

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**Jean Nuzzi**

**Intermediate School 109**

**213-10 92<sup>nd</sup> Avenue**

**Queens Village**

**NY 11428**

**Principal: Karleen Adam Comrie**

**Dates of review: May 20 – 21, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Lenon Murray**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Jean Nuzzi is an intermediate school with 1084 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 37% Black, 22% Hispanic, 2% White, and 38% Asian/American Indian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 95.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school leaders and faculty align curricula to State standards and offer a range of learning experiences that engage students and support their learning. (1.1)
  - The school strategically uses scope and sequence guides, curriculum maps and pacing calendars, units of study informed by instructional shifts of the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) as faculty and school leaders work on full implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The school uses network support and an Aussie educational consultant as they engage throughout the year in developing well-crafted instructional units of study. For example, the units of study for seventh grade science are used across the grade and contain content, essential questions, assignments and suggested experiments. Informational and evidence-based argumentative writing is a major focus. This has led to a narrowing of the achievement gap between subgroups and the general student body when compared to periodic assessments from the same period last year and the promotion of college and career readiness in all grades.
  - Classroom visits reflect that teachers, across all grades, focus on higher order thinking skills, particularly in informational, challenging texts. For example, students are coached in making reasoned arguments with evidence and explaining their processes in math problem-solving, social studies and science. The school aligns its instructional tasks both vertically and horizontally particularly with regard to English language learners and students with disabilities. Special Education teachers and English as a Second Language teachers are fully engaged with the rest of the faculty in using the same standards and Common Core-aligned tasks to work with their student subgroups. They are continuously searching for and refining leveled entry points that are relevant and interesting. This has led to cognitive engagement by a vast majority of students.
- Teachers effectively use relevant assessment data creating a clear understanding of student performance that informs instructional adjustments. (2.2)
  - Teacher teams create and use assessments by subject area department. The major departments are English language arts, math, social studies and science. They align their rubrics and grading policies to promote consistency across the school with regard to task complexity. For example, the science department has regular unit assessments and quizzes at the conclusion of each topic. All labs are structured, mandatory and graded. The students in the small student group were able to speak to the rubrics that they used, explain their teachers' comments and demonstrate an awareness of what they do well and the next steps for improvement across subject areas. Exit slips are used selectively across all grade levels. Content area teacher teams created the questions for the assessments and revised the rubrics to align with the increased rigor of the Common Core. The various assessments are used to monitor

student progress so that the teachers could make needed adjustments to their instruction. As a result, teachers are able to better coach and tutor their students as evidenced by an increase in comprehension for 90% of English language learners in sixth grade as measured by a web-based program, Achieve 3000.

- The school establishes systems for classroom observations and provisions for feedback to teachers that intentionally facilitates professional development to improve teacher practice and student performance. (4.1)
  - The principal and assistant principals provide effective feedback to teachers a minimum of four times a year including newer teachers primarily from their informal observations and snapshots of classroom teaching and student work. During each observation, they focus on two or three of the competencies of the Danielson Framework to continuously improve teacher effectiveness by providing feedback that is individualized and tailored to their pedagogical strengths and areas of need. Planning is a priority area for the school and teachers' lesson plans demonstrate the clear expectations for teacher practice that the leaders propagate. Probationary teachers are mentored by experienced teachers in the building and sent off-site for multiple professional development sessions. As a result, teachers are supported with training in response to observation and student data that accelerates their professional growth.
- The principal makes informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support improvements in student learning. (1.3)
  - Aligned to instructional goals, the school uses its resources effectively to improve the learning outcomes of all students. For example, high needs students including English language learners and students with disabilities are placed in purchased programs such as Achieve 3000 that target specific literacy skills individualized according to student need. Students in different grades are sometimes bridged, and transitioned to the higher groups as they progress. The school schedule enables teams of teachers to meet regularly to share best practices and improve instruction by studying student work. For example, programming provides a weekly inquiry period, common prep periods for team work plus a volunteer team of teachers that specializes in facilitating 'critical friend' classroom inter-visitations. Teacher teams are also instrumental in revising curriculum aligned to the Common Core, monitoring organizational adjustments and enhancing parent-teacher communication regarding students' academic progress. As a result, there is steady progress towards the school's instructional goals as measured by improvements student writing and work products.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Refine teaching practices to ensure that teachers provide multiple entry points for all learners, including subgroups that result in meaningful work products. (1.2)

- Teachers in most classrooms plan lessons aligned with the school's belief in flexible grouping, relevant scaffolds and essential questions to drive instruction. For example, in a seventh grade social studies class a student asked, "What happens when treaties entered into in good faith are repeatedly broken by the government?" This was in response to an essential question that focused on "Manifest Destiny". Students with disabilities and English language learners are carefully considered as in the sixth grade classroom where each student had access to a computer terminal and were working on individualized lessons on Achieve 3000. The Danielson framework is consistently discussed in teacher team meetings to norm their pedagogical skills and strategies. Student engagement and participation are maintained at high levels as in the seventh grade science class where students were working on a lab activity to prove that sugars are produced when photosynthesis occurs in plants. However, all learners are not engaged in progressively challenging work. As a result, lessons do not always challenge all students at their level, particularly extensions for high performers, thus instructional entry points do not fully address all students' learning needs especially high achievers. This results in missed opportunities for these students to reach their fullest potential to exceed the standards.
- Improve the evaluation systems for school-wide decisions as you integrate CCLS to increase policy coherence. (5.1)
  - The school's instructional cabinet meets regularly to examine instructional practices and how assessments are utilized to inform instruction. They evaluate how resources are used in light of significant budget cuts and review consistent reports from teacher teams. This cabinet consisting of teachers and school leaders has been instrumental in facilitating the provision of professional development to support the integration of the CCLS in response to goal attainment and CIE. However, the process of evaluating and adjusting curricular, instructional and assessment practices is not sufficiently flexible and consistent. As a result, the adjustments required to support the CCLS expectations are slow and conservative about what teachers need to learn to make instructional shifts and subsequent student mastery.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Jean Nuzzi	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			X				
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?			X				
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?			X				
<b>School Culture</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?			X				
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			X				
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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 <b>inquiry approach</b> that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>