

Quality Review Report

2009-2010

**Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis High School for
International Careers**

**High School 529
120 W. 46th Street
New York
NY 10036**

Principal: Edward DeMeo

**Dates of review: February 24 - 25, 2010
Lead Reviewer: Deena Abu-Lughod**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis High School for International Careers has 699 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 24% Black, 67% Hispanic, 3% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 37% of the students enrolled and girls account for 63%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 83.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The teachers and administrators create a caring environment for students, who feel respected and supported, and enable parents to become actively informed and involved in important decision making processes. The school maintains its business focus, motivating students to high levels of achievement, while providing programs to elevate the skills of incoming students to create a solid base for their secondary education. The principal has developed strong systems to evaluate the school's overall effectiveness and works reflectively to better serve students and empower staff to play more decisive roles in school decision-making. Expectations for high quality curriculum and instruction are clear, but a gap between the vision and actual practice remains. For example, many teachers still do not use the data they have to plan for differentiation, set specific content and skill goals with students, or revise their curriculum. There is inconsistent use of formative assessment techniques, high level thinking, and variation in the quality of materials and presentations.

The school reviews summative and interim data frequently, examining results by program, cohort and sub-group, for a constantly updated understanding of student progress. This information is used wisely to guide students to suitable courses, to a rich array of additional opportunities for support and to highly engaging theater, arts, dance and community service activities. The school regularly evaluates the quality of assessments and selects exemplars that some teachers have used to good effect.

The school has embraced AVID, Advancement via Individual Determination, as a path towards a common instructional focus, and a third of its teachers have been trained in its techniques to elicit high-level thinking and engagement. Teachers and targeted students are enthusiastic about the results, as these students are now more reflective, focused, and skilled in independent and group work, and most have improved their grade point averages. Most teachers participate in teacher-led inquiry teams that connect directly to school wide goals and feel committed to the success of their shared group of students whose data they examine. However, most individual teachers and teams of teachers limit student goals to credit accumulation or Regents exams, so that students are unable to articulate their next steps with respect to specific content and skills objectives. There is currently insufficient use of rubrics to guide student development and to enable them, and their parents to understand precisely how they can improve their work.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Sound organizational and budgetary decisions enable the school to achieve its instructional goals and the long range plans to improve student outcomes.
 - The school evaluates costs and benefits in assigning resources to assure support for students at all levels. Additional staff for English language learners, integrated co-teaching courses and Ramp Up provides support for underperforming sub-groups. Students in the business courses are all college-bound. Internal and external providers, including teacher volunteers and university tutors, alongside the web-based Plato program, support completion of graduation requirements, while multiple arts partners enrich student programs.
 - Daily common planning time, by department and for teachers of first year students, is used well to examine student data, coordinate curricular goals and student supports, and to share best practice. As a result, there has been significant progress on the school's action plans and improved in-class support for at risk students.
- The school is proactive in communicating with, and involving students and parents in school decision-making, creating a welcoming environment that is conducive to learning.
 - Students value the safe environment where they feel respected as young adults, and seek mediation in cases of interpersonal problems. Special classes help new students adapt socially and academically, and to connect well with faculty members. Student-planned community service activities lead to greater student interaction and the youth's perception that "We're more open-minded now."
 - Parents appreciate the school's frequent informational mailings, including minutes of school leadership meetings and same-day calls for any absence. The school provides transportation to encourage participation at frequent, well-attended workshops and budgetary discussions. As a result, families praise the school's "great" outreach program, which informs them of early risk indicators and allows them to work with the school on a coordinated response.
- Professional development aligns with the school's instructional goals and has a positive impact on teaching quality.
 - Teachers lead the nine inquiry teams, each with a different sub-group, and a teacher coordinates the school's professional development. This has improved relationships with the administration, and staff now works with increased efficacy towards goals that they believe in and have ownership of. Within these teams, teachers share observations of their targeted students so they can coordinate in and out-of-classroom support.

- A third of the staff has been trained in AVID strategies, which elevate student engagement and self-evaluation, use technology, and tap into higher-level thinking through Socratic seminars. These teachers share strategies with other teachers. Classrooms of AVID-trained teachers exemplify the school's beliefs about learning and provide students with good quality instruction.
- The school has a good understanding of its strengths, enabling it to set goals that reflect clear aspirations and to monitor its progress well.
 - New courses and programs address issues identified in the school's rigorous needs assessment process. This has resulted in the establishment of excellent integrated co-teaching classes, the development of study skills, and enhanced community building. Students at the cusp of proficiency, for example, who were targeted with new initiatives have increased their grade point averages by seven points.
 - A large cabinet, which includes faculty, regularly compares data across terms and years, by subject area and teacher to evaluate the impact of new initiatives on student outcomes. As a result, most teacher goals align with the school's instructional goals to move the school towards a common focus, and teachers collaborate to solve common problems they have identified. In particular, a recent teachers' initiative to monitor hallways resulted in an improvement in class attendance.
- The school uses data to monitor progress over time, act upon areas of need, and to make mid-year adjustments to optimize student outcomes.
 - Leaders and faculty analyze scholarship reports and Regents item analyses regularly for an ongoing understanding of student performance trends, and to ensure alignment between classroom grades and summative assessments. Scrutiny of mock English Regents showed weaknesses in reading comprehension. A focused weekly comprehension lesson across the department has led to an average of five additional correct answers.
 - Color-coded charts track individual and sub-group progress on Regents results by cohort and grade, which facilitates wise programming decisions, adjustments to content, and provision of out-of-class supports. Programs change each semester so that students are in classes that are most suitable for their levels and interests.
- The school effectively evaluates the quality of assessments and data gathering systems to improve the alignment of assessment to curriculum, and communicates results to students and their families.
 - School leaders keep a comprehensive collection of mid-term and final exams to evaluate quality and format, and share exemplars with staff. As a result, more teachers are designing assessments that are accessible to students who benefit from large type, high quality diagrams, and clear directions and are acquiring expertise in connecting items to standards. Models of communication with parents are also collected periodically, and the desire to improve specificity has resulted in the decision to purchase a technology-enhanced solution.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen differentiation of instruction, based on data, so that all lessons offer suitable challenge to students at their individual level to maximize their potential.
 - The variation in the expectations of students across classrooms demonstrates a gap between the school's beliefs and actual teacher practice. In many classes, students are grouped purposefully, and evaluate, discuss, and write substantially about texts, engaging in tasks that appeal to different learning styles. In others, teachers rely on lecture, summarize texts for the students, and test students on the quality of their notes. As a result, students in these classes do not learn the value of analyzing and synthesizing texts, or of problem solving independently or in groups.
- Refine curriculum planning to build coherence and ensure that tasks reflect a common understanding of rigor.
 - Although the curriculum is standards-based, the school does not make consistent efforts to identify and reinforce key standards, or ensure that tasks in all classes require high cognitive demand. There is little evidence of vertical planning to ensure that courses ending in Regents build substantively on the content from the preparatory courses in science and social studies. In consequence, there is insufficient planning to ensure continuity and rigor in student skills and knowledge development over time.
- Create systems for teachers to disaggregate interim assessment data for more content- and skill-specific goal setting, progress monitoring, and meaningful evaluation of curriculum and instruction.
 - The school sets goals for credit accumulation and Regents passing rates to evaluate progress by class and sub-group, and to make programming decisions. However, the teachers do not uniformly break down these goals by specific skill or content need, as revealed by the item analyses, to create and monitor goals for sub-groups or at risk students. As a result, rich sources of data are not utilized effectively to help students understand the specific skills and content that they need to succeed.
- Provide consistent feedback to students and their families, with reasons for their success and clear next steps for improvement, based on rubrics to help them set and achieve their goals.
 - The use of rubrics is not uniform across the school. At present, rubrics are used more as summative instruments than as a tool for clarifying students' next steps. As a result, students express goals in general terms, such as 'studying more' or 'taking better notes', and show less awareness of their particular strengths and weaknesses. Feedback to parents also lacks clarity and specificity, which prevents them from playing as strong a role as partners in their children's learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis High School for International Careers	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