



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability
2010-2011**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

John Ericsson School

Middle School 126

**424 Leonard Street
Brooklyn
NY 11222**

Principal: Rosemary Ochoa

Dates of review: March 22 - 23, 2011

Lead Reviewer: James Quail

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

John Ericsson School is a middle school with 333 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 20% Black, 71% Hispanic, 5% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 32% special education students. Boys account for 59% of the students enrolled and girls account for 41%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 90.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders make informed and purposeful organizational decisions to improve instruction, and meet student needs, for increased achievement.
 - The use of technology is evident in classrooms as most teachers use SMARTboards in their lessons. Teams of teachers meet after school to plan around integrating key evolving State standards into their instruction. Students actively participate in the two new course offerings in engineering studies. The school purposefully uses its budget to provide these opportunities and resources for staff and students and aligns them with instructional goals to meet student needs to improve learning.
 - This year, school leaders provide added time for all departments to collaborate around planning and incorporating key evolving State standards into instruction. The school uses before, after school and anticipated summer programs to extend opportunities for learning. The school thoughtfully brought in a new after school provider to render more academic and social programs to meet student needs. One student said, “I love going to after school as the programs are really great”. This strategic use of time increases chances to improve instructional practices and presents tasks that are more challenging to students.
- The school works closely with families by continuously sharing relevant information related to student progress to promote clear and timely expectations for learning.
 - Parents state that they receive timely progress reports in all subjects, which indicate the specific needs and next learning steps for students. They talk about ARIS, email messages, daily phone calls and the open door policy of the principal as additional resources to obtain timely academic and social information related to their children. Students speak about the consistent help their teachers provide to them each day, particularly around learning. This open exchange of timely information helps build capacity and increases opportunities to improve learning.
- Teacher teams work collaboratively to share best practices, analyze data and resources to improve instruction and student learning.
 - The school utilizes inquiry teams in each department that collaborate each week to look at student work and assessment data. Specific Inquiry teams analyze the progress of English language learners and special education students. Teachers share inter-visitations, attend workshops, and receive the support of external consultants to enrich their practices. For example, the reading consultant regularly visits teachers and school leaders to provide support and assistance with planning and the alignment of materials to match student needs. These efforts help the school improve its professional practices to increase student outcomes.

- Individual teachers and teams purposefully use a variety of assessment tools and other data to track progress and share relevant information with parents to increase opportunities for increased student outcomes.
 - School leaders and teachers purposefully use Periodic Assessments, unit tests, and student work to track student progress at the school level. The school uses a variety of data tracking tools to monitor and share this progress around school goals. As a result, the school now offers courses in engineering to engage students in their learning and it has revamped after school offerings and added time for departmental meetings to enrich teacher collaboration. The school has shared this revised instructional plan with its leadership team, parent group and the surrounding community. This assists the school in analyzing and wisely using data to make purposeful adjustments in its plans to increase student outcomes.
 - Parents express high regard for the school, the teachers and the purposeful assistance their children receive related to their learning. One parent stated, “I know the scores in the school are not that high but for me, my two kids are doing great. They love their teachers since they always help them know what to do.” They appreciate receiving timely progress reports, which informs them of their children’s academic needs and next steps. This helps the school build capacity to improve student learning and fosters a positive home school relationship.
- The school uses a transparent system to analyze trends in student progress and performance over interim periods to make adjustments in plans and strategies that support students to accelerate their learning.
 - The school uses formative, summative and other data to set annual goals and plans which address them. In response to the significant drop in reading scores, the school has purchased libraries for every classroom, and increased literacy periods from five to eight a week. It supports teachers in creating their own assessments, and utilizes a reading consultant to enrich teacher practices. The school uses ARIS, Periodic Assessments, student work and unit tests to compare individual, class and grade progress over interim periods. This timely use of data to measure progress and make adjustments increases chances to improve learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a more rigorous alignment of the standards based curriculum to promote greater levels of student engagement and higher order thinking skills to increase student outcomes.
 - Presently, the principal indicates that the school is in the process of revising curriculum maps and relies on last year’s finished products to support staff. The lack of clearly defined, and agreed upon curriculum maps for the year limits the school in offering a rigorous curricula aligned within and across the school to promote student learning.
 - In a few classrooms, students work on tasks to meet their needs and challenge their thinking. However, across most classrooms students use the same worksheets in group settings. The lack of planning to engage a

diversity of learners in challenging activities limits the development of their full academic potential.

- Promote greater consistency in the use of differentiated instruction by aligning teacher strategies to improve student work and learning.
 - In some, but not all classrooms, students created their own machines and work products, used rich vocabulary and offered their thinking to open-ended questions. In most classrooms, portfolios or work folders show evidence of students working on the same assignments. The inconsistency to offer differentiated instruction across classrooms limits student engagement and the production of meaningful work products.
- Ensure the alignment of teacher assessments to curricula and instructional decisions to create a clear picture of student strengths and needs, in order to analyze progress over time.
 - Individual teachers and teams create assessments and use other data to assess students. However, there is an inconsistent alignment of this data to key standards and curricula to measure classroom instructional decisions to differentiate instructional strategies. For example, most students worked on the same activity but in different group settings. This restricts the school in adjusting its instruction and curriculum to create a clear picture of student needs and strengths to improve academic performance.
- Expand the use of the observation tool with teachers around data and student work to develop a common instructional focus to promote professional growth and accountability for student outcomes.
 - The recent Learning Environment Survey (LES) indicates almost 50% of the staff feels that school leaders should encourage open communication on important issues. Some teachers express concerns about the limitation of the current reading program to meet the diverse needs of students. This limits the development of an agreed upon instructional focus and hinders efforts to build community to strengthen learning and student achievement.
 - New teachers pair with a mentor and attend regular professional offerings provided to the faculty. There are 12 new, probationary teachers in the school. However, there is no action plan to support this particular group. This limits chances for all teachers to improve their practices, and receive additional support to increase student learning.
- Improve communication and develop partnerships with families to build capacity, and purposefully engage them in decision-making and school activities to foster high and clear expectations for learning.
 - Few parents attend parent-teacher association meetings, only two parents sit on the leadership team and the parent leadership group has only three members. This lessens opportunities for parents to be actively engaged in school decision making and limits the development of a meaningful home-school connection to support school initiatives.

- Parents share that they do not attend meetings due to childcare issues, scheduling and or language barriers. The lack of multiple opportunities for parents to be engaged in school activities limits efforts to increase communication and build capacity for learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: John Ericsson Middle School	UD	D	P	WD
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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		
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, 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	

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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		

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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		

Quality Review Scoring Key

UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed
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