



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

18K235

**525 Lenox Road
Brooklyn
NY 11203**

Principal: Lisa Solitario

Dates of review: December 13 - 15, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Beverly A. Wilkins

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Janice Marie Knight School is a K-8 school with 1,353 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 95% Black, 3% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 95.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and school administrators' passionate vision for excellence drives all the school's work, which fosters high levels of commitment from faculty and staff.
 - The principal and school leaders effectively communicate what students should know and achieve. Therefore, clearly articulated expectations ensure the academic and personal well-being of every student. A collective understanding of shared norms and values strongly support positive adult and student relations, which leads to a school environment conducive to school-wide achievement.
 - The alignment of best teaching practices, across three school sites, result in tailored lessons that address the different ability levels of students in Core and Soar classrooms. Consequently, flexible and tiered groupings based on individual interim learning goals enable students to see their personal potential and work towards even greater levels of success.
- Teachers work effectively in collaborative teams to share relevant data, to develop assessment tools, and to plan curriculum and instruction with a focus on elevated student outcomes.
 - Customized diagnostic and formative class and grade assessments undergird the insightful work of coaches and teams of teachers. Hence, teachers are acutely aware of student strengths and needs. Accordingly, they pinpoint gaps in progress toward "power standards" and adjust curriculum maps and their instruction to fully all engage students in the learning process.
 - Individual and groups of teachers engage in critical conversations in order to shape curricular and instructional decisions across the school. For example, lesson designs incorporate Making Your Thinking Visible (MYTV), an initiative developed in the middle school math department. This plan to ensure learners represent their thinking, in writing, in all content areas narrows performance gaps on extended responses in math and English language arts.
- Professional development equips teachers extremely well to teach the school's programs consequently leading to accelerated professional growth and increased achievement among students.
 - Professional development is the springboard for launching a strong commitment to uniformity in instructional practices. Hence, professional collaborations strengthen common connections between the school's instructional foci and its culture of continuous professional learning. Demonstrated enduring emphasis on "what must be done" coupled with professional creativity and originality on "how teachers get it done" promote high levels of student success and improved student outcomes.
 - Critical friend feedback and a rich menu of professional engagements augment the mentoring received by new teachers and teachers new to the school. The Lesson Study Research Project, School-wide Inquiry Teams, and turnkey workshops enhance professional knowledge and inspire innovation in senior

- teachers resulting in students' praise for their teachers' ability to provide a "larger than life" education.
- Individual and groups of students identified with particular needs benefit from targeted academic and social-emotional support; accordingly they meet and exceed learning targets.
 - All teachers and School Leadership Team members receive the principal's annual goals aligned with the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) in order that the entire school community takes ownership in the progression of whole school improvement. In turn, consensus on school improvement initiatives, including but not limited to, character development programs, motivational speakers, monarch butterfly tagging, anti-defamation projects, and Penny Harvest Round Table work, drive real life learning experiences that positively impact student outcomes.
 - The staff development team examines accountability reports to set appropriate courses of action in support of identified groups of students. This year students with disabilities receive additional academic intervention services relative to their needs. Intended to improve subgroup performance on high stakes test, this work leads to the mainstreaming of students ensuring appropriate mastery of skills and sustained proficiency.
 - Teachers and coaches use collaborative, data informed processes for timely planning and suitable goal setting, which advance student progress across grades, subjects, and for individual and groups of students.
 - Teams of teachers work in tandem with coaches and assistant principals to design effective lessons and implement instructional strategies based on student work, interim assessments, and patterns of error. Thus, learning goals well matched to student strengths and areas for further development enable increases in student progress.
 - Teachers on all grades purposely align curriculum maps with grade level goals. Consequently, they closely monitor the progress of target students, students performing at level 2, and those in the bottom third of each class to mobilize student capacities, provide additional support, thereby heightening interest toward achievement of specified learning objectives.
 - School leaders and faculty work cohesively to review and analyze data that guides the school forward with consistency which results in refined practices and professional collaborations that meet students' needs.
 - Whole school teacher benchmarks serve as guideposts for the evaluation of teacher effectiveness. Because planning throughout the school involves "the whole organism of teaching", teachers supported by school leaders and coaches utilize feedback from observations of classroom instruction to refine their practice or make appropriate adjustments to grade level curriculum maps. Collective responsibility for analyzing student work results in academic growth across the school. The school's use of ACUITY and customized assessments establish common ground for building coherence as a result there is deliberate teamwork to ensure the progress of all students.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve the consistency of effective questioning, across the school that elicits higher order thinking and extends learning.
 - Teachers on all grades align curriculum and incorporate the Common Core State standards to ensure purposeful learning in order to close the achievement gap and promote college/career readiness. Nevertheless, the planning of all lessons using the higher cognitive practice of Bloom's taxonomy is not consistent across the school. Therefore, the activities in a majority of classrooms visited did not adequately challenge all learners in all subgroups.
- Increase opportunities for both teachers and students to use technology in order to support a rigorous approach to differentiated instruction.
 - Although the school wisely invests in arts partnerships such as Symphony Space, Theatre for New Audience, National Dance Institute, and Project Arts, which support a strong interdisciplinary approach to learning, students do not yet profit from online content and technology tools in order to extend and enhance learning beyond the classroom.
 - The principal has a strong commitment to revitalize technology evidenced by a grant to fund a computer room and Smartboards for use in elementary classrooms. However, the current lack of technology impedes opportunity for all students and teachers to engage in interactive learning thereby enriching academic tasks across content areas.
- Extend interim reports provided to students and families to include learning goals, next steps, and information on how to help at home in order to assist their ability to track academic progress and to reinforce ownership and accountability.
 - Detailed teacher comments regarding students' academic performance and the next steps needed for improvement strongly support the tracking of student progress. In contrast, the vast majority of interim reports for distribution to parents lack necessary steps needed to reach targeted goals. Thus, clear direction to help parents understand their children's progress and how to support or extend learning at home is inconsistent across teachers.
- Strengthen opportunities for parental participation in key decision-making policies in order to further parent involvement in the life of the school.
 - Parents interviewed report high-level satisfaction with the "family environment" fostered by open communication with school leaders and teachers. As a result, they expressed overwhelming confidence in the education their children receive. However, ongoing and reciprocal conversations that provide information to parents about school-level decisions primarily engage School Leadership Team parent members, thereby reducing greater opportunity for increased parent involvement in school decision-making activities.
 - Evidence showed and parents told of the need to develop the work of the parent coordinator. Therefore, a fundamental role that promotes parent leadership and exalts school-level support is not yet systemic.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Janice Marie Knight 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