

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

Joseph C. Lanzetta School

Elementary- Middle School 96

**215 East 120 Street
New York
NY 10035**

Principal: Noel Rios

Dates of review: April 19- 20, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Luz T. Cortazzo

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Joseph C. Lanzetta School is an elementary-middle school with 624 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 26% Black, 72% Hispanic, and 2% White. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 91.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Joseph C Lanzetta has recently introduced the program, *Respect for All Curriculum and Getting Along*, and this has contributed to the positive climate in the classrooms resulting in improved student attendance and a decrease in suspensions. The new principal and his instructional cabinet support a capable faculty in moving the school forward with a unified vision. The principal's strategic use of the budget enables teachers to collaborate on teacher teams each week. As such, they continually learn from each other and collectively support their own pedagogic growth. This strategic use of the budget has led to the alignment of instructional goals with the school's resources for instructional opportunities beyond the school day. Thus, struggling students participate in after school programs with an emphasis on accelerating their learning. In addition, higher achieving students engage in enrichment activities. The varied support enables students to meet specific learning goals.

School-wide, clearly defined classroom routines are evident throughout the school and contribute to safe and positive learning environments that result in greater student productivity. The school's curriculum is aligned to the State standards but the workshop model lacks consistent differentiation of instruction in the upper grades. The administration and faculty gather and analyze Acuity results, review student work and summative data, to understand performance and progress. This utilization of data informs decisions and enables the school to make adjustments. However, this analysis is not yet a rigorous school-wide practice, limiting the school's ability to effectively set short-term goals and benchmarks from which to make adjustments to enable increased progress. Consequently, higher achieving students do not always receive suitable challenges. Additionally, although the school faculty regularly evaluates instructional practices in response to learning needs, these practices do not always provide differentiated access into the curriculum.

Outside organizations and school staff integrate focused collaborations throughout the day. The school's partnerships with families and outside organizations have had a positive impact on students' social, emotional and academic development. The school communicates high expectations via progress reports, a monthly newsletter, and the school's monthly calendar as well as parent involvement opportunities resulting in active parent participation in the formulation of the Comprehensive Educational Plan. Parents have ample occasion to celebrate their children's writing by attending "Publishing Parties", enabling them to deepen their role in the school community. Parents expressed their satisfaction with the manner in which the school communicates with them.

What the school does well

- The principal is a highly effective manager who has aligned the school's resources to the instructional goals, thus providing valuable support to the students in need.

Title III funding is effectively used to support English language learners. The scheduling and implementation of a specifically designed, before and after school, program has resulted in the academic and personal growth of students.

 - Staffing appointments and training decisions are strategic. Learning styles, differentiated instruction and peer collaboration have all been emphasized and strengthened in response to the data. Scheduling decisions reflect schoolwide goals to improve literacy and mathematics by using the 37.5 minutes block effectively to enable, small groups of students, opportunities for differentiated learning.
- The school provides a safe, caring and respectful environment that is conducive to learning, supports the social and emotional growth of students and increases communication between and among adults.
 - The school's inclusive culture is evidenced by the active participation of parents and staff on the School Leadership Team. As a result of the team's in-depth review of school data from the Learning Environment Survey, school leaders strategically utilized the budget to hire a dean and an additional guidance counselor to manage behavioral issues. Consequently, a positive school tone is evident and the number of suspensions has decreased, resulting in greater student involvement and excitement at the school.
 - *The Family Style Academic Advisory*, a middle school initiative, has been instrumental in establishing a sense of community. Advisory groups of 8-10 eighth graders meet on a weekly basis under the direction of a faculty member. Students work on collaborative projects under the guidance of an adult. As a result, students take more ownership of their work, and their self-esteem is growing, carrying over into all content areas.
- School leaders and faculty gather and analyze a range of relevant data to establish a clear understanding of student progress to identify strengths and needs at the school and classroom level.
 - School leaders and teachers very strategically analyzed the high level of referrals through a large range of data and item analysis. As a result of their purposeful work, the school implemented a *Response to Intervention* initiative. Resulting in eighty percent reduction in the number of initial referrals.

- The school recognizes that writing is the greatest challenge to student progress and consequently, writing scores are discussion topics during common preparation periods, and at weekly teacher team meetings with the goal to improve performance. As a result of teacher's purposeful focus on using specific teaching strategies, student achievement in written response has risen.
- Teachers benefit from participating in professional collaborations and teacher teams that foster reflection as well as providing options for researching effective instructional strategies.
 - The structured professional collaboration, evident at weekly inquiry team meetings, results in shared leadership as well as school-wide accountability for accelerating student growth. Teachers discuss professional literature and are engaged in a study group, while sharing comprehension strategies relative to the specific needs of students, teachers modify relevant lessons improving much student achievement.
 - Teachers on every grade participate in inquiry teams facilitated by lead teachers identified by school leaders. During the second grade, inquiry team meeting, analysis of "E-Pal" results revealed the need for additional student support with comprehension strategies. Teachers agreed on a universal reading comprehension strategy. This decision resulted in a positive improvement in students' written response to literature.
- The school's partnerships with outside organizations and internal services support students in learning to promote their social, emotional and academic growth.
 - School guidance counselors and staff, from the Integrated Service Center's Office of Youth Development, provide well-delivered professional development and integrated support to the staff. This enables teachers to present students with varied opportunities, which support socio-emotional learning and academic growth. This has resulted in lowered suspension rates.
 - Focused collaborations with: Learning Leaders, Hunter College, Meridian Youth Baseball, Urban Dove, and Chess-in-the-Schools are integrated with other school-based supports throughout the school day. These partnerships meet students' needs in a cohesive manner as evidenced by the *Chess-in the-Schools* program, where students are becoming analytical thinkers and critical problem solvers and increasing their academic, social and emotional growth.
- The school maintains a safe, supportive environment and has high expectations for attendance, learning and behavior that are clearly and consistently shared with parents and students.
 - Teachers use student conferences effectively to discuss assessment results, strengths and areas of need, helping students identify next steps to understanding what they need to do to improve. Students know their independent reading levels and aspire to reach a higher-level book and overall achievement level by June.

- The school's inclusive culture is evident by the active participation of parents and staff on the School Leadership Team. As a result of the team's in-depth review of the school data from the Learning Environment survey, school leaders strategically utilized the budget to establish a student advisory program with groups of between eight to ten grade 8 students. Consequently, the tone of the school has improved.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen differentiation of instruction so that all lessons engage students and offer suitable challenge at every level, including effective questioning that elicits higher-order thinking and extends learning.
 - Within many lessons, differentiation meets the needs of different ability groups. However, some teachers do not consistently use the data they collect to adapt their methods of instruction or to ensure that each student has work to match their capability, as evidenced in student work products and processes.
 - Teaching strategies and classroom routines are generic, thereby limiting students' differentiated access into the curricula especially for higher achieving students.
- Build upon the school's curriculum planning to include a structure that delivers opportunities for rigorous, challenging instruction in all subject areas.
 - School leaders and staff make purposeful decisions that align the curriculum with key standards. However, rigorous habits and higher-order skills have not been embedded across all content areas. As a result, not all students are adequately challenged.
- Refine and ensure that all goals include precise short-and long-term measurable outcomes to monitor students' progress effectively, and to reinforce ownership and accountability.
 - The school has plans that are well documented but school leaders have not established interim benchmarks across subject areas so that the school can monitor progress and revise the instructional programs of individual students promptly.
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers use assessment data to track the progress of individual students' subgroups, but the assessments are not uniform from grade to grade.
- Refine action planning by developing interim goals and benchmarks for all plans so that progress can be measured, readjustments made and success evaluated.
 - School leaders and individual teachers are in the process of developing systems for measuring progress towards interim goals and identifying areas where improvement in plans or strategies are needed.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Joseph C. Lanzetta	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