

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

James P. Sinnott School

Junior High School 218

370 Fountain Avenue

Brooklyn

NY 11208

Principal: Alison Breedy I.A.

Dates of review: April 4 - 5, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Rose-marie Mills

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

James P. Sinnott School is an intermediate school with 600 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 43% Black, 37% Hispanic, 1% White, and 19% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 89.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Pedagogical practice at the school is beginning to engage students in completing tiered differentiated tasks that aim to meet their learning needs.
 - Whereas teaching practices at the school is mostly whole class instruction, differentiated practice is emerging and students are becoming engaged. Some teachers have begun to engage students in group work. For example, in the math and English language arts departments a few teachers had students complete some tiered activities according to their learning needs, resulting in the completion of meaningful learning activities.
- Teams of teachers analyze summative assessment data and are working on evaluating student work products in order to create a clear picture of students' performance so as to appropriately differentiate instruction.
 - The data specialist shares reports delineating students' performance with teachers when the results of summative assessments become available. Subsequently, teacher teams review and discuss the overall performance of students along with class performance and progress. Additionally, staff is working on examining student work products and discussing required instructional adjustments that is beginning to lead to a clear picture of student needs.
- Teacher teams use data to identify students requiring additional supports and are developing systems to set goals for targeted students in order to ensure that academic growth is accelerated.
 - The school has a template used by some staff to set goals for students. In February, the principal established a system whereby staff answered poignant questions regarding the performance of students on the Predictive Assessment. Additionally, all teachers have a "data binder" with students' performance data on summative assessments. This supports teachers in setting some data related goals for students as a means to guide academic growth.
- Teacher teams are led by teacher leaders resulting in structured opportunities to engage in professional dialogue.
 - All teachers are members of teacher teams which meet on a weekly basis. The eighth grade math team has integrated the inquiry approach in the work they do and the school is working on embedding this structure into the other teams. Teachers engage in discussions on students' performance, understanding of requirements for assessments, along with some focus on pedagogical practices and resources resulting in a focus to improve student development.
 - Teacher teams are led by teacher leaders identified by the administration. Team leaders lead meeting, and facilitate a review of students' data. This

structure is helping to ensure that staff plays a role in decisions related to students learning and builds leadership within the team.

What the school needs to improve

- Fortify the coherence of instructional practices to the curriculum thereby ensuring the alignment of key standards with rigorous and challenging tasks that meet the diverse learning needs of students.
 - Whereas the school has pacing calendars for English language arts and mathematics, minimum refinement took place over the summer to align to the curriculum. Additionally, the development of the Common Core State Standards curriculum maps is in the pilot stages thus, limiting a clear focus on standards to propel students academically.
 - Tasks observed during classroom visits, on display on bulletin boards, and in students portfolios do not reflect planning to engage and challenge students. In a grade eight science class all students participated in a task that required them to measure the length of lines and objects in centimeters for the entire period. The homework activity required the same students to calculate the volume of objects without any review of this concept. The absence of differentiated tasks that appropriately meet the diverse needs of the student population does not augment the development of higher order thinking skills.
- Align instructional and human resources with students' learning needs to ensure organizational decisions adequately support the achievement of school goals.
 - The school's use of organizational resources does not adequately support the learning needs of all students and staff. Currently, the math and literacy coaches teach classes, with seven and five coaching periods respectively per week for coaching duties. Additionally, there is a UFT Teacher Center coach that has 5 coaching periods per week. Much of this limited time is spent preparing to facilitate teacher team meetings and looking at students' performance data. Given the large variation in the instructional capacity of the staff, this minimal support does not adequately allow for an increase in instructional growth.
 - Student programming practices of the school does not align with the achievement of the annual goal of accelerating the progress of English language learners. Presently, English language learners are grouped for all instruction in two grade bands; grades six and seven, and grades seven and eight. The mathematics instructors observed with these classes struggled with teaching the curriculum of both grades concurrently, thereby inhibiting students' growth.
- Develop a common instructional focus that foster pedagogical growth and utilize the observation process to consistently provide explicit feedback that guides differentiated professional development.
 - The school has a structure to observe teachers both formally and informally, however the practice is inconsistently adhered to. Reviews of

formal observations reveal that some teachers have not been observed for the school year and most teachers received their only observation in March. This limited feedback does not support teacher growth and the school's intent to improve pedagogical practices.

- Whereas teachers create goals for instructional improvement, these goals are not revisited and do not impact the offering of professional development opportunities. This limits the development of reflective practice and does not support the needs of the staff for professional growth.
- Bolster communication with students and families to build capacity and engagement in decision-making in order to foster a culture of high expectations.
 - Consistent communication with parents is limited to a monthly calendar and a listing of important dates. The school has yet to establish clear structures to promote high expectations for both students and parents thus, resulting in an environment in which positive behavior and high expectation is not the norm.
 - The Parent Association is newly formed and members are learning their roles in school decision-making. Parents indicate that they, “go by what is told to them” resulting in limited engagement and an absence of shared commitment to the attainment of the schools’ goals.
- Forge effective partnerships to provide targeted youth development services that support students’ social and emotional needs thereby accelerating both academic and personal growth.
 - The Learning Environment Survey indicates that both parents and students are very concerned with safety and respect. However, the school has yet to establish a SAVE room and implement a plan to effectively support the development of an environment that is conducive to both teaching and learning thereby reducing opportunities for students to excel and develop social –emotional growth.
 - The school has a health theme and attracts high performing students who aspire to careers in the medical field. Partnerships to support the needs of these students are limited to a “few day care centers”, as the linkages with hospitals no longer exist. Additionally, activities to foster the enhancement of the socio-emotional needs of students are not plentiful at the school. Consequently, student support for personal growth is limited resulting in the lack of a respectful school climate.
- Develop formal structure to consistently evaluate the effectiveness of instructional practices so as to ensure alignment with the evolving State standards and learning needs of students.
 - The instructional cabinet has not yet established structures to ensure curricular and instructional coherence. The school has hired a consultant to work on the development of a plan, but the work has not yet begun. Additionally, the teacher leader training to build capacity has been

discontinued, resulting in an unclear system to monitor curricular decisions and reinforce leadership building.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: James P. Sinnott	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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