



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Inocensio Casanova School

Elementary School 062

**660 Fox Street
Bronx
NY 10455**

Principal: Lourdes Estrella

Dates of review: December 4 - 6, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Stephen Walker

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Inocensio Casanova is an elementary school with 725 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 82% Hispanic, 17% Black, 0.5% Asian and 0.5% White students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 93%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 90% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has a good understanding of the performance and progress of individual students in the school.
- Teachers keep very detailed assessment records for their classes and this enables them to highlight the precise learning needs of the individual students.
- Students who require additional help with their work are well supported by the academic intervention services.
- Parents and caregivers are regularly informed about progress of their children and greatly appreciate the work of the school.
- The school provides an excellent reading and writing program that greatly supports the academic development of the students.
- Teachers use assessment information well to inform planning and groupings so that differentiated instruction meets the specific needs of the students.
- An effective program of professional development enhances the very positive culture amongst the teachers to improve their practice.
- The high degree of mutual respect between students and teachers leads to a very positive atmosphere in classrooms and around the school.
- The principal provides committed, dynamic and empowering leadership so that parents, teachers and students respect and share her clear vision for the school.
- Student work is displayed well in classes, providing a stimulating learning environment.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop further the analysis of whole school performance and progress data with particular reference to gender and similar schools.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good across the school.
- Encourage more frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction in order to share good practice across the school.
- Update the Comprehensive Education Plan to ensure that newly identified priorities are included across the subject plans.

Part 3: Main findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Inocencio Casanova is an improving school that is making commendable progress in its mission to move from “good to great” so that all students experience success. The principal provides committed and empowering leadership so that parents, teachers and students greatly respect and share her clear vision for the school. There is a good understanding of the performance and progress of individual students although the school does not fully analyze the data in relation to gender and similar schools. Teachers keep very detailed assessment records for their classes and this enables them to monitor student performance and progress closely, highlighting their learning needs. There is a very positive culture amongst the teachers to improve their instructional practice in order to engage students even more fully in their learning. The school does not use observations of other teachers’ classroom instruction fully as a way of sharing good practice across the school.

An analysis of assessment information and a rigorous process of school evaluation drives strategic planning and school improvements. However, the Comprehensive Education Plan is not a current working document and the subject plans do not include the newly identified priorities for the school. The school’s inquiry team is undertaking research on the identified target group although the terms of reference and time scales for the group are not fully agreed

Since the last school Quality Review, teachers are now more responsible for the progress of their students, particularly in reading and math. Academic intervention services provide good support for students who need extra help with their work. All teachers are now using assessment data well to inform their planning and groupings in order to support differentiated instruction in the classroom. Teachers use performance data effectively to set challenging goals for the students in order to raise levels of achievement. The school is also using the grade meetings and planning time very effectively to share good practice and support the professional development of teachers.

How well the school meets New York City’s evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the student’s progress over time.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The school demonstrates a good understanding of the performance and progress of individual students. It uses assessment data very well in order to track the progress of individuals and groups of students. Teachers keep very detailed records for each student in reading and math including baseline assessments, individual conferencing and regular

standardized tests. The grade teams are making some progress in rationalizing the testing so that there is not over-testing of certain skills.

Teachers provide the administration with their assessment records so that there is a whole-school view of performance and progress in each class and grade. The principal, vice-principals and coach managers meet regularly with grade teams and individual teachers, to discuss student progress and variations in progress between classes.

There is a detailed analysis of past performance and differences between teachers and classes. Each teacher is able to show “the annual growth” as well as “the catch up growth” for their students. The school’s challenge this year is to ensure that over 55% of students gain at least a level 3 in reading.

There are good systems to record the performance and progress of English language learners and special education students. The school analyses the ethnic differences in performance and notes Hispanic and Black underachievement in English language arts. The school does not explore the differences in achievement between boys and girls. The principal compares results with local elementary schools but does not fully analyze whole school performance data with similar schools that have better results with special education students and English language learners. Teachers are using the ACUITY system in grades 3 through 5 to inform their instruction and the inquiry team is developing its understanding of ARIS in order to inform their action research.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

Teachers maintain very detailed assessment records for their classes. This enables them to highlight the precise learning needs of individual students. The school has high expectations for the students, encourages all to experience success and teachers set challenging goals for students to achieve. The school constantly emphasizes that PS 62 is “the Academy for Success” and is “working its way to 90%” of students gaining Level 3 in reading and math. One parent proudly said, “This school teaches children to read.” Students and parents are aware of achievement goals and there is a clear expectation that students will make at least one year’s progress in each grade.

The school shares the graded reading levels with students and parents so that everyone know what they should be aiming for over the four assessment periods. Grade teachers meet each week to discuss class performance and highlight the students who are not making the required progress. Academic intervention services support students who require additional help with their work well. For example, the Wilson reading program supports struggling readers and support teachers provide effective help for many students through “push in and pull out” strategies.

The extended-day and after-school programs provide a comprehensive support package for students who are performing at Levels 1 and 2. Communication with the parents and caregivers is good and this supports student achievement. Regular and detailed reports to parents include an analysis of student strengths and areas for development. The school alerts parents quickly if their child requires intervention support. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences is very good. Teachers are in regular contact with parents regarding their children’s progress and many teachers provide parents with their cell phone numbers and email contact.

The school engages the local community and “encourages parents to be involved in their children’s education”.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school provides a very good reading and writing program that greatly supports the academic development of the students. The division of the school into the two age-related academies of "Learning to Read" and "Reading to Learn" emphasizes the importance of reading in the school. The school uses the Lucy Calkins programs for writing effectively as well as a phonics program for word development. All teachers are following an effective literacy lesson structure and workshop model to raise achievement in reading and writing. The introduction of the more structured everyday math course is leading to a significant improvement in test scores across the grades.

Enrichment and intervention specialists broaden the curriculum with a range of programs in creative arts, physical education, technology and science. A wide range of educational visits to places such as to the Museum of Natural History and the Rockefeller Center greatly enhance the learning experience of the students. Strategic use of the budget and imaginative scheduling supports the progress of the students. For example, good use of funding provides small classes, collaborative teaching and enrichment intervention specialists in each grade. A homogeneous group in each grade also provides additional challenge for the higher-achieving students.

Teachers support student learning effectively and maintain a "low stress yet challenging learning atmosphere" in the classes. Supervision of students is very effective within a calm atmosphere and there is deliberately "no shouting at the students". Mutual trust and respect between staff and students supports a very positive culture in the school.

Teachers use assessment information well to inform groupings, planning and instruction so that differentiated instruction meets the specific needs of the students. Although some instruction is good, the quality of teaching is not uniformly consistent across the school. Despite this, students enjoy the lessons and really appreciate how the teachers take time to explain the work. The high quality work on display in many rooms provides a stimulating environment for learning. The school does not use technology fully to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

The school monitors attendance well and has effective measures in place. As a result, attendance is improving across the grades. Rewards are given for good attendance and the school is "striving for perfect attendance".

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

An effective program of professional development enhances the very positive culture amongst the teachers to improve their practice. Training programs clearly focus on using assessment data more effectively to accelerate student progress. The assistant principals and curriculum coaches provide very good support for teachers with planning and instruction as well as modeling lessons. New teachers receive very effective ongoing support through coaching and mentoring. As a result, the large number of newly qualified

staff are developing their teaching techniques well. The school selects teachers on their potential to set high expectations for student performance and “to make a difference”.

All teachers praise the collegial approach amongst the staff and appreciate the generous support from colleagues with planning and teaching techniques. Teams of teachers use grade meetings to identify their areas for development and support each other in planning and teaching. However, the school does not fully use the opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction in order to share good practice across the school. There are regular walkthroughs and learning walks by administration, which enhance the very open approach to advice and support that teachers adopt. All teachers have a formal observation by the principal or assistant principals with detailed, diagnostic and effective feedback at least once each year.

The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis, supported by committed teams of teachers and support staff. The positive culture in the school encourages a good standard of behavior and a belief amongst the students, teachers and parents that this is “the best school in the Bronx”.

Effective partnerships with a number of outside bodies and community organizations support the school well. For example, the Citizens Advice Bureau provides essential support with attendance and the Police Athletic League arranges numerous sports activities for the students.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The principal provides committed, dynamic and empowering leadership so that parents, teachers and students respect and share her clear vision for the school. Michael Fullan’s model of “transformational leadership” influences her long-term aims for the school in which “success for all” is achievable even in a highly challenging environment. All stakeholders within the school and community appreciate her inter-personal skills and as one parent said, “She is the right person for the job.” The assistant principals and curriculum coaches work well with the teachers in order to put the vision into practice.

A rigorous process of school evaluation and analysis of assessment information drives strategic planning and school improvements. There are clear targets for the current year for student achievement in each grade. The school monitors student progress through regular testing in each subject. There are explicit whole school goals and teachers are held accountable for the performance of their students. However, the Comprehensive Education Plan is not a working document for the current year. Subject action plans do not include the newly identified priorities in order to drive improvements in the school.

The school identifies students who need extra support through a variety of intervention strategies. The academic intervention team meets regularly to monitor the effectiveness of intervention strategies. The school is continually evaluating its performance and “looking deeper into the ingredients for improvements”. For example, the revised organisation of the school into the separate academies is an ambitious change to improve reading levels across the school.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Inocensio Casanova	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?			X		
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X	

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?				X	
2.2 focus on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area?				X	
2.3 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students ?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?			X		
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?				X	
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3					X

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?			X		
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4					X

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to make strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5					X