



PSC 3.0 INFORMATIONAL SCHOOL PLAN SUMMARY

FOR: VALIDATION ACADEMY

FOR: 42ND STREET ELEMENTARY

PROPOSED BY: BE THE CHANGE IN URBAN EDUCATION (BCUE)

Mission & Vision of the School / Misión y Visión de la Escuela

Our vision is to enable students to become lifelong learners, informed and responsible citizens, competent and successful members of the workforce and thinking, fulfilled caring individuals; develop leaders of the 21st Century who have a well rooted culturally based self-concept as autonomous, productive, lifetime learners who are part of a larger interconnected community; and serve as a model of culturally responsive teaching as a successful approach for closing the achievement gap.

Since today's students are tomorrow's problem solvers, Validation Academy fosters students' ability to uncover meaning and significance while they are acquiring information and skills. We consider it imperative for students to think critically and act creatively to be successful in the twenty-first century. The Academy curriculum is designed to allow children time to think and discover. Hands-on experiences, engaging discussions, field trips, and collaborative activities are fundamental parts of the coursework. The integration of the arts - visual art, music, and performance - into a full academic curriculum ensures that the arts are valued as a way to develop the essential capabilities for abstract thought and expression. Our intent is that students acquire the tools to become active, interested lifelong learners. Students need to master core content standards to demonstrate proficiency. This active engagement may require the addition of enrichment or intervention services to meet students where they are and bridge them to where they need to be to master grade-level content and beyond.

**Designing Data Driven & Student Centered Instructional Programs /
 Diseñando Programas Educativos Basados en Datos y Centrados en los Estudiantes**

Synopsis: 42nd Street Elementary School is currently in its 5th year of program improvement. The 2010-2011 data showed a slight improvement in the overall achievement. However, In all progress areas, the scores remain far below target goals with nearly 70% of the student population scoring below proficient in English/Language Arts and 60% in Mathematics.

Strengths

- Met API, with gain of 21 points (659)
- Slight gains in English/Language Arts, Mathematics achievement (3.5, 6.5 respectively)
- All subgroups improved, except for English learners (-0.2)
- Latino students had the biggest gains of any subgroup
- All grade levels improved, except for 4th grade and 5th grade in math and science

Opportunities For Improvement

- Increase primary grades literacy skill levels. Compared to state-wide data, the proficiency rates at the lower grades (2-3) can be increased substantially which will have an affect on the entire program as students matriculate upward



- Revised instructional/curricular program in English/Language Arts and Mathematic programs to address gaps in the overall achievement, particularly with African American, English Learners, Socio-Economically Disadvantaged, and Student with Disabilities
- Improved English Learner support instructionally to increase numbers of students passing the CELDT and English proficiency
- Re-incentive school attendance plan to improve number of students attending 96% or more of the time.

Top Priorities and Actions Steps

1. Establish an early literacy focus (primary grades) with Differentiated Reading Groups.
2. Implement new English Learner program
3. Re-examine intervention programs for ELA and Math
4. Implement one-to-one tutorial programs and services for special needs
5. Establish Parent Outreach Teams at each grade level

Instructional Program / Programa de Instrucción

Students with disabilities and special needs

Validation Academy believes that all students deserve fair and equitable access to the curriculum, including students with special needs and students with disabilities. Support will be provided to students in accordance to their IEPs. Additionally, many of the strategies used for groups listed above, such as using comprehensible input, are also sound instructional strategies with students with special needs. Additional sound strategies including breaking down tasks into more manageable pieces, which is a strategy described in Teach Like a Champion by Doug Lemov.

Socio-economically disadvantaged students

Validation Academy's main mission is to empower socioeconomically disadvantaged students and therefore, its instructional methodology and program are carefully created and chosen with this population in mind. The school has also designed its program so that all students will obtain access to the regular grade-level curriculum, but there will also be opportunities for students to obtain either intervention help during the regular school day or an accelerated curriculum during the regular school day for students who are ready for more challenging work. Additionally, after school intervention, Saturday school, and/or summer school may be provided for students who are academically behind. The school also plans multiple field trips throughout the school year in order to provide socioeconomically disadvantaged students with firsthand experience outside of the classroom in order to strengthen their "cultural currency" that will enhance their understanding of their grade-level curriculum inside the classroom.

Gifted students

Teachers are prepared to provide additional challenges for academically gifted students, even though the research-based curriculum is already academically demanding. The teacher differentiates instruction so that academically gifted students will have an opportunity to work on more advanced curriculum. Other subjects may have heterogeneous ability grouping to give students opportunities to work and learn from each other. Research shows that people deepen their understanding of various concepts through the process of working with and teaching others.

English Language Learners

The School may use materials such as QuickReads, which builds fluency by delivering science and social studies content through the use of comprehensible text. Step Up to Writing provides instruction and practice in sentence structure, punctuation, grammar, and how to write a paragraph. When appropriate, the school may also utilize the English Language Development resources that are provided by the textbook publishers that the school uses for the



four core curricular areas of language arts, mathematics, history-social science, and science. Teacher-created lessons based on AEMP may be additional resources provided to our students, with an emphasis on helping Standard English Learners. For example, students may engage in contrastive analysis lessons that empower students to “code switch” between Nonstandard Languages and Standard American English/Mainstream American English.

Standard English Learners

Teacher-created lessons based on AEMP may be additional resources provided to our students, with an emphasis on helping Standard English Learners. For example, students may engage in contrastive analysis lessons that empower students to “code switch” between Nonstandard Languages and Standard American English/Mainstream American English.

School Culture / Cultura de la escuela

The Typical Day of a Validation Academy Student...

From the moment Patrick and Isela, 2nd graders at 42nd Street Academy, leave their homes this morning, make the 10 minute walk to school and enter the school gates, they are awash in a sense of validation and affirmation that is at the heart of their school experience.

First and most importantly , they feel safe. They each amble down the block from their respective homes in their smartly attired school uniforms and bounce across streets eager to start the day. They do so without fear as they are well aware of the community development program initiated by their school in conjunction with community leaders including the local city councilman, law enforcement, clergy, activists, and gang leaders, that has resulted in safer streets and a peaceful neighborhood.

Isela and Patrick arrive on the school grounds alive with an excitement and anticipation that is palpable—an energy that any visitor to the school remarks about immediately upon setting foot on campus. They both head to the cafeteria area for breakfast, enthusiastic that the cafeteria staff has introduced new breakfast and lunch menus with delicious, wholesome meals that are now desired by a majority of the students and have resulted in the number of purchased meals tripling since they were introduced over a year ago.

Having enjoyed the nourishment provided, they discard their trash in appropriate containers and head to the playground, equally excited about what surprises Morning Affirmation will bring. They say hello to the principal—Isela getting a hug, Patrick getting a “pound” (fist bump)—who is doing yard supervision this morning and knows each of their names and the names of all the other students who have assembled on the yard (as do the other adults doing supervision this morning). Patrick and Isela are delighted with the adjustment to the school schedule made two years ago that has them arriving 20 minutes earlier than before so as to capture time for Morning Affirmation.

They see that three upper grade students have convened, drums in tow, arms and legs akimbo, as they stretch and ready themselves to deliver the Drum Call (call to order) to the school community. They like that the school abandoned the school bell/buzzer as the initial signal to come together in the morning and that, in it’s place, the upper grade students play a contemporary rhythm on an ensemble consisting of a West African Djembe drum, a Conga, and collection of Culoepuya (Venezuelan by way of Congo) drums. They feel the rhythm and it’s calling to them that learning has officially begun.

Isela and Patrick can articulate that Morning Affirmation represents an important beginning to their day. They know that it is a time meant to affirm their reason for being at school as a community of learners. They will share with a



visitor to the school this morning that “Affirmation” as they call it, is the first formal activity of the day designed to touch their hearts, elevate their spirits, and galvanize the community around a common theme for that day—be it one of the righteous principles that make up the character development program and ethics process in use at the school, or a relevant and meaningful song, reading passage, poem, speech, dance, etc.

Our two superstars begin Morning Affirmation with the Pledge of Allegiance, then sing James Weldon Johnson’s *Lift Ev’ry Voice*, recite the school poem, *Where There is A Will* (one of a collection of published children’s poems authored by legendary and now deceased rapper Tupac Amaru Shakur), and recite the school’s motto in a familiar call and response discourse: “Aspire...” “I Want!” “Affirm...” “I Can!” “Attain...” “I Will!”

Today’s Morning Affirmation activity is a line dance taught to them by one of the school administrators (!) that requires each member of the community to do the dance together, in step, as One—the message to the students being that together, as a unified, committed community, they can accomplish anything they desire. Affirmation has been perfect—serious in its message but fun in its application. And the day has just begun!

As students enter the CLASroom™, the teacher, Ms. Jacques, greets each by name, shakes their hand says “welcome” in Español and Yoruba, “Bienvenidos!” and “Ekaabo!”. Students return the welcome phrases to the teacher in like fashion.

Anticipation then builds once more. It’s Isela’s turn to lead the Morning Report, an essential CLASroom™ structure that, like Morning Affirmation school-wide, sets a tone of readiness, reviewing the days learning goals along with news, facts and fun tidbits to intrigue Isela, Patrick, and their CLASmates™.

Isela heads to the laptop cart and removes one of the laptops that the school has purchased as part of a ubiquitous computing initiative in which there is a laptop for every two students at the grade level. She connects wirelessly to the Internet and using Google Docs™, opens a Powerpoint-like presentation that she has worked on in preparation for the day using the Presentation component of Google Docs web-based software application.

Isela then leads the class through each element of the Morning Report:

The Morning Traffic Jam—Isela fires up a popular song that she has received

approval from the teacher to play. She has listed on the LCD projector that she had connected to her laptop, instructions for her CLASmates™ that during the two and a half minutes that the song is on, to listen to music while they engage in the initial routines of placing their backpack, snack or lunch in the designated area in the room, submit their homestudy to the homestudy basket, and ensure that they have all the needed supplies for the day. During this time students are allowed, encouraged even, to socialize as well, thereby benefitting from a learning environment that is culturally responsive to the sociocentric /interpersonal learning styles evident in many of the students in the room.

Morning Proverb: Next she leads the CLAS in proverb study in Español: *El perezoso trabaja doble*. She reviews the translation—The lazy one works twice—and asks for interpretations from the class. She is delighted when Patrick responds. “Put forth the effort to do things right the first time or you’ll have to do them again.”

What’s in a Name?: Isela has researched West African languages and shares a slide in her presentation that let’s the



class know that the day name of a male child born on Wednesday is Kwaku and the day name for a female child born on Wednesday is Akua. She then acknowledges and addresses each of her classmates that know that they were born on Wednesday by placing either Kwaku or Akua before their name.

Fact or Fiction?: Isela asks her classmates to discuss whether the following statement is fact or fiction– you are tall in the morning but shorter at night. Students are surprised to find out that it’s true.

Wired to The World: Isela states important events in Latino and African American history that occurred on the same date.

CLASroom Agenda: Finally she displays the agenda that her teacher has developed for the day. She reviews each of the subjects and corresponding learning activities.

Prepared and ready for excellence, Patrick and Isela then engage in the days learning in their language rich CLASroomTM.

Isela and Patrick are engaged in exploration and comparative analysis of two culturally relevant literature titles, *Mirandy* and *Brother Wind*, by Patricia McKissack and Gilberto and *the Wind* by Marie Hall Ets. The literature study is part of an integrative unit of study incorporating reading comprehension, linguistic awareness and language study, vocabulary development, science incorporating the study of the natural phenomenon of wind, and cultural studies.

In the morning lesson, after reading passages from the two stories, students engage in the “Three Step Interview” discussion protocol that is responsive to the cooperative/interdependent cultural learning style that predominates in the classroom. Isela and Patrick are asked to turn to their table partners and take turns asking and answering comprehension questions about the stories. After asking and answering one literal and one inferential question about each of the stories with their partner, students share their questions and answers with the other table partner pair in their collaborative team. The teacher evaluates Patrick and Isela and their CLASmates’ questions and answers using the Pick-a-Sick participation protocol in which the teachers solicits

responses/answers by picking sticks from a group in which each stick represents a particular student. The protocol provides explicit turn-taking practice for students characterized by non-volunteer selection, increased engagement created by the anticipation of being chosen, and is responsive to interpersonal/interdependent preference for learning that is evident in so many learners in the classroom.

Later in the morning Isela and Patrick engage in academic vocabulary by building on words and concepts that they already possess. This is done through the use of a Personal Thesaurus that each student adds to and maintains throughout the school year. Afterward, the two students engage in a contrastive analysis language sorting activity in which they identify and sort sentences and phrases extracted from *Mirandy* and *Brother Wind* according to whether they contain linguistic features of standard English or home language.

Later that day, Isela, Patrick, and their peers all use the laptops in the CLASroomTM to connect to the internet to research wind turbines, how they are constructed and how they are used to generate clean “green” energy. Students use YouTube to access videos that focus on wind turbine movies and animations. As they view the videos, they take notes and write questions that arise as they are viewing the pictures, videos, and chart their questions to make public their wonderings about the strange propeller-like contraptions.



That afternoon, the two students benefit from further engagement with culturally responsive participation and discussion protocols infused throughout content area instruction as they are provided experiences in mathematics with gathering data, entering data in a table, and drawing a bar graph; and to demonstrate a strategy for finding the middle (median) value in a data set.

Prior to dismissal, Isela and Patrick participate in daily reflections in which they reflect on and consider their learning day, what they learned, how they learned it, and whether they managed their efforts and talents to the best of their abilities. Both feel quite positive that today was good day.

Because the school has been awarded a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant, both students participate in the after school program that offers safe and exciting learning, cultural and recreational activities. They each receive a nutritious snack, get help with their homestudy from volunteer mentors and tutors, and participate in sports and artistic activities. When their parents pick them up that evening and ask each about their day, Patrick and Isela have much to share. Their parents are pleased at their children’s eagerness and motivation to return to school as early as possible tomorrow to experience it all over again.

Parent Engagement & Involvement / Participacion de padre y comunidad

Parents are key stakeholders in this process of school transformation. Their agreement and support is needed to foster an environment of collaboration and success. Parents will be engaged in a variety of ways including needs assessment surveys, parent education workshops, meet and greet activities, cultural festivals, parent councils, resource workshops, volunteer opportunities and community outreach, student-led conferences, invitation to classroom culminating projects and reports, leadership development and social service support offerings.

It will be very important to create a welcoming and respectful environment for parents and families by valuing their presence and input, encouraging classroom visits and making sure there is regular communication with the home.

Staffing / Personal de La Escuela

Validate Academy will pride itself on having a staff with a heart to serve. Staff members must first and foremost understand and appreciate the community we serve, have an sincere commitment to the students and families of the school and a consistent value for their own professional development and growth. Together we will all become part of a process of change and transformation.

Applicant Team Contact Information / Información de contacto de la organización solicitante

Lead and/or Team Member Name(s): Sharroky Hollie, Janis Bucknor, Anthony Jackson

Applicant Team Contact Phone Number: (323) 292-0500

Applicant Team Contact Email: moreinfo@cultureandlanguage.org