the Go Green committees. A strong focus on the environment and environmental awareness has allowed parents, teachers and students to work together toward common goals and causes.

This school assesses student progress in English language arts, math and science. School leaders and faculty strategically analyze a wide range of data in English language arts in order to understand students' strengths and weaknesses. Collected data, in the form of Teachers College reading and writing assessments and classroom-level conferring notes, is used to analyze learning outcomes for individual and groups of students. However, the school's use of assessments, observations and other evaluations for math and science is not sufficiently strong to identify its progress towards successfully implementing change in student performance and strategic improvement for specific student subgroups in those subject areas.

School leaders and classroom teachers set long-term reading goals for students in English language arts and math based on student's previous performance. Science enrichment teachers support classroom teachers by facilitating the gathering and analysis of data for that subject area and consequently setting standards-aligned interim goals. The school monitors goals in English language arts regularly through formative assessment practices and this supports planning for subgroups and targeted instruction. However, this practice is not systemic, and so, it is not evident across core curriculum areas. Parents are included in their child's education through regular reporting and open dialogue with classroom teachers. There is not yet a formalized protocol for regularly informing parents of the specific goals and short-term next steps in learning that have been set for their children.

The principal's vision and the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan are well aligned. Staff and parents are aware of the school's key priorities that support academic, personal and professional growth. A core team of parents, teachers and school leaders developed the Comprehensive Educational Plan.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and assistant principals know the staff well and can articulate next steps for teacher improvement.
- Parents are included in their child's education through regular teacher reporting and consistently open dialogue with classroom teachers.
- Relationships in the school are respectful and professional, which ensures high levels of collaboration and a strong commitment to improvement.
- Teachers throughout the site are gathering and analyzing data in English language arts, math and science to promote increased mastery of content and skills.
- Professional development, particularly in English language arts and math, has resulted in effective implementation of the curriculum.
- The principal's vision and the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan are well aligned so staff and parents are aware of the key priorities that support academic, personal and professional growth.

Areas for improvement

- Extend the analysis of the learning outcomes and needs of all subgroups of students to include those not making one year of progress in English language arts and math, boys, and English language learners.
- Expand on current content- and skills-centered goal setting practices by setting goals for student subgroups that will ensure their specific learning needs are addressed.
- Increase communication with students and parents regarding goals and interim checkpoints for all subjects, including social studies, ensuring a clear understanding of next steps in learning.
- Develop the school's use of assessment, observation and evaluation in identifying the school's progress towards successfully implementing change in student performance and strategic improvement.

Part 3: Main Findings

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

This school implements a Design Your Own evaluation plan in order to assess student progress in both English language arts and math. School leaders and faculty strategically analyze a wide range of data in English language arts and math in order to understand students' strengths and weaknesses. Classroom teachers and school leaders collect data in the form of Teachers College reading and writing assessments and classroom-level conferring notes, which are used to analyze learning outcomes for individuals and groups of students. The variety of test and conferring data provides information for teachers that show students' strengths and weaknesses in learning in English language arts, which helps teachers in planning for different students' needs. In science, enrichment teachers have successfully taken on the onus of leading formative data analysis and content-focused student goal setting. The school pays close attention to the learning needs of special education students but has yet to undertake this level of analysis for other subgroups of students, including boys, English language learners and students who did not make one year of progress. This lack of analysis has resulted in low progress scores, particularly in English language arts.

School leaders and faculty provide students and families with feedback about students' progress at the end of each report card marking period. Narrative descriptions of students' next steps in achieving short-term goals in English language arts are included on each child's report card. These help parents in understanding their child's next learning steps. However, the narratives do not include short-term progress goals for math or the other core subjects. In some grade levels, parents and students are provided with summary feedback at the end of each math unit, but this is not systemic across the school and the feedback does not outline improvement targets or goals. The school is in the process of revising grade-level report cards so that they are more aligned to the school's curriculum and standards.

The school has successfully focused analysis on the achievement of students with special needs. Last school year, the principal and assistant principals recognized that the quality of instruction was vastly different for those students. As a result, current observations are made in an effort to recognize the strengths and struggles of students with special needs in order to work with teachers to make any necessary environmental, as well as instructional, modifications. Teachers of students with special needs work to align individual educational plan goals with classroom action plans that include both long-term and short-term progress goals.

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 proficient.

Leaders and teachers throughout the site set content and skills-centered grade-level goals for students in English language arts, math and science. Long-term goals are monitored regularly through formative assessment practices across the school in order to plan for small-group and targeted instruction in these core curriculum areas. As a result, students are well aware of what they need to do in order to improve, and they can articulate their goals clearly. Furthermore, the long-term and short-term goals of students with special needs are addressed well through the alignment between their individual education plans and classroom teacher action plans. However, the school does not sufficiently demonstrate how it addresses the specific needs of subgroups, such as English language learners and gender groups.

The school keeps parents well informed through e-mail correspondence, monthly newsletters authored by classroom teachers, bi-yearly grade meetings with the teachers and through the distribution of assessment data and rubrics. However, while parents are informally aware of the focus areas identified by teachers in working with their children, they are not aware of their children's goals for continuous improvement the core subjects. Parents are pleased with the narratives included by teachers on their children's first report card, but acknowledge that these do not address the next learning steps for their children.

The principal's vision and the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan are well aligned and collaboratively developed, so staff and parents are aware of the key priorities that support academic, personal and professional growth.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

This school has included interesting opportunities for students that are in addition to the mandated curriculum. This school year, the school implemented a Food and Farming initiative, whereupon parents and members of the faculty work with students to plant, cultivate and harvest foods that will be served to students as part of the school's lunch program. Environmental stewardship is one of several areas of school community interest that directly involves and includes students. The school also has a physical education and wellness committee and a "go green" committee. Like the food and farming committee, these committees involve parents, members of the faculty and staff, as well as students. The school also implements a school-wide enrichment model at every grade level. At every grade level across the school, students engage in a study centered on a particular area of interest. The school uses surveys to determine the studies that will be on the choice menu for children for this enrichment program. Parents, along with two out-of-classroom teachers, facilitate these experiences. It is unclear yet as to whether these experiences have an overall impact on student progress or achievement.

Teachers use a wide range of assessment data to inform their lessons in English language arts and math. The school's Design Your Own assessment in English language arts is Assessment Pro by Columbia University's Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. Classroom teachers also use conferring notes to plan for individual and small-group strategy lessons. The math Design Your Own analysis focuses on number sense. This assessment is new to the school and is limiting in terms of the amount of information generated in order to determine next steps for both high-achieving and low-performing students. Teachers use rubrics in science, physical education and

in the visual arts classes. These rubrics are mostly behavioral in nature and do not address the content expectations of their respective discipline requirements.

Adults in this school trust each other and treat each other and all students with respect at all times, which results in the students showing reciprocated respect for adults and their peers. The school has implemented a "Peace Path" program that has a positive impact on students' awareness of strategies for resolving conflicts within the school building and among themselves. The school's guidance counselor trains upper grade students to act as peer mediators in nonviolent situations involving students and works with groups of students throughout the year to address student concerns and issues as they arise.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Teachers at this school work with the principal and assistant principals to formulate professional development goals and objectives. School leaders refer to each teacher's professional development plan when providing formal and informal feedback to teachers. Professional development, particularly in English language arts and math, has resulted in effective implementation of the curriculum. Monday afternoon professional study cycles this year have focused on community building and priorities in looking at student work, however there is no mechanism in place to monitor the effectiveness of these sessions or long-term impact on student achievement.

The school has two active inquiry teams. One team, led by one of the assistant principals, has targeted the lowest-achieving fourth and fifth grade students in the area of English language arts. The other team, led by a second assistant principal, has targeted second grade students who scored a Level 2 in math on their June 2008 first-grade report cards or a Level 2 in math on their November 2008 second grade report card. Both teams include classroom teachers and are using formative assessments, conference notes and student observation to study and address the needs of the selected students from both target populations. Teachers representing the other core subjects are not participants on the inquiry teams and therefore are not given the opportunity to learn how to address the needs of struggling students within their own disciplines. Other forms of inquiry at the school include monthly grade-level meetings run by the principal and assistant principals. At these meetings, school leaders model for teachers how to look at and discuss student work, but the needs of teachers as they relate to student progress and performance are not specifically addressed.

The school implements a rigorous guidance plan that supports students and their families in order to enhance students' personal and academic growth. This year, the guidance counselor has trained over 35 students to be active peer mediators. This focus on peer mediation was initiated after careful analysis of the school's learning environment survey, which indicated concerns on the part of the parents and staff around bullying.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 proficient.

Formative assessment data is analyzed in English language arts, math and science across classes at the site to identify content- and skills-driven trends for student goal-setting throughout the school year. However, the school has no formal process in place beyond English language arts that examines subgroup level data in order to improve student outcomes for specific populations. The work the school is currently doing around the examination of students with special needs has led to individual student action plans that are specific and data driven. The same process has not been applied to English language learners, boys and girls or to students who did not make one year of progress in English language arts or math. Interim checkpoints for all student subgroups across each grade level are in place in English language arts through the implementation of the Assessment Pro program. The data rendered has allowed the school to examine some subgroups, but not all, and has generated long-term reading level expectations for every student. Teachers have complemented this data with systematic conferences that facilitate the development of interim goals that support the achievement of the long-term reading goals. In the area of math, the school's implementation of the new Design Your Own assessment in number sense has supported content-based goal-setting for students, but it has not rendered enough data to allow the school to focus on subgroups. Science cluster teachers employ an efficient alignment between end of unit assessments and the State standards in order to gather and analyze data that informs skills-centered student interim goals. However, no analysis of data and goal-setting for subgroups has been implemented as yet in that core curriculum area.

Leaders have examined the results of the school's progress report, learning environment survey, inquiry team work and internal assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of organizational decisions. The results of the learning environment survey led to the school's implementation of a peace path initiative, which teaches students to become active problem solvers. The school uses peer mediation to enable students to resolve nonviolent conflicts peacefully. While the school concentrated on the learning environment survey metric of the progress report, the school does not address the student progress metric. Students who did not make one year of progress in English language arts or math are not considered as a subgroup and therefore no work is currently being done by the school leaders or inquiry teams to analyze individual student loss in proficiency from year to year.

The principal's vision and the school's Comprehensive Education Plan are well aligned so staff and parents are aware of the key priorities that support academic, personal and professional growth. The Comprehensive Education Plan was co-constructed by a committee that included parents, teachers and administrators and the action plan identifies desired outcomes for school improvement.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: John M. Harrigan School	△	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?			X	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?		X		
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			X	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			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 student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?			X	
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			X	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?			X	
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYO, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?			X				
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?		X					
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?			X				
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X				
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?			X				
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?			X				
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?			X				
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X				
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?			X				
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?		X					
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?			X				
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed