

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Inocensio Casanova

Elementary School 062

660 Fox Street

Bronx

NY 10455

Principal: Lisa Manfredonia

Dates of review: April 9- 10, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Timothy Behr

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Inocensio Casanova is an elementary school with 753 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 21% Black, 77% Hispanic, 1% White and less than 1% each of American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 91.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Relationships among students, faculty, staff, and the administration are warm and respectful, resulting in an atmosphere that is highly conducive to learning. (1.4)
 - A positive Behavior Intervention Program entitled “Students Organized Around Respect” (SOAR) has directly resulted in a decrease in the number of incidents reported via the Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS). To date, there are 66 incidents as compared to 156 for the academic year 2011-2012. A behavior expectations rubric for students supports a school wide system to promote good conduct, empowering students to socialize and behave in positive ways throughout the school. A “Respect for All” door decorating contest helps to promote a safe environment and a student generated anti-graffiti program has improved the physical environment, as evidenced by hallway and classroom bulletin boards displaying exemplary student work. A school sponsored “Culture day” highlighting breads throughout the world, promoted positive interactions with all constituents of the school community. Students’ contributions to school decisions are highly valued, with a member of the student council stating that, “students can choose the theme for Fun Fridays”. Examples are “Pajama day” and “Sports day”. Hence, the school is consistently attaining its goal of having an inclusive culture that encourages respect for diversity and learning, as evidenced by improved scores in all categories on the schools 2011-2012 Learning Environment Survey and on the Spring 2013 periodic assessments.
 - Thirteen (13%) of the total school population resides in temporary housing. All constituents work as a team to address students’ social-emotional needs via counseling services and attendance outreach programs. When needed, the Parent Coordinator conducts a home visit, offering support for regular attendance by all students. Students state that adults know them well and they receive “lots of support” with their work from teachers who are “always nice”. Art, technology, physical education, performing arts, and mini labs cluster classes provide multiple opportunities for students to strengthen their social emotional learning skills. As a result of these efforts, overall school attendance continues to improve daily and now stands at 91.7% year to date.
- The school’s curricula offers all students access to a wide range of learning experiences that include complex tasks aligned to Common Core Learning standards (CCLS) that promote college and career readiness for all students. (1.1)
 - All English language arts teachers implement a common curriculum that focuses on both fiction and non-fiction text aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Through backward design, tasks are developed with a rubric to ensure students know what is expected to experience success. To supplement the Everyday Math curriculum the school utilized funding from an instructional software grant to purchase an additional math program designed to help students in grades 2 and 3 attain math proficiency. Teachers use data from the program’s pre-

assessments to revise their units of study to address the needs of individual students and ensure that data drives instruction. As a result, all students in grades 2 through 3 have demonstrated average progress of 19.5% as measured by a recent math assessment.

- During common planning teachers meet with administrators, an Australian United States Services in Education (AUSSIE) consultant and the school based coach, to examine student work and develop lesson units and tasks to engage all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities in rich learning tasks. A Response To Intervention (RTI) plan for bilingual students in grades 3, 4, and 5 has resulted in enhanced understanding and application of language skills (speaking, listening, and writing), as measured by teacher made assessments. As a result, across content areas, curricula is well aligned to assessments and selected standards, leading to school wide improvement in student performance on assessments, as noted on the school's most recent 2011-2012 report card, which shows that the school's State Accountability status is "In Good Standing".
- The principal strategically aligns resources to support the school's instructional goals, via modifications and extensions of curricula and staffing decisions that are effective in addressing the distinct learning needs of students. (1.3)
 - The principal has purposefully planned at least two common preparations periods per week for teachers, with the purpose of monitoring the impact of curriculum and instruction on student outcomes. The review and evaluation of completed tasks, teacher made tests, unit plans for all core content areas and Acuity assessments in English language arts and math interconnect to provide data that determine the next steps to improve instruction and student outcomes. For example, the review of pre-assessment data empowered teachers to revise their units of study, prioritizing vocabulary development, in order to provide challenging the tasks that were correlated appropriately to student learning needs. These instructional techniques have resulted in improved student performance on complex academic assignments, as evidenced by completed tasks seen in students' work folders.
 - To support the academic growth and social development of students, especially English language learners and students with disabilities, the principal created a full time RTI teacher position that ensures that students receive continuity in services to meet their individual needs. The principal also created a part-time native language teacher position to provide students with the opportunity to learn academic content in their native language, while acquiring English language speaking, writing and comprehension skills. An instructional coach provides Reading Recovery strategies to accelerate student learning, resulting in improved independent reading levels. To insure that each child receives the best instruction possible, teachers to be hired at the school are required to meet with the administration, conduct a demonstration lesson and verbalize a willingness to work with a high needs population. As a result of these initiatives, student performance has been enhanced, as evidenced by student work across content areas and unit test results.

- Administrators and teacher teams use a wide range of assessment data to monitor student progress and provide feedback that informs revisions of instructional strategies, leading to student progress towards learning goals. (2.2)
 - All teachers incorporate pre-assessments into their curriculum to identify student strengths and weaknesses. All teachers maintain a mark book which reflects the school wide grading policy and use rubrics to insure that students are well aware of next steps to improve their performance. Teachers developed a progress report for kindergarten that is aligned to the selected standards. The school also prioritizes infusing writing activities in daily routines, leading to curricula that is cohesive and lesson plans that have specific reference to CCLS across grades. Consequently, with effective and ongoing data driven adjustments to curricula, the majority of students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, are making progress in English language arts and math, as noted on the Student Progress domain of the 2011-2012 Progress Report issued by the New York City Department of Education.

What the school needs to improve

- Establish consistency in scaffolding instruction based on data, so that lessons reflect purposeful grouping, challenging activities, and targeted questioning, to maximize student thinking and participation in learning. (1.2)
 - Teachers analyze pre-assessment results to inform planning. In some classrooms they incorporate targeted small group instruction to address students' academic needs. In the lower grades, the emphasis is on improving student vocabulary via a language experience approach. This instructional strategy has resulted in the majority of students improving their independent reading levels. For the upper grades, the emphasis is on students exploring texts and using information contained in them to support their answers. This strategy has resulted in students improving their ability to cite relevant text in oral and written assignments. However, there were limited opportunities for multiple entry points to allow all students to fully engage in learning and complete assignments. As a result, some students are not adequately supported towards higher order thinking to improve their proficiency in learning across content areas.
 - Although teachers know their students well, tasks for some classes require students to complete the same assignment. This results in uneven levels of student engagement as evidenced by some students not remaining on task during lessons. Students' notebook entries are inconsistent, as some students do not use notebooks regularly and thus are not able to use this tool as a resource and study guide. Most lessons are teacher directed and teachers do not consistently use technology to enhance their lessons. As a result, teachers are not targeting instructing as strategically as they could to improve student work products and participation in learning activities across content areas.

- Expand the use of a research based rubric to evaluate pedagogy with a distinct focus of maximizing teachers' professional growth via professional development activities that are linked to their individual learning goals and needs. (4.1)
 - School administrators demonstrate explicit attention to a school-wide focus of deepening the practice of rigor in instruction through regular cycles of observations. They examine student work and provide consistent verbal and written feedback, aligned to the Danielson framework, prioritizing planning, questioning, and assessment, to inform teachers of the quality of their instruction and next steps for growth in their pedagogy. New teachers receive mentoring from the administration and colleagues in a risk-free environment, to enhance their delivery of instruction. Consequently, administrators identify pedagogical trends in all classes and grades and coordinate professional development and inter-visitations that support continued improvement of rigor in lessons. However, not all professional development activities are aligned to the individual needs of teachers, as articulated via formal and informal observation data. As a result, all teachers are not effectively supported in the growth and development of their instructional practice for the benefit of all learners.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Inocensio Casanova Elementary	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<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				
School Culture							
<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				
Systems for Improvement							
<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 inquiry approach 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				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed