### The School Context

John F. Hylan is an elementary school with 660 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 22% Black, 75% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 30% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.0%.

### School Quality Criteria

#### Instructional Core

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<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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#### School Culture

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<th>Rating:</th>
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<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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#### Systems for Improvement

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<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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Findings
School leaders consistently convey high expectations to the entire school community, including teachers, students and parents, and provide supports to achieve these expectations. Professional development, partnerships with families and teacher feedback prioritize placing students on a path to college and career readiness.

Impact
Structures that support high expectations across all constituencies result in reciprocal accountability between teachers and administration and a high level of trust between the school and families.

Supporting Evidence
- The school’s mission and vision statements underpin how teachers and leaders deliberately embed clearly defined standards for teaching the whole child in a respectful environment and work towards the goals of engaging all students in project-based learning, with opportunities for enrichment and cultural immersion through the performing arts. The administration ensures teachers have on-going professional growth opportunities as evident in the school’s evolving professional development plan.

- The principal and his administrative team ground their on-going and systematic feedback to teachers in the Danielson Framework for Teaching and include actionable next steps to improve practice resulting in teachers’ improving practices in engaging students in discussions. The school’s leadership also expects other staff members to participate in purposeful professional learning. All teacher assistants, for example, participated in training for guided reading and other intervention approaches they can now implement when working with students.

- All staff members hold themselves accountable for preparing students for college and careers via modeling and exemplifying desired standards for professionalism. One non-teaching staff member leads the school’s character development program, anchored in social and emotional learning that supports all learners in meeting the school’s academic expectations. The entire school community, including parents, is involved in this initiative.

- The school arranges for ongoing opportunities to partner with families and engage parents in learning. Regular school-home communication includes translated grade level newsletters, individual and class conferences, and monthly progress reports with letters from teachers explaining the expectations to master monthly skills. The school frequently provides parents with access to teacher-led workshops targeting academic goal setting and strategies to better prepare their children for the benchmarks of their grades. Parents feel informed and express the school does an excellent job of communicating and involving them in their children’s learning.

- Interviews with the parents revealed a high level of enthusiasm and trust they have for the school leaders and teachers. They say the school respects them as valuable members of the community who are welcome to take part in the school’s improvements, like creating a school library to support reading and writing programs for their children.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Proficient |

**Findings**
Across classrooms, the Danielson Framework for Teaching guides teaching practices that reflect the school’s beliefs about learning. The levels of student engagement in challenging tasks vary across the school.

**Impact**
The inconsistent strategic planning of multiple entry points impedes some students, particularly English language learners (ELLs) and higher achieving students from demonstrating deep critical and analytical thinking skills in their work products.

**Supporting Evidence**
- Teachers and leaders discuss instructional approaches for higher-order questioning and student discussions in professional development workshops and at team levels. Reciprocal teaching and other structures for collaborative student groups drive the school’s shift from teacher to student-centered lessons.

- In one class, students worked in groups to understand the water cycle process and to identify the relationships among heat energy, evaporation and condensation of water on earth. One group of students built a mobile model of the water cycle based on information from a text that was on their reading level. The teacher challenged another group to create a brochure while ELLs could label a blank model or create a water cycle song or a play, depending on their level of English proficiency.

- Diverse students said that they consistently work in groups and that their teachers provide them with discussion stems and prompts for high-order questions. However, extensions to the lessons did not fully engage higher achieving students when they were able to finish their work earlier. Although students discussed tasks in groups or in partnerships, early finishers had limited opportunities to extend their thinking beyond the class assignment.

- Similarly, a review of student work in portfolios and on bulletin boards revealed consistency in challenging students to read and respond to informational text or to conduct research for writing. Similarly, students solved problems and worked on projects by applying real world situations and skills. Yet, some tasks simply required students to answer questions associated with assigned texts and did not challenge individual students to make deeper connections.
Additional Findings

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
Teachers and leaders ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and promote college and career readiness with emphasis on instructional shifts. Planning with emphasis on rigorous habits and critical thinking for English language learners and special education students sometimes is not evident across all grades.

Impact
Uneven planning for rigorous habits and higher order skills in academic tasks holds back some learners from demonstrating deeper levels of analytical reasoning.

Supporting Evidence
- Curriculum maps across the grades and subjects indicate that teachers strategically plan for student research in informational reading and writing units of study, and in science and social studies. For example, a grade 2 cross-curricular map includes research skills and strategies to incorporate data and findings in informational writing. Similarly, grade 4 teachers incorporate web-based research for the completion of social studies units about immigration and about North American native tribes and their dwellings.

- Teachers purposefully plan and emphasize cross-discipline connections across all grades. They integrate writing and speaking for audiences in all content area unit plans and in culminating interdisciplinary projects displayed around the school. For example, presentations and skits are part of the third grade poetry unit. Grade 1 science units incorporate informational writing about animal diversity and presentations of this research to parents.

- Most teachers plan differentiated tasks for identified students. All reading lesson plans include independent practice for students who are on, below and above grade level. Guided and partner reading are planned for ELLs. Some teachers, however, limit these tasks to a worksheet-based skill practice.

- A review of unit and lesson plans revealed that most teachers plan essential questions and tasks with higher-order thinking levels. A grade 3 math lesson plan included tiered questions and tasks for identified groups of students, including ELLs and students with disabilities. In some classrooms, however, students worked on the same tasks, thus hindering the development of higher-order skills for identified groups of students.
Findings
Assessments across classrooms align with the school's curricula. Teacher teams consistently analyze student work to provide actionable feedback and make curricular adjustments.

Impact
Feedback to students and teachers, combined with the use of common assessments, results in monitoring students' progress toward achievement of grade level goals.

Supporting Evidence
- Teachers across grades use a wide range of common assessments such as a periodic administration of the Fountas and Pinnel reading running records, rubrics and checklists for writing and math, and unit and benchmark tests in English language arts and math. Additionally, the monthly progress reports to parents include the school's grading policy.

- Students consistently receive feedback from teachers during reading conferences and via next steps in writing. For example, teacher feedback is included on a rubric for opinion writing in social studies where, in addition to highlighting the writer’s strengths, a teacher offers next steps for moving forward, such as to work on word replacement and use a higher level of vocabulary. Similarly, a student received feedback about mastering a presentation of facts and supporting details in a research report as a teacher identified a next step for improving conventions through a clear reference to a word wall during the revision process.

- Teacher teams follow a protocol for student work analysis to discuss student improvements toward grade level goals and to outline strategies they can implement to better support student learning. The second grade teacher team, for example, made recommendations for addressing the needs of students that are below, above and on grade level in their informational writing. They compiled noticings on instructional and academic challenges and recommended adjustments in lessons, such as utilizing peer reading groups, modifying graphic organizers, or utilizing technology as an entry point for identified students. Teachers said that instructional adjustments they have made based on their analysis of common assessments has improved student achievement in writing. Students improved their writing across pages and in paragraphs as evidenced by the volume of their published pieces presented by this teacher team.

- The administrative team actively monitors student progress in collaboration with teachers. For example, the school has a system for tracking current student data to measure progress toward grade level benchmarks and goals. A data specialist publishes disaggregated reading data by grade level and individual classes. The data currently indicates that 42% of students are exceeding grade standards.
Findings
The majority of teachers engage in structured professional collaborations focused on professional learning, meeting the school’s instructional goals and implementing the Common Core Learning Standards. The principal promotes distributive leadership and encourages teachers to contribute to school’s key decisions about instruction.

Impact
The work of teacher teams results in continued school-wide efforts to strengthen the capacity building and shared leadership initiatives that positively influence learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence
- Grade level horizontal teams and a vertical instructional team meet regularly to examine the school’s implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards in units of study and integration of the instructional shifts. The collaborative inquiry work has resulted in the instructional recommendation to pilot and implement a new writing program, *Strategies for Writers*, to supplement the existing literacy curriculum.

- In teams, teachers plan strategically for the integration of project-based learning, the school’s instructional focus that addresses differentiation for groups of students. Similarly, teachers and teams share resources that support the implementation of informational reading and writing in literacy units of study.

- Teachers revealed that they learn from each other through classroom visitations and added time for collaborations and professional learning. With support from leadership, they developed a shared list of individual teachers’ instructional expertise that serves as the basis for teacher-led professional development with classroom inter-visitations to improve practices. For example, reciprocal teaching, higher-order thinking questions, and integration of the arts in the curriculum are some of the instructional areas that teacher-experts share with their colleagues during collaborative structures.

- The principal empowers teachers to contribute to the school’s professional development program. Teachers shared that many of them have conducted workshops for their colleagues in such instructional areas as guided reading or addressing academic rigor and relevance. In addition, teachers in upper grades lead initiatives such as the implementation of reciprocal teaching to promote student engagement in discussions and questioning.