



Charter School Annual Site Visit Report
Charter Schools Office
2010-2011

DR. RICHARD IZQUIERDO HEALTH AND SCIENCE CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

JUNE 2011

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

Dr. Richard Izquierdo Health and Science Charter School is a middle/high school serving approximately 100 sixth grade students in the 2010-2011 school year.¹ The school opened in 2010 with grade 6. It plans to grow to serve students grades 6 through 12.² It is currently housed in DOE space in District 12.³

The school population comprises 30.1% Black, 68.8% Hispanic, 1.1% White, and 0% Asian students. 89.3% of students receive Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, compared to 86.9% of the district.⁴ The student body includes 14.0% English language learners (ELL) and 15.1% special education students (SPED), compared to 20.2% ELL and 18.9% SPED in the district.⁵

The school is in its first year and thus has not yet earned a Progress Report grade or state/federal accountability designation.⁶ The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 95.4%.⁷

Annual Review Process Overview:

The NYC DOE Charter Schools Office (CSO) conducts an annual site visit of New York City Department of Education authorized charter schools in order to assess three primary questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a viable organization; and is the school in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The visits are conducted by representatives of the New York City Department of Education Charter Schools Office and last the duration of one school day. The annual site visit begins with a meeting with the principal and school leadership team. Subsequently, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators, teachers, and students. Areas of evaluation include, but are not limited to: academic goals and mission; curriculum and instruction; school culture and learning environment; assessment utilization; parent engagement; government structures and organizational design; community support; special populations; and safety and security.

The following experts participated in the review of this school on June 1, 2011:

- Richard Larios, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSO
- Jessica Fredston-Hermann, Analyst, NYC DOE CSO

¹ NYC DOE ATS system

² NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

³ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

⁴ Demographic Data drawn from NYC DOE ATS System; data pulled on June 30, 2011

⁵ Demographic Data drawn from NYC DOE ATS System; data pulled on June 30, 2011

⁶ New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

⁷ Self-reported by school; pulled on May 20, 2011

Part 2: Findings

Areas of Strength

- The school and classroom environment is safe, orderly, and positive. Classrooms are well-resourced and benefit from the integrated use of technology.
 - The school environment is print-rich with multiple examples of student work displayed.
 - Teachers use SmartBoards in classrooms and all students are given iPads. On the day of the visit, students were observed using their iPads to create PowerPoint presentations for group projects.
 - The school has a number of systems in place to foster a positive school community including an Advisory program and a system of giving students blue tickets to reward positive behavior, who are then celebrated during monthly assemblies.

- The school Board, administration and staff all have a strong commonality of purpose, embracing the school's mission and academic and social development goals for students.
 - Teachers interviewed spoke about wanting students to understand the importance of healthy living on a daily basis. Teachers stated that they also try to model health informally on a daily basis, such as by banning unhealthy food in classrooms.
 - All students take capoeira daily and an additional gym class once a week. The school's Health/Science theme is incorporated through a Health/Science class for all students. All students received health screenings organized by the Urban Health Plan, the school's institutional partner.
 - Teachers have developed a common language around instruction through professional development focused on the common themes of planning using the Understanding by Design model and instructional delivery following strategies from *The Skillful Teacher*.

- The school is beginning to focus on data use to inform instruction, to target interventions for low-performing students, and to engage students in the use of data and learning standards.
 - Students take interim assessments three times per year, as well as a number of practice exams. The school is currently using the Acuity assessment system as well as the Scantron Performance Series.
 - The school used data from Acuity exams to re-teach certain key standards during a Vacation Academy this year over spring break. Over 60% of students participated in the program this year.
 - Some teachers interviewed described using data from Acuity and other in-class exams to identify standards for re-teaching.
 - The school publicly displays attendance data and data from interim assessments in hallways, showcasing class averages, how many students answered each question correctly or incorrectly, and noting which students mastered which standards.
 - School leadership stated that they are currently in the process of building a Student Success Plan that will incorporate students' data-driven goals. Students currently work on this plan during the Advisory period.

- Lesson planning is standards-based and follows a consistent format. The school principal reviews teachers' lesson plans and provides feedback from observations based on how closely teachers follow the lesson plan format.
 - In one class observed, students were creating PowerPoint presentations for math class to review topics from Impact Math, and one of the requirements was that students had to identify the standard covered for each slide. Reviewers noted that students were able to explain what the standard meant and how it had been measured in class.
 - All students complete a Mastery Project that includes a written component and an oral presentation. The Mastery Project is intended to combine different disciplines (e.g. health section as part of newspaper). All teachers work to build investment in the Mastery Project, and hallways contain countdowns to the mastery assignment due date.
- The school has engaged families and the community in efforts to improve the school.
 - The School Enhancement Collaborative (SEC) includes teachers, parents, members of the administration, Board members, and members of the Urban Health Plan (UHP). The SEC meets on a weekly basis to create action plans around perceived areas of need, such as developing an afterschool program.
 - School leadership stated that their Parent Association is "very active." The PTA meets monthly and has also been involved with the SEC. School leadership stated that a number of parents also frequently attend Board meetings.
 - All parents are given cell phone numbers and email addresses for teachers. Teachers interviewed described the parents as "supportive" and noted that many come into the school and/or help as chaperones.
 - The school benefits from its institutional partnership with the Urban Health Plan, which provided BMI, vision, and dental screenings for all students. UHP members also sit on the Board and participate in the SEC.

Areas of Growth

- The school should continue to improve its professional development and feedback structures to provide more targeted, differentiated support for teachers.
 - The school currently holds Professional Development on Friday afternoons, but students are still in the building at this time so not all teachers are able to attend. The school is encouraged to consider alternate strategies that allow all teachers to attend Professional Development together each week, as well as to continue the effort to attain its goal of providing teachers with 90 uninterrupted minutes of PD each week.
 - Teachers interviewed stated that while they received occasional informal feedback from each other and from the school dean, they did not receive much formal feedback from the principal. The two math teachers currently do cross-observations but this structure is not utilized for all teachers. The school should continue to develop their systems for providing regular, useful feedback to teachers and helping teachers develop individualized growth goals.
 - Teachers interviewed stated that they do not have enough time for common planning or meeting in teams. The school is encouraged to consider different strategies for incorporating more structured collaboration time for teachers as well as more structured activities for teacher collaboration.
- The school is encouraged to focus on improving the quality/consistency of instruction, classroom management, and student engagement.
 - The level of rigor and student engagement observed on the day of the visit was inconsistent. In the majority of classrooms observed, students were asked to

- complete Cloze notes or multiple-choice/fill-in-the-blank questions without opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking tasks. The school is encouraged to consider strategies to increase the level of rigor across all classrooms and build in more opportunities for students to practice higher-order thinking.
- In a number of classes observed, reviewers noted that classroom time was lost due to issues of classroom management, such as students talking during teacher instruction and not completing assigned tasks. The school is encouraged to focus on clarifying expectations for what students should be doing while in class so as to increase time spent on task, and to consider professional development on classroom management to further develop teachers' skills.
 - In some classes observed, instruction was largely teacher-directed with few checks for understanding and few opportunities for students to participate. The school is encouraged to consider strategies such as think time and checks for understanding to increase student engagement and participation, and to work toward increasing students' ownership of their own learning.
 - The school has a majority of young teachers (five of seven of teachers at the time of the visit were first year teachers) and has experienced some turnover this year with several teachers leaving in the middle of the year. The school is encouraged to focus on sustainability by providing differentiated support for teachers based on their individual needs as well as filling the budgeted Academic AP position to assist school efforts in improving instruction and instructional support.
- The staff should work to improve staff's ownership/capability of data use for differentiation within classrooms and advancing Student Success Plans.
 - While some teachers stated that they used data from Acuity to target standards to re-teach for their classes, other teachers were not observed to use data in their daily lesson planning. The school is encouraged to use its professional development program to improve teacher capacity with analyzing and applying understandings from data to more effectively target instruction.
 - While students have the opportunities to receive additional support through afterschool tutoring and Literacy/Numeracy interventions, classes observed lacked evidence of differentiated lesson planning or activities. The school is encouraged to consider ways to differentiate lessons so that all students are challenged at appropriate levels.
 - The school should continue its work in developing data-driven Student Success Plans and in investing students in developing their own data-driven goals.
 - The school should continue to develop their implementation of the school mission as they work to develop their school culture.
 - The school is encouraged to consider additional ways to integrate the health and science theme beyond the discrete Health/Science class and the requirement that students wear scrubs.
 - The school should work to develop consistent behavior norms as they consider ways to strengthen their school culture.
 - The school should continue to develop their Advisory and afterschool programs as the school grows in size.
 - The school should continue to refine its outreach strategies for recruitment of ELL/SPED students and document its efforts for ongoing monitoring of effectiveness in reaching comparable percentages with its Community School District (CSD).

- The school's student population currently includes 14.0% ELL students, which is lower than the district average of 20.2% and a current population of SPED students (15.1%) which is lower than the district average (18.9%).⁸

⁸ NYC DOE ATS system; data pulled on June 30, 2011

Part 3: Framing Questions

FRAMING QUESTIONS:

Throughout the Renewal Process and the life of each school's charter, the NYCDOE Charter Schools Office uses the following framing questions to monitor Charter School success:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?
2. Has the School Been a Viable Organization?
3. Has the School Been in Compliance with All Applicable Laws and Regulations?

Annual Site Visit Rubric:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?
 - Academic Goals and Mission
 - School components and curriculum align together and holistically support the mission
 - School has high academic expectations and employs strategies for the full range of students served by the school, including those at risk and those with special needs
 - Curriculum and Instruction
 - The educational plan is flexible and is adjusted to meet the performance levels and learning needs of all enrolled students
 - School implements programming to address the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs
 - Teachers demonstrate the use of differentiated instructional techniques to support the varying ways by which students learn
 - School has implemented programming for students who need remediation or acceleration
 - School Culture
 - The culture is strong, intentional, supportive and sustainable and promotes student learning
 - The school motivates all students and respects the diversity of learners and cultures in the community
 - School offers programs, activities or support services beyond academics to address students' social and emotional needs
 - School calendar and day are set to provide extra supports to ensure that students are able to meet and exceed academic goals
 - Schedule for communication to parents/students is timely and allows for due process, includes strategies to prepare students for transitions and strategies for those students who are not on schedule, presents a clear and fair system that complies with students' due process rights
 - Structures that foster the development of authentic, sustained, caring, respectful relationships among all stakeholders within school
 - Behavioral expectations and social supports that reflect the school's mission and comply with all applicable laws and regulations
 - Assessment
 - Establishes a culture of continuous improvement and accountability for student learning
 - Develops assessments that shape and inform instruction on an ongoing basis and develop data that's used to gauge student, teacher and school progress through formative and summative assessment
 - Student learning measured with multiple forms of assessments/metrics
 - Develops educational goals and performance metrics that are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reflect the Mission and Time-Specific
 - Develops assessments that are appropriately aligned with curriculum, instruction, and adopted standards

- Provides evidence of how data will influence instruction, professional development and curricular adjustments
- Parent Engagement
 - Parent engagement strategies that integrate and mobilize parents within the school community as conduits for student success
 - Capacity to communicate effectively with parents and families
- 2. Is the School a Viable Organization
 - Governance Structures and Organizational Design
 - School has articulated appropriate roles, responsibilities, and decision-making structure for school community members (including Board of Trustees and school leadership)
 - An accountability structure that provides effective oversight of the educational program and fiscal components of the school is in place and utilized
 - Board regularly reviews a data dashboard of student achievement and fiscal management that forms the basis for Board discussions and decisions
 - Board has diverse skill set that lends itself to strong educational / operational oversight
 - Board has an articulated process for ongoing policy development, Board member development and self-evaluation
 - Organizational charts are aligned with mission; roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
 - Board has developed essential strategic partnerships with organizations that support the mission of the school
 - Community Support
 - School Leadership demonstrated responsiveness to the unique needs and interests of the community to be served
 - School has established a presence in the community and has buy in from community members
- 3. Is the School in Compliance with Applicable Laws and Regulations
 - Special Populations
 - Well-defined plan and sufficient capacity to service the learning needs of Special Education students, English Language Learners
 - School adequately addresses the academic and non academic needs of students in need of remediation, students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and gifted students
 - There is a coherent plan for meeting the non-academic needs of students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and other populations
 - School employs a process to identify students at risk of not meeting expectations and creates intervention plans and follow up
 - School demonstrates a comprehensive recruitment, enrollment and retention approach that is sensitive to the diverse needs of students
 - School admission policy and lottery preferences serve to create a student body that reflects community demographics and give a preference to community school district residents
 - Safety and Security
 - School is well maintained
 - Transitions and student gatherings are orderly and well supervised
 - Expectations for student behavior are well known and are enforced fairly
 - School is current with all safety recruitments and drills.
 - AED machines are in operation and school staff is trained in CPR