



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Jean Nuzzi School

Middle School 109

**213-10 92 Avenue
Queens
NY 11428**

Principal: Miatheresa Pate

Dates of review: May 14 - 16, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Richard Woolf

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Jean Nuzzi is a middle school with 1450 students from grade six through grade 8. The school population comprises 49% Black, 20% Hispanic, 2% White, and 29% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 90.4%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school is nearing the end of an extensive period of reconstruction to the exterior of the building. The building's original design was as an elementary school with the resulting outcome that space for middle school students is at a premium. The school utilization currently stands at 114%. The principal is new having been in post for only seven months.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- An energetic, articulate and dynamic new principal with a clear focus on improving instruction is leading the school well.
- The school uses data effectively to highlight and set challenging goals for its special education students and English language learners.
- The principal has a very good understanding of how to use data to compare the school's performance with that of other schools.
- The school provides its students with a curriculum that meets their needs, particularly in the arts, pre-nursing and pre-engineering programs.
- The school's critical friends group for new staff is good practice and greatly assists in helping them to understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Teachers receive good assistance from the school's support service team in meeting the learning, emotional and social needs of the students.
- A more rigorous professional development program is now place to align with needs of individual teachers.
- Teachers feel more supported than previously and welcome the feedback they receive from the administration.
- Students speak highly of the respect they have for their teachers and the changes the principal is introducing.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop and implement whole school policies relating to differentiated teaching and assessment.
- Make better use of data to inform instruction particularly for ethnic and gender groups.
- Ensure there is a rigorous process in place for the setting and dissemination of whole school goals.
- Establish clear procedures for the monitoring and revision of targets for both staff and students at suitable points during the year.
- Re-engage with the parent body to develop an on going productive dialogue with a clear focus on raising student achievement.
- Develop effective partnerships with outside organizations with the sole purpose of extending the student's learning opportunities.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The Jean Nuzzi School is in a transitional period of its history. The school began this current academic year with a principal in her first year of leadership. She is dynamic, articulate and energetic with a strong focus on instructional leadership. It is two years since the school had its initial Quality Review as part of the pilot scheme. During that period, the school has seen many changes. The new principal is slowly but positively re-engaging the staff and parents to focus their energies on improving student learning. This is a challenging prospect but one which she and her assistant principals are meeting with enthusiasm.

To ensure students receive every opportunity to reach their full potential many new structures and systems are in place but now need time to be established especially in relation to the school's general education population. The school is reaching a proficient standard in its use of data, especially as it pertains to special education students and English language learners. The analysis of data in determining the performance of its ethnic or gender groups currently lacks rigor and focus. The school does not yet set either its teachers or students with challenging or invigorating targets to maximize either group's potential. With the exception of certain interest groups, overall whole goal setting is minimal. The new principal is cognizant of this and every effort is in place to ensure improving systems are in place for the start of the new academic year. For the most part student learning is satisfactory. However, many students do not receive challenging, engaging or differentiated teaching with the aim of realizing their potential. The school is devoid of technology both as an instructional or administrative tool and this is providing the principal with a monumental task to reverse the situation. Teachers receive adequate support in terms of their professional developmental needs. The introduction of the "critical friends group" for new staff is proving an invaluable method of induction to the school and teaching profession. The new principal continues to seek ways of engaging parents more fully in the education process, seeing them as an essential component of the home-school partnership. The school has yet to reach out to new external school partners in order for them to assist in raising the school's academic and social profile.

Since the previous Quality Review, the school is making some progress in the areas shown to be most in need of improvement. However, the focus for many of these areas has been lost over the last two years, as more pressing issues have overtaken the school. The school's inquiry team is in operation with a clear remit to challenge a number of English language learners whose progress is faltering. The use of data to identify the group is good. Many of the adoptive strategies to raise their levels are proving significant.

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 the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The principal is very adept in the use of data and she highlights, to the staff, its importance in raising student learning. As a result, teachers currently use data with more confidence to inform their practice. Assistant principals, who have subject and grade level responsibilities, use data in an informative way to guide their teachers to improve their instruction. This is particularly the case for special education students and English language learners. Both groups of students are benefiting from this better understanding of data manipulation to improve learning outcomes. The school has yet to develop its work in relation to recognizing the specific needs of its gender and ethnic groups. This is particularly the case for boys who are the larger of the two gender groups. The principal is meticulous in utilizing data to comparing the school against those of a similar classification. She is seeking pertinent help from such schools in her efforts to improve her own students' performance. A major issue for the school is the lack of computer technology and software teachers are able to access. Currently there are several different assessment and data retrieval systems in place. These are effective in their own right but lead to confusion when teachers attempt to make comparisons between students' relative strengths and weaknesses across a number of subjects. Training in new systems is an area of development teachers are seeking as they start to value the importance of data to drive instruction.

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 underdeveloped with proficient features.

The setting of whole school goals to accelerate student learning is an area of weakness within the school. Other priorities have been the focus for the new principal during this academic year. However, planning is underway to ensure procedures are in place so that for the next academic year staff, students and parents have a clear view of the direction the school will follow. The school has a senior leadership team and every effort is in progress to make this a more dynamic and forceful group. The principal is clear the school is to develop a more instructional focus and with less emphasis on behavioral management. Special education students and English language students receive explicit goals and this translates into improving academic outcomes. The school does not yet set its highest achieving students significant or challenging targets to realize their potential. The data shows nearly half the school performing at Level 3 on entry and with a similar number leaving at the same level. Currently the school has goals to "make a year's progress for each student". Parents are aware of this but have little understanding of what it translates to in relation to their own children. There is recognition for teachers to receive goals that are more rigorous and planning for this is currently in train between administrators and subject teachers. Due to changes of

leadership, relationships between home and school are at a low ebb. However, the current administration is making efforts to bridge this. Both teachers and parents are experiencing positive changes with better communication between home and school occurring during this academic year.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school uses the mandated curriculum in a proficient way without really challenging the students to realize their full potential. Currently each subject has their own assessment and recording policies. This is a proficient approach in terms of the individual subject areas but is proving to be a less than efficient way for the school to have an overall understanding of individual learning needs. The principal seeks to improve this by establishing an overarching assessment policy for the whole school and plans are already in place for this to take place. The school runs courses in pre-engineering and nursing which prove popular with the higher achieving students. The school offers adequate programs that include art, music drama and health. The school is very successful in a number of sporting activities.

Currently most teachers have a lack of understanding of how differentiated instruction positively influences learning. The outcome for many students is to receive lessons that lack pace and challenge. The school is woefully devoid of technology to engage students in the learning process. Teachers have limited access to the computer labs and no classroom has computers or smartboards. The school does not yet have any whole school policy on how to infuse differentiated instruction or better use of technology into class teaching. Students at this school make progress. However, the new principal’s vision of improving instructional leadership through better teaching is providing a solid foundation for further planning and learning.

In challenging circumstances, the principal’s ability to manipulate dwindling budgetary resources is good. Exceptionally difficult curriculum and staffing decisions show minimal impact on overall student learning. Teachers and students show each other a great deal of mutual respect. Students acknowledge this as an improving aspect of school life during the current school year. The school works hard to ensure attendance rates remain at an acceptable rate with evidence to show a one percent increase in comparison to this time last year.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The administration undertakes daily formal and informal observations. Teachers welcome the immediate feedback they receive to assist them in improving their instruction. Teachers now have an opportunity to be part of the decision making process in relation to the provision of professional development. They see this as a positive way

forward in improving instruction and recognizing their professional needs. Teachers meet weekly for common planning time in discrete subject areas. However, there is limited cross-curricular or grade level planning time. Teachers intervisit but usually only within their own subject areas. The introduction, this year, of the 'principal for the day' is proving not only popular among teachers but also very enlightening, as is the critical friends group for new teachers by developing their roles and responsibilities as teachers. A group of twelve teachers each has mentors and regular meetings with the principal. The principal is now considering ways of extending this format to include more staff.

Through the good work of the school's support teams incidents of poor behavior are diminishing. The teams work collegially to support the students academically, emotionally and socially. The systems in place for supporting overall good behavior are effective. Students feel safe within the environment and issues of poor behavior are decreasing this year because of administrators' willingness to listen to students' views. The school has some links with outside organizations. However, these are yet to service the best needs of the school.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for 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 underdeveloped with proficient features.

The monitoring and revision of student performance does take place but it is not systematic or rigorous. This is partly due to the lack of whole school goals for teachers to gauge their students' achievements using benchmarks and time frames. Similarly, teachers are yet to be set significantly challenging targets that align to instruction. The school makes use of Acuity as a diagnostic tool but each subject area has differing ways using periodic assessments to determine individual and whole group progress.

The school's reflective practices are currently reactive rather than proactive. Consequently, teachers place reliance upon State test outcomes for verification of their work. It is therefore difficult to revise plans with any degree of confidence if teachers are never fully aware of where individual students reach on the progress continuum. Assistant principals are working hard to track the effectiveness of the current assessment system in relation to their subject and grade level responsibilities. The outcomes show signs of fruition. However, the school does not yet tackle this area of its work with rigor. The principal is very aware of the need to ensure planning for the coming year takes into account viewpoints from the entire school community. Processes to make this happen are underway with teachers receiving clear guidelines on how to prepare for both their individual and collective responsibilities for improving instruction.

The principal has a five-year plan for the continuing development of the school. It includes the revision of many long-established practices and the re-engagement of teachers' thoughts and actions to provide students with the best educational experience the school can offer. This is an ambitious project but one which the principal and her staff demonstrate signs of achieving.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Jean Nuzzi School	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score		X			

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?			X		
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?			X		
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?			X		
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?		X			
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?		X			
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?			X		
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?		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 students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?	X				
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?		X			
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?		X			
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?		X			
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?		X			
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?		X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X			

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?			X		
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?			X		
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?		X			
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?		X			
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?			X		
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?			X		
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?			X		
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?			X		
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?			X		
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?			X		
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?			X		
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?		X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X		

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?		X			
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?		X			
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?		X			
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?		X			
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?		X			
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?		X			
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X			

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped