

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**International High School at Lafayette**

**21K337**

**2630 Benson Avenue**

**Brooklyn, New York 11214**

**Principal: Jon Harriman**

**Dates of review: March 26-27, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Aimee Horowitz**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

International High School at Lafayette is a high school with 353 students from ninth through grade 10. The school population comprises 15% Black, 22% Hispanic, 22% White, 40% Asian, and 1% other students. The student body includes 90% English language learners and 1% special education students. Boys account for 58% of the students enrolled and girls account for 42%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 90.6%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Students and families appreciate the school's focused efforts on maintaining a safe and inclusive environment that supports students' academic and social emotional growth. (1.4)
  - Students are involved in school-wide decision making through student government and indicate that school leaders seek their opinions on how to improve the school. To bring together the schools' diverse cultures and build understanding and appreciation, students organized an *International Feast*. Students' desire to alleviate overcrowding in the stairwell led to their gaining access to a second staircase. When they asked for additional academic opportunities, the school began giving early morning classes, including French. Students state, "We trust our teachers and can talk to them about school or home problems. Teachers are always here to help us before and after school, during lunch, and on Saturdays."
  - Students are programmed in grade cohorts and advisories so that all teachers know every student in their cohort, are aware when a group of students has an issue and immediately address it. For example, when girls complained about sexism, advisory lessons were created. Teachers and the parent coordinator regularly communicate with students' families. In conjunction with the parent coordinator, the grade team monitors attendance while all, including the guidance counselor, social worker, and Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) teacher, support students' social-emotional learning and celebrate their successes. As a result, attendance is at 90.9% and incidents are kept to a minimum.
- Highly effective programs and collaborations provide a wide range of learning opportunities that support students' social emotional and academic needs. (4.4)
  - The school's advisors, guidance counselor, and social worker in collaboration with higher education institutions and community based organizations are highly effective in supporting students' social-emotional and academic development as well as advisement for college. Students and families articulate that students are becoming post-secondary ready and are college bound. All students are part of an advisory where they and their teachers are programmed by cohort. Thus, each teacher knows all students in their group well and effectively supports their academic and social-emotional growth. Further, the Mind Matter summer program helps students in the college process with internships that provide authentic real world, career-based learning experiences during which students also practice their communication skills. Through the Saturday Explorer Club, students experience New York City and its' cultural institutions while making connections to peers and to their in-school learning. Personal mentors are provided through iMentor for each junior and senior to aid them in building college and career readiness skills.

- Through the use of a framework, frequent focused classroom observations provides teachers with feedback along with clear expectations, strengths, and next steps to improve their practice to increase student learning. (4.1)
  - The principal, assistant principal and coaches engage in frequent and focused classroom observations providing actionable feedback aligned to a researched-based framework and the school's core principles. This supports the alignment of yearly professional goals that teachers set in reference to the framework and student data. New teachers are also supported by their grade and disciplinary teams as well as by the literacy coach and the Internationals Network. Accordingly, teachers share a common language around what constitutes effective practice and understand the next steps to improve their practice.
  - Teachers are provided with feedback, noting their strengths, weaknesses, and next steps with specific attention to the school's core principles of heterogeneity, collaboration, experiential learning, language and content integration, along with localized autonomy and responsibility. "One strength of the lesson was the integration of language into your classroom. The article and the scaffolding that you provided for it were great examples of bringing language rich experiences into the science classroom. Students were reading an article, developing literacy skills, and making science and math connections", is an example of specific teacher feedback to support language and content integration. Additional conversations and observations focus on monitoring teachers' progress towards implementing prior recommendations and meeting individual goals, resulting in their pedagogical growth.
- Strategic organizational, resource, and scheduling decisions are aligned with student learning needs and support improved student outcomes. (1.3)
  - The school's intentional hiring of dually licensed content area and English as second language ESL teachers so that each team has several certified ESL teachers enables the staff to support students at various levels of language proficiency while in their content classes. Intentionally programming teachers to teach a cohort group of students, coupled with teachers strategically looping with students, decreases total teacher load while fostering responsibility for meeting students' needs and ensuring that teachers know students well. As a result, the passing rate of students who have passed all five Regents exams is 5% higher than at this time last year, which is aligned to the school's goal of increasing the graduation rate.
  - Twice weekly electives are tied to literacy development and to support students in meeting graduation requirements. The Green Team Elective, while focusing on ecology and the environment, supports students in achieving success on the Living Environment Regents. In the Media Arts course, while students learn to use various media including iMovie and Garage Band, the content of the course aligns with Global History to support students in meeting standards to pass the Regents exam. Further, grade and department teams provide teachers time to collaboratively plan interdisciplinary projects, analyze student work, and vertically scaffold curriculum to engage students in challenging academic

and language acquisition tasks. As a result, student work products reflect increased use of academic language and increased organization.

- Students and families are aware of the school's high expectations and of the many supports available to ensure they achieve them. (3.4 )
  - Advisors, teachers, guidance counselors, and school leaders consistently convey high expectations to students and their families for academic achievement, social-emotional growth, and that students attend college after high school. Students state, "They want us to graduate with good grades, improve our English, give our work our best effort, pass our Regents, and go to college." Seniors state, "We have completed our Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) applications and resumes in advisory; in our internship seminars we have done research about colleges; and we do college research and mock interviews with our mentors to help prepare us for college." Parents report that the school constantly communicates with them in their home language about how their child is meeting course expectations. Parents are also provided with classes in English, are kept informed about the college process, and engaged in meetings with their child and his/her guidance counselor so that they can help prepare their children for college.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Use formative, interim, and summative assessment data including ongoing checks for understanding to analyze student performance, target instruction and apprise students of next learning steps. (2.2 )
  - While teachers analyze summative classroom level assessment data, there is a lack of analysis of formative and Periodic Assessment data and rubrics are not always well-aligned with standards they are measuring or tasks they are assessing. The absence of comprehensive accurate data analysis limits actionable feedback on effectiveness of classroom level, curricular and instructional decisions.
  - Limited use of ongoing checks for understanding throughout lessons and projects impedes teachers' ability to gather information needed to make "on the spot" adjustments ensuring they are meeting all students' learning needs. Further, limited opportunities for students to self-assess hampers students' awareness of their next learning steps.
- Increase the level of rigor in the curriculum to consistently engage students in critical thinking tasks, to support higher order student work products. (1.1)
  - Some teachers plan learning activities that include some tasks which require the use of manipulatives, providing students with choice, incorporating visuals, and making lessons relevant with real world applications. However, questions and tasks that facilitate higher order thinking are not incorporated across all content areas and tasks are not always aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to support a rigorous curriculum. This inconsistency in curriculum design minimizes the school's ability to cognitively engage all students in problem solving and higher order thinking that produces extended responses with evidence based discourse and work products that

integrate Common Core Learning Standards in order to promote post-secondary readiness. As a result, not all students are supported in producing higher order work products.

- Establish consistency in higher order questioning and in differentiating teaching strategies so that all students can access rich learning experiences and participate in all learning tasks at the highest level possible. (1.2 )
  - While professional development includes creating questions and tasks at high levels using Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK), not all teachers engage students in higher order thinking through questioning and writing tasks, or maximize student learning by providing extensions to support higher achieving students in deepening their thinking in order to expand their potential. Teachers carefully scaffold activities so that struggling students have access and questioning facilitates student participation. However, the use of academic vocabulary, accountable talk, and student to student discussions are minimal. Students do not yet generate their own high level questions and lessons are not guided by student inquiry. Thus, not all learners are pushed to think and write at high levels, limiting self guided inquiry.
- Support teachers in understanding and utilizing an inquiry based approach to collaborative planning and strategic decision making to increase student achievement. (4.2)
  - Although all teachers participate in grade and department teams and collaboratively plan projects, use of an inquiry-based approach is not yet embedded across all teams. Protocols for learning from teachers' work to inform best instructional practices and analyzing student work products for the purpose of targeting specific students for whom they share are not consistently employed by all team members. The absence of established procedures to govern inquiry work across all subject areas hampers teams in the process to prepare all students for post secondary work and to inform best instructional practices for all team members.
- Ensure that tools are used to aggregate data so that trends in student performance drive school level, curricular, and instructional decisions. (2.3 )
  - Teachers provide grades to students at targeted intervals. However, many grades are indicative of student effort and not of their meeting State standards. Consequently, the lack of a school-wide uniform grading policy and grading practices that are not consistently aligned to standards-based work severely limits the school's ability to capture meaningful information about students' mastery of standards and performance trends.
  - While social studies teachers used ARIS line item analysis to look for trends in students' performance on the United States History Regents and used that information to provide students with different essay prompts, student data across classrooms is not transparent to all faculty and the use of data tools to analyze trends in students' performance is not consistent across all teachers and teams. Consequently, trends in student performance, including performance of key subgroups, do not inform curricular and instructional decisions.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

<b>School name: International High School at Lafayette</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		<b>X</b>		
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?		<b>X</b>		
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				<b>X</b>
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?		<b>X</b>		
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>		
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?		<b>X</b>		
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			<b>X</b>	
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			<b>X</b>	
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			<b>X</b>	

<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			<b>X</b>				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?		<b>X</b>					
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			<b>X</b>				
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, guidance/advisement support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				<b>X</b>			
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?		<b>X</b>					
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			<b>X</b>				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?		<b>X</b>					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>