Quality Review Report

2014-2015

John J. Pershing Intermediate School
School Designation 20K220

4812 9th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11220

Principal: Loretta Witek

Date of review: December 11, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Karina Costantino
The School Context

John J. Pershing Intermediate School is an intermediate school with 1377 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 1% Black, 45% Hispanic, 10% White, and 42% Asian students. The student body includes 35% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 95%.

School Quality Criteria

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<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
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<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school…</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
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<td>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 Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
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<tr>
<th>School Culture</th>
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<td>To what extent does the school…</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
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<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
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<td>To what extent does the school…</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
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Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum Rating: Well Developed

Findings:

Pershing Intermediate School has developed an engaging curriculum across grades for all subgroups, aligned to Common Core State Standards, providing a rigorous curriculum for all students.

Impact:

As a result of a rigorous curriculum and student empowerment around their academic goals, the school is no longer a focus school but exists in good standing moving their English Language Learners and students with Special Needs.

Supporting Evidence:

- The Core Curriculum based units, adapted from Code X, CMP3, FOSS and Glencoe are mapped on Rubicon Atlas to promote school wide collaboration and access creating coherence across grades and subjects.

- Supplemental resources include MyOn, Fast Forward, Grammar in Context, Wordily Wise, Readworks.org, Quizlet, Brainpop, Flocabulary, Story Corp. LearnersDictionary.com, IXL and Khan Academy which are used to additionally support English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities by increasing their language acquisition through rigorous programs.

- In science, teachers are using new state framework and city scope and sequence. They are rewriting current curriculum maps to include essential questions, content/concepts, skills assessments and standards. During the summer, the science teachers rebuilt the curricula using Foss and Glencoe, integrating baseline assessments and imputing and adapting curricula that provides meaningful context to what students are learning inside the classroom by making connections outside the classroom, to build college and career readiness.

- Students have rubrics across subjects. In addition, they are using exit slips to cite understandings or wonderings and are encouraged to be advocates for themselves where they are uncertain as to their next steps. Provided with a number of acronyms students use them to attack any piece of literature. For example, A.R.M.S. provides them with the steps necessary, which are Adding specific evidence, Removing what doesn’t make sense, Moving to a better place and Substituting boring words. This is especially helpful to our English Language Learners and Students with disabilities. In addition, students also use stop and jots, discussion strategies, graphic organizers, turn and talk; peer and self-assessments enabling them to identify their next steps and demonstrate their thinking towards their next steps.
Findings:

All teachers are engaged in professional collaborations to implement the Common Core State Standards that support the achievement of school goals, while building distributive leadership among all teachers.

Impact:

The work of these professional collaborations result in teacher teams being self-sufficient and teacher led, empowering teachers to take on leadership roles on a rotating basis. However, not all teachers were engaged in inquiry based collaborations which would strengthen teacher practice, as well as improve student outcomes for all sub groups.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams span the school in a variety of ways. In addition to the Grade Content Team, there are Professional Learning Communities which focus on particular content areas, developing strategies to promote achievement; a Paraprofessional Team to have paraprofessionals work as partners in the classroom to increase student achievement, and The English as a Second Language Team to consistently revise existing curricula to provide entry points for the large number of English language learners in the building.

- To promote achievement and improve instruction, the teachers consistently analyze assessment data and look at student work. Through the use of the school’s new Learning Management System, Datacation, teachers are more accurately able to predict students’ outcomes. The Datacation system allows the teams to identify students that are academically at risk to provide the timely remediation and provide interventions essential to student success and school improvement.

- The structures in place to support distributive leadership are the Professional Learning Communities which rotate teachers to present; the Mentor/Mentee program encourages support among staff of each other: The Demonstration Teacher Team models best practice in identified lab sites throughout the school and the Peer Instructional Team which consists of coaches to support teachers and improve their instruction for student learning aligned to the Danielson Framework.

- Although teams meet regularly to examine data and monitor curriculum, a true inquiry model of trying research based strategies to move a specific group of students is not consistent throughout teams, preventing school wide instructional coherence which would move student outcomes for all subgroups.
Additional Findings

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings:

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curriculum that is informed by the Danielson Framework and all teaching consistently provides multiple entry points so all learners are engaged in challenging tasks.

Impact:

Through engaging students in multiple entry points, the school projects and documents realistic and attainable learning trajectories moving students to attain their projected goals. The intentionality of this work is reflected in team level discussions and is a coherent school wide belief.

Supporting Evidence

- Multiple entry points are provided through the varied Depth of Knowledge tasks in units as well as in the daily lessons. Students are engaged in accountable talk across subject areas to enrich student discussion and deepen student understanding. The English as a Second Language (ESL) push in model has been very successful in various content areas. The combination of teachers serving the English language learner population and decreasing the student-teacher ratio has proven to be successful. This is evidenced by the state English Language Arts (ELA) and New York State English as A Second Language Assessment (NYSESLAT) All students engage in CLOSE reading to determine what the text states explicitly and make logical inferences from it as well as cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. This is achieved through the continued use, as seen in classrooms visited, of accountable dialogue, classroom debates and small and large group discussions.

- All teachers are aware of students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds and are understanding that English Language learners/bilingual learners are at different stages of language and literacy development. To that end, teachers draw on the home languages/literacies-cultural practices of English language learners/bilingual learners as powerful resources to develop at school.

- Students monitor their own thinking through various modes such as exit slips, self-assessment checklists, peer assessments and reflections. In addition, students are engaged in close reading to determine what the text states explicitly and make logical references from it: cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. This is achieved through the continued use of accountable dialogue, classroom debates and small and large group discussions.
Findings:

All assessments are aligned to the curriculum and are used to adjust curricula and instruction as well as determine progress toward student goals. In addition, the content area teachers create common assessments to determine trends across grades to adjust teacher practice.

Impact: Teachers collaborate and share best practices based on data which moves students to meet their goals and enabled the school to move from a focus school to a school in good standing.

Supporting Evidence

- Core curriculum based units adapted from Scholastic Code X, CMP3, FOSS and Glencoe are mapped on Rubicon Atlas to promote building wide collaboration and periodic refinement.

- English language arts uses a novel based common core aligned curriculum developed collaboratively by the assistant principal, literacy coach and teachers. This curriculum is refined periodically by teachers based on student need and formative and summative assessment. In addition, Wordly Wise 3000 was implemented as a vocabulary school wide instructional resource.

- Teachers analyze school formative and summative data. Results acquired from pre and post assessments are uploaded to the DDC portal. This information is used to form instructional groups within the classroom. Ongoing assessments are given to monitor student learning and make necessary adjustments within the classroom.

- During professional learning, teacher teams identified the questions from the 2013-14 New York State English language arts and Mathematics assessments as well as findings from the baseline and Measures of Student Learning assessments to develop scaffolds and other modifications for differentiation in order to provide multiple entry points for all learners including English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities.
Findings:

The school has embedded high expectations in the very fabric of the building to parents, students and staff to meet all student and teacher goals.

Impact:

This results in establishing a strong path to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers receive an updated electronic handbook that outlines the school wide expectations and procedures. The principal discusses high expectations during the pre and post formal and informal observation conferences. In addition, teachers maintain a Pershing 22 email account and share valuable documents to spreadsheets on google doc., building coherence across the school on and among grades.

- The parents receive a survey which indicates their needs and consequently drives the professional development sessions on Tuesday afternoons familiarizing them with the various content areas. In addition, the Grade 8 Science Chronicles newsletter is provided to parents five times a year to provide them with the goals for each unit of study, as well as important events that are upcoming in the building.

- Partnerships with Lutheran Medical Center, The Guidance Center of Brooklyn and the Chinese Planning Council (Beacon Program) and Maimonides Hospital provide counseling for parents and assist students with their social and emotional well-being.