

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**J. H. S. 289**

**02M289**

**201 WARREN STREET  
MANHATTAN NY, 10282**

**Principal: Ellen Foote**

**Dates of review: January 15-16, 2013  
Lead Reviewer: Mariano Guzman**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

I.S. 289 is an Intermediate school with 292 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 8% Black, 18% Hispanic, 32% White, and 40% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 97.2%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty have created coherent and rigorous curricula that connect within and across grades, aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) with opportunities for student inquiry in all content areas. (1.1)
  - Curriculum maps reflect both vertical and horizontal development of understandings and competencies with purposeful access for all students. Continued refinement, based on formative data and clear connections to the school's identification of key standards, assures that instruction is authentic, engaging, appropriately challenging and connected to the real world to guarantee both relevancy and career and college readiness. Across grades, students are poised to engage in "deep thinking" and self-pacing through multiple entry points and ownership of their learning. In a 7<sup>th</sup> grade lesson on writer's purpose, following a turn and talk, students were directed to experiment with different ways of stating their purpose as they wrote their essays ranging from first to third person with intention and purpose and clear evidence to support their writing. In another classroom, a review of the previous day's exit tickets were used by the teacher in formulating essential questions on scaling during a 7<sup>th</sup> grade mini-lesson on 3-Dimensional Geometry applied to a compost box model. The teacher's review of students' previous day understanding shaped the creation of two groups following the mini-lesson, including a strategy lesson facilitated by the teacher and the others working in partnerships to develop models that they would then share with the class. Thoughtful engagement of all students by teachers has created a community of learners engaged in a productive continuum to develop independence and responsibility for their own learning. Students talk in partnerships, small groups and whole class discussions with purpose, respectful of knowledge and evidence and of the needs of the learning community thereby initiating work and direct their own learning. As a result across all classrooms, students were eager to share their specific goals and could articulate next steps they were taking independently or with a partner to meet them.
- Pedagogical practices are consistently informed by a research-based set of beliefs of how students learn best, aligned to the curricula ensuring that students have multiple opportunities to engage in challenging tasks. (1.2)
  - The school believes students learn best when they are motivated and challenged by authentic intellectual purposes. This belief includes opportunities for students to self-assess and self-adjust based on feedback provided to them by their teachers. The school has also adopted the iZone Competency Based Learning Assessment (CBLA) model in developing the following school-wide competencies: Investigate, Interpret, Argue, Communicate, Discern, Plan and Prepare, Collaborate (plus Innovate and Self-assess/adjust). This thoughtful collaboration has been invaluable in supporting the school's ongoing work and furthering its mission to serve all students. It has been a keystone in the school's work in Academic Coaching (Personalized Learning Planning) aligned to the CBLA, available to all students to assist in developing goals in very specific assignments rather than the more conventional and broader goal of achieving academic success. Students now have a research-based framework for understanding expectations and taking ownership for their learning. Teachers have an

opportunity to deepen their understanding—from a students' perspective—of the learning experiences of students across their grade level. This work has been quite powerful and has resulted in demonstrable shifts in teacher practice and student learning. This deliberate work by the school has provided for a student-focused approach that underpins teaching practice throughout the school and a strategic use of resources that allows for multiple entry points with student specific supports built into the curricula for all learners. As a result, all students approach their work in a meaningful way, feel safe to take risks and reflect on their progress with thoughtful expression.

- The school's organizational decisions result in strategic use of teacher and student time to support the school's instructional focus to promote student success for all populations. (1.3)
  - The principal has consistently made thoughtful and purposeful decisions to support the schools instructional goals, maximize professional development opportunities and enrich classroom instruction through the purchase of materials and resources for teachers. Moreover, she proactively seeks additional resources and encourages technology integration through several grant initiatives. These strategic decisions are clearly evident in the school's decision to use iZone 360 funding to contract with Teachers College Reading and Writing Project for CCSS aligned coaching to augment the partnership with Authentic Education to develop CBLA and CCSS aligned curriculum units. The school has also created a part-time Literacy coaching position by freeing up its veteran literacy teacher to support both ELA and content teachers in developing and implementing CCSS aligned units and assessments as well as strengthening instruction in reading and writing. To support the needs of its accelerated students 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, the school created a per-session position for one math teacher to set up and monitor an after-school on-line Integrated Algebra course and provide additional instructional support as needed. The school also funded an additional full-time math teacher to provide both push-in and pull-out math support for students with disabilities and at-risk students throughout the grades. The school has made consistent informed choices in the purchasing and use of technology that supports project-based learning and provides students with tools that authentically support them in future learning and career-related skill development. These carefully designed applications of resources maximize benefits for the school and provide support for the short and long-term implementation of its unique CBLA approach. Most important, they provide opportunities for all students to meet their personalized learning goals with additional support as required.
  - The school's Theory of Action states: If we provide time and opportunity for collaboration, teachers will more effectively meet students' needs. This theory undergirds the development of school goals and initiatives aimed at school improvement with an emphasis on classroom practice. Moreover, it provides a foundation for the inquiry work that this year studied: *the facilitation of student learning with foci on: processes and practices that move all students and promote an individualized approach for each student.* As such, the school conducts a weekly whole faculty professional development facilitated by teacher leaders, and administration. In addition, teacher teams meet weekly to plan and review student work. Department meetings take place bi-weekly and approximately six times per year and are facilitated by an instructional coach. ) The school leadership provides mentoring for untenured teachers as well as teachers new to the school. Led by a veteran teacher, in a teacher team, observed working on a Literacy Task, the group

work focused on using exemplars to guide their analysis of student work. The discussion centered both on struggling students, including students with disabilities, as well as accelerated students and how to scaffold understanding for one group of students while providing another with the ability to advance. As a result of this work, students benefit from lessons that are closely studied for alignment to the curriculum, instructional methods, and the application of strategies to develop independent thinking and expression.

- The school provides a safe, nurturing environment that cultivates mutual respect and care for students and adults that promotes academic achievement and personal growth. (1.4)
  - The alignment of CBLA to curricula has guaranteed that school goals supporting a positive school culture are imbedded in the Instructional Core. This Theory of Action is evident most directly in three goals: The first ensures that Personalized Learning Plans (Coaching) make explicit the expectations of competencies a student should transfer from one class to the next, in the halls, and even when representing themselves in the wider community. The second goal aims to decrease the impact of every student's disability in the general education classroom so that each child can access the curriculum. This work began with the adoption of an Integrated Co-teaching (formerly Collaborative Team Teaching or CTT) model and is bolstered by coaching as well as the UBD/CCSS curricular development. The third goal focuses on teaching students how to collaborate on digital platforms, specifically GoogleDocs. This work has served to significantly increase student-student, teacher-student, parent-student, and teacher-parent communication and collaboration. Combined with grade team level disciplinary/intervention strategies, the school has created a holistic model of supporting students academically, socially and emotionally that has reduced incidences, lifted self-esteem and ensured that every student is known intimately by a minimum of one adult in the building. Speaking to students, it is clear from their poise, self-assurance and clarity of purpose that the school has developed a rich and safe culture for student growth and expression. One student stated that his goal was to attend an audition arts school and as such, he was developing a portfolio with support from the school. He spoke with self-reliance and openness about his academic struggles and his goal to overcome some of the challenges through support from his teachers and student partners. He spoke of the significant difference between this school and his former school where he felt that his challenges would limit his options for the future. Similarly, parents spoke of the great advances made by the school in keeping them informed, empowering their children with voice and purpose and providing all students with the conviction to succeed. The infusion of technology specifically through GoogleDocs and JumpRope has made transparent for families the day to day life and progress of their children. It has allowed parents to track and monitor student and learning and provides a feedback loop that has proven invaluable in adjusting student Personalized Learning Plans. As a result, students and their families are continually engaged in understanding real-time achievement data and pushed to meet the school's high expectations.

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

- Refine the use of assessment and data collection to develop a clear understanding of trends and patterns in order to adjust instructional decisions so that all students demonstrate mastery. (2.2)

- Consistent baseline, interim and formative assessments assure that teachers, both in teams and individually, plan instruction that addresses CCSS and CBLA standards and support classroom level decisions for groups of students. The vast majority of classrooms provide students an authentic push that consistently develops higher order thinking skills through a variety of independent tasks that are well matched to student's achievement levels. However some teachers do not consistently incorporate the use of ongoing formative assessment data into their daily practice to make immediate adjustments to lessons, including opportunities for grouping. This limits the school's ability to fully target and address the needs of all student subgroups and apply differentiated interventions to accelerate their learning especially for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities. As a result, instructional practices and learning tasks are not always strategically revised, impacting opportunities to meet the needs of all students.
- Further build upon the work already begun to link the teacher observation and feedback process to teacher development so that professional growth and accountability is leveraged for pedagogical improvement. (4.1)
  - Consistent with the school's model of collaboration to develop ownership and guarantee success, during the 2011-12 school year the principal used the Danielson Framework to observe untenured staff and gave tenured teachers the option of choosing from a menu of professional frameworks This strategic decision allowed for a smooth transition to the full implementation of Danielson in September 2012 and it allowed the school to make significant inroads in aligning its CBLA competencies to the Danielson framework. The school has made a commitment to the CBLA competencies that define its instructional focus and as such, they are right to align the models. However this is challenging and time intensive collaborative work and while the strides made by the school are notable, there is still work that needs to be completed to secure total coherence between the models. This limits leadership's ability to provide feedback that is consistent across competencies, thus impacting the ability to maximize shifts in teacher practice.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: I.S. 289	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			X				
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?				X			
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?			X				
<b>School Culture</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?				X			
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?				X			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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 <b>inquiry approach</b> that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<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>