

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**The College of Staten Island High School for  
International Studies**

**R047**

**The Jerome Parker Campus  
100 Essex Drive  
Staten Island  
NY**

**Principal: Aimee Horowitz**

**Dates of review: February 9 – 10, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Geri Taylor-Brown**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The College of Staten Island High School for International Studies is a high school with 448 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 14% Black, 16% Hispanic, 54% White, and 14% Asian students. The student body includes 11% special education students. Boys account for 42% of the students enrolled and girls account for 58%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 93.8%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

This growing school is a place where students truly feel that they are citizens of the global community as they participate in trips to other countries and continuously communicate electronically with students all over the world. The principal's inspirational leadership provides an expectation that all of her students will be successful in both academic and social matters. Her high energy motivates teachers who voluntarily take on leadership roles on the school's Inquiry Team. The recent move into their new school building has come with some challenges, but this provided more opportunities for this community to band together as the "school family" that students, staff and parents have become over the past developing years.

The school leaders have put in place a rigorous curriculum with a global focus which works well in providing students with a platform for continued individual academic exploration. The rich curriculum is taught well by some teachers who construct lessons based on aligning the standards-based curriculum with student needs. These teachers succeed in using their skills in differentiating instruction for individual student and student groups. This practice is not yet sufficiently embedded throughout the school across all core subjects. Additionally, there are systems in place where teachers keep a watchful eye on student progress in English, math and social studies. They set measurable short- and long-term goals for students and examine individual student progress and academic trends. This successful practice directly affects their instruction as illustrated by improved student data in these areas. However, this practice is not yet fully developed in all core subjects.

The principal uses her budget successfully to plan, develop and implement organizational structures to provide additional academic and personal support for students and their families. Support for myriad needs ranges from supplementary classes for all collaborative team teaching and resource room students, to choices between College Now and Advanced Placement in acquiring college level credits.

Numerous professional development opportunities are available for teachers. However, teachers do not yet have individualized plans that target their specific needs to ensure that they support accelerated student learning successfully. Teachers eagerly take leadership roles as they model instruction for their colleagues. This is indicative of the school's journey towards continued improvement.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is highly respected by students, parents and staff for her commitment, high expectations and focus on the creation of a whole school community.
- The school has systems in place in English, math and social studies to ensure that data is gathered regularly and is analyzed and used effectively in classroom instruction.
- School leaders make prudent use of the school budget and the resources of the school's partners to provide supportive services as well as to enrich the unique college level and international experiences available in the instructional program.
- Teachers are empowered to take on additional leadership roles, as illustrated by the collaborative work of the Inquiry Team that models effective distributive leadership.
- Parents are truly partners and feel like members of a whole school community through effective and consistent communication with the school on all matters of importance regarding their children.
- The school provides students with multiple opportunities as global citizens to engage in an education that allows them to experience all the possibilities that they can achieve.

### What the school needs to improve

- Expand the process for student goal setting to include specific, measurable academic goals in all core subject areas.
- Establish consistency throughout the school in the areas of gathering, analyzing and using data to influence and impact on classroom instruction.
- Develop individualized and detailed formal professional development plans for all teachers to improve the skills required to accelerate student learning.
- Improve instructional rigor across all core subjects to ensure consistency in the usage of differentiated instruction.

## Part 3: Main Findings

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

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

School leaders and faculty collect, analyze and utilize data from a variety of sources to determine student academic progress and success. The English, math and social studies departments have succeeded in implementing data collection and analysis systems. These teachers work individually and collectively, within their respective departments, to measure student progress and determine the next instructional steps. The recently implemented summer assessment for incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders revealed a data trend that resulted in a revised 9<sup>th</sup> grade English curriculum and use of the SAFMED vocabulary acquisition program in social studies. Both interventions have positively affected 9<sup>th</sup> grade student achievement, as seen in the increase of 9<sup>th</sup> graders acquiring credits towards graduation.

The principal has led staff in closely scrutinizing the specific student sub-group data. Special education student progress is reviewed vigilantly. Core subject teachers gather data from class assessments engage in discussion with special education teachers and jointly develop ways in which this information will influence student instruction. Through a thorough and regular examination of the HSST scholarship report, the school has implemented both in-school and after-school support programs that demonstrate increased credit accumulation for African American males.

Parents are kept fully informed of their child's academic standing. An electronic parent newsletter has aided them considerably in developing a better understanding of the general student progression towards graduation. Both parents and students check class grades on the Engrade system. However, the accuracy of tracking student grades is hampered because teachers do not yet have a required schedule for the regular updating of information.

**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 proficient.**

The principal continues to do an outstanding job in conveying extremely high expectations for all school stakeholders, and in maintaining a school community that "feels like home". One parent stated that the welcoming school climate and high quality of learning make CSI her "private public school". Students echo the sentiments of their

parents as they appreciate how school leaders direct them in how to improve academic achievement and behavior.

The principal has been successful in rallying students, parents and teachers to participate fully in developing the school Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP). This school-wide goal development process involved review of multiple data sources, including an assessment by their partner (The Asia Society Assessment Matrix), and an examination of the Principal's Performance Review annual goals. School Leadership Team members were clear, in presenting to their constituent group, how work by all stakeholders is connected and valued.

While school goals are firmly established, the school does not yet have firm systems in place to set measureable goals, with precise timeframes, for all students across core subjects. The school recently introduced the process of students recording written goals in a few core subjects and in the Advisory class. The process currently lacks rigor and has not been clearly established as a meaningful activity to students, who mentioned this as something they would change about their school. The school leadership is working towards full implementation of goal setting school-wide through a plan developed by the Inquiry Team. However, as the principal states: "This is one step on a journey."

**Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

Teachers use the CEP school-wide goal of teaching engaging lessons, as their mantra in providing class lessons that evoke student participation. Students have shown academic improvement in classrooms where teachers use more varied instructional materials and strategies including smartboard usage, classroom computers and even floor maps. However, teachers agreed that although "Everyone is working very hard to differentiate instruction," they have not yet arrived. There are examples of differentiated instruction across the core subjects of English, math and, to a high degree, in social studies. However, the school's strong focus on student engagement has moved all teachers to be more consistent in asking high order questions in accordance with Bloom's Taxonomy.

There are strong feelings of mutual trust and respect among students and adults in this school. Students, parents and staff attributed lower scores in these areas on the Learning Environment Survey to being influenced by the school's former location. The school's relocation to a new multi-school campus has brought the challenges of adjustment to a new environment. However, there is an overall feeling of satisfaction about this permanent settlement.

The school offers a rich and exciting curriculum for all students. The school provided students with authentic school-to-life connections as they studied Global History and then traveled to Italy and Costa Rica. Students show a great deal of pride in what they see as the "openness" of their school culture. There is great respect for a level of

education that pushes children to deepen their learning experiences. As one student stated, "Work here is more provocative."

The principal works closely and well with her cabinet in the creative use of a lean budget. Implementation of the Learning Support classes for all collaborative team teaching and resource room students was developed following a thorough review of special education student data. The integration of the school budget and finances with resources from school partners has greatly benefitted students who are successful in obtaining college credits in multiple ways. College Now and Advanced Placement classes are two ways that CSI students obtain college credit. This aspect of the school is a particular strength to parents who are able to save significant tuition monies as their children enter college as second semester freshmen, college sophomores or beyond.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

School staff have done exceedingly well in their outreach to student families, especially in situations where there are socio/emotional needs. School support personnel have been successful in implementing in-school support for students and complimenting this with outside referrals for their families. The principal leads this charge of servicing the whole child through her strong emphasis on addressing all impediments to student learning. The recent employment of a new parent coordinator and extensive partnership with community based organizations has aided in this venture.

The school Inquiry Team serves as a model for other academic teams to follow as teachers serve as the leaders of this team. The team meets regularly and focuses on the school-wide academic and social issues that impact upon student learning. The Inquiry Team members communicate their successful strategies to other teachers through effective and collaborative sharing at departmental meetings. This team continues to use the case study model established last year in addition to intense data review. The success of the case study model has moved the school to begin to implement this strategy for use by all teachers.

The school professional development (PD) plan includes teacher observations, class intervisitations, some arrangement of common planning time and most recently, the implementation of learning walks. While all of these interventions have value in providing concrete data on teacher skills, the school has not yet embedded a firm practice of utilizing them to establish individualized plans for teacher development. Teachers eagerly plan informal visits to colleagues' classrooms to observe instruction, but it is not clear how the next steps of development are planned. The school proudly implements what they call FUBU PD (for us, by us). However, these PD events, although based on what is seen as student academic needs, do not relate clearly to teachers' developmental needs.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 school leaders have accurately identified academic areas where the school needs to strive for continued improvement. This collaborative view is a vision shared by all school stakeholders as they collectively look at the data generated by their current 12<sup>th</sup> graders. The school population is reflecting intelligently on academic, behavioral and attendance data that has been generated over the past four years by their founding 92 senior students. Findings thus far underpin the school's stalwart commitment to remaining an effective smaller learning community.

The principal and cabinet have made good use of their monthly review of student data. Organizational decisions, mainly in the area of class offerings, have been modified because of these examinations. Increasing instructional time from one class period to two daily class periods has shown a significant positive impact in the class assessment grade scores of students enrolled in Advanced Placement European History. The practice of addressing data trends overall has proven successful however the school has not yet used the data consistently to ensure regular individual goal setting for all students in all core subjects.

The school has plans to individualize PD plans for teachers through the initial steps of formalizing class intervisitation. School-wide reflection shows that teacher development improved considerably when professional development was carefully targeted towards identified need and included a written action plan for improvement.

The passion for moving all students towards excellence is a strong driving force for the principal. As one parent stated, "She knows your child's name whether your child is the valedictorian or a child struggling academically."

## School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: The College of Staten Island High School for International Studies</b>	△	➤	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?		<b>X</b>		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

### DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYO, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.”

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.</b>							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?			X				
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?			X				
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?			X				
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?		X					
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?			X				
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?			X				
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?			X				
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?			X				
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?			X				
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>