

Quality Review Report

2009-2010

James Madison High School

High School 425

**3787 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11229**

Principal: Joseph Gogliormella

Dates of review: March 23 - 25, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Nancy Gannon

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

James Madison High School is a high school with 3290 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 23% Black, 16% Hispanic, 43% White, and 18% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 90.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Madison High School is a large comprehensive high school that prides itself on its history, its diversity, and its cohesive nature. Although it is divided into houses with different themes and different offerings, administrators often refer to “One Madison” as an indication of the consistency throughout the building. Students have a wide array of classes, including honors and advanced placement courses, art, music, and drama, and an enormous choice in after school activities. The school has created a strong, uniform pedagogy that offers differentiation so that students have multiple pathways to achieve their objectives. Teachers regularly use current data to set goals for students and to target instruction to move students at every level. However, because only some teachers use online grade books, there is an uneven practice of sharing data around student progress with families. Administrators and department teacher teams meet regularly to analyze data and strategically create, monitor, and refine goals based on their progress. Because they have a firm understanding of learning trends, they have effectively set goals that have strong results on student learning. The school’s organization into departments and houses though, does not consistently create student cohorts all taught by the same team of teachers. This limits teachers’ opportunities to meet and discuss a shared group of students across a grade.

The school has created an exceptional model of teacher inquiry that has become a driving force of the institution, deeply embedded in the school. Every teacher is on at least one team investigating a question that has direct impact on teaching and learning within their department, and thus, teachers are eager to engage in this work. The result of these data-savvy teams is an ongoing dialogue about improving practice, a dialogue that has clear and measurable positive impact on student learning, including gains in graduation rate and gains in test scores, particularly around the students in the lowest third. Professional development happens in a variety of ways, but much of it takes place within these inquiry teams and so directly aligns with school goals and with teacher need. Teams share their learning within the department, which allows department leaders to monitor and support the work of teacher teams, ensuring that the work they do remains aligned with the school’s goals. The school looks closely at its English language learners, but other subgroups are not tracked at the leadership or teacher team level.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Teacher teams exemplify how an inquiry approach builds a culture of learning that constantly impacts classroom practice and improves student outcomes.
 - One of the many inquiry teams was working on increasing the number of students scoring above a 75 on the English Regents. Teachers identified student hurdles, such as making explicit connections between literary elements and writing and worked with other faculty to eliminate those hurdles. All but one of their target populations passed the test with a score of 75 or higher.
 - Administrators share leadership of inquiry teams with teachers. Four new teachers, share a team's leadership, and work together to strategize around school wide practices to improve outcomes for special education students. By feeling empowered to affect change, teachers at the school consistently lead conversations on how to increase student success.
- This year's effective changes in professional development focus teachers on classroom practice, which has lead to accelerated learning.
 - The school's dedication of more time to collaborative inquiry allows teachers to meet in teams and continue their investigations, all of which are connected to the school's overarching goals. Teams work on delving into relevant questions around curriculum and pedagogy, and directly link conversations to student learning. By giving teachers time and freedom to work on these issues, the school has developed a true purposeful learning community, resulting in improvements in student learning across the school.
 - Intervisitations, sharing best practices, and attending professional developments outside the school enhance teachers' learning well and in varied ways. These multiple opportunities allow for differentiated learning, and have affected student progress positively including improved outcomes on the United States history and English Regents.
- Teachers use strong instructional strategies that are consistent across classrooms and that reflect the school's belief that differentiation improves student outcomes.
 - The school has clear expectations around classroom practice, and those expectations are visible in classes across the school. For example, classes consistently display an aim, use a mini-lesson, and provide time for students to collaborate with each other in strategically designed groups. By making purposeful decisions around pedagogy, the school has seen consistent upward trends in achievement this year.
 - Students, including honors classes, general education classes, and special education classes, use heterogeneous groupings, tiered activities, targeted small groups, and other strategies to differentiate instruction based on data. This instructional strategy reflects the school's commitment to data-informed practice and allows students to enter the

work and move toward achieving a common standard despite the fact that they came in at different levels. The result is that students on every level engage and progress in their class work.

- The collaborative and dedicated leadership team consistently meets to evaluate and revise practice based on data showing progress, which has improved student outcomes.
 - Course sequence and curriculum have changed based on the school's analysis of data. Prior programming had students starting with a global studies course, resulting in a 67% pass rate on the Regents. Currently, the school is piloting programming students initially into the United States history course. Preliminary results show an 80% pass rate. This progress is supported by ongoing changes in curriculum to help students as they move through the coursework.
 - The school has also shifted the way they make decisions. Currently, many organizational, instructional, and curricular decisions, including the pilot history program, come from teacher teams as a result of their inquiry work. In this way, people closest to the students make decisions and the school builds leadership skills throughout the school.
- School leaders analyze a wide range of data to gain a deep understanding of learning trends, and this analysis has led to improved academic opportunities for students.
 - The school's data specialist expertly supports teachers and the cabinet in analyzing data on a variety of levels. The analysis revealed that the English Regents is one of the biggest struggles for students. This then led to an inquiry team developing a goal to help students score a 75 or above on English Regents. By using data successfully, the school focuses inquiry work on the most pressing areas and accelerates learning.
 - Teachers and administrators have given special attention to data around English language learners, one of their most relevant subgroups. By using Acuity's item analysis, teachers have adjusted instruction to focus on specific writing issues across the curriculum leading to the achievement of this group of students.
- Teachers use data to set goals for individual students throughout the school year, which has led to targeted instruction that accelerates student learning.
 - The school uses the Ramp Up program with all ninth graders who enter below grade level in reading. After a diagnostic test, students have clear goals and differentiated work to help them reach their targets. Students can explain why their work relates to their goal. This targeted work has led to significant achievement, with many students moving multiple grade levels in one year.
 - In a history class with both higher and lower achievers, the teacher set goals for students and the class, so that every student felt pushed. These differentiated goals in a heterogeneous class resulted in gains for all the

students, including a strong exam pass rate by both lower and higher students.

- The school has built structures to consistently evaluate progress in teacher development and in leadership.
 - Inquiry teams regularly report their work to departments, who in turn share that progress at leadership meetings. By consistently monitoring inquiry teams, the school has made them a key lever for school improvement, and learning has accelerated as a result. For example, the ongoing monitoring of the inquiry team around a pilot Global Studies class has honed the team's strategies and resulted in significant gains in tests scores. In addition, because the teams have significant autonomy in their learning, they have become a vehicle for school leadership and several school leaders rose up through their work on inquiry teams.

What the school needs to improve

- Build on existing practices and extend the use of the unified grade book tool for organizing data to effectively share progress information with students and families by ensuring equality of access and maximum clarity.
 - Currently, teachers effectively use periodic and classroom data to track student progress. Teachers give regular feedback and some share information with an online grade book accessible to families from any computer. Many parents and students have said the online data is helpful for tracking achievements. The dissemination of information for students' progress is uneven and not all have an equal opportunity to monitor their progress on a daily basis.
- Align resources to better ensure that teachers share information about cohorts of students to improve academic outcomes and social supports.
 - Currently, the school has carefully aligned curriculum and pedagogy throughout the school so that classrooms reflect "One Madison." Teachers are most commonly teamed departmentally. The school is organized in themed houses, and teachers meet within those houses, but they do not always share a group of students. This limits opportunity of teachers working together to voice and compare concerns and build strategies for specific students across grades.
- Broaden the investigation and analysis of key subgroups to support strong learning outcomes across all student populations.
 - The school invests in analyzing data but not for key subgroups beyond English language learners. Teams have not investigated disparities in other subgroups and this hampers the identification of trends and specific needs of those subgroups including Black and Hispanic students.
 - Similarly, teachers work closely with classroom data to shape their curriculum and instructional practices but have not disaggregated for most subgroups. Although they regularly differentiate for students at different levels, by not analyzing data about subgroups of students, they cannot uncover issues that might be affecting those groups.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: James Madison High 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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed