



Quality Review Report

2015-2016

J.H.S. 067 Louis Pasteur

Junior High School Q067

**51-60 Marathon Parkway
Queens
NY 11362**

Principal: Zoi McGrath

**Date of review: January 14, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Claudette Essor**

The School Context

J.H.S. 067 Louis Pasteur is a middle school with 907 students from grade 6 through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 62% Asian, 3% Black, 12% Hispanic, and 23% White students. The student body includes 2% English Language Learners and 8% students with disabilities. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 97.5%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	Additional Findings	Well Developed
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Additional Findings	Well Developed
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Additional Findings	Well Developed
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Focus	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

In all classrooms, instructional strategies illustrate strategic use of multiple entry points and extensions of curricula to immerse all learners in rigorous tasks and high level discussions

Impact

All students engage deeply in challenging and engaging learning activities that result in high levels of thinking, participation and ownership of learning and high quality work products in all disciplines.

Supporting Evidence

- In all classrooms, teachers challenge all students to learn new concepts and skills with peers and individually, through differentiated tasks and flexible groupings. Teachers scaffold and extend learning tasks via writing prompts, guiding questions, visuals and anchor activities that reinforce the day's teaching point. In a grade 8 Algebra 1 class, students worked in groups on their choice of one of three differentiated tasks outlined on an interactive white board. One task involved students examining three sets of data to determine positive and negative correlations of variables and distinguish between correlation and causation. A second task involved discussion of three other sets of data to examine similar relationships between variables, while a third task invited students to do the same thing with a third set of data about correlation and causation. Students debated their positions, using academic vocabulary such as bivariate data, positive and negative correlation and causation. Those who finished early moved on to creating and describing their own examples of causal relationships and correlations among variables.
- All lessons observed demonstrated effective use of student-led questioning and discussion. Some lessons involved students leading discussions with peers, using high level Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questions. In a grade 6 Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) class in English Language Arts (ELA) students worked in groups on tasks, such as using DOK question stems to review and revise questions on post-its from peers. Several revisions illustrated movement from low to high level DOK questions about changes in characters in the text, *The Lightning Thief*. Other lessons showed students "teaching" peers, using "Do Nows" that they created. In a grade 7 science class, a student used an interactive whiteboard with his own "Do-Now" and notes to introduce a lesson on the effects of wind erosion. He checked in on peers as they worked, reminding them that they had "one minute to finish" and must "add more details." The classroom teacher extended the lesson to a further study of wind erosion and other natural disasters.
- Instructional strategies challenge all students to take ownership of learning by exploring content for their next lesson ahead of time. They preview articles and or videos for homework to gain knowledge that they apply during the lesson that follows. The teacher facilitates discussions, as students share their learning across groups. In a "flipped lesson" where this model of instruction was seen, grade 8 students could be heard clarifying and applying the knowledge gained from their pre-viewing of science lesson activities on *YouTube*. The teacher listened in as students answered peer generated questions and asked their own questions about weather and precipitation. Similarly grade 8 students in a law class, previewed legal cases and prepared questions and briefs that they used in a mock trial where they demonstrated high-level thinking as jurors, defense attorneys, witnesses, victims, defendants and audience members, with the teacher as the judge.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Teams of teachers systematically analyze major elements of their instructional practice and share strategies to improve staff and student achievement. Distributive leadership structures empower teacher leaders to collaborate regularly with all school leaders.

Impact

Through extensive teamwork and shared leadership structures, teachers and other staff have multiple opportunities to provide critical input in high-level decisions that improve teaching and learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders strategically schedule all teachers for weekly grade level common planning and vertical team meetings that address all instructional expectations. There are eight vertical and seven horizontal teams that meet four times per month, including Mondays and Tuesdays, allowing all staff, including teacher leaders from each grade and school leaders, to share expertise and identify and implement best practices for accelerating staff and student achievement across all grades and content areas. There are also weekly house and department meetings which allow teachers to collaborate further in examining indicators of student performance and progress and developing initiatives to help all students succeed in mastering learning goals. Teamwork results in the refinement of curricula for all disciplines and successful implementation of the many initiatives for ongoing school improvement.
- During inquiry team meetings, teachers use protocols to examine student work, identify gaps in learning and identify strategies to improve student achievement. During the Quality Review, a team used a “Collaborative Assessment Conference” protocol to guide their discussion of strengths and needs of specific students whose work about the life of refugees was presented by a peer. Participants took turns sharing noticings, asking questions about the work, outlining learning needs evidenced in the work and generating ideas for re-teaching the content and skills involved. They drafted a plan for follow up work with the students whose work samples were examined and for other students with similar needs. Tracking logs for all targeted students contain detailed findings about each student’s needs, interventions applied and indicators of progress across two cycles of assessments. Teams are focused on gathering additional data to assess the impact of strategies used to date.
- School leaders have empowered teacher leaders such as instructional coaches, a data specialist, grade advisors, lead teachers and members of a Core Inquiry Team, to collaborate with peers and other leaders on school level decisions about teaching and learning. They identify and implement professional learning activities for all staff. With every teacher programmed for a data period, they also work with peers and administrators in using data to outline and implement intervention and enrichment strategies for all students. The principal and teachers noted that teacher leaders play an integral part in decisions about school resources to be purchased and ongoing evaluation of school programs and their contributions to student achievement. However, with staff members now engaged in examining data from recently administered assessments, discrete measures of the impact of the work of the school’s many teams on student achievement, are not yet refined.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school's curricula are strategically aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts and offer all students highly challenging learning experiences.

Impact

All students, including students with disabilities and English language learners have ready access to curricula with rigorous academic tasks designed to foster higher order thinking and heighten their readiness for college and careers.

Supporting Evidence

- Using a "Curriculum Planning Protocol" template, teacher teams create unit maps for all content areas, showing essential questions, targeted Common Core Learning Standards, assessments, performance tasks and core texts that reflect the instructional shifts. There is emphasis on fluency and problem solving in math, inquiry-based activities in science, exploration of historical concepts, text-based responses in all content areas, and rigorous writing tasks across the curricula. Student work for grade 7 showed that after reading *The Odyssey*, students engaged in a critical review of the book and posted their response to a school website. Students in grade 6 produced a similar response to tasks from their reading of *Wuthering Heights* while grade 8 students posted responses about their text, *The Hunger Games*. Bulletin boards and student portfolios showed students' responses to informative and argumentative essay tasks in all disciplines.
- With literacy across all content areas as a schoolwide instructional focus, units of study reflect the use of nonfiction selections to incorporate literacy-based tasks in all grades and disciplines. In alignment to a focus on differentiated tasks for diverse learners, all lesson plans include three tasks differentiated for students to choose from for group or independent work, based on learning style, Lexile level, or products. Tasks linked to web-based resources such as *TeenBiz* allow students at different Lexile levels to choose articles on the same topic and web-based tools such as *Glogster and Gizmos* offer enrichment and intervention activities. Common Core-aligned resources, including *Expeditionary Learning*, *Algebra 1 Common Core*, *New York Science*, *United States History and New York History*, *Achieve 3000* and *EngageNY*, support instruction in applicable disciplines and *Word Generation* provides for the integration of academic vocabulary in all units of study.
- All students have access to college and career readiness activities through lessons in areas such as visual arts, drama, dance, law, debate, chorus, band, orchestra, film, and robotics. With units of study that integrate Science, Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) content, there are tasks that allow students to investigate theories about real world issues. They use math and engineering practices to design solutions and create award winning projects for national contests, such as a "Future City" competition in which students work with an educator and engineer mentor to design models of future cities. STEM activities also support a mentoring program in which some grade 8 students serve as learning partners for grade 4 students from an elementary school. Project-based tasks linked to curricula for Integrated Algebra, earth science, geometry and living environment Regents courses offer grade 8 students opportunities to further explore applications of math and science concepts. Curricula for library skills, Spanish Regents, computer literacy and study skills classes add tasks that also promote high school and college readiness for all students.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

All teachers use varied assessment practices and tools to create clear portraits of student mastery of skills across all classes. There are ongoing checks for understanding in all classrooms and all students engage in peer and self-assessment.

Impact

Comprehensive and varied assessment practices result in adjustments to curricula and instruction that meet students' diverse learning needs and generate actionable and meaningful feedback that makes all students well aware of next steps for improved mastery of their learning targets.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers monitor student growth via a variety of assessments, including interim assessments, baselines and benchmarks in all core contents areas. They administer Teachers College running records, creating a profile of individual student strengths and areas of needs, to inform the selection of independent reading texts by Lexile levels. Teachers also administer a quarterly exam in English language arts, math, Spanish, science and social studies and use the data to plan instruction, guide student grouping, adjust teaching practices and implement intervention and enrichment activities. They share a common grading policy and collaboratively develop task-specific rubrics, generating feedback about student progress towards mastery of anchor standards, such as writing opinion pieces and supporting points of view with text-based evidence.
- Using individual or small group conferencing, teachers engage students in discussions of performance on assessments, to highlight the progress students make in meeting mastery goals. Based on data from exit slips, peer-and self-assessment rubrics and student self-reflection sheets, teachers across classrooms check for understanding and make adjustments to curricula and instruction, as applicable to diverse student needs that are detected. Using laptops that connect them to web-based assessment portals, including *Nearpod* and a *Smart Response Mimio Vote System*, students take assessments and give feedback to and receive feedback from teachers. The *Smart Response Mimio Vote System* allows the teacher to engage in real time assessment of students' understanding of content, by asking questions and obtaining an instant digital response from the entire class. Data from the responses lead to formation and/or revision of groups, immediate conferencing with students who answered incorrectly and/or re-teaching.
- As observed in classrooms, students self-assess and are able to talk about their progress, using checklists and rubrics. Additionally, all students use reflection essays to assess their performance on tasks. In one such essay about the experiences of characters in the text, *Inside Out and Back Again*, a student noted, "I need to add more details to provide more background information about the characters". Another said, "I forgot to list the authors quoted and not just the websites that I used to write my essay". All students use portfolios of work from all core disciplines to monitor their own growth in performance and all portfolios contain student-teacher conference notes, student goals for each quarter, reflections on steps taken to achieve and progress towards goals, samples of assessments and many samples of high quality work products. Further, all students who participated in the student meeting, displayed work samples with teacher and peer feedback on post-its with comments and next steps linked to a rubric attached to each sample of work in their portfolio. They all articulated a clear understanding of their next steps as learners, based on the feedback noted on the work samples that they presented.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and staff engage in reciprocal communication with families to share expectations for students and promote partnerships in support of staff and student achievement.

Impact

Communication of and targeted supports for attainment of high expectations by staff and students promote collective responsibility among staff and families, contributing to improvement in staff and student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders set clear expectations and provide ongoing support for teacher practice, specifically connected to teacher goals and feedback, including next steps, from formal and informal observations. They work with teachers in developing their instructional practice, through school-based supports, including participation in three cycles of professional learning activities, provisions for peer to peer intervisitations as well as offsite professional learning and formal mentoring of teachers. Instructional coaches meet with new teachers to review the needs of their students and to support their implementation of appropriate instructional strategies for all lessons. Teachers reported that they are all expected to turnkey learning to peers and implement best practices in all content areas. Teachers also noted that the supports they receive help to improve their pedagogy and result in all students making progress towards learning goals.
- With a schoolwide expectation for all teachers to maximize student ownership of learning, school leaders have provided teachers with specific feedback, modeling, and targeted professional development related to “engagement and transference of ownership to students” as per the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. In addition, a toolkit of “Fusion Strategies”, created with input from teachers and school leaders, offers all staff access to 35 literacy-based strategies for implementing high quality student-led instruction in all classrooms. The school’s participation as a host in the Department of Education’s Learning Partners Program further contributes to instructional support for all staff, with three model teachers from the school visiting partner schools, observing best practices, and turnkeying information that allows peers to adapt and integrate new practices and strategies for accelerating staff and student growth.
- School leaders and staff partner with families in workshops on topics such as Common Core Learning Standards, New York State assessments and the high school transition process. Several families spoke of events such as a high school night, a back to school night and breakfast with the principal meetings, which informed them about curricula, classwork and homework expectations for their children, as well as tips for helping their children at home. Families attend weekly parent engagement activities that include student-led conferences, with students discussing their work and progress in learning, while families and teachers look on. Families are also kept informed about their children’s progress on assessments, projects and homework assignments, via quarterly report cards, mid-quarter progress reports and *Jupiter Ed*, an online portal with grades and messages from school staff. Families partner with staff in sponsoring after-school activities for students and parent engagement activities. They help provide coverage for and push parent participation in events such as bowling nights, environmental projects, book fairs, and music, art, dance and drama presentations, including a school play. Parent leaders also maintain a website with postings of school events and links to educational supports for families and students.