



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Washington Irving

High School 460

40 Irving Place

Manhattan

NY 10003

Principal: Bernardo Ascona

Dates of review: October 21 - 22, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Elaine Gorman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Washington Irving is a high school with 1299 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 31% Black, 61% Hispanic, 2% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 24% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 76.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- A highly respected, strategic principal and committed faculty make effective, data-informed organizational decisions across the school, resulting in continuous improvements in the learning of students.
 - Strategic hiring decisions address the needs of English language learners and students with special needs in English and math. This includes an additional ninth grade math teacher to lower class size. Additionally, budget priorities are informed by results and stated goals and in support of the Common Language Protocols, resulting in the use of technology as an instructional strategy to address learning needs of students.
 - Programming aligns to student data and teacher expertise, including double blocks of grade 9 and 10 English and grade 9 math, review classes, and advanced classes resulting in increases in every progress measure on the Progress Report. Program flowcharts guide students in selecting relevant coursework resulting in increased graduation rates.
- School leaders have systems in place to provide for an increasingly positive environment with a focus on high student achievement.
 - Mediation, detention, and community service allow students to remain in class while learning from their mistakes, resulting in a reduction of suspensions from 305 to 152 from school year 2009 to 2010. The Learning Environment Survey also reflects a significant changes in school environment, as demonstrated by 82% of teachers saying, "Order and discipline are maintained at my school" and a 12% increase by students indicating they feel safe in hallways, bathrooms and locker rooms.
 - Small Learning Communities (SLC) promotes personalization for each student. The assignment of a guidance counselor and dean to each SLC, who collaborate regularly, is further supporting the close monitoring of student achievement. Teachers volunteer for the Super Angel program that provides additional assistance for students at risk of falling behind in credit earning. These efforts as well as targeted academic intervention services are resulting in demonstrated increases as measured by every progress metric on the Progress Report.
- School leaders, teams, and individual teachers use data tools to understand trends in student performance, including subgroups in order to make ongoing school-level and curricular decisions.
 - The school's 'Data Inventory Flow Chart' provides specific data sources, how they will be used and by whom, and the accountability by each part of the organization. The leadership team generates targeted reports from ARIS and Datacation, determining the trends in total school achievement and subgroups currently not making progress, informing high-level instructional and organizational decisions across the school.
 - Content level teams use well-designed protocols to enable item analysis of assessments to ascertain student mastery of standards of team-developed

curriculum maps. Curricular and instructional decisions remain fluid as a result of frequent review of school and subgroup results and ongoing communications, including the use of Google Docs.

- Teams and individual teachers regularly use a range of data to set SMART goals for individual and groups of students, with measurable increases in class performance.
 - Committed teacher teams carefully analyze exam results, common assessments, and student work to develop learning targets by curriculum unit, with attention to English language learners and students in special education not making adequate progress. Regular adjustments are resulting in school-wide increases in credit earning and improved classroom level student performance.
 - Based on students' results on teacher-developed diagnostic tests, students receive SMART packets with individual goals, which students said, "are motivating me to do better in my class work". This consistent school-wide practice successfully informs flexible grouping in classrooms.
- Parents appreciate the extensive communications between home and school, informing them about the high expectations for students, as well as how they can help their children meet their goals.
 - Parents say the school communicates often about attendance and performance, by school messenger, phone, home visits, and individualized student letters. Newsletters provide specific suggestions and opportunities for helping their children. Favorable parent responses on the Learning Environment Survey, use of ARIS and other systems, and increases in graduation evidence the growing impact.
 - Parent leaders work closely with the principal and parent coordinator to involve parents in school and provide workshops to support the social and educational needs of families. The transparency and availability of the principal and the growing belief that the school is steadily improving is creating what parents describe as, "a family with a common purpose."
- A vast majority of the school community supports the clearly articulated instructional focus, supported by specific, ongoing administrative and peer feedback, and multiple professional development opportunities.
 - A school-based option for daily common planning allows for ongoing teacher-to-teacher review of data to further student achievement. Efforts are underpinned by the Common Language Protocols, which is resulting in a cohesive school culture, as evidenced by a consistent lesson format and a growing use of differentiated grouping based on data.
 - Based on data conferences with administrators, teachers write professional goals, supported by ongoing conferencing and actionable feedback. Increasingly teachers indicate they know what is expected and "professional opportunities are impacting their instructional practice", which is resulting in greater pass rates and increased Regents' results.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure all curriculum maps embed higher order tasks and sequential concept development, to better support college readiness.
 - Although teachers are committed to ongoing refinement of standards-based curriculum maps, they currently do not consistently identify key standards that will lead to college readiness. The Common Core Standards pilot is promising, but other curricula does not yet build across grades and subjects, limiting rigorous concept development.
 - Although there is increasing levels of reading and writing and tasks are differentiated, there is not yet coherent development across grades and content to ensure all students are provided with skills needed to be successful beyond high school.

- Further accelerate the complexity of questioning and rubrics to raise the level of student discourse and writing products.
 - Differentiated groupings with targeted tasks is a consistent practice; but unevenness in teachers' comfort with differentiation, in particular the delivery of supports and extensions, results in inconsistent opportunities for all students to meet higher level goals..
 - Models of high-level questioning and sophisticated rubrics exist but are not pervasive, which limits the complexity of discussion and writing in too many classes.

- Build on developing expertise of individuals and teams of teachers in analyzing student data to adjust instructional decisions and differentiated tasks.
 - Substantial work is taking place in a well-planned system of teacher teams, including the development of common assessments that inform curricular decisions. The work is not yet sufficiently refined, limiting feedback on the effectiveness of actions on student mastery of key standards.
 - Teacher teams support individual teachers in analyzing data, and teachers consistently are making efforts to learn from each other. However, there is unevenness in the expertise of teachers to use data to assess the instructional needs of students, reducing the quality of differentiated tasks and the impact on developing student work.

- Expand the evaluation of the effectiveness of professional development and teacher collaborations in building adult capacity and instructional coherence.
 - The principal has invested time and resources to ensure support for the 31 teacher teams and their teacher leaders. Teacher leaders write additional goals for their work and assistant principals meet regularly with them to review the work and provide support. Teacher leaders are active members of the leadership team.
 - While the teams review their processes and make adjustments, these systems are not sufficiently embedded to measure sustained impact on coherence or continuous development of teacher leaders.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Washington Irving High School	UD	D	P	WD
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, 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	

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

Quality Review Scoring Key

UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed
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