

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

J.H.S. 052 Inwood  
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle school M052

650 ACADEMY STREET  
MANHATTAN  
NY 10034

Principal: SALVADOR FERNANDEZ

Dates of review: November 30, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Cathy Powis

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

J.H.S. 052 Inwood is a Junior High-Intermediate-Middle school with 645 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 3% Black, 94% Hispanic, 0% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 35% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 94%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is well-developed.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Standards-based curricula reflect State Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and ensure rigorous academic tasks that increase outcomes for all students. (1.1)
  - o Two small learning academies, one focused on science specialties and the other performing arts, provide rigorous curricula opportunities and broaden experiences for students in preparation for post-secondary choice. Arts Achieve, a NYS pilot program, is a five-year commitment to connect the arts to the CCLS by providing more interdisciplinary links and infusing technology into daily instruction. The school-wide curricula are redesigned to incorporate the rigorous demands of the CCLS by integrating writing across the content areas. Links between Science and English curricula are accomplished through theme-based units and essential questions to bolster the focus of writing in both subjects. Subject-specific curriculum teams, strategically, provide increased complexity of text within each unit of study in English matched with well-written, cognitively demanding performance tasks that build knowledge to achieve a culminating unit performance task. This ensures that curriculum maps, detail key standards, address specific deficits identified in student summative data, include explicit guiding questions, and offer a series of embedded diagnostic and criterion-referenced performance tasks. As a result, across grades skills and content knowledge improved by a range of 15% to 20% in student performance task outcomes.
  - o Content area teacher teams analyze student work and end-of-unit performance tasks on an ongoing basis to identify deficits in understanding for English language learners (ELL) and students with disabilities (SWDs). In turn, adjustments to the curriculum maps and tasks are made to ensure cognitive demand and improved performance. For instance, the math team advises bilingual teachers of scaffolded strategies for students to build conceptual understanding in the content and improve performance on the assessment. The Science team reviews student work and determined gaps in understanding for SWDs and identifies strategies to support learning. This assures that there are embedded strategies and accommodations that increase understanding for these groups of students, thus ensuring improved outcomes for all learners.
- The principal is an analytical thinker who ensures that adequate support structures are in place across all aspects of the school so that instructional goals are achieved. (1.3)
  - o Teacher and student programs exemplify the vision of the school to support student and adult learning. Two double-blocks periods are allocated in teacher programs for team meetings to build and refine curriculum and performance task, and focus on progress of targeted student groups during inquiry work. Additionally, a 25th period is allocated for teachers to provide academic intervention services to at-risk students in their content area. A co-teaching model in several classrooms offers a lower student-to-teacher ratio to provide individual support to improve comprehension skills for SWDs and ELL students. Budget allocations allow for outside consultants and on-site math and literary coaches. Everyone takes ownership for students' successful completion of academic task and attaining school-wide goals of improving proficiency levels in English language arts (ELA) and math for ELLs and special education students. As a result, the most recent interim assessments, Instructionally Targeted Assessments (ITA), in ELA and math reveal that 44% ELLs and 46% special

education students went up from level one to level two or above from September's baseline assessments.

- Coherent assessment practices result in ongoing identification of the specific learning needs of students, thereby improving overall student performance. (2.2)
  - o Teacher teams give high priority to the development and improvement of assessment to ensure alignment to chosen key standards and CCLS. A series of rigorous, mini-performance tasks are embedded in each unit of study and leads to a final performance task. Content area teacher teams assess resulting student work against task-specific rubrics to determine student mastery. Writing is further assessed through the use of rubrics across all subjects. One science team considers further refining the writing criteria in a performance task and unit of study so that some of the students, particularly SWDs, further understand the expectations on this type of task. In turn, assessment criteria are revisited to determine effectiveness and develop a clear portrait of what students know and don't know. Consequently, assessments are successfully aligned to curriculum and continuous adjustments ensure gains in student progress.
- Strong collaborations develop data-driven, focused goals that are evident across all school planning documents thereby accelerating school-wide improvement plans. (3.1)
  - o An exceptionally cohesive faculty, school leadership and administration engage in a comprehensive analysis of the school's summative and interim performance data, Progress Report, School Survey and benchmark assessment data to develop a rationale for goal-setting. This, coupled with explicit steps to achieve goals, results in strategic school-wide objectives that accelerate student learning and aim to close the achievement gap in English and mathematics, especially for ELLs and SWDs. Action plans include curricular refinements that effectively narrow the achievement gap. This is evidenced by the collective efforts of staff to ensure students success on academic tasks, thus resulting in gain in ELA and math ITA assessments for the first quarter marking period. Additionally, School Leadership Team members agree that revisions of the school's Language Acquisition Policy (LAP) will yield reductions in the number of students in trans-bilingual education, thereby allowing for redistribution of teacher support for ELLs.
- Empowered teachers work in teams to reflect on their practice and provide reciprocal feedback that leverages changes in pedagogy resulting student growth. (4.2)
  - o Teacher teamwork is an embedded practice that is reflected in teachers' programs. All teachers engage in content/curriculum development teams and inquiry at least four periods per week. A teacher leader assigned to each team facilitates group discussion, guides the inquiry work, and assigns roles. The recorder documents the discussions during meetings and captures minutes, which is shared and reviewed at subsequent meetings. Content teams focus on the four core subjects creating and refining performance tasks based on a detailed tracking system for ongoing task outcomes. In turn, a continuous constructive dialogue and process refines the curriculum as teachers work diligently to align key standards with rigorous expectations of CCLS. Specialized teams, Inquiry teams, focus their efforts on a targeted group of low-achieving students to inform their teaching practice for all learners. These teams review student work and recent ITA data comparisons to September baseline data, use this information to determine targeted support and discuss strategies that work, such as "Who + What = Main Idea" and "Restate Question + Answer Question +

Give Evidence” (RAG) that students use in all content classrooms. This work is further supported by professional resources and literary study groups to further enhance their practice. Consequently, November, 2011 ITA results in ELA show several English language learners as well as students with disabilities move from level one to level two or higher.

- Strategically use of tools enables them to access valuable information in order to make tactical decisions about curriculum, instruction and assessment. (2.3)
  - o A series of CCLS-aligned mini-performance tasks are effectively built into each unit of study and end of unit performance tasks, are tracked on Google Docs for core subjects and the arts. Spreadsheets of this very useful and timely data, managed by the math coach, are frequently used by faculty and administration. This system provides information about performance trends in student mastery of key standards informing teacher team work on curriculum redesign. This valuable tool is matched with teacher assessment binders (TAN) maintained by classroom teachers. The TAN stores summative data, conference notes by subgroup, and other pertinent classroom level checks for understanding as deemed necessary by individual teachers to inform their day-to-day planning and instruction. Furthermore, these data tools are used to determine students who require additional academic intervention through one-on-one tutoring, afterschool, or on Saturdays. Consequently, curricula and instruction are continuously informed by student performance trends to improve student outcomes.
- The school is working diligently with external partners to provide supplemental supports for students and families that promote academic and personal growth. (4.4)
  - o I.S. 52 is very committed to integrating academic support with personal guidance and choices for all students to express themselves. An explicit process and timeline commencing in sixth grade are followed that leads to successful high school acceptance to several specialized schools that are aligned with the focus of the school's two academies—School of Environmental and Applied Sciences (SEAS) and Visual and Performing Arts Academy (VPAA). As a result over 67% of graduates from the School of Environmental and Applied Sciences were accepted into the health, science, math, and/or medical program in high school. Also, several students from the Visual and Performing Arts Academy were accepted into high schools targeting the fashion, art and design, and cinema industries. Additionally, partnerships, such as Urban Advantage, Columbia University TREES program, and the Mayor’s Recycling and Outreach Program provide students and parents’ ongoing experience in standards-based, science field trips and guest speakers as a way of exposing them to a variety of careers in science. Furthermore, Urban Advantage provides targeted support to families and the parent coordinator, via cultural institutions and workshops, in order to increase their science understanding and ability to assist students with science exit projects. As a result, real-world experiences afford greater opportunities for acceptance to the high school of their choice.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Deepen differentiated instruction to ensure that all students are effectively challenged in all content areas with particular attention to students with disabilities and English language learners to maximize learning for all students. (1.2)
  - o Individual and teams of teachers collaborate and plan differentiated strategies for all learners. Teams use a common, agreed-upon lesson plan template and

structure that includes making modifications and accommodations of the learning experience whole group, independent practice and group work. However, instructional strategies used to support and extend the learning of individual and groups of students, ELLs on the continuum of language development and SWDs, are not always used by all teachers. This creates an imbalance in the opportunities students are provided in order to access the learning and, when appropriate, extend beyond their entry level in order to achieve and surpass intended outcomes. As a result, the comprehension of groups of English language learners and students with disabilities is limited.

- o Curriculum maps and lesson plans provide explicit questions and activities that lead to high levels of student engagement in most classrooms. However, some classrooms lack rigor in the activities and work products that students are expected to know and be able to do. For example, in Science although co-teachers planned for six workstations of activities for groups of students to travel through to distinguish between different forms of energy and understand how energy is transformed, some of the tasks were not cognitively demanding and resulted in some students not fully engaged in the investigations. Subsequently, not all students achieved the objective and completed the workstation lab sheets. As a result, improving content knowledge and skills in Science are hampered.
- Further refine systems that evaluate teacher effectiveness in order to maximize professional growth and student learning. (4.1)
  - o In response to last year's State review, a rigorous classroom observation system is implemented and widely embraced by faculty. School-wide research-based rubrics provide a common language and clear expectations for planning and instruction, classroom environment and management, and professional responsibilities for all teachers. Teacher leaders engage in cycles of interclass visitations focused on five key areas and provide concrete and actionable feedback to teachers who welcome the support. Administrators complete weekly cycles of classroom observations providing timely written feedback coupled with conversations around classroom performance task data. However, the protocol presents a snapshot of teacher practice and student learning that in some instances is too broad and lacks coherence. Consequently, strategies to incorporate in future lessons lack specificity thereby reducing the impact these changes can make to further improve pedagogy and build capacity for student academic growth. This is evident particularly in classrooms with a co-teaching model.
- Modify structures to evaluate the effectiveness of professional collaborations in order to assess the impact of capacity building efforts to ensure accelerated learning for adults and students. (5.4)
  - o A research-based Professional Educators Guide, developed by school leaders and faculty, allows educators to assess their own and each other's pedagogy through a distributive leadership model. This promotes professional growth and reflection, particularly with new teachers. Additionally, teacher teams are the engine for improvements in curriculum, teacher practice, and pedagogy. However, systems for evaluation of alignment between curriculum and instruction by administration and teacher leaders is not fully coherent and therefore, feedback is not consistently effective resulting in improvements in capacity building, supports for new teachers and student outcomes.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

<b>School name: J.H.S. 052 Inwood</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>				<b>X</b>
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?				<b>X</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?				<b>X</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				<b>X</b>
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?				<b>X</b>
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?				<b>X</b>
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?				<b>X</b>
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?				<b>X</b>
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?				<b>X</b>
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?				<b>X</b>

**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, guidance/advisement 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, with particular attention to the CCLS?			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**

<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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