

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

John Ericsson School

Middle School 126

**424 Leonard Street
Brooklyn
NY 11222**

Principal: Rosemary Ochoa

Dates of review: December 2 - 3, 2009

Lead Reviewer: James Quail

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

John Ericsson School is a middle school with 474 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 16% Black, 73% Hispanic, 7% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 91.7 %.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The school focuses on raising student academic and social outcomes. Student behavior has improved greatly as the school has made efforts and plans in this area, and this has been noted by parents, students, teachers and the principal. However, behavior is still not as good as it could be. School leaders have adjusted schedules and programs to maximize the use of time and personnel thus giving more emphasis to learning and the improvement of instruction. Teachers have been able to meet purposefully on a weekly basis as teams and have focused on goal setting. However, there is lack clarity as to their next steps in this process, which prevents teachers from embedding change in their practice.

The school utilizes information from surveys and a vast variety of data sources to monitor student performance trends, including its student subgroups. Teachers use this data to adjust instruction to meet student needs. Teachers including subject and grade teams use a variety of tools to support the improvement of learning. These provide evidence of pupil progress thus encouraging teachers to hold themselves accountable for student outcomes. In addition, teachers use a variety of data binders that supports them in making school and class-level decisions as to the next steps in student learning. However, teachers servicing English language learners and special education students lack specific strategies for these students, preventing them from making timely decisions on what is taught and how it is taught to improve student outcomes.

The principal has provided additional resources in technology in an effort to expand the differentiation of instruction in the school. However, a great many classes and adults do not have the opportunity to use these resources to improve their learning.

Comprehensive and purposeful professional development is in place, reflecting school goals and focusing in on the development of teacher leaders by supporting the improvement of instruction and student outcomes. Individual teachers select their own offerings giving them voice in the school and reflecting the school's belief on how teachers learn best. School leaders utilize daily observations, formal lessons, data talks and conversations with staff to align these offerings to school and teacher needs as it builds capacity.

The school engages in an open exchange of purposeful and varied student progress information with families, mainly through the commitment and support of the principal. This varied and consistently provided communication fosters a positive, caring and collaborative home-school relationship centered on learning and improvement.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty maintain meaningful communications with families that support purposeful home-school relationships.
 - Close collaboration between school and families enables parents and teachers to gain an accurate picture of the precise strengths and needs of individual students and this positively supports student learning.
 - Teachers use data from ARIS and other assessments weekly to plan pertinent instruction by subject and grade levels. Specific workshops help parents to understand and use the various forms of data to understand their children's successes and next steps in learning.
- Leaders and faculty use a range of accessible data systems to gather, organize and understand student performance trends and to inform planning and choice of resources to meet the precise needs of students.
 - The teachers and faculty use relevant information to meet the specific needs of all individual and groups of students. Teams of teachers use information from interim progress reports, report cards, conference notes, unit tests, and multiple grade assessments to note pupil progress and see trends they address in their next steps. Teachers use data to deliver lessons based upon the assessment results within data binders or portfolios.
 - Administrators use information gleaned from many sources including the Learning Environment Survey and the School Self Evaluation form to adjust school decisions, and the use of resources and personnel. For example, the school uses a new literacy program to raise standards in response to staff evaluation and requests. Other improvements have led to a sharp decline in behavioral infractions this school year.
- The school has a full picture of the progress made by each student and this enables the school to set clear expectations for learning, within and outside the school.
 - Teachers provide meaningful and timely feedback to parents and students on the progress of pupils and the opportunities for support and enrichment. This practice is consistent across teachers.
 - The school offers a wide array of workshops, trainings and extended day opportunities for parents and students to note progress and to make certain that all parties know their next steps. The school reflects an active and supportive parent and school leadership group and they work in a collaborative fashion with the faculty and teachers. One parent mentioned, "The principal is everywhere and she cares very much about my children and the school".

- The school renders a vast variety of professional offerings to individual teachers and aligns this support with its use of classroom and informal observations, data talks and school needs.
 - The school's program of teacher development is aligned well with school goals and the curriculum. Professional development activities reflect the school's belief about how students and adults learn best.
 - Teachers select workshops and trainings to match and meet their needs and wishes. This enables the school to provide multiple opportunities for teachers and faculty to develop and practice their leadership as part of a data-informed effort to improve learning and professional practices.
- The school evaluates meticulously all data and assessment systems and modifies policies, programs and practices to meet the varied needs of students, staff and parents more closely.
 - In response to the widespread analysis of all relevant data, a pertinent academic plan is in place to match student needs, personnel and available resources. Recent improvements include a new literacy program and extra science lesson to address identified weaknesses.
- Teachers and students have specific time to meet, and identify progress towards instructional goals and student outcomes and make adjustments, when required.
 - Teachers are now accountable for improving instruction and student progress. Grade, subject and other teams evaluate student performance and needs and report outcomes.
 - The modified program schedule minimizes the amount of travel time between classes for students and teachers and student attendance is higher this year due to the new rigorous strategies in place.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve student behavior and meet their social, academic and emotional needs more closely.
 - Parents and staff report that behavior has improved this year but not all teachers uphold the agreed whole-school discipline policy.
 - Parents and some staff members feel some staff have very low expectations of students. Many students commented that some teachers expect very little of them both socially and academically and wish all staff would listen to and address their problems when they arise.
- Promote and support teacher teams in knowing the next steps in their planning as they collaborate and plan, especially for those delivering instruction to English language learners and special education students.
 - Teachers meet, collaborate, use data and study pupil outcomes and progress but they are not clear about their next steps. The focus of these meetings is not always related to student learning or improved

instructional practice and do not reflect teachers' moves to the next planning steps.

- Some English language learners and students in the special education class show they can produce some high quality work. Conversations with these children show they love to talk, establish friendships and think very creatively. This is not the case for all these students, and teachers do not always recognize this and plan for improvement.
- Identify data-led long-term and short-term goals and produce detailed plans to meet the precise needs of English language learners and special education students.
 - In an effort to expand the differentiation of instruction in the school instruction for English language learners does not engage or motivate students or meet their individual needs. Lessons are too prescriptive.
 - The grade and subject team for English language learners do not share or express specific strategies or ideas to work on with their students. The same applies to special education students.
- Extend the use of technology to support teachers in setting classroom goals to meet the differentiated needs of students, teachers and caregivers to increase opportunities continuous learning.
 - Technology instruction is inconsistent as some students receive computer education but many do not as the school does not provide a computer teacher.
 - There is no evidence of the use of technology to support instruction or improve classroom practices in the majority of classrooms.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| School name: John Ericsson Middle School | △ | ▷ | ✓ | + |
| 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> | △ | ▷ | ✓ | + |
| 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 | |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 1 | | | 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> | △ | ▷ | ✓ | + |
| 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 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level? | | | X | |
| 2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize 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 |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 2 | | | 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> | △ | ▶ | ✓ | + | | | |
| 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 | | | | |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 3 | | | 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> | △ | ▶ | ✓ | + | | | |
| 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 | | | | |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 4 | | | 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> | △ | ▶ | ✓ | + | | | |
| 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 | | | | |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 5 | | | X | | | | |
| Quality Review Scoring Key | | | | | | | |
| △ | Underdeveloped | ▶ | Underdeveloped with Proficient Features | ✓ | Proficient | + | Well Developed |