



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Inwood Intermediate School

Intermediate School 52

**620 Academy Street
New York
NY 10034**

Principal: Dr. Salvador Fernandez

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Reviewer: Desiree Mansell

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Inwood Intermediate School is one of the largest middle schools in the City with approximately 1,118 students enrolled from grade 5 through 8. Its student population comprises 94% Hispanic, 4% Black, and 2% White, Asian and students from other backgrounds. A far higher proportion of students are English language learners than usual in similar schools. The district's Dominican population is one of the largest in the City and nearly all students speak Spanish at home. At just over 7% there are fewer special education students than found in similar and City schools. The proportion of students who are Title 1 eligible at 80.5% is comparable to that of other similar schools in the district but much higher than other City schools.

The attendance rate for students is 90.3%, which is broadly the same as similar schools, but below that of City schools.

Inwood experiences a high rate of student mobility with a significant number of students transferring in and out of the school throughout the year. The school has had three principals in the last two years. The current principal, while experienced, has only been at the school since July 2006.

Last year, the school was awarded a Comprehensive Reform grant and was given the funds to become an America's Choice School. This grant has provided professional development in all content areas and in the use of assessments to drive instructional practices.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has quickly and effectively got to know the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- The principal and his administrative team have initiated strategies that have brought renewed order, structure and purpose to the school.
- The entire administrative team is visible, accessible, instructionally grounded and respected by all members of the school community.
- Systems and routines have been established that promote a positive and productive classroom and school environment.
- A variety of data has been assembled in binders to provide a varied range of information on every student in the school.
- The creation of common preparation periods provide opportunities for some teachers to collaborate, share best practices, plan lessons and have conversations about students and their work.
- A professional development program has been instituted during the school day and its impact monitored closely by the coaches and the administrative staff.
- Effective interventions provide pull-out and push-in services to support all students in need.
- The principal is successfully improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- Creative measures are employed to provide the staff and material resources necessary to move improvement plans forward.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop teachers' skills to analyze and use data to align and drive instruction.
- Align the professional development plan to individual teachers' and the school's development needs as identified in data analysis.
- Engage students more in lessons to include the promotion of opportunities for students to collaborate, work cooperatively and enter into student-to-student conversations.
- Continue to revise units of study to give more clarity and depth to teaching points and develop students' skills and knowledge systematically.
- Establish ways for the different teams to share their evaluations and reviews of plans and programs.
- Ensure the monitoring of progress towards the school's goals align more closely to student achievement.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

Inwood Intermediate School is a place where more purposeful learning is starting to occur. The current principal is seen by staff, students and parents as someone who 'makes things happen'. New initiatives have been implemented and older, effective ones built on successfully to give the school a renewed sense of purpose and focus. The administration is out and about the school, supporting students and staff in creating an orderly, safe and welcoming environment

The areas for improvement detailed in this report are, for the most part, ones the school is aware of and already addressing. There is a sense of purpose conveyed by staff, students, parents and the community. In alignment with the school's mission statement, members of the school community are united in a common mission: to provide a safe school environment and a quality educational program.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

On appointment, the principal immediately analyzed the assessment data available to gain a quick and secure overview of the school's strengths and areas for development. The information was shared with the administration team so that comparisons could be made with the performance of other schools in tested subjects and to identify those students most in need of intervention and support.

The school's comprehensive system of data collection ensures it has a secure knowledge and understanding of each student's performance and progress in every class, grade and subject. Teachers use regular formal and informal assessments to measure progress most often of individual students, but on occasion across classes and grades. Each teacher and student has an assessment notebook which contains a wealth of information about each student's performance in City and State tests and in the comprehensive range of the school's own assessments.

As yet, the school has not analyzed data by gender and ethnic groups to see if there is a trend in these groupings' performance and progress because the systems are new. However, it does ensure that all students who need extra help to reach grade standards are identified and given the support they need to make faster progress. Higher achievers are catered for in a separate class and students' progress monitored within the school's current systems.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school has started the process of setting goals in all tested subjects based on its analysis of performance data. While some measures are included, these are not aligned closely to students’ actual expected performance at the end of each year because systems for gathering and analyzing data are new. The school meets regularly to review the goals, to keep them to the forefront of everyone’s work and ensure they drive the activity of all staff.

The school’s key goal is for every child to be looked at in a unique manner, as an individual. This is especially true of those students in the greatest need of improvement. Push-in and pull-out services given to these students as interventions are part of the targeted instructional plan. The extended-day program and Saturday school provide effective additional help for those students struggling to reach grade standards.

The school is successfully raising expectations of what each student is able to do. Improvement plans focus on whole school and on individual students’ performance by classroom, grade level and subject areas. Implementation is ongoing. The continuing use of assessment now enables the school to determine how successfully student skills are being developed and to understand each student’s next learning step. Conversations in the many team meetings reflect higher expectations, with some teachers already showing improved rigor and expectations in their practice.

The school shares goals and plans with parents so they are more able to support the school and their children in meeting their goals. They are given good information about their children’s performance and progress and feel they are treated with respect even when there are problems. Parents are urged to become active members of the parent teachers association and to take advantage of the workshops and activities taking place at the school. As a result, attendance at parent meetings is improving, as are the number of parent volunteers.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school has planned a series of units of study to deliver the mandated curriculum. The units are constantly evaluated and revised to strengthen teaching practices and ensure the curriculum subject content builds systematically from one grade to the next. Using common preparation periods to meet with coaches and school leaders, teachers are becoming familiar with new curriculum content and its importance to students’ learning.

Teachers use assessment information to flexibly group students to align instruction to the range of skills and abilities in classes. Establishing this practice is a working goal, along with plans for increased analysis and understanding of data to drive instructional practices. Most teachers use running records, student conferences, observations, anecdotal records and journals to assess students’ work and use the information to plan the next day’s

lessons. However, this practice is not yet consistent across the school, with some teachers still lacking the skills to interpret and use data to align their instruction effectively.

Common preparation periods provide a forum for discussion of what works and what does not work and this is beginning to consolidate practice. The teaching staff realize that although gains have been made in these areas, additional improvements are still needed to individualize the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, learning is not always presented in a way that engages students so some are inattentive and distracted in lessons. Students spend too much time listening to the teacher and working quietly on their own and so have too few opportunities to talk with a partner or in a group to share ideas and challenge each other's thinking.

Suitable emphasis is given to students' academic and personal development. Students are encouraged to take an active part in the life of the school to increase their responsibility. The student council is a vibrant part of the school. Relationships are positive and most students feel able to go to an adult to ask for help with their work.

The principal has made it clear, in his actions and verbally, that everyone has a part to play in increasing student achievement. Support has been given to staff members in the form of professional development, supplying needed resources and in-class monitoring of newly learned strategies and techniques. The effective use of budget to provide staffing and material resources is a school priority. The budget is used strategically and effectively, and decisions based on priority needs. For example, money from the budget was dedicated to developing units of study in need of improvement.

Staff recognize that the school is better organized this year and feel supported in their work. Reorganization by grade rather than department has reduced the spread of subjects and grades that teachers have to plan for. This has helped them to focus their instruction more accurately on the range of performance in their classes. Special education students and those requiring help to reach grade standards get daily support. Resources more closely match the range of levels in classes. For example, students use differentiated primary sources for research in social studies work.

Attendance, at 90% is unacceptably low. The school has rigorous procedures to reward good attendance and follow up absence in pursuit of its realistic but challenging goal of 94% attendance this year. Participation in class is now a requirement for meeting the grade standards. This has been an attendance motivator. A bulletin board lists the names of over 200 students that have been present and on time every day since the beginning of the school year.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has clear procedures for selecting staff which are based on their commitment to students' achievement and ability to use data to drive their work. Professional development happens in school time so all staff able to attend. Consultants from outside deliver model lessons and help teachers to plan mathematics and English language arts learning activities. The administration visits classes to ensure teachers incorporate what they have learned into their lessons.

The principal and assistant principals visit classes regularly, to monitor the quality of instruction. During post-visit discussions, teachers receive feedback about their teaching and are given clear timeframes in which to improve their practice. There are few planned opportunities for teachers to visit each other's classrooms to observe and share best practices and effective teaching strategies. In the meantime, coaches have started to use videotaped lessons as a strategy for motivating and focusing discussions and sharing ideas about effective instructional skills and techniques.

Most teachers meet regularly to plan and evaluate how well things are going. The weekly meetings in English and mathematics have enabled planned changes to be made quickly and efficiently. However, currently science and social studies teachers do not have common planning time and this limits the same good opportunities to share and develop their work. In addition, teachers would like more opportunities for cross-grade discussions.

The principal is well respected by staff, students and parents, who recognize the speed in which he has brought about change. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis because clear systems and communications are in place. Teachers have high expectations of student behavior. Students feel safe because these expectations are generally clear, although they still receive some inconsistent messages from some teachers who do not always follow procedures.

Various partnerships make a good contribution in helping the school reach its goals especially support from literacy and mathematics consultants and the work of Inwood Community Services that supplement student support services.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school is increasingly using reflection and collaborative conversations to evaluate and review its progress towards meeting its goals. Teams meet regularly to explore ways to improve student outcomes, however, what is discussed in one meeting is not always shared with another and so sometimes work is duplicated unnecessarily. Alignment and coordination of these efforts are yet to be achieved because the priority has been to establish systems this year.

The school uses regular assessments to evaluate how effectively intervention strategies are helping to accelerate individual student's progress and to adjust programs as and when necessary. Through learning walks, the administration team is able to gather data to monitor students' engagement and progress. However, while process and programs are evaluated against student achievement and progress, the evaluations and revisions to action plans are not so closely aligned.

The school is at an early stage of setting and monitoring progress towards goals. Systems have now been set up that enables one year's review to lead to the setting of the following year's goals. However, this is still in its early stages of implementation because a full cycle of evaluation and review has not taken place.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Inwood Intermediate School (IS 052)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 		X	
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 		X	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X	

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.		X	
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.		X	
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.		X	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	