



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis High School for
International Careers**

High School 529

**120 West 46 Street
New York
NY 10036**

Principal: Edward DeMeo

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Reviewer: Roy Storrs

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis High School for International Careers was one of the first schools in New York to have a specific instructional focus. The school was a performing arts school which moved to larger premises in Manhattan. The building was empty for several years until it re-opened in the early 1990's as a school for girls wishing to pursue a business career. Male students were subsequently admitted, but female students outnumber male students three to two. This represents a reduction from last year when the female student population stood at 73%.

The school serves approximately 700 students in grades 9 through 12. This number has grown by 25 % in the past three years. The school population comprises approximately 63% Hispanic, 25% Black, 4% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.1% Native American students. Of these, 75 are special education students and 39 students are English language learners. At 86.7%, attendance is higher than City schools and significantly higher than similar schools.

Running at 129% capacity, the school is severely restricted for space, such that the library and TV studio are partly used as classrooms and the auditorium is used for physical education, thus limiting their specialist use.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The hard working and determined principal is focused on improving the academic and social development of his students.
- The recently appointed assistant principals actively support the principal in his mission.
- The strong focus on improving reading and writing across the school is beginning to contribute to higher achievement in all subjects.
- The virtual enterprise program actively engages students and reflects the school's focus on international careers.
- The curriculum is enriched by the expansion of clubs and activities.
- Priority is given to improving attendance and reducing the incidence of cutting class.
- The school is managed smoothly and efficiently on a day-to-day basis.
- Most students are well behaved and attentive in class.
- Parents value the fact that the school is safe for their children.
- Students benefit from fruitful links and partnerships with a number of outside bodies.

What the school needs to improve

- Establish systems for regular internal diagnostic assessments of students in all subjects.
- Make more focused use of data to determine the performance and progress of individual students, classes and grades and use this data to set goals for improvement.
- Focus professional development on improving teachers' use of data.
- Introduce differentiated instruction in all classes which engages students and is targeted at what they need to learn next.
- Engender a more co-operative approach to planning, goal setting and monitoring the school's performance using all available data.
- Delegate greater responsibility across the faculty and establish a more collaborative culture.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school overall.

Since his appointment, the principal has succeeded in creating a calm working atmosphere in which students feel safe and secure. He is actively supported by his cabinet in his determination to improve the academic and social development of the students. The cabinet uses data successfully to place students in suitable programs, to track progress and to monitor attendance rates. Faculty does not yet consistently make periodic, diagnostic assessments across all subjects, nor does it make sufficient use of data to understand the performance of the students to set goals for improvement. The principal and cabinet undertake daily walkthroughs to check on the curriculum and the quality of instruction. Otherwise the school's systems for monitoring and reviewing goals and plans are still being developed. The curriculum is enriched by clubs, activities and fruitful business and community partnerships. The strong focus on literacy is beginning to have the desired effect of improving attainment in all subjects. Generally, students behave well and are actively engaged in some lessons. The challenge now is to introduce more differentiated instruction which holds the students' interest and is targeted at what they need to learn next. Many of the older students display considerable maturity and are a credit to the school.

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The principal and cabinet systematically collect and analyze data received from the State and regional tests which they convert to spreadsheets for the school's own use. In addition, they set tests to check the attainment of incoming freshmen. These students are tested in mathematics, enabling the school to allocate them to appropriate instructional groups according to their attainment. The same students are given a range of literacy tests, providing data on their competence in writing and reading. These recent tests identified distinct weaknesses and that, upon admission, two thirds of students were only attaining level 1 or 2. This valuable data led to the principal wisely establishing strategies to improve literacy across the school. More focused literacy instruction is occurring, especially in social studies and science. As a result, progress is beginning to improve across the curriculum. English language learners are appropriately tested to determine skill levels in Spanish and English to identify their needs. Still being developed is the collection of data on special education students and a means of comparing attainment by gender and ethnicity.

Most teachers use a variety of informal methods of assessing their students, but there are no firmly established systems for regular internal diagnostic assessment across grades and subjects. The situation is compounded by some teachers not seeing the value of detailed data analysis as a means of improving instruction. As a result, specific strengths and weaknesses of individual students and within classes are not clearly identified. The

principal makes comparisons with other local schools and with the school's own performance over time. This has shown that the number of students graduating, including English language learners and special education students, has risen consistently over the past three years. The principal recognizes the need to extend these internal comparisons within subjects and grades and to initiate the diagnostic assessment procedures mentioned above.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient overall.

For the past three years, the principal has undertaken the considerable task of writing the Comprehensive Education Plan himself, with subsequent contributions and revisions from the cabinet and school leadership team. While relieving teachers from the burden of contributing to the Comprehensive Education Plan, this solitary approach has not yet led to the plan's goals acting as the driving force for the whole school community. The principal is conscious that a more collaborative approach to planning and goal setting, involving teachers and parents, is needed to inspire a wider sense of ownership and give greater status to the plan. Beyond the cabinet, there is little evidence of regular and consistent goal setting even though department and grade teams have joint planning time. Teams do not all yet make focused use of data to determine the performance and progress of individual students, classes and grades, or consistently use this data to set goals for improvement which can be measured objectively.

The area of greatest need has been identified as improving the reading and writing skills of all students. Poor performance in these basic skills throughout the school has had a detrimental impact upon achievement in other subjects, especially social studies. The principal has rightly addressed the situation in a variety of ways, such as the ramp-up class in grade 9 and extended writing periods in grade 10. This sensible focus on improving reading and writing across the school is beginning to contribute to higher attainment in all subjects. Although there is no parent coordinator at present, the school continues to keep parents suitably informed of school activities via informative newsletters and educational workshops. Parents are informed of their children's progress through the sound reporting system. In an attempt to improve parental involvement the school has undertaken parent surveys on such topics as home/school communications. An important feature is that parents appreciate the fact that the school is safe for their children.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The principal's belief that students will work better if they are interested is reflected in the curriculum provided. The expansion of clubs and activities organized by teachers effectively supplements the mandated curriculum, adding variety and providing opportunity for students to pursue their interests. For instance, journalism club members have developed editing and design skills in publishing a well produced magazine. The virtual enterprise elective actively engages students and effectively promotes the school's focus

on international careers. Additional support for students is met through the extended day provision, imaginatively organized in conjunction with two other small high schools. The staff handbook clearly sets out the expectations for teachers who are held accountable for the progress their students make. Being a small school, faculty knows its students, who feel respected by most teachers. As part of the goal of high achievement, differentiated teaching is encouraged and being established for the special education students and English language learners. While most students are well behaved and attentive in class, many students are not actively involved in lessons. This is partly due to a lack of differentiated instruction which engages students and is targeted at what they need to learn next. Data analysis has identified a link between students' poor attendance or their cutting class, and the degree to which they are engaged in lessons. As a result, the principal has initiated a rigorous campaign to improve attendance and reduce the incidence of cutting class. As a result, attendance figures have improved and are now above the averages for similar and City schools. Sound budgetary and staffing decisions ensure instruction is adequately funded and that teacher deployment meets the needs of the students. Rising enrollment figures have created accommodation problems such as the loss of specialist accommodation. Prudent scheduling and the use of other facilities, such as a nearby gymnasium, have partially resolved matters.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The determined principal is focused on improving the academic and social development of the students. The cohesive, recently appointed assistant principals actively support the principal's mission. Faculty respects the fact that he works very hard for the school and most find him receptive to new ideas. Reflecting his ambition for higher achievement, the principal has selected a number of senior staff and faculty who meet his criteria of being multi-skilled, visionary and able to lead by example. Professional development arrangements are multi-faceted and enable individual teachers to develop their subject skills. Fortnightly, whole faculty training, organized by the administration, rightly focuses on wider school issues such as promoting higher literacy skills for all students. The administration recognizes the need to provide further professional development to improve teachers' use of data. The principal and assistant principals make numerous classroom observations, as they see improved instruction as the key to higher standards. Visits may be pre-arranged or less formal walkthroughs; all are followed by a discussion with the teachers observed. Intervisitation, whereby teachers might observe and support one another, is much less frequent.

While the administration meets weekly, a weakness of the school's functioning is that planning and the evaluation of results does not involve a wide enough spectrum of staff. The principal is trying to address this by establishing new working teams with clear operating procedures. In spite of the pressures of space and its impact upon scheduling the school runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis. One of the school's great strengths is the abundance of productive links with support services and outside bodies. Links include agencies in the arts, physical education and the commercial sector. Especially valuable are student mentoring arrangements, international contacts and the school's attempts to reach out to its feeder middle schools to strengthen transition arrangements.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is undeveloped.

The lack of rigorous systems for monitoring and revising plans through well structured meetings, especially at subject and grade levels, has led to a lack of cohesion. As a consequence, the potential impact of the school's efforts is reduced. For the past three years the principal has been the main architect of the school's Comprehensive Education Plan. While it is clearly expressed, its goals are not widely understood because it is not a collaborative effort and too few people are involved in monitoring its goals. Nevertheless, several forms of monitoring occur. Teachers are expected to assess their own performance by reviewing students' results and their response to the instruction, but this is inconsistent. For special education students and English language learners, counsellors play a key monitoring role. Considerable attention has been given to monitoring attendance trends and behaviour patterns with high involvement of the deans. Parents consider this emphasis to be important, as both attendance and the school culture have improved since the principal's appointment and have had a positive impact upon results. At an academic level, the principal and cabinet track performance of subjects and the school as a whole, providing them with an overview. Their main form of monitoring is through a daily schedule of walkthroughs with the aim of visiting up to eight classrooms each. The system is not robust enough however. The accumulation of evidence from observations does not result in summaries highlighting strengths and weaknesses in the instruction as a means of helping all teachers improve their skills.

The principal has very high aspirations for the school and works unstintingly on the students' behalf. Even with a supportive cabinet, he carries too much of the administrative load on his shoulders and does not delegate enough responsibility for monitoring to faculty and parent members of the school leadership team.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis High School for International Careers (HS 529)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 	X		
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 		X	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X	

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.	X		
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.	X		
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.		X	
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.		X	
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.	X		
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.	X		
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.		X	
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.	X		
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.		X	
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.		X	
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.	X		
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.	X		
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.	X		
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.	X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5	X		