

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

INNOVATION DIPLOMA PLUS

High School 404

**145 WEST 84th STREET
New York
NY 10024**

Principal: Casey Jones

Dates of review: May 9 - 10, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Tamika Matheson

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

INNOVATION DIPLOMA PLUS is a transfer High school with 154 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 31% Black, 29% Hispanic, and 40% other students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 68.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is Developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school aligns its curricular to State standards and embeds Common Core Learning Standards tasks across disciplines and grade levels. (1.1)
 - With the use of an alignment grid and Network support each department-examined curriculum across respective content areas to develop direct links to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and school-based rubrics. Individual teachers and teacher teams refine maps and identify key skills to teach and embed within instruction. In addition, English language arts and math teachers devised Performance Based Assessments (PBAT) aligned to CCLS and Depth of Knowledge (Level 3), and coupled with the analysis of student work gleaned student progress and identified possible next steps. As a result, teacher teams frequently discuss maps and embed key skills within units and students have begun to acquire identified skills via instruction observed during class visits and review of PBAT portfolios.
- School leaders and faculty have created a very safe learning environment that promotes academic and personal development (1.4)
 - The school and its community-based organization (CBO) partner have established a safe school environment and culture conducive to learning. Via advisories and CBO advocates students have a secure place to discuss concerns and to receive academic progress reports. Routines and protocols, such as automated phone calls and home visits, and Ramapo restorative justice and classroom management training, have reinforced trust and strengthened relationships among faculty, students, and families. This has resulted in lower suspension rates, the school meeting New York State graduation adequate yearly progress targets, and over 80% of students on the 2011-12 Learning Environment indicating they feel safe in school and respected by teachers.
- Electronic record keeping structures are used to capture, organize, and track school data to identify trends and areas of concern and adjust the curriculum. (2.3)
 - Individual teachers and teacher teams use an electronic grading system coupled with Department of Education data resources to generate Excel spreadsheets to track student data. This has had significant impact on programming and flexible student grouping based on academic and personal needs.
 - The school has a uniform grading policy, which is based on 70% academics and 30% personal competencies. As a transfer school, the school uses varied grading policies and practices to capture and share meaningful feedback. School based rubrics indicating stages of mastery in the form of “does not meet,” “meets” and “exceeds” are used to evaluate performance, as evident on student work, and are used by teacher teams to shift targeted practices and instructional rigor.

- School leaders and staff consistently communicate high expectations to all members of the school community. (3.4)
 - At the start of the year school leaders presented data strands including, the Learning Environment Survey, Progress Report, Peer Review and school level data such as attendance, scholarship reports, Regents item analysis, to the faculty to inform and galvanize team meetings based on school and student needs. Further, the principal regularly addresses teacher teams and conducts faculty meetings to disseminate information and gather feedback for reflective purposes. School leaders in collaboration with the Network support teacher development of performance based assessments and curriculum. Teachers, counselors, and partners, via meetings, reference data strands and report their understanding of administrations high expectations and needs of the school community. The school also purchased an online grading system to communicate student progress, next steps, and school events to students and families. Additionally, the school utilizes its advisory program to employ a curriculum model, *Overcoming Obstacles*, which embeds life skills, effective habits, and high expectations. Students who are programmed for advisory two to three times per week were able to articulate the available supports and adult expectation of what success looks like at their school.
- The school collaborates with partners to provide youth development services focused on academic success, post secondary readiness, and social emotional growth. (4.4)
 - The school collaborates with various partners such as Alianza and Mount Sinai to meet the needs of the school community. As a transfer school, students enroll intermittently throughout the year, thus, requiring ongoing cycles of service. Alianza, in collaboration with guidance staff, facilitates year round orientation sessions at convenient times to assess the needs of students and to introduce families and students to a broad range of academic and social services offered by the partnership and school. These include transcript evaluation, Learn to Work Programs, college tours, college application process and financial aid assistance. Students reported feeling safe and supported by adults and partner programs, and cited Mount Sinai providing access to varied health services such as routine medical care and counseling.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase teacher capacity to offer differentiated instructional strategies and learning designs that offer equal opportunities for all learners to engage in purposeful thinking and participation. (1.2)
 - Although the school has embraced teaching practices aligned to the curriculum, for example, the use of essential questions and the interactive lesson model, the quality of strategies, tasks, and questioning are inconsistent across disciplines. The school has spent significant time and effort to create performance based assessments (PBATs) which are posted and shared in google.docs, however, the enduring impact was not evident during class visits. Questioning does not regularly support higher order thinking and tasks are not consistently stimulating. Thereby, students

including students with disabilities and English language learners are not sufficiently challenged, limiting their ability to engage in meaningful work.

- Ensure that instructional supports and organizational decisions result in uniformly challenging levels of student work in all classes and subgroups. (1.3)
 - As a transfer school, the school structures staff and student time to support two to three times per week teacher team meetings to consistently reflect on student work. Teams have engaged in noteworthy work around curriculum development, performance based assessment, common core standards, and analyzing student work. Further, hiring practices and teacher assignments reflect an understanding of student needs. The school hired four new teachers who are emerging as effective pedagogues. However, the impact of these decisions has not been sufficiently translated to rigorous challenging tasks for all students.
- Strengthen instructional decisions at the team and classroom level based on summative and formative data, and student needs. (2.2)
 - Teacher teams meet two to three times per week to discuss rubrics and assessments, and to review and revise curriculum maps that are posted and shared on *ATLAS Rubicon*. However, there is not sufficient review of classroom and summative data, thus limiting its impact on instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels to address the needs of student subgroups.
- Deepen the level of feedback to teachers through a research based outlined rubric, and conduct frequent observations that underpin the expectations for improved teacher practice. (4.1)
 - The school is using the Danielson to reflect on teacher practice and school leaders have created observation tools to support this work. However, school leader feedback during class visits and in observations reports does not always provide specific targeted next steps and a clear timeline for follow up. Additionally, a differentiated professional development plan does not yet fully encompass relevant features aligned with building teacher effectiveness.
- Build on systems and structures to review teacher team effectiveness to ensure the understanding of inquiry processes and deepen the quality of teacher collaboration. (5.4)
 - Teacher teams collaborate across content areas and grade levels, and utilize agendas and maintain records, including student work samples, to document team progress. However, the work of teams does not consistently reflect the inquiry process. Some teams have yet to deepen their focus on subgroups as a method to gauge instructional practice. Furthermore, practices have not yielded teacher leaders nor led to sustained best practices to impact achievement. As the school does not have a structured and regimented defined protocols and goals to monitor teacher team effectiveness, the impact of teams on instruction and the expansion of distributive leadership school wide are limited.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Innovation Diploma Plus	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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?		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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
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?			X	
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?		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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			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, 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

UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed
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