



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

East-West School of International Studies

**High School 281
46-21 Colden Street
Queens
NY 11355**

Principal: Ben Sherman

Dates of review: June 4 - 5, 2007

Reviewer: Ronnie Solow

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

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

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The East-West School of International Studies opened with 150 students in grades 7 and 9, in September 2006 on the fourth floor of a Flushing, Queens Junior High School. The student body is 53% male and 47% female. The ethnic composition of the school is 50% Asian, 29% Hispanic, 15% Black, and 6% White. English language learners account for 20% of the students, while special education students are about 3% of the student body. The rate of attendance is 94.3% for the year to date, placing it above New York City averages. The school receives Title I funds based on targeted assistance for year 1 schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is highly visible and accessible, providing good support and encouragement for staff and students.
- The principal and assistant principal work as a collaborative team in order to institutionalize policies, procedures and guidelines.
- Coaching is used to increase teacher skills and ability in order to raise student performance outcomes.
- Budget, scheduling and staffing decisions are based on the needs of the students.
- Staff members support one another well in their professional growth and development.
- Students are well known across classes and grades by all staff members.
- Students are active participants in the learning process.
- Achievement is celebrated through displays of high quality samples of students' work in classrooms and halls.
- Technology use is embedded and enhances the academic program in order to increase linkages with home-based technology.
- Partners support and expand the academic opportunities of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Further disaggregate data to note the progress and assist in planning within all sub-groups.
- Create practices in order to raise the efficacy of planning and collating data information to facilitate classroom planning.
- Expand professional development activities regarding the use of data to inform classroom practice and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of individual students.
- Develop a school-wide curriculum map and pacing calendar to insure equity of instruction across all classes.
- Publish a staff handbook to institutionalize rules, regulations and policies across the school.
- Expand parental involvement in the school life of their students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The East–West School of International Studies is in its first year and has an emphasis on Asian language and culture studies. All students elect to study either the Chinese, Japanese or Korean languages during their time in this school, along with the other academic subjects such as English language arts and mathematics. Currently, the school enrollment is 150 students in grades 7 and 9. Next year there will be 350 students in grades 6 through 10.

The principal and his staff have formed a collaborative team in order to plan, initiate and create the school. The educational philosophy is rooted in project-based, student-centered learning for the mostly level 1 and level 2 students. Students are responsible partners in the learning organization. The morning assembly, called muster, student planned and led, contributes an important element to the establishment and maintenance of the school culture and rituals.

The principal and his assistant principal have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and the areas for improvement in the use of data for improving academic outcomes and increasing parental involvement in the school.

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 student progress over time.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

As a new school, there is not a large body of quantitative data available. Prior to the school year staff reviewed the previously amassed data for English language arts and mathematics levels, along with the attendance history and biographical information for each student. This information is used to form the classes.

Formal assessments, teacher–made tests, unit tests, student project outcomes and teacher observations are providing the data used to establish the student goals within the curriculum outline. Content knowledge goals are infused with literacy skills in reading and writing across all areas of the curriculum. The principal recognizes the need for an efficient system to collect and organize the data from all sources for every class in order to enable the teachers to utilize the information for planning purposes, and readily identify student strengths and areas of concern.

The staff tracks the data for their students and uses the information to address individual needs. The school does not track the progress of all students by ethnicity. After the first report card, it was noted that some male students were not performing as well as some others in the school. The principal and staff elected to follow 20 of these students closely and to provide special intervention services in order to improve their performance outcomes. Data is amassed about the progress of English language learners and the small number of special education students. The principal has begun to disaggregate data

according to ethnicity and other groups of interest in order that performance outcomes can be monitored and sub-group needs addressed.

The school monitors attendance and lateness as indicators of success. Academic intervention services are offered in the extended day program, as well as an after school tutoring program. Many of the students have scored at level 1 or level 2 and are required to attend the extended day program in literacy and/or mathematics, as well as the tutoring and Saturday academy.

The principal makes comparisons with other schools in his Empowerment Zone network. He recently compared his State English language arts examination results with the comparable grades of the junior high school in which the school is situated. The results were roughly equivalent while attendance was significantly higher. Other school comparisons include those in his critical friends' network of small schools.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The goals for year one were established in the principal's aims and objectives. The staff was solicited for comments and input. The current Comprehensive Education Plan for 2007-2008 has been collaborately developed by the school leadership team. Teachers establish goals for their classes and individual students based on the curriculum and needs revealed by the data and teacher observations. Weekly grade meetings and the monthly faculty conferences serve as good forums for assessing progress using the available qualitative and quantitative data. Grade conferences provide time for planning, developing materials and strategies, reviewing student work, assessing individual and group projects and conferencing with the principal or assistant principal. Student portfolios contain work samples including insightful, reflective writing about their learning and test papers.

All level 1 and level 2 students, the largest percentage of students, receive academic intervention services in the extended day program. The small group of higher attaining students is challenged through the project-based learning assignments, after school program and the Saturday academy. The small percentage of special education students receives appropriate, mandated individual education plan services in pull-out sessions according to their individual education plans.

The interactive web-site designed by the school serves as a vehicle for sharing the high expectations the school has for every student. The school determined that all students at the school have access to a computer at home. Parents and students can communicate with the staff, check assignments, receive homework help and have on-line discussions using the website. Parents are invited to open school events, curriculum meetings, celebrations, orientation sessions, and parent teacher association meetings. Currently, there is no parent coordinator. The principal recognizes the need to increase parental involvement in the school life of their students.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The English language arts curriculum follows the guidelines in the State standards, as do the science, social studies and foreign language courses. English as a second language students receive their instruction in a separate class aligned to the same curriculum standards as the English language arts classes. The seventh grade uses the Impact Mathematics course and the ninth grade uses the Regents level Mathematics A as the curriculum. The principal recognizes that there is a need for a curriculum map and pacing calendar to be developed to insure that all classes receive a high quality education through the daily lessons of the semester.

Teachers are accountable for improving student outcomes by engaging in professional development to improve their practice. Daily walkthroughs by the principal and assistant principal provide timely oral and written feedback. The principal has set aside time for coaching the staff in the classrooms. He actively participates in the lessons through demonstrations or observations. Students are actively engaged in the learning process through independent or group projects. Students’ work, rubrics, schedules and class expectations are exhibited in the halls and classrooms. Data is reviewed at the weekly grade meeting in order to assess the progress of the individual student, class and grade.

The principal is an effective manager. The budget, scheduling and staffing decisions are based on the needs of the students. An experienced educator serves the special education students according to their individual education plans. Other consultants assist in curriculum and administrative areas in order to build capacity in the school. The budget supports the latest technological systems that are available to staff and students.

Attendance is a high priority. The attendance plan includes incentives and rewards for excellent attendance. Attendance for the year to date is 94.3% placing it above similar schools. Students state that they know and trust many adults including the principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor and teachers. The students state that the principal is always in their classes.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

Staff selection is done through the personnel committee. At the conclusion of the school process, the principal and assistant principal then make the final decision. The professional development program for this year centered on the use of data to improve instruction and creating project based learning environments. The school has a weekly professional development session built into the schedule to accommodate the needs of the staff. All staff members received training in the effective program called ‘Understanding By Design’ in order to assist them in the creation of appropriate classroom environments and programs. The principal and assistant principal participate in a monthly critical friends’ group that focuses on building leadership capacity. Less formal professional development activities include grade conferences, faculty meetings and lunch-time discussions in the teacher workroom.

The principal and assistant principal follow a schedule of formal observations resulting in a timely written report. Walkthroughs by the principal and assistant principal provide oral or written feedback on what was observed and suggestions for strengthening the classroom program. Teachers are encouraged and supported to visit one another's classrooms. Grade teams jointly plan for the daily advisory period that includes a whole school, quiet, personal reading period two to three times per week. Faculty conferences, grade team meetings and all cabinet meetings focus on the use of data and the information gathered from the staff in order to determine next steps in improving student performance outcomes and expand staff knowledge in the use of data.

The principal is respected for his knowledge, past experience and leadership ability. As an experienced teacher, he is capable to serve as the instructional leader of the school. The student-parent handbook clearly spells out some developed rules and regulations of the school and contributes to the quiet, orderly learning environment. The principal has begun to develop a staff handbook in order to institutionalize the rules, regulations, policies and procedures across all classrooms in the school.

Partnerships support and expand the school program. Many partners have contributed need-specific professional development activities, as well as funds to attend conferences on internationalizing the education program and scholarships for staff and students to attend language study programs in the United States and Asia. Others have assisted with additional cultural and arts programs. Students participate in fundraising for various charities to assist those less fortunate in the community.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

This year, the principal's aims and objectives serve as the action plan for the school and provide the benchmarks for the education program. The Princeton Review interim assessment data provides insight into student areas of strength and weakness so that appropriate intervention strategies can be employed. Teachers examine class work, individual and group projects and teacher-made test scores using an item analysis to determine areas of strength and weakness in order to put appropriate interventions into place. Students not performing well are directed to go to academic intervention services that take place in the extended day program. From September to January, the extended day program took place in the middle of the day. Realization that a large percentage of the student population required more intensive academic services prompted the principal to move it to the end of the school day. Students requiring the services are mandated to attend the small, flexible group settings designed to meet individual needs and data reveals improved performance outcomes. The results of the January State English language arts examination shows that progress has been made for the seventh grade.

Current assessment data illustrated the pressing need to concentrate on literacy skills across all curriculum areas. The school leadership team has developed the 2007-2008 Comprehensive Education Plan with an emphasis on literacy and differentiation of instruction. These needs are further illustrated by analysis of student work, class tests and their journals. The school recognizes that it is work in progress and continues to strive to provide the highest quality education for the students entrusted to their care.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| SCHOOL NAME: East-West School of International Studies (IS/ HS 281) | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| Quality Score | | X | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 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 student progress over time. | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each student, classroom, grade level, | | X | |
| 1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* | X | | |
| 1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all other categories of interest to the school* | X | | |
| 1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school. | | X | |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 1 | | X | |

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning. | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals. | | X | |
| 2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and 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 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement. | | X | |
| 2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans. | | X | |
| 2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners. | | X | |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 2 | | X | |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student. | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans. | | X | |
| 3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. | | X | |
| 3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. | | X | |
| 3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. | | X | |
| 3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes. | | X | |
| 3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students. | | X | |
| 3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her. | | X | |
| 3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention. | | X | |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 3 | | X | |
| Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student. | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress. | | X | |
| 4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap. | | X | |
| 4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes. | | X | |
| 4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement. | | X | |
| 4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change. | | | X |
| 4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed. | | | X |
| 4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals. | | X | |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 4 | | X | |
| Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning. | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals. | | X | |
| 5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions. | | X | |
| 5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required. | | X | |
| 5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes. | | X | |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 5 | | X | |