

Quality Review Report

2009-2010

International Arts Business School

High School 544

**600 Kingston Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11203**

Principal: Sheila Hanley

Dates of review: February 8 – 9, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Richard D. D'Auria

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

International Arts Business School is a high school with 466 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 87% Black, 11% Hispanic, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 38% of the students enrolled and girls account for 62%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 91%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The principal, in her second year of leadership, successfully evaluated school policies and effectively established a collaborative community that is well poised to move the school forward. The school's diverse curriculum, including the arts, business, dance and a culinary program provides students with many opportunities to tap into their interests and talents. Teachers are making progress toward differentiated teaching strategies, but practice is currently limited and inconsistent. Students have developed learning goals, but they are currently quite broad, general and not skill specific or carefully monitored in a systemic way.

Several pivotal strategic organizational decisions such as the use of budget and time align well to the school's goal to improve instructional coherence and differentiation. Key among them is the institution of common planning time and diverse professional development opportunities that enable teachers to collaborate, analyze data, share instructional strategies and materials and become more reflective of their practice. They are able to learn and share both from their colleagues and from leadership within the building and by attending outside professional conferences. The power of these experiences is evident in a veteran teacher's reflective comment, "I'm not teaching in a vacuum anymore. I came here and am reinventing myself, still learning and growing." While teachers do engage in inquiry, they acknowledge that they are in the beginning stages of deep inquiry work involving action research.

Teachers use data well and strategic professional development supports their use of ARIS and other data tracking tools and reports. They are increasingly using common assessments. They are also working on improving the alignment and coherence of the curriculum during their common planning time. This is particularly evident in grade 9 English language arts, where teachers revamped the curriculum and improved coherence and student relevance. Teachers' sophistication in their use of technology as an instructional tool is increasing. While some still use it primarily to project the lesson outline, others are more creative.

Students have a viable student government and an active voice on the school leadership team. A core of committed parents is very engaged. The school informs them well through a weekly newsletter, telephone calls and teachers' increasing use of web based grade books. Multiple partnerships support residencies and internships that enable students to learn beyond the classroom. The school has developed some systems to monitor and evaluate progress throughout the year, but it does not yet have embedded systems to measure student progress toward interim and long-term learning goals.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The second year principal has transitioned successfully, resulting in a community that shares a common vision, positioning the school well for future progress.
 - The principal's highly collaborative open-door policy and effective data analysis has led to the thoughtful development of school-wide goals of increased graduation and attendance rates, enhanced parental engagement and greater use of differentiated teaching strategies. Presentations and discussions with faculty, parents and students resulted in a greater understanding of next steps, culminating in the school's coherent vision to support future school progress.
 - The school utilizes an effective backward design approach to plan strategically. Teachers develop end goals such as improved English language arts Regents passing, credit accumulation and increased graduation rate. Through careful data analysis and reflection on current teaching practices, they develop strategies to achieve these goals. The school's emphasis on students' writing skills through journaling and other strategies is a particular focus for current grade 9 students to support their development of a strong foundation to better prepare them for higher-level coursework.
- The school offers a broad and engaging Regents curriculum with high expectations, providing students with a well-rounded education.
 - Diverse course offerings in visual, performing, media and culinary arts, along with programs in dance and business, complement the rigorous core academic Regents based curriculum. Teachers engage students in higher order thinking through effective questioning. Strategic teacher collaboration ensures improved coherence through embedded and consistent teaching practices across grades and subject areas.
 - Teachers are increasingly using technology as an effective tool to engage students actively in their learning. Math students drew lines and rays on a Smart board while their teacher manipulated an electronic protractor, enabling more visual learners to grasp abstract concepts. A social studies teacher illustrated historic and modern day political cartoons, modeled the identification of symbols, and provided students with an electronic timer, enabling them to monitor their group work time efficiently.
- Strategic organizational decisions by school leaders enable teachers to collaborate during common planning time to improve instructional coherence.
 - School leadership implemented common planning time for the entire faculty. As a result, teachers are able to meet weekly, alternating between subject and grade level teams. These vertical and horizontal structures effectively enable teachers to plan collaboratively and facilitate inquiry work around student literacy skills and to discuss and implement strategies to support already noted increases in student proficiency.

- Teachers engage in a variety of meaningful professional learning opportunities both within and outside of the school that effectively support their practice. They are also developing distributed leadership skills through their roles within structured weekly collaborative teams.
- The school's culture of mutual respect and positive attitudes provides students a safe culture where they can participate in decision-making.
 - A recently implemented student-mentoring program enables each teacher to closely monitor and support about 10 students. Teachers voluntarily "adopt" these students and feel accountable to them. A teacher shared, "Each student has multiple guardian angels to prevent their slipping through the cracks."
 - School leadership courageously used a student government sponsored survey in addition to analyzing and using the results of the Citywide Learning Environment Survey. As a result, staff is more reflective about their teaching practice to support higher levels of student engagement, more diverse differentiated and cooperative learning strategies, and improved use of technology, leading to improved student achievement.
- School leadership and teachers analyze a broad range of data to inform organizational and instructional decisions that have a positive impact on student learning.
 - Leadership uses ARIS and various reports that track the progress of student cohorts' effectively. Information on Regents grades, credit accumulation, attendance, cutting and lateness are all considered. Scholarship reports are the basis for discussion of student progress with individual teachers. Teachers use ARIS well and multiple failure reports are instrumental in identifying students in need of mentoring and support.
 - Teachers strategically gain insights on performance trends by beginning with grade 8 scores on English language arts and math assessments as base line indicators. Uniform midterm and final examinations align with the revised grade 9 English language arts curriculum. Teachers increasingly use common assessments to measure student progress. Spanish teachers use common projects for portfolio assessment and social studies teachers use a common mock Regents exam for grade 9.
- Mentoring structures support students' academic and socio-emotional needs and multiple partners enhance their learning opportunities.
 - The student-mentoring program is having a positive impact on student progress by assuring that students receive support from peers as well as from teachers. A senior ambassador program enables seniors to support students in need of assistance, thus providing opportunities for both peer support and student leadership opportunities.
 - Partnerships expand opportunities for student learning and experiences. Artist, musician and choreographer residencies enable practitioners to support student exploration of links with academic content areas and career possibilities. Students in media arts travelled to New Orleans to film interviews with Katrina survivors and in Spanish class, students used photography to create portraits of the school through their own eyes.

What the school needs to improve

- Support teachers' consistent use of a broader range of differentiated instructional strategies to meet students' individual learning needs more effectively.
 - Teachers are making efforts to incorporate differentiated strategies into their practice. However, current practice is limited and implementation is inconsistent. Some teachers offer options on the do-now or have students work in groups, but teachers do not yet flexibly group students strategically based upon skill strengths and weaknesses as an outgrowth of analyzing student results on periodic assessments.
 - Currently most teachers use the Smart board to project the lesson's outline. However, there is inconsistent use of technology to engage students by extending this practice to illustrating photographs, maps, video clips or connecting to internet resources to support teaching.
- Utilize student work, evaluated with standards based rubrics and critical feedback, as an instructional tool to foster students' self-reflection.
 - There is currently very limited use within classrooms of student work evaluated using standards based rubrics with critical feedback as an instructional tool. Evaluation rubrics are either inconsistent across subject areas or grades, or posted work is not associated with a rubric. Comments are often limited to "good" or "excellent". As a result, students miss opportunities to develop reflective practices on how to improve.
 - Teachers do not analyze student work products effectively as an instructional focus to guide differentiated support for students and to enable them to refine their own practice in support of students' learning.
- Develop systemic structures for monitoring student progress toward achieving their skill specific interim and long term learning goals.
 - The school does not currently have transparent, collaborative systems for monitoring student progress toward interim goals. While students engaged in initial learning goal setting activities, current goals are general and broad and therefore do not allow for strategic monitoring of progress.
 - Current processes do not enable school leaders to monitor progress toward skill specific student goals carefully throughout the year to guide school wide decisions to implement targeted plans or strategies.
- Deepen collaborative inquiry to foster action research so teachers can methodically evaluate the impact of instructional strategies on student learning.
 - Teachers collaborate and plan together during common planning time to review their work against research-based practice. However, currently teachers do not yet methodically implement specific teaching strategies with identified students, nor do they analyze the effectiveness of these strategies to consider whole school implications.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: International Arts Business 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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed