

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Joseph Pulitzer

Intermediate School 145

33-34 80th Street

Queens

NY 11372

Principal: Dr. Dolores Beckham

Dates of review: May 22 - 23, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Dr. Philip A. Composto

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Joseph Pulitzer School is a Junior High-Intermediate-Middle school with 2061 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 2% Black, 88% Hispanic, 1% White, 8% Asian and 1% other students. The student body includes 24% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 95.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school cultivates a safe and respectful school environment that supports learning, encourages attendance and enhances personal growth of students and adults. (1.4)
 - Teachers are present in the hallways during passing to ensure smooth passing and timely student arrival to classrooms. The school has been organized into five academies and an assistant principal, guidance counselor, dean and a group of teachers in each academy are responsible for academic and social emotional needs of students in each academy. Furthermore, all adults in the school, including the principal, mentor a student and provide one-on-one support that enhances student's academic and personal growth. Students' state that they feel comfortable confiding in the principal, assistant principals, teachers, counselors and other adults if they have a problem. One student said, "our principal cares about us." The school's motto, "Respect people, respect property. There is only one race, the human race", is followed and modeled by actions of adults and students. Students state that they enjoy coming to school as evidenced by 3.09 extra points earned in the attendance section of the 2010-2011 Progress Report.
- The school engages students and families in school decision making activities and regularly communicates information regarding student performance resulting in strong buy-in and support for success. (2.4)
 - Monthly newsletters update families on upcoming school activities and events. In addition, each month, goal sheets with the overview of the curriculum in each subject across all grades are distributed so parents can help improve their child's learning at home. Parents receive a progress report four times a year which indicates students' attendance, behavioral and academic progress and next learning steps. The school uses Engrade, an online grade book that is accessed by teachers, students and parents. This allows students and parents to view students' grades and contact the teacher if necessary. To increase communication with parents about student's outcomes, the school offers continuous assistance with the Achievement Reporting and Innovative System (ARIS) Parent Link. A parent room has been established with a computer so parents have access all day. Thus, these efforts support families in utilizing tools to access and understand their child's performance, resulting in an open exchange of information that promotes student achievement.
- The school's internal capacity and strong partnerships with a variety of organizations help support students' personal and academic development, resulting in accelerated learning. (4.4)
 - To ensure a positive and safe school culture, all assistant principals are assigned to monitor behavior, track incidents and code infractions, and address areas of need. The assistant principals coordinate work done by deans, guidance counselors and school safety agents in order to provide

preventive counseling and academic support to identified students. Furthermore, guidance counselors and assistant principals offer professional development supports to teachers so that they are able to support social emotional growth of students in the classroom. This has led to a decline in occurrences from 661 in 2010 to 628 in 2011 and an improvement on student achievement on periodic assessments.

- The school has several partnerships with outside agencies. Through the partnerships, the school offers a large range of constructivist and real life learning activities for students after school and on Saturdays. These activities include homework help, tutoring, safety forums, healthy choice, cyber safety, violence prevention, literacy and math classes, and music and sports teams. Consequently, students enjoy coming to school and the school has developed effective relationships with the community as noted in the increased involvement of all constituents in school activities.
- School leaders make purposeful organizational and curricular decisions across all aspects of the school to improve student learning and meet the school's instructional goals. (1.3)
 - The school offers a very successful School-Wide Enrichment Model (SEM) across all grades. School leaders, staff and students are included in developing an enrichment curriculum that exposes students to a subject or topic where children learn and grow in that talent. For example, students create a digital portfolio showcasing their best work. Consequently, the SEM engages the students in visual, musical, spatial and kinesthetic activities through their particular interests and talents thereby enabling them to enhance their academic potential. This effective use of resources is well aligned to the school's long range instructional goals to improve learning as evidenced by increased student outcomes on SEM assessments and meaningful work portfolios.
 - The school's organizational decisions include the assignment of push-in English as second language (ESL) teachers to support English language learners (ELL) in the classrooms during the literacy period. Both classroom and ESL teachers work collaboratively in teams to track the progress of ELLs and plan lessons to meet their needs. Consequently, students increased their comprehension and advanced one or more levels in reading as noted in the Achieve 3000 ELA assessment results.
- The school conveys high expectations that promote parent involvement and support learning so that school, students and families work together toward achieving the school's goals. (3.4)
 - Teacher teams and staff communicate high expectations through parent workshops on college prep, rebellious teens, State assessments and promotional criteria. Students participate in assembly programs and small group activities with the guidance counselors to improve their self-confidence and enhance their social skills so that they achieve their goals. Parents report that they appreciate the school's efforts in communicating high expectations for students' academic, attendance and personal success. Families and students participate in training that provides important information regarding promotion and high school selection. For example, the school held a high school orientation night,

during which representatives from various high schools provided information about their programs. In addition, workshops are provided on the high school application process. As a result, students are eager to attend high school and parents feel that their children are well prepared for their next level of learning.

- The school effectively uses a wide range of assessment data that guides student grouping decisions and informs planning, resulting in a clear understanding of the performance of learners. (2.2)
 - Individual teachers and teacher teams effectively use item analysis from the New York State exam, periodic assessments, Scan-Tron Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA) and core tests developed by teachers, conference notes and rubrics that are aligned with the school's key standards and curricula. All subjects include a comprehensive assessment component which guides teachers' instructional and curricular decisions. Teachers use the assessment data to surface common misconceptions and identify strengths and learning needs of individual and student subgroups across grades and subjects. For example, teachers identified that academic vocabulary needed to be prioritized in their lessons for ELLs and students with disabilities (SWD). This led to revisions and adjustments in curricular maps, grade level planning and student grouping, to address students' learning needs and academic deficits by grade, subject and student subgroups as evidenced by an increase of 22% on the DRA which measures comprehension, fluency and accuracy of reading.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase the coherence of curricular modifications so that academic tasks promote higher levels of thinking and cognitive engagement for all students. (1.1)
 - The school uses pacing calendars that support rigorous habits and higher order skills and implementation of standards-based lessons. However, modifications to meet the needs of ELLs and special needs students are not fully coherent across grades and subjects. Consequently, lessons and academic tasks do not always cognitively engage highest and lowest achieving students, limiting the achievement of subgroups of students as evident in the school's Progress Report and State accountability achievement status.
- Refine teaching practices to promote greater consistency in strategically differentiating instruction so that lessons challenge all students in their learning and result in meaningful work products. (1.2)
 - The school focuses on supporting high needs students such as ELLs and SWDs through lessons that include the use of various graphic organizers across grades. For example, in one classroom, ELL students were effectively engaged in writing an argumentative piece using the "tree method" (topic sentence, reason, evidence, explanation). However, high performing students are sometimes unchallenged and instructional strategies do not always offer meaningful extensions that further develop their thinking. For example, in another classroom, students who are

above grade completed learning tasks quickly and were not further challenged through appropriate extensions, thus limiting additional opportunities to continually enhance cognitive growth.

- Enhance the use of classroom observations along with the analysis of student work data to improve professional development and student achievement. (4.1)
 - School leaders offer recommendations for teachers to improve their instructional practice through frequent formal and informal observations and analysis of student work products. The school has adopted Danielson's research-based rubric to articulate clear expectations for teacher practices and use that framework for development of teachers. However, the feedback is not always clear or actionable and lacks alignment with individual teacher's goals. This limits the school's ability to identify teachers' specific areas for improvement to strengthen their teaching craft and positively impact student outcomes.
- Enhance school structures to ensure that effective teacher practice and use of resources result in student mastery of current and evolving State standards. (5.1)
 - The school's teacher team structure and data gathering systems reinforce capacity building practices and support the analysis of student progress towards meeting the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). A review of baseline data highlighted the need to examine the alignment of classroom instruction to CCLS. However, procedures to ensure that classroom teaching and organizational resources translate into student achievement on summative assessments are not consistently aligned across the school thus limiting coherence between what is taught and how it is taught in some classrooms.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The Joseph Pulitzer 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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?			X	
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?				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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			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, guidance/advisement 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, with particular attention to the CCLS?			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