



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Office of Accountability
2008-2009**

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

Joseph F. Lamb School

Elementary - Middle School 206

2200 Gravesend Neck Road

Brooklyn

NY 11229

Principal: Deirdre Keyes

Dates of review: February 4 - 5, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Marianne Ferrara

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Joseph F. Lamb is an elementary-middle school with 1336 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 6% Black, 8% Hispanic, 40% White, and 46% Asian students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 95.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 100% eligibility. The principal, who is new to the school, was appointed to her position on July 25, 2008.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The school environment is warm, positive and welcoming. Parents appreciate the principal and staff being approachable and trust that the decisions made for their children are in their best interest. There are numerous opportunities for parents to participate in school-wide and classroom workshops and activities provided by both the school and community organizations. Students enjoy their school experience. They participate in varied activities both during and after school.

The administration supports the development of differentiated instructional practices to meet the needs of all students. Although teachers identify short-term goals that are measurable and aligned to school goals and create lessons that challenge all students on their own level, this does not always happen in all classes. Teachers are engaged in a program of continuing professional development to improve this aspect of their work but this is still a work in progress. Teachers are also given additional opportunities to engage in professional opportunities based on their individual needs and requests. Currently there are differences between the elementary and middle school departments so that the school does not operate as one contiguous organization. The transition from grades 5 to 6 is not seamless for all students.

The relationship between the staff and the students is strong, as evidenced by the depth of knowledge the teachers have of their students. The school effectively gathers and organizes data to identify and monitor students who are not making progress as well as special education students and English language learners. The inquiry team is successful in carefully tracking the progress of the targeted children with whom they work. Training has been provided on use of data management tools. Teachers use a wide range of assessment materials and rubrics to provide feedback to students and parents regarding the quality of their work. However, there is no consistent system in use throughout the school. While analysis of the performance of individual students and sub-groups is extensive, it does not extend to differentiation for all students and sub-groups, especially those who are higher achieving. It is also not yet common practice to include interim checkpoints and time frames in the school's plans to evaluate success and, if necessary, modify the plans.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders make effective strategic decisions that encourage students and assist them in achieving their learning goals.
- A culture of mutual respect and trust is promoted throughout the school and it has a positive impact on the social, emotional and academic growth of all students.
- The school communicates effectively with families and students to keep them well informed about learning goals and outcomes.
- The inquiry team collects and analyzes data assiduously and develops detailed individual action plans for students.
- The school provides a wide range of relevant professional development opportunities for teachers based on their individual needs and requests and the needs of the school.
- The school has developed strong partnerships with community and cultural organizations that provide purposeful opportunities for students and families.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen all teachers' professional plans to include analysis and use of data to differentiate instruction and better meet the needs of individual and subgroups of students, especially those who are capable of performing on higher levels.
- Expand the goal setting process for teachers and students to ensure that goals are established and aligned to school goals in all subject areas.
- Ensure that all school plans include interim checkpoints and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments.
- Create a continuous K-8 school with one mission and vision to provide students with a seamless transition between grade levels.

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.

Effective procedures are in place that assists administrators and the faculty in the collection, organization and analysis of data. Teachers monitor the students in their classes using a variety of tools including summative and formative assessments. It is not a school-wide practice to use data to analyze student work in all subject areas and for all subgroups of children. The school needs to use data effectively to identify trends and patterns and inform instructional practices for the higher achieving students.

The progress and performance of all at-risk subgroups of students are carefully monitored. Ongoing assessments of these students provide a clear picture of their strengths and areas of improvement. The staff has a thorough knowledge of the needs of the students and meets regularly to determine the services that are most appropriate for these students. Specialized teams of teachers work with special education, English language learners and students in need of academic intervention services resulting in a positive impact on learning. The inquiry team members support classroom teachers by implementing specific strategies for targeted students. These practices are not yet formalized for higher achieving students.

The school is very effective in communicating learning outcomes with parents and students. There are opportunities for a parent to meet or speak with teachers to discuss their child's learning, as well as review their children's work and portfolios. Parents are aware of their children's goals, the progress toward meeting the goals and most willingly partner with the school to ensure that the goals are achieved. It is the school policy that parents are accountable for their children's attendance. The administration links attendance to high student outcomes. The school monitors and addresses patterns of absences and this has contributed to the high level of attendance throughout the school.

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.

The school encourages students to be involved in their own goal setting. The teachers' improved access to assessment data through ARIS and Acuity has increased their understanding of the value of this detailed data and allows them to guide their students in determining their individual goals. Children and parents discuss these goals and collaborate with the classroom teachers to ensure that they are achievable.

The school has made progress in developing goals in a few subject areas but has not yet established a consistent pattern throughout the school. Not all teachers set interim goals for all grade levels and subgroups of children they teach. Those teachers who are strongest in this practice generally demonstrate higher levels of focus and challenge in their lessons since they account for different levels of understanding. This practice is not, however, consistent throughout the school. Teachers have set goals for and with their students, but there is a greater focus on long-term or annual performance measures than on interim goals.

The school goals identified in the Comprehensive Educational Plan are directly aligned with the outcomes for the Progress Report. Although the Comprehensive Education Plan is a working document, there is not a common understanding of the goals among the members of the school community, as evidenced by an inconsistent alignment of school, classroom and student goals.

Teachers use an effective range of assessment systems and rubrics to discuss their students' performance and progress. The diversity of student work displayed on the bulletin boards in the corridors reflects the good quality of instruction being delivered in classrooms. Comments and rubrics are used well to provide constructive feedback for students continued improvement. Conferencing with students is a practice teachers use to understand the dynamics of student learning.

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.

School leaders strategically use data effectively to make appropriate changes for improved learning. The school has a well-developed curriculum. Curriculum maps, aligned with the New York State Standards, are available across all content areas and grade levels. There are various good quality opportunities for students based on their interests. The school suggestion box enables students to request specific books, materials, events or activities of interest to them. It is proving to be a good means of direct communication between the principal and the students. All areas of the arts are well developed throughout the elementary and middle school. Students have musical, visual, movement and theatre experiences aligned with Blueprint for the Arts. Middle school students are preparing art portfolios as part of the application process for specialized high schools. Students are motivated to become partners in their own learning.

The trends and patterns identified through data analysis and, specifically, the Progress Report show that students at Level 3 and 4 are not making sufficient progress in English language arts and math. This is a major area of focus for the school. Teachers are encouraged to request materials and resources for lesson planning and delivery that will enhance the learning opportunities for their students. Teaching staff in several classrooms are beginning to make good use of various enrichment programs, including Renzulli. However, the implementation of differentiated instruction that ensures all students the opportunities to engage and receive challenging assignments is not consistent throughout all grade levels and in all subject areas and does not impact all students performing at higher levels.

The Learning Environment Survey indicates that there is a high level of mutual respect and trust among all constituents and this is supported by reviewed evidence. Teachers, parents and students work collaboratively for the academic and social good of the students and the school community to reinforce a strong sense of cooperation and commitment to the school. Students can ask for additional help and guidance for both instructional and non-school related issues. Teachers work in teams to address the needs of the students. Parents support school policies and participate in school activities.

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.

The administration uses various sources of data such as classroom observations, snapshots, learning walks, analysis of student data and teacher requests to inform professional development decisions. New teachers have the services of a mentor and have the opportunity to work with staff developers. All teachers are given the opportunity to work with consultants, attend workshops and conferences, observe demonstration lessons and engage in intervisitations with their colleagues to improve and strengthen the quality of their classroom practices. There is extensive professional development in Writing Fundamentals, which is a school-wide initiative, and there is evidence of strong teacher training in this area throughout the school. However, the same level of training is not provided in other core subject areas.

The inquiry team uses sources of data assessment to create detailed learning profiles and individual action plans for targeted students. Team members discuss student needs and implement strategies to improve student outcomes. There is articulation between the team members and classroom teachers to ensure identified skills are being reinforced through daily lessons. Their practice of monitoring and revising strategies based on data and observations enables them to provide each targeted child with skills and strategies to succeed to their next level of learning.

The school has strong relationships with community and business organizations. These outside agencies provide excellent support for the students and parents with non-academic related topics as well as offering learning experiences that enrich the curriculum. The Brooklyn Chinese American Organization provides translators during conferences enabling the parents of English language learners to better participate in their children's education and school experiences.

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.

The administration and staff members work collaboratively to identify strengths and areas for improvement in the curriculum and instruction and develop plans to enable students to make progress. Teachers are continuing to develop their expertise in using assessment results to inform instruction. However, it is not yet common practice to set targets with timelines to address students' needs in all core subjects. An effective

practice for tracking, revision of instructional practices and ongoing assessments to make adjustments has not yet been implemented. The school's ability to gauge its needs and determine progress over time is inhibited by not having specific goals with measurable objectives for all students.

The Comprehensive Educational Plan is based on information from the Progress Report and the Learning Environment Survey. The goals are clearly aligned to improving student learning outcomes and increasing opportunities for parental participation. Staff members acknowledge and appreciate the collaborative process in which the plan was written.

The new principal has quickly established herself as an energetic and popular leader and manager with a clear understanding of the school's strengths and challenges. There is a recognized culture of commitment to the children and respect for each member of the school community. The community also shares an understanding that goal setting has a positive impact on providing clear expectations for everyone. The administration recognizes that the school must continue work in this area to support differentiated instruction for all students in all grade levels. They also agree there is little articulation between the teachers in the lower and upper schools. Presently, there is not a continuous elementary-middle school experience with a seamless transition between grade levels for the students.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Joseph F. Lamb School Public School 206	△	➤	✓	+
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, DYQ, 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