

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

The Irvington School

Elementary School K086

**220 Irving Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11237**

Principal: Mabel Sarduy

Dates of review: May 15-16, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Andrea Harris

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Irvington is an elementary school with 470 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 2% Black, 91% Hispanic, 1% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 26% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 95%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and staff ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in all subject areas resulting in accessible, engaging, and rigorous learning for all students. (1.1)
 - The leadership and staff have ascertained a school culture that is firmly committed to ensuring that all learners perform at the highest levels of achievement throughout the learning continuum. This is based on deep reflective thinking and targeted professional development. There is a school wide focus on informational text based writing across the curriculum. This was based on the connection between last year's curriculum and student performance on the 2013 English language arts and math New York State assessments. While students made progress the faculty determined that the data for all students indicated a need for growth in this area. Early in the year both horizontal and vertical teacher teams began working on the development of rubric assessed writing tasks that required learners to demonstrate skills, such as text referencing and the use of grade appropriate or advanced vocabulary in their writing. As part of their learning experiences students engage in tiered activities strategically designed to incorporate the CCLS and instructional shifts based on formative assessment data. During the classroom instruction teachers engage in note taking as a way of checking for understanding. Note taking assessment sheets are designed during team meetings and based on the rubric and connected with the lesson learning objectives and grade level goals. During lessons teachers use these sheets, checking and collecting comments about student learning. The school's approach to learning is cohesive, resulting in students being equipped with the back ground knowledge necessary for college and career readiness.

Each grade has a curriculum map, a lead teacher and teams that meet each Wednesday developing units, reviewing student work and planning next steps. Administrators support this process by supporting teachers in aligning plans with the Danielson Framework for Teaching and Webb's Depth of Knowledge cognitive matrix (DOK). The staff has collaboratively developed CCLS aligned curricular in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. This has resulted in the implementation of daily lessons that are engaging, rigorous and address the instructional shifts. Every lesson written begins with an "I can statement" to be read and revisited by students throughout the lesson. Student ownership for learning is highlighted at the conclusion of a lesson through discussion and the writing of a reflective statement about their academic experience, as embedded in the plans. The core inquiry team functions vertically and meets weekly to make certain that the written instruction provided is coherent, enabling students to be successful as they move from one grade to the next. A second focus of this team is to ensure that the appropriate scaffolds needed to support groups of students both low and high achievers, English language learners and special education students are planned by all teachers in every lesson. Also, the development of key questions and assessments has resulted in teachers easily identifying and making adjustments during instruction based on the individual needs of all learners. For example, in a grade one Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class during a science lesson the teachers were able to provide three different types of graphic organizers that were designed to be used by special education students and English language learners to facilitate

access to the learning about the life cycle of the butterfly. Students are required to collaborate with partners using a rubric along with a desktop checklist to determine the quality of their informational text writing task, thus these cohesive plans result in opportunities for all students to demonstrate their thinking.

- Assessments are aligned to curricula and analysis of information on student learning outcomes is used across the vast majority of classrooms to make instructional adjustments and curricula decisions at the team and classroom levels. (2.2)
 - Assessments used to measure student achievement vary in design depending on the student or teacher learning that is to be examined. They are carefully selected ensuring alignment with Common Core Learning Standards and based on individual student needs. Teachers meet in horizontal and vertical teams to create common assessments, as well as to examine student work. All teams use the Tristate rubric when looking at student work. Additionally teams have created school wide CCLS aligned writing rubrics. At a grade 4 team meeting teachers focused on analyzing the revised curriculum adjustments that were made early in the school year based on CCLS instructional shifts. Teachers examined a collaboratively developed English language arts task along with a student friendly rubric/checklist that was used by student partners to critique the work. Teachers also discussed possible next steps based on student, class and grade level goals, as well as crafted feedback to the student peers regarding their recommendations about the work and possible next steps. As a result of the action plans created, teachers pay very close attention to the vocabulary used by students in the writing tasks. To support students with using higher levels of vocabulary in their writing the strategy teachers agreed to use with their students entailed Prediction, Association, Verification, and Evaluation and is called, (PAVE). Administrators use a similar approach for teachers discussing and reflecting on Danielson teacher observation and using a data tracking system to look for trends and then design the appropriate professional development.
 - The staff has collaboratively created a yearlong assessment calendar using “Rally and MOSL” assessments in English language arts, math, and science and social studies along with teacher made common assessments for all grades. The analysis of baseline data revealed that students in grades 2 through 5 struggled with main idea within informational text. This led to a school wide goal focusing on the writing and the development of tasks and rubrics. This focus is evidenced throughout the school with rich student writing for all grade levels. The administration does weekly data snap shots looking for trends and growth. Teams meet weekly to examine the data around student progress stored on TE mathematics P.S.86. Based on trends appropriate scaffolds are identified to support student learning. All students are carefully monitored for progress and teachers collaboratively select student partners for share-paired and self-analysis of their work, as well as the use of appropriate scaffolds for all relevant subgroups and higher achieving students. Mastery is also linked to students’ achievement of individualized goals. These goals are crafted based on student conferences, self-reflection and the peer revision process. Additionally, teachers are very mindful about the language used to provide students with actionable feedback. These comments serve as springboards that students use to build their personal goals as part of their next steps. During the student meeting learners shared their reading reflection note books and talked about how their writing has improved in the area of referencing the text to support answers, thus indicative of student growth toward mastery levels.

- The school maintains a culture of mutual trust and positive attitude that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults. (1.4)
 - The school's mission is to provide challenging curriculum with flexibility to meet the needs of all learners. To accomplish this, the school has adopted the following pledge that is embraced by staff, parents and students known as YMCA Y (you should be respectful to others), M (Make responsible choices), C (Consider others feelings and Celebrate your differences), A (Act Appropriately). Along with, *the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports, (PBIS) program*, this pledge informs the school's theory of action resulting in an environment that is safe and inclusive of all. The thoughtfully embedded practice of beginning the school day with the reciting of this pledge allows students the opportunity to share goals and the plans for accomplishment, supports a cohesive learning environment. The acronym was developed collaboratively with leadership, parents, teachers, support staff and students. It includes a student friendly rubric used by students to support emotional development and help peers monitor each other's behavior. This aligns with the school's goals and targets preparing students to be college and career ready. Through the PBIS program a monthly character trait and weekly vocabulary words are strategically selected to promote alignment with the school wide writing goals creating writing experiences that are incorporated into the academic work across all content areas. Students produce high quality monthly writing essays that are proudly displayed on bulletin boards both inside and outside of classrooms. Additionally, the writing is also used as a way to amplify student voice and choice around various topics. Moreover, the student government meets every Tuesday with the principal to discuss ideas and concerns. One outcome of these meetings has been the parent and staff participation in monthly potluck luncheons where parents and teachers come together to discuss student learning, thereby working together to support school improvements in academics and social-emotional growth.
 - The entire school community has collaboratively developed the mission focusing on building students' self-confidence for acquiring the social and academic skills necessary to take responsibility for their own learning. The school's approach to professional development targeting staff, parents and student ability to strategically implement the PBIS program is supported by a sophisticated expectation matrix behavior tool. This tool was developed for students by administrators, teachers, parents, support staff and students. It provides a guide in the form of a rubric for students on how they should behave in the classroom, cafeteria, hallways and school yard. It helps students assess their own behavior and that of their peers and provide solutions and interventions when change is needed. The matrix is used in conjunction with students writing journals targeting improving their writing skills as they self-reflect on their own behaviors. The adoption of these highly effective practices involving the academic and personal behaviors has resulted in a zero suspension rate over the past four years.
- The school uses a carefully crafted set of short and long term goals tracked by student data results in a coherent vision targeting school improvement that is understood and supported by the entire school community. (3.1)
 - The administration then ensures that teachers have built into their schedule time to review and reflect on the data and turn-key information to colleagues focusing on closing the achievement gap for all students. Goal setting and effective action planning at the school level are strategically crafted after careful reflection on student work samples, New York State summative assessments and formative

teacher data gleaned from the June, 2013 common assessments. Additionally this included a comprehensive analysis of teacher performance based on the Danielson Framework for teaching. The principal engaged the School Leadership Team (SLT), faculty and additional parent leaders in deep discussion around student learning and CCLS aligned curriculum. The Irvington school adopted a school wide initiative that focused on long-term goals of deepening critical reading/literacy skills and then strategically using them as a link to target and improve student writing. This was done through the teacher and student development of short-term goals embedded in daily instruction across classrooms and content areas. The principal has provided the staff with targeted professional learning based on data and trends identified through the Danielson Framework for Teaching. A former Generation Ready consultant has supported the school forming study groups around assessment and questioning. Teacher inter-visitations and off-site professional development are provided to teachers based on their individual needs. This process of reflection, discussion and collaboration among teachers is spearheaded by the two assistance principals. The impact of this professional development has resulted in the school wide practice of assessing for student learning at least three times during the lesson. Teachers make frequent, on-the-spot adjustments during lessons to ensure student success. As a result the school is closing the achievement gap as evidenced by the number of grade 4 students inclusive of special education students, and English language learners scoring levels three and four on Rally assessments. To ensure that progress is made toward meeting short and long-term goals the school has outlined a plan emphasizing communication between administration, faculty, parents and students. During a grade 2 teacher team meeting it was shared that data is recorded in TEmathematicsP.S.86K by the core inquiry team. A collaborative action plan is then crafted. Careful attention is paid to teacher comments on student work. The deeply embedded practice across the school requires that teachers align the next steps comments to students' short term goals. During the student large group meeting a grade 2 student described how she planned to use her teacher's comment to craft her next goal. She plans to work on the development of her language for summarizing the main idea of a text using, "my summary sentences". Parents shared that based on the six week progress report they have a better understanding about their child's learning, as well as the progress the child is making and give credit to school leaders for establishing cohesive practices that promote the high level decision making processes at the school.

- School leaders, and staff, have established a culture for learning that communicates high expectations for all and provides families with the support to achieve those expectations. (3.4)
 - The principal's appropriately focused leadership skills allow her to clearly communicate high expectations for all members at "The Irvington School. Professional development is consistently building the staff's capacity with the necessary skills to support students toward preparing for their next level. The meticulous goal setting across classrooms targeting writing, and students' work products that require deep thinking result in the acquisition of skills directly connected to students being college and career ready. The monthly character traits implemented through the school's *Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports* (PBIS) program allow students to consistently engage in discussions that strengthen their skills in areas, such as responsibility and determination. This supports academic study and work habits, as well as the social maturity these learners will need to succeed in college and careers. The school supports parent trainings through the evening English as a second language program enabling

entire families to engage in similar discussions around their child's future. To promote this process the school holds parent walk-throughs visiting classrooms and observing instruction every three months. During a walk-through in October parents noticed that English language learners needed additional materials in literacy. The SLT researched this, and the Parents Teacher Association donated 5% of the funds needed to purchase the "Ticket to Read" program. Results from the "Rally" assessments show that 30% of the English language learners have positive gains in English language arts. Further, all school constituents partake in monthly celebrations on the third Monday of each month targeting student future pathways. Currently grade 3 students, teachers and parents are participating in the leadership/Envision Pathways. The program is led by a third grade teacher and focuses on the various pathways and careers for students in the area of science, thus these collaborative efforts result in a culture of mutual support toward meeting the school's expectations.

- The school learning environment survey indicates that 100% of the parents and teachers believe the school has high expectations for all learners. In the area of academic expectations the school was rated 8.7% and this rating is above the citywide average for all New York City schools. Consequently teachers through inter-visitations, team meetings and turn-keying of information about student learning have established a systemic and unified culture for student learning and effective feedback. This is evidenced by the consistent and cohesive threads in ETmathematics, emails and blogs used by teachers to communicate around student learning ensuring that all students including high-needs subgroups receive the supports and learning opportunities needed to be successful.

What the school needs to improve

- Intensify the work done with teacher teams so that across the vast majority of classrooms strategic instructional practices result in high level thinking and student discussions for all learners. (1.2)
 - At The Irvington School the faculty is devoted to encouraging rigorous tasks and learning activities to probe student thinking. They are committed to the belief that students learn best when they take ownership for their learning. Teachers collaboratively developed a lesson plan template ensuring that lessons across all content areas provide multiple entry points and can address the various learning styles of students. A grade five English language learner shared that she was using the strategy of jotting down notes when reading in order to respond with appropriate facts and details to questions asked by the teacher or another student. She also offered assistance to other students during the lunch period on the use of the strategy. During classroom visits students were seen engaged in student to student discussions and using rubrics to check on their work and the work of a partner. However, during classroom visits it was also noted that the vast majority of teachers do not strategically implement these practices and strategies, thus inhibiting the ability for all students to engage in discussion and rigorous learning tasks that result in high levels of thinking and problem solving.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The Irvington School	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 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?				X			
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the 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 supports 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 those expectations?				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 student 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 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?				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