

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

J.H.S. 123 James M. Kieran
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle School X123

1025 MORRISON AVENUE
BRONX
NY 10472

Principal: Tyra Williams

Dates of review: February 13-14, 2012
Lead Reviewer: Timothy Behr

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

J.H.S. 123 James M. Kieran is a Junior High-Intermediate-Middle school with 527 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 30% Black, 68% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 19% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 90%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal makes strategic decisions that are aligned to the school's instructional goals of implementing CCLS tasks and writing to improve student outcomes. (1.3)
 - o The grade level teams support school wide structures and inquiry while the department teams look at student work and curriculum maps. They share and develop strategies (modeling, increased independent reading time to improve stamina, and focusing on using details to improve writing) to meet student learning needs. As a result, there is a more unified approach to teaching and ultimately learning for students as evidenced by student work products.
 - o Teacher assignments are based on data reports and observations which demonstrate positive leveraged changes in student outcomes to consistently support student learning and promote accountable interaction during grade and department meetings and post observation conferences. Pedagogues hold themselves responsible for student progress by consistently modifying instructional practices to revisit topics and ability grouping to meet the needs of students. Consequently, all key constituents are knowledgeable of student performance and progress leading to gains evidenced by formative assessments results.
- The administration regularly monitors the effectiveness of pedagogy with an emphasis on adult learning in order to strengthen classroom practice. (4.1)
 - o The administration conducts formal and informal observations using a researched based rubric with a current focus on aligning assessments with curriculum maps to drive instruction. Feedback to teachers is provided verbally and in writing and responses are monitored by the administration via subsequent class visits. Teachers plan their lessons utilizing data and maps and revise when warranted. As a result, there is ongoing improvement of instruction to meet the needs of students as evidenced by observation reports and student work products.
 - o State test results inform teachers assignments and retention. Some first year teachers were rated doubtful to complete probation as a result of observations and student performance results. Targeted professional development supports the special education Phase 1 reform by ensuring compliance with students' Individual Educational Plans. Learning walks make the observation experience more positive and inclusive. As a result, there is deepening of pedagogical skills as evidenced by formative assessment results.
- The principal, administration, faculty and staff work as a unified team to create a calm, respectful, and orderly environment for learning to take place. (1.4)
 - o Positive behaviors, college and career readiness are gained through student participation in the Success, Organization, Attendance, and Respect (SOAR) program which is new to the school this year. Student achievement and civic responsibility are regularly celebrated and acknowledged via SOAR bucks which can be exchanged for a variety of items. Students and adults treat each other respectfully in classrooms and in common areas. As a result, there have been an increase in student attendance and fewer suspensions.

- The school's administration, along with partnerships with community based organizations, and support personnel meet the needs of students and families. (4.4)
 - o In response to last year's Learning Environment Survey (LES) results the administration enlisted the teachers to have input in revising the school's PBIS program. Professional development activities empowered teachers to become active participants in highlighting and acknowledging positive student behavior. As a result, the school has been removed from being identified as persistently dangerous. Teachers and students are able to place more emphasis on academic achievement.
 - o The guidance counselor, along with the school's administration provide students the opportunity to participate in a high school fair and visit local colleges. A community based organization provides a college and career readiness fair for parents and their students. Consequently, the school is raising student awareness of high school and college requirements while enhancing social/emotional development.
- School leaders utilize assessment data to inform teacher hiring and assignments to support distributed leadership opportunities. (5.4)
 - o The school has created clear systems of frequent cycles of informal observations to inform the effectiveness of teacher hiring and assignments. Teacher data reports have been used to match students who perform in the lowest third with teachers who have success improving the progress and performance of these students. Resume analysis, data results and interviews led by content area specialists inform hiring practices. As a result, there has been positive growth in student progress as evidenced by the most recent periodic assessment results.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop curriculum maps and unit plans that consistently reference benchmarks that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards to support a rigorous instructional program for all students. (1.1)
 - o Teachers are identifying links between Common Core Learning Standard tasks and curriculum maps. Math teachers are implementing a sugar cookie task to reinforce concepts previously taught and are developing interdisciplinary links to the school wide English language arts writing curriculum. However, there is a misalignment of the pacing of the units and the content skills that students need in order to attain mastery.
 - o The school emphasizes small group instruction to actively engage both the lower and higher achieving students in developing higher order thinking skills. However, this practice is not implemented in all classes. In a 7th grade Special Education ELA class there was inconsistent evidence of students using reasoning to explain multiple ways to get an answer. In an 8th grade ELA class there was minimal evidence of analyzing multiple sources of information to establish a theory or opinion. As a result, the majority of students are not performing at grade level as evidenced the 2010-2011 Progress Report.
- Enhance the consistency of incorporating various teaching strategies in classrooms in order to challenge all students to achieve to their full potential. (1.2)
 - o Teachers inconsistently use various methods (whole group, small group, accountable talk and individual tutoring) to help students manage goals. When a task is completed the majority of students observed in classes will wait for teacher prompts before going on to another assignment. This leads to a lack of

student engagement in some classrooms. Consequently, students are not learning to their full potential as evidenced by the school's NYS accountability status of Improvement (year 1) for English language arts and Math.

- o There is inconsistent use of resources in the delivery of lessons to address student needs. This was evident in a special education class where students were expected to independently read a book that was above their reading level. Teachers inconsistently asked supplementary questions to check for student knowledge and understanding. As a result, teachers are not generally providing targeted instruction to meet the needs of students as evidenced by 2011 State test performance results.
- Strengthen systems that empower teachers to know their individual students' strengths and needs on a regular basis to support targeted instruction. (2.2)
 - o Teacher teams inconsistently use protocols to review summative and formative data to identify students strengths and areas for improvement. While curricular (sequence) and or instruction (writing to defend arguments) are modified to improve student mastery, teachers inconsistently use common formative assessments that are linked to the schools key standard of improving writing to evaluate the impact of modifications. Using exit slips and accountable talk as on-going checks for understanding was inconsistent across classrooms. As a result, the school is not targeting instruction to meet the particular needs of students as evidenced by student notebooks.
- Refine the monitoring of progress for English language learners and special education subgroups including the use of rubrics to ensure that students are attaining their goals throughout the academic year. (3.3)
 - o The school does not sufficiently use notebooks or classroom assignments to evaluate the strengths and needs of its subgroups. The inconsistent use of a progress tracker impedes the ability of the school to influence adjustments to curricula and or instruction based on student academic strengths and needs. Consequently, the school does not consistently analyze if the progress that students are making meets proficiency levels or moves them towards adequate yearly progress.
 - o Students receive actionable feedback on classroom assignments that are based on standards-based rubrics. However, targeted next steps for learning are not consistently identified by all teachers. In addition the school does not regularly share student outcomes of rubric based work with families. As a result, students are not certain of next steps and parents are unsure of content area strands they could support at home to improve student outcomes.
- Promote consistency with collaborative teacher teams by providing support in analyzing student work in order to provide all teachers with structured opportunities to reflect upon their teaching practice to improve student learning. (4.2)
 - o The majority of teachers are engaged in collaborative teams. Some teams meet more than others by choice to analyze data and student work products. This inconsistency limits the opportunities for teachers to determine the effectiveness of collaborations on student performance. Although the teams identify a nominally sized target population of struggling learners, they do not strategically work with the same students throughout the year to determine the impact of instructional change strategies over a prolonged period of time. As a result, the teams have not yet consistently identified specific instructional practices that have resulted in improved student outcomes on summative tests.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

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|---|----|---|---|----|
| School name: J.H.S. 123 James M. Kieran | 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

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|-----------|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| UD | Underdeveloped | D | Developing | P | Proficient | WD | Well Developed |
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