



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Accountability and Achievement Resources
2009-2010**

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

The John J. Pershing School

Junior High School 220

**4812 9th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11220**

Principal: Loretta Witek

Dates of review: April 12 – 13th, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Karina Costantino

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The John J. Pershing School is an intermediate school with 1,398 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 21% Black, 38% Hispanic, 5.3% White, and 55% Asian students. The student body includes 48% English language learners and 7.1% special education students. Boys account for 73% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 95%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The principal's dynamic leadership and enthusiasm effectively drives organizational change with the implementation of programs such as the Teacher's College Literacy Program, Expediting Comprehension for English Language Learners (ExC-CELL), RIGOR for English language learners and Achieve 3000 for special needs students in all three academies. As a result, these programs provide students with rigorous curricula enabling them to improve their academic outcomes and reach their June goals. Although the school has a strong visual arts and drama program, there is currently no music program during the school day to provide for a well rounded arts program. Parents feel the school is a safe nurturing environment for their children and community agencies provide parents with additional support in the areas of health and welfare. This enables them to become partners in their child's education to support the emotional and social growth of their children. Students are happy to attend school and express that teachers are very supportive of their needs.

Professional development is very strong in the building and the Teacher's College Literacy model sets the groundwork for teacher teams across all grades and in all content areas, providing them with weekly support. Teacher teams share their findings and discussions on target students by issuing weekly reports that they distribute to all teachers servicing these students. This allows them continuity of instruction in the content area using similar literacy strategies throughout the school. In addition, teachers are provided opportunities to build leadership capacity. An example of this is the use of an F-status English as a second language teacher to support teachers across content areas in their use of ExC-CELL for English language learners, which strengthens content vocabulary and brings students academic success.

Teachers are highly effective at using a variety of data and four times a year, they are provided with Data Repository Sheets. This provides them with current data on their students, focusing on students that do not show progress or may drop in any area. In collaboration with the principal, and her administrative team, teachers adjust their curriculum and teaching strategies where the data indicates, which moves students closer to their desired goals. All classroom teachers distribute exit passes at the end of each lesson, providing teachers with what the student masters and what continues to be a challenge. Since this is done daily, teachers are able to differentiate the next day, based on current student need. Although all teachers differentiate instruction, there is no evidence of differentiating questioning during the mini lesson so not all subgroups participate.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Leaders make informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support improvements in learning.
 - The Teacher's College literacy program is in use in all three academies and they use the same rubric for ELA, which builds consistency in focus throughout the building, challenges students and provides the foundation to use teacher teams as an engine for instructional improvement. The introduction of Expediting Comprehension for English Language Learners program (ExC-CELL) effectively trains all teachers in each academy to address the instructional design for English language learners. Using this in conjunction with RIGOR, the academic program in Welcome Classes for newly arrived immigrants, allows teachers to effectively differentiate instruction which improves comprehension, using a strong tiered vocabulary component.
 - The principal indicates that every teacher in the building is a reading teacher and to this end, every teacher focuses on literacy as it relates to content, holding themselves accountable for their student's progress towards attaining the school's instructional goals.
- Regularly using a wide range of data, leaders and faculty have an ongoing understanding of the progress of individual students by group and by subject, and this practice informs instruction.
 - The school realizes that each periodic assessment is limited in its ability to determine students' strengths and areas in need of improvement. Thus teachers administer a wide range of summative and formative assessments such as State exams, customized tests and teacher-made tests. During department and grade meetings, the results of the various assessments are cross-referenced by all teachers to obtain an accurate profile of individuals' and groups of students' next learning steps.
 - The data specialist, in conjunction with the assistant principals, develops and distributes a Data Repository Sheet to each teacher four times a year. This provides actionable feedback to staff to highlight students who are slipping in any content area, enabling teachers to adapt appropriate strategies to address their individual needs and improve academic outcomes.
- Individuals and groups of students identified with particular needs benefit from targeted, caring support according to their needs and so achieve success.
 - Teacher teams fill out progress reports on students they target at the end of each of their meetings. They then share these reports with the administration and content area teachers. This allows for a sharing of next steps for instruction and leverage changes in classroom practice to enable students to reach their learning goals.
 - All classroom teachers use exit passes in every content area for each student at the end of every class. This enables the teacher to identify what

learning outcomes the student understands and what the student needs to readdress as a next step. This provides all content area teachers with daily identification of student progress, particularly sub-groups

- The school's system and partnerships are highly supportive of students and their families promoting personal growth and development and thereby improving student academic outcomes.
 - The school enjoys an on-site dental clinic, as well as an on site medical clinic which is an extension of Maimonides Hospital and provides services to students and their families, resulting in improved social and emotional growth.
 - Through a grant obtained from Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE), teachers are provided professional development to assist them in developing before and afterschool courses which focus on healthy living for students and their families.
- Teachers collaborate frequently to examine student work, plan together and visit each other's classrooms to share ideas and best practice, resulting in improving student outcomes.
 - The Teacher's College literacy model sets the groundwork for teacher teams across the grades and in all the content areas. These teams are highly focused and meet weekly with the agendas set from the prior meeting. The teams look at the validity of the data, post minutes on the ARIS community for the school to review and discuss next steps for each student they discuss. As a result, adjustments are made to the curriculum and instruction which improves overall student success for all subgroups, particularly English language learners.
 - After a careful review of the data, a decision was made by staff to give English language learners, specifically students in the Bilingual Chinese class, the opportunity to participate in the integrated algebra class. This example of distributive leadership exists across content areas validating the importance of teacher teams in the building.
- The principal and cabinet provide professional development to support teachers to differentiate lessons that target school wide and individual teacher goals.
 - Teachers benefit from a wide range of professional development as a result of Teacher's College and ExC-ELL in all grades and in all content areas, which clearly aligns with school goals and individual teacher goals. As a result, teachers enjoy many opportunities to come together during the school year to share best practice and learn from each other.
 - An F-status English as a second language teacher provides continual support to teachers in all content areas using the Expediting Comprehension for English Language Learners (ExC-ELL), which focuses on content vocabulary resulting in English language learners improving overall performance in comprehension school wide.
- The cabinet works cohesively to review and adjust data systems to ensure the data is effectively used to support student learning.

- The cabinet, which consists of the principal, assistant principals, data specialist, coaches, special education and English as a second language teachers review all Data Repository Sheets, once a week in an effort to evaluate the validity of the assessments in all content areas. As a result of this the cabinet makes adjustments as needed to differentiate instruction.
- The principal and assistant principals conduct walkthroughs on a daily basis to see the coherence of the school wide rubric in English language arts as it applies to all content areas. They provide them with the opportunity to monitor the implementation of professional development strategies and practice.

What the school needs to improve

- Review and revise additional ways to outreach parents in order to make them effective partners in their child's education to improve student performance.
 - In order to increase parent involvement in discussing student goals, the school is reviewing additional opportunities for more parents to attend ARIS workshops offered by the parent coordinator. Because of low attendance in these kinds of activities, the school has not been able to collaborate with parents to the extent that they might around increasing student learning.
 - Currently not every student has opportunities to reflect on their learning or discuss their learning with their parent in a structured way. Because this practice is not embedded throughout the school, parent involvement in student learning is uneven.
- Expand opportunities for students to engage in music and art so that all students are exposed to a rich, balanced curriculum.
 - Currently, students participate in a strong art and drama program during the school day, but they do not have a music program during the school day. Because of the absence of music, students have fewer opportunities to engage in multiple arts.
- Expand differentiation of instruction in the classroom to include questioning during the mini lesson to engage all students in the class.
 - Currently there is differentiation of instruction taking place in every classroom during activities, but there is little evidence of differentiation of questioning during the mini lesson, which would provide to higher levels of student engagement during this portion of the lesson.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: The John J. Pershing School	Δ	▶	✓	+
Overall QR Score				X
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	Δ	▶	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			X	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				X
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X	
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	Δ	▶	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?				X
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?				X
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?				X
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?				X			
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?				X			
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?				X			
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X			
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.							
<i>To what extent does the school..</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?				X			
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				X			
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?				X			
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals 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 progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school..</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?				X			
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?				X			
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?				X			
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X			
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed