

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

Institute for Collaborative Education

Middle-High School 407

**345 East 15 St
New York
NY 10003**

Principal: John Pettinato

Dates of review: December 7 - 8, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Nancy Gannon

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Institute for Collaborative Education is a middle-high school with 487 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 21% Black, 22% Hispanic, 46% White, 10% Asian and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 0% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 95.7% for the middle school and 91.1% for the high school.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The Institute for Collaborative Education (ICE) is deeply committed to providing a rigorous and personalized education for all of its students and uses its resources effectively to support this effort. To that end, the school has created a detailed, thorough, standards-based curriculum that offers students a coherent, college-preparatory experience. The well-thought-out curriculum spirals backwards from grade 12 to grade 6 to allow for a comprehensive, connected education. The school has created a variety of systems and checks and balances to ensure that this curriculum, along with its performance-based assessments, stays current and effectively serves students' needs. However, the newly created interim assessment system does not include sufficient means to monitor performance trends of the students and does not include State alternate assessments for special education students. The school effectively supports teachers in their work to refine and deliver meaningful instruction that supports strong student outcomes. The school's very strong systems are continually re-examined and thus undergo revisions that lead to clear strategies that best serve student academic and social growth. The principal is frequently in classes; however, he does not have a formalized system for recording his evaluation of specific instructional practices to support teachers' professional growth.

The faculty at ICE understands the power of teacher collaboration and therefore works together closely. Regularly scheduled meetings engage staff members of different disciplines and configurations, including grade-level teams, vertical teams, and topical committees. Teams look at student work, examine student data, and develop various effective strategies to support students. Teachers also review and revise the curriculum and assessments based on what they learn from their data. The principal and staff contribute an enormous amount of time to ensure that the school is delivering an extraordinary academic experience for students and use an effective advisory system to support students in setting and meeting academic goals. Both students and families are unanimous in their articulation of their appreciation, with one parent saying he feels "gratitude" toward the school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's very strong system of regularly checking and rechecking the curriculum and instructional practices, both school-wide and at classroom level, ensures that teaching and learning is relevant and moves students forward.
 - Vertical teams in each content area meet at least once a month to review and then revise the curriculum they have developed. This constant refinement means that the learning needs of students are suitably addressed.
 - Teachers regularly revise the curriculum when needed. This is exemplified by a grade 7 math teacher who accelerated the curriculum to ensure ongoing challenges for all students.
- Exceptional opportunities for teacher collaboration through inquiry meetings, grade-level meetings and professional development lead to a deep commitment by staff to the work of the school.
 - An 'Interim Assessment Team' is highly focused on increasing student meta-cognition. They team meets regularly and invests an extraordinary amount of time in the redesign of assessments and the way in which student work is used to guide teaching and learning. This team incorporates faculty feedback to ensure that their school-designed system is appropriate to their student and faculty needs. They also focus on providing the supports for faculty to ensure the effective utilization of the new system.
 - Grade-level teams, in formal meetings and informal conversations, look closely at identified individuals and rotating groups of students to develop plans to support and help students move to higher levels of achievement. The grade 10 teachers engaged in a highly focused discussion and collaboratively developed clear interventions around moving high-end students to their next steps in learning to ensure improved student outcomes.
- The school's well-structured instructional framework provides a challenging, project-based curriculum that leads to coherent and purposeful instruction across the classrooms.
 - The extremely detailed 'Understanding by Design' curriculum maps create a clear and comprehensive scope and sequence within each subject, and provide a rich spiraled curriculum for students across subjects and grades. One parent highlighted the project-based learning task her child completed that included not only writing an essay about a hero, but an oral presentation to argue the qualities of a hero in defense of categorizing Joan of Arc as a hero. In this way, the parent noted, students are required to think and respond critically about a topic.

- The school's curriculum is referenced around national standards, which results in coursework that readies students for higher levels of learning.
- School leaders and teacher teams regularly develop school-specific, standards-aligned interim assessments and carefully review student results to give a clear portrait of student performance and progress.
 - Four times a year, students take performance-based assessments in each of their classes. Teachers' highly detailed analysis and review is used to ensure ongoing learning by enhancing or changing assessments from those that are less effective to ones that are more relevant.
 - Report cards are issued four times each year. Two of these reports include an extensive narrative with a detailed picture of the student's strengths and challenges. This information allows families and students to have a clear insight into their performance and a focused view of their learning path.
- Teachers engage in ongoing conversation with parents and students about student progress, challenges, and next steps, so that students feel very supported in their educational and social-emotional growth at the school.
 - Administrators and staff maintain clear lines of reciprocal communication that allow students and families to focus on learning. Students were unanimous in saying "ICE feels so welcoming." Parents echoed with "Every child deserves an ICE", and "I wish I'd gone to a high school like this."
 - Both students and parents articulated that the school's advisory program provides a structure for students and parents to know where the student is struggling and to understand what supports that student might need, either inside or out of school. This close relationship between a young person and advisor enables every student to get close supervision and support leading to better student outcomes.
- The school's garnering of resources, including a wide variety of particularly rich partnerships, ensures that all students are supported in a highly nurturing environment that is well-aligned with their learning needs and the school's vision.
 - The principal's careful decision-making around the use of his allocation enables students to attend in lower-register classes thus providing for a high level of instructional and social-emotional support resulting in strong student outcomes.
 - The principal's ability to inspire various stakeholders, including parent fundraisers and teachers who dedicate countless extra hours to the school, allows ICE to offer a rich educational experience for all students.
- The school's goal-setting process, including those for the whole school, for individual teachers and for students, is structured in a way to ensure clear action steps and supports for student achievement.
 - The school's overarching goals are directly aligned with needs the school would like to address and are responsive to specific faculty concerns,

resulting in a commitment by stakeholders to work toward those goals. For example, their goal to integrate math and science stemmed from their relationship with the Consortium and resulted in a new physics class, led by a new teacher who is supported by both departments.

- Teachers and students use the school's advisory program as a highly effective venue where students are well guided to set and identify clear steps toward achieving personal goals. Careful on-going documentation enables students and staff to track progress, thus ensuring that students are well supported in reaching their full potential.

What the school needs to improve

- Formalize a system to identify individual teacher needs around their practice to guide professional development in enhancing pedagogy.
 - The principal's observations during informal visits to classrooms are shared with department chairs for feedback to teachers. However, the lack of a formalized system of documenting does not allow the school to track patterns and growth in teacher practices over time.
- Develop further the interim assessment system to gather student, grade-wide, and school-wide performance trends that can be used to support and accelerate student learning.
 - Currently the school does not have a fully developed system for easily accessing student portfolios so that both students and teachers can see their work grow over time.
- Develop an alternate assessment protocol to monitor performance and progress of special education students to address State mandates.
 - The school does not yet have suitable alternate assessments for special education students to adequately show the rich ways in which these students are growing academically to support the school's application for a State waiver from standardized testing mandates.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Institute for Collaborative Education	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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