



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

Jordan L. Mott Middle School

Middle-School 022

270 East 167th Street

Bronx

NY 10456

Principal: Linda Rosenbury

Dates of review: March 5-6, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Sheryl L. Watkins

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Jordan L. Mott is a middle school with 640 students from grade 5 through grade 8. The school population comprises 20% Black, 77% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 36% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007-2008 was 92.3%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 82% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

“I know my child is safe,” stated one parent when asked about the change in the school since the new principal took over. “Communication is so much better,” stated another. The consensus of opinions celebrate the respectful and professional tone that has pervaded the school since the summer. Teachers agree. “The instructional initiatives along with her positive attitude and deeper involvement have made this a different place.” Mutual trust and respect is the foundation upon which the school is building classrooms where more and more evidence of what students have learned is observable.

Celebrating the success of their removal from the SURR list this year, the school is energized in their mission of being a “community where caring people work together to improve constantly as learners.” It is apparent that this holds true for both the students and the staff. Professional learning is the basis for a strong program of supporting teacher growth and development, which in turn is influencing student achievement by motivating both staff and students. Comprised of eight academies that serve small groups of students, the individual attention that students receive is paramount in supporting academic growth and social development. Four academies provide instruction in languages other than English including Spanish and French. “Every child will pass” is consistently echoed in conversations across the school. A strong academic intervention program throughout the school day and varied Saturday Academies provide evidence of the schools’ work to meet this goal. However, there is no apparent system to routinely measure the progress of individual student progress.

The schools high attendance rate, as well as the after school programs are the direct consequence of the partnerships they have developed with outside agencies and programs. These organizations enrich students’ exposure and participation of arts and recreation programs as well as tutoring and social development. Ever vigilant of what will improve student success, the school has fully implemented a first period breakfast program where students pick up their meal in their first period class. This has resulted in a reduction of lateness, and assures that students are ready and able to actively participate in their learning.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and her administration have a clear instructional vision for the future of the school and have begun to implement change
- Adults in the school are supported by each other and the school leadership in their learning.
- The school has developed collaborative teams in all core subject areas that engage in collaborative inquiry.
- The school has developed a professional development program which enhances professional learning.
- School leaders involve staff and parents in school improvement planning, so all stakeholders have a clear idea of the school's priority goals for improvement.
- Affiliations with community based organizations have provided additional supports to student and their families and assist in bolstering student successes.

What the school needs to improve

- Implement school wide protocols that ensure that measurable long and short term goals are implemented and reviewed at specific time frames throughout the year.
- Deepen the use of the new assessment tools by expanding the application of conferencing with students to drive greater success.
- Formalize and deepen the progress of supporting pedagogical growth by developing long and short term goals with teachers.
- Further develop teachers' skills in using data continuously to support goal setting and monitor student progress.

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.

The faculty has embraced and embedded the use of data to support student achievement. While City and State formalized assessments serve as a baseline for determining students' ability levels, teachers are beginning to connect the results from formative and predictive assessments to standardized tests. This has resulted in teachers grouping students according to levels for instruction. Data that is both quantitative and qualitative add to teachers' ability to understand the individual needs of students. Teachers speak about how they are now using these tools to inform classroom practices and small group instruction. While this assists teachers with informed planning for student success, there are not yet school wide protocols that will support teachers in setting short- and long-term goals for and with students. Currently the school is unable to look more closely at the needs and learning outcomes of more subgroups of students. The school consistently administers formative assessment measures. Nonetheless, it does not systematically use the data provided by these measures to review individual student goals to assure they are based in sound data analysis. In addition, the use of rubrics is sporadic, and where they are used, there is little evidence of their consistent application to work that students have produced. The unique needs of the school's large number of English language learners have been supported by the introduction of a Saturday Academy through "Title 111 funds" where students are provided with additional instruction towards meeting the requirements of the New York State English as a Second Language Test. In addition, these students participate in the English language learners predictive assessments. Teachers use the results of these assessments throughout the school day and during the 37 1/2 minutes of extended day to provide small group instruction and promote student progress. This is not consistent for all subgroups of students. Having been recently informed of their removal from the SURR list for deficits in mathematics achievement, the school has analyzed the conditions of learning that lead to this success and have embedded the successful practices and strategies implemented across all programs. They have hired an outside consultant to work with the mathematics team twice a week, and have increased the frequency of math instruction from eight to ten periods a week for all students.

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.

Teachers report that school leaders have diligently supported them in understanding the use of data to drive instruction across the school. Data analysis and synthesis takes

place at the twice-weekly collaborative meetings in vertical academies and subject areas. This has resulted in teachers having a deeper understanding of reading and comprehension levels of their students. The school recently added the Teacher's College Assessments in English Language Arts to their formative assessment toolbox. In addition, they have added constructive response questions to both the English language arts and math predictive assessments. The result of these assessments has allowed teachers to have a clearer picture of individual students' strengths and weaknesses related to the metacognitive processes of problem solving. What is not apparent is the use of the data derived from these measures to set long- and short-term goals for individual students, nor have timeframes for monitoring progress been shortened from the initial four month review period. Teachers have set goals for students to accomplish and students have set individual goals for themselves in most subject areas. There is no alignment between the two. The school does not expand the analysis of this information, share it with students, and collaboratively develop goals that are based on student need. In addition, there is limited use of conferencing with students. The school has implemented a mid-marking period warning system whereby students, teachers and whenever possible, a family member create plans to prevent academic failure for the marking period. The school does not share interim reports of student successes with parents. In addition, six-week cycles of Saturday Academies prepare students for New York State and City exams.

Parent involvement has increased this year because of the principal's efforts to engage parents in the school. The parent coordinator has led workshops and discussions for parents on topic such as Developing Respect for and with Children, Preventing and Managing Problem Behaviors and Using Television Wisely. Additional workshops in computer usage and English as a second language for parents are in the planning stages. In addition to providing space for a "Parent's Room" within the building, the principal has included a team of parents in writing the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan as well as in the writing of the application for the Middle School Improvement grant. Parents report that their "access to the school, teachers and principal makes them feel like they are a part of a team in their child's education." However, they do not yet conference regularly with families to support plans in reaching both student and school-wide goals.

Parent meetings are conducted with Spanish as the primary language. Letters, flyers and voicemail messages are translated into the language of the families. They especially appreciate the Phone Messenger system that calls their home if their child has been recorded as absent for the day. All of these supports are bolstering the sustained attendance rate that is above the 90% standard. The school recognizes the need to have greater parent involvement from other members of the school's parent community.

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.

The school's interdisciplinary curriculum is effectively embedded across all academies, with each program adding its own uniqueness to instruction. Units of study are based in the themes of empowerment, motivation, connections and communication. The arts are an important component of the culminating activities of these units. School wide assemblies allow for the presentation of work produced. For example, one academy

wrote, produced and edited a 10 minute video about Motivation in the Classroom. Fifth Graders are provided with music instruction and the school wide marching band participates yearly in the New Rochelle Thanksgiving Day Parade, which celebrates the accomplishments of the fifth grade music curriculum and extends experiences in the arts for those who participate in the band.

Available finances are used to purchase additional technology equipment. For example, each mathematics classroom now has a Smartboard and each academy has a laptop cart. Funding has been earmarked for a consultant from Teaching Matters to assist staff in using technology in classrooms. "New stuff arrives every day. For the first time ever, each student has practice books and we have teachers' copies," remarked two teachers. Currently, a well defined grant proposal has been submitted to the Campaign for Middle School Success that may provide the school with an additional \$250,000 which will set structures and plans in place for improving outcomes for middle school students. Despite some disappointing responses in the last Learning Environment Survey, teachers are quick to clarify the quick change in the culture and climate of the school. The principal now "includes us, makes time for us, and is approachable and responsive to us." "Everything is very supportive here," states another teacher, "which leads me to wanting to improve my practice and stay at this school" and "decisions are collaborative."

Some evidence of differentiation of instruction was observed during classroom visits. The school does not yet consistently and frequently use the results from formative assessments to refine the process used to provide this differentiation. They recognize that building knowledge related to implementing more differentiation is essential for improvement and have begun the study of *Understanding by Design* in order to advance more sound practices. They plan to engage more teachers in the development process of this training, and build capacity to share learning between colleagues in order to support efforts to make strategic decisions related to teaching and learning.

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 principal has developed a strong team with two assistant principals to support her in building a culture of professional collaboration that values and champions teacher development. Currently a support program for new teachers is in place that builds critical friends and connections to colleagues both within and outside of the academy structure. The administration has developed detailed feedback forms for observing teaching that has resulted in teachers looking more closely at their own practice. Formal observations align to feedback provided from informal visits, and observation reports recognize improvements and provide suggestions for further development. Weekly collaborative meeting discussions now demonstrate an apparent shift from "what to teach" to "how to teach," but they do not have detailed individual teachers' goals for their own pedagogical development. In addition, the principal has implemented a "Collaborative Meeting" protocol that assures the participation of all members of the group and the validation of their contribution. After-school professional development for staff promotes the understanding and application of data provided by ARIS, Acuity and Performance Series. Attendance by staff from all of the school's small academies promotes alignment of teaching and learning across the unique foci of the small school programs.

The Inquiry Team focused on seventh grade mathematics academic vocabulary during the 2007-2008 school year. This contributed to the school's removal from the SURR list. The school assigns two professional activity periods a week to collaborative inquiry that provides teachers with the opportunity to discuss their practice, look at student work and data, and share resources. This has led to deepening studies of strategies to support content-based vocabulary into instruction in additional content areas.

Strong partnerships with several community-based organizations support students and their families. The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) provides incentives such as parties and prizes to students for improved and sustained attendance. This has sustained above average daily attendance. The Learning through an Expanded Arts Program (LEAP) provides after school activities based in the Arts that add creative content based activities to learning experiences. SCAN (Supportive Children's Advocacy Network) provides students with one hour of after school academic tutoring followed by one hour of recreational activities. A 21st Century Out-of-school Time Grant supports the marching band. The principal has added key members of these organizations to her weekly cabinet, providing opportunities to discuss individual students and assure that they are enriching students' learning. An on site health clinic provides a full time physician to meet the medical needs of the student body.

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 principal has a clear vision for what she wants to accomplish this year and has shared it with all members of the school community. Since September, she has built on existing systems and structures and moved forward to focus on improving instruction and achievement as stated in the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan. She has laid a solid foundation of communication that encourages staff to take ownership of their effectiveness related to student progress and develops willingness to discuss their practices. Teachers appreciate the time provided for collaboration with their colleagues and the increasing support from administration while deepening their knowledge about and use of data to inform instruction. There is recognition that more work needs to be done in the area of academic rigor, questioning techniques and academic vocabulary to increase achievement, as well as setting goals to monitor student progress, all of which are currently begin addressed.

In order to promote the urgency of implementing more rigorous instructional practices, the school has contracted for the return of an outside consultant to move the work grounded in *Understanding by Design*. Lead teachers, along with this consultant are committed to building curriculum and capacity and deepening professional development. To support the increasing social and emotional needs of the teenagers in the school, the school has developed "Project Intensive Care," specifically targeting the students most at risk. The principal is committed to moving the school forward with three key components in the forefront of her work: Engagement, Equity and Evidence.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|----------|---|
| School name: Jordan L. Mott Middle School | △ | ➤ | ✓ | + |
| 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> | Δ | ➤ | ✓ | + | | | |
| 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> | Δ | ➤ | ✓ | + | | | |
| 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> | Δ | ➤ | ✓ | + | | | |
| 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 | | | | | | | |
| Δ | Underdeveloped | ➤ | Underdeveloped with Proficient Features | ✓ | Proficient | + | Well Developed |