

Quality Review Report

2009-2010

Jane Addams High School for Academics and Careers

**High School 650
900 Tinton Avenue
Bronx
NY 10456**

Principal: Sharron Smalls

Dates of review: February 23 – 24, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Michael L. Schurek

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Jane Addams High School for Academics and Careers is a high school with 1487 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 34% Black, 63% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 30% of the students enrolled and girls account for 70%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 77.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Jane Addams High School offers both academic and career technical education to its students enabling them to fulfill graduation requirements, prepare for college, and develop technical career skills. The principal, in her third year, has united the staff in their use of data as the foundation of their practice. She has strategically organized the staff into teacher teams on each grade that are accountable for specific groups of students through data. Teachers conduct student conferences on a regular basis to set goals and monitor progress. These new practices have fostered instructional coherence as evidenced by the writing that takes place in every class to accelerate English language arts, an area of need identified by the statistics. It also empowers teachers to make key decisions and adjust classroom practices to ensure student success.

Professional development activities are based upon teacher survey except for mandated activities that are determined by administration through observations. At this time, the school is working to improve differentiation in all lessons, because teachers demonstrate varied abilities to do so resulting in unequal levels of student engagement. Although rubrics are common in many classrooms, they are not used to provide students with specific next steps to improve the quality of submitted work in many grades and subjects.

Parents praise the progress made under the tutelage of the principal. However, their lack of participation inhibits their abilities to influence school-level decisions. They are able to articulate school goals, but action plans designed to meet these goals do not contain benchmarks linked to interim goals, which would enable the school to measure progress along the way in order to make timely adjustments to increase student outcomes and evaluate the impact of actions.

The school provides effective interventions to students in need through technology-based assessment and instruction, on-line courses, peer and teacher tutoring, and double block scheduling. In addition, credit recovery programs are conducted during all recess breaks and on weekends. Over aged, under-credited students can participate in a separate accelerated credit recovery program during regular school time. A small learning community for 9th graders has been formed to increase first year credit accumulation utilizing an interdisciplinary approach. These programs have brought new hope to students, resulting in increases in attendance, Regents' pass rates, and credits earned. As a result, the school is in the beginning stages of reorganizing all grades into smaller learning communities to expand the successes experienced by the 9th grade students and teacher teams.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal, with feedback from her staff and administrative team, successfully makes fully informed and effective decisions across all aspects of the school to support improvements in learning.
 - Teacher assignments are organized on each grade level so that each team of teachers is accountable for the progress of a particular group of students, resulting in robust use of data at classroom and team levels. This structure is directly aligned to the school's overall goal of using data to drive instruction in order to improve student outcomes.
 - The principal has strategically used budgetary and space resources to create 9th grade block scheduling that increases credit accumulation because of extra seat time. As a result, first year credit accumulation has improved from a negative percent to 64.4% and the school's first year students far outperformed both peer and City averages on science and math Regents.
- Administrators and teachers meticulously use a wide range of data and tools to understand individual student and subgroup performance, progress, and learning needs.
 - Administrators use a wide array of summative data to create a clear picture of their school's areas of need. Progress Report outcomes reveal a trend in their 9th grade student cohort of disproportional grade failures. To rectify this negative trend, programming has been redesigned to create extended class time through interdisciplinary humanities blocks in English language arts/history and math/science, resulting in improved student achievement.
 - Teams of teachers and school leaders supplement summative data with teacher-made assessments and assessment software in all content areas. These data tools identify English language arts weaknesses in student subgroup performance. As a result, writing is practiced every day in every class, a writing center has been established, and an enhanced library supports student achievement.
- The school has established effective systems for improving instructional practice with a clear focus on professional growth and instructional coherence.
 - Teachers clearly understand that data is the foundation of their practice, and use this lens, individually and in teams, to design practices to meet student needs. Administrators utilize this same lens to support a coherent school culture.
 - School leaders use classroom observations to provide feedback to teachers about their implementation of school-wide initiatives, and provide next steps to individual teachers to support their growth. This practice has enabled the school to make great strides in its utilization of technology-based assessment and instruction. As a result, all staff members use Gradekeeper or Engrade to monitor student progress.

- Teachers across the school welcome opportunities to participate in collaborative inquiry and use this to strengthen instruction and raise learning outcomes.
 - All teachers participate in structured collaborative inquiry on teams each week. Teachers embrace this practice because they feel empowered to make key decisions, supported by each other and by the administration.
 - Teachers use common preparation periods to conduct collaboration each week to develop reading strategies designed to improve student outcomes, such as using graphic organizers, highlighting key information, and using anticipatory guides to predict and measure comprehension. The use of these strategies has resulted in improved student outcomes.
- The principal is creating a professional learning community that is tightly focused on student outcomes with a clear view to accelerating learning.
 - The school has meticulously examined data from multiple sources, especially the progress of its 9th grade cohort, to develop action plans that accelerate student learning. As a result of strong academic gains in this grade, the school is in the beginning stages of reorganizing into small learning communities on every grade.
 - The leadership team, administrative cabinet, and student government are fully staffed and united in their use of data to form goals. As a result, they have all been involved in completing the Comprehensive Educational Plan and school self evaluation form for the first time, thereby establishing support for the school's direction. In addition, the principal conducts town hall meetings to share these goals and action plans and establish transparency.
- Teachers, teacher teams, and administrators use collaborative, data-informed processes for effective planning and goal setting across the grades for individuals and groups of students to ensure student success.
 - Teacher teams and administrators collaboratively set goals and differentiate instruction for student subgroups and students in need of additional support by using Performance Series assessments in English language arts and math. As a result, the numbers of English language learners who no longer need services has increased and the school received extra credit in the lowest third student category for exemplary math gains.
 - Teachers conduct student conferences six times a year to track progress and set goals in each subject while the administration utilizes a computerized tracking system to monitor growth by individual student and grade. This combined effort in setting interim as well as annual goals enables the school to identify specific students for targeted intervention, such as accelerated credit recovery programs, to ensure student success.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen differentiation of instruction so that all lessons engage students and offer suitable challenge at their level, including effective questioning that elicits higher-order thinking and extends learning.

- Special education teachers utilize technology to administer an individualized reading program to build students' reading skills. In addition, many content area teachers heterogeneously group students and use individualized web-based assignments to reinforce learning and measure progress. However, many classroom routines do not vary materials or instructional activities to sufficiently ensure multiple entry points for all learners.
- While many teachers demonstrate sound, open-ended questioning techniques and utilize templates and graphic organizers during their lessons, levels of student engagement vary and many classrooms have limited displays or portfolios of student work products.
- Ensure that parents are key partners in their child's education by involving them in school-level decision making and providing supports to enable their participation in important school activities.
 - The parents association has a new president, and attendance at their monthly meetings has increased from last year. In addition, the school leadership team is staffed with the required number of parents. However, the rest of the parents' decision-making opportunities are limited to participation in the Learning Environment Survey, which is currently 30% below the City average and limits the ability of the parent body to inform decisions.
 - The school has provided more outreach to families through increased mailings, phone master alerts, the school website, and a facebook account. These efforts have not proved supportive enough in promoting familial involvement, with less than 2% participation at parent association meetings.
- Strengthen teachers' responses to all student work, to include guiding comments and the use of rubrics to level performance in order to convey clear next steps for improvement to students and their families.
 - Teachers regularly use rubrics to rate student work in career education classes and to prepare for upcoming Regents exams. However, it is not established practice in all grades and subjects to use rubrics to identify next steps and provide students with the opportunity to improve the quality of submitted work.
 - The school is in the beginning stages of utilizing tools such as ARIS Parent Link and recently obtained Engrade, a program that enables parents to monitor their children's grades and attendance online. The lack of home computers hampers these efforts of engagement.
- Refine action planning by linking all interim goals to specific benchmarks for all plans to enable the principal and faculty to modify goals and objectives in a timely manner in order to optimize the impact of their actions.
 - School action plans generally use percentage-based target gains as the overall goal in the areas of credit accumulation, Annual Yearly Percentage gains in English language arts, and the achievement of students with disabilities. Benchmarks measuring progress towards these goals at specific intervals have not been established. This lack hampers the school's ability to determine program effectiveness along the way, to allow for contingencies, and make timely adjustments that improve outcomes. It also limits the school's ability to align planning from one year to the next.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Jane Addams High School for Academics and Careers	△	▷	✓	+
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>	△	▷	✓	+
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>	△	▷	✓	+
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