

# Comprehensive Needs Assessment

## Demographics

### Demographics Summary

John R. Harris Elementary is a school-wide Title 1 campus in the historic east end school located near the Houston ship channel inside the 610 loop. It opened as Harrisburg School in 1895 named after John Richardson Harris, the founder of the Harrisburg community in 1826. The school serves students from Pre-Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grades. The school enrollment for the school year 2020-2021 was 351 students and it currently stands at 344 students for the school year 2021-2022. The ethnic distribution includes 98% Hispanic and 2% African American. The special population distribution is 7% Special Education, 4% Gifted and Talented, and 63% Limited English Proficient. The school is 97% Economically Disadvantaged and 77% At-risk. The attendance rate for the school year 2020-2021 was 93.9% with a mobility rate at 10%. John R. Harris is surrounded by 4 other neighborhood elementary schools which also includes a charter school.

John R. Harris Elementary staff is composed of 16 Teachers, one Principal, and two Teacher Specialists, of which 5% are male and 95% are female and where 53% are Hispanic and 16% African-American, 10% white, and 21% Asian. The school has 3 teacher assistants, 2 female and 1 male with 1 dedicated to our Life Skills Program.

Programs offered at John R. Harris include Bilingual Education Program, English as a Second Language, and Special Education – Life Skills. The school for the last 3 years has continued to be identified as a (CEP) Community Eligibility Provision Program campus which allows students to receive free meals without requiring families to complete the free and reduced lunch application. Our curriculum is supported by the implementation of the PBIS (Positive Behavior Implementation System) and Social Emotional Learning activities in fostering safe, caring, and positive learning environment. The school has been awarded for 3 consecutive years the Family Friendly School which exemplifies the the school's commitment in building relationships with our families in achieving success for all students.

Partnerships have been formed with community organizations including the Houston Backpack Buddy Program, Valero, Eco-Services, and Navidad in El Barrio Organization in providing additional supports for our students and parents including to assist in the various needs of the school. Students will continue to participate in extracurricular activities that are designed to develop well –rounded individuals. Some of the activities include choir, soccer, cheerleading, and Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts.

### Demographics Strengths

John R. Harris has been consistent with its ethnic breakdown from the previous year. The school's diverse staff population is important to fostering inclusion and awareness around multicultural education as well as in taking culturally responsive teaching in the classroom.

### Problems of Practice Identifying Demographics Needs

**Problem of Practice 1 (Prioritized):** More than half of the school population are LEP students. Speaking English as a second language can be quite an obstacle for students. In addition, students who are not identified as limited English proficient rely heavily on Spanish as their primary language at home. **Root Cause:** Most of our parents or guardian have limited language to communicate in English or are only able to communicate in Spanish; thus, students revert to speaking Spanish in communicating with family members at home. With limited opportunities for English language and academic support at home, this influenced the improvement of students' English language proficiency.

**Problem of Practice 2 (Prioritized):** Our students transition from 3rd grade Bilingual to a 4th grade ESL classroom causes gaps in understanding. **Root Cause:** The incorporation of Sheltered Instruction strategies in all content areas was not evident, as well as an understanding of the purpose of the Bilingual classrooms, which is to build and strengthen both the

Spanish and English languages preparing students to move into a transitional classroom.

**Problem of Practice 3 (Prioritized):** While the campus has found new and successful implementations to engage students in the learning - face-to-face and virtual amidst the challenges over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic last year, student enrollment continues to decrease. **Root Cause:** The school is surrounded by 3 neighborhood schools and a charter school 2 blocks away. Furthermore, parents' uncertainty to their child's health and safety along with families mobility during the pandemic have influenced the downturn of enrollment.

**Problem of Practice 4 (Prioritized):** We are still building the culture and community that is within our school walls to extend to our parents and families. **Root Cause:** Last year with the limiting of events and meetings in person, families felt isolated from the school and not a part of the community.