

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**International High School at Prospect Heights  
High School 524**

**883 CLASSON AVENUE  
BROOKLYN  
NY 11225**

**Principal: Nedda De Castro**

**Dates of review: November 14-15, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Karen Watts**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

International High School at Prospect Heights is a high school with 407 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 27% Black, 32% Hispanic, and 28% Asian students. The student body includes 95% English language learners, 5% former English Language Learners and 3% special education students. Boys account for 57% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 90.1%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school's safe learning environment and inclusive culture foster academic excellence. (1.4)
  - The school's vibrant and supportive culture infuses all aspects of work at the school and provides a welcoming environment for students from 130 different countries, various cultures, and ethnicities. Teachers, who speak multiple languages, are able to communicate with students and their families thus promoting the inclusive culture. Students are well supported as they assimilate into the education system of a new country and progress academically, despite their level at entry.
  - Advisors who take responsibility for the success of students remaining with them for all four years of high school teach a comprehensive curriculum that promotes the attainment of social-emotional learning. This seamless four-year personalized high school experience for all students promotes adequate youth development leading to improvements in academic success.
- The school's many partnerships provide transformational experiences to well prepare students for college and careers that lead to satisfactory postsecondary readiness. (4.4)
  - Multilingual college advisors, team advisors, social workers, and guidance counselors guide students and create graduation plans. Team advisors work one-on-one with students to support their movement throughout the four years at the school, and grade 11 and 12 advisors primarily focus on exposing students to various careers, industries, and colleges, thus providing students with suitable help for staying on track for graduation and ready for post-secondary studies or work.
  - Extensive partnerships with Opportunity Network, Global Potential, STEP, iMentor and Brooklyn, Kingsborough and Medgar Evers Colleges, expose students to real world career experiences and college level work. Students participate in numerous internships in nearby businesses and attend College Now courses on the various college campuses. As a result students' academic and social-emotional skills are developed.
- The school's strategic use of its resources supports teacher teams and the school's instructional goals so that student learning is maximized. (1.3)
  - The principal's has strategically used funds to create a unique integrated ninth and tenth grade program designed to immerse English language learners, (ELL's), in the English language. Additionally, the school purchase of laptop computers enables upper-grade students to use them as learning tools. These structures and tools help students grow in language acquisition and content skills, develop evaluative content portfolios, and pass high stakes examinations, resulting in an 18% increase in the school's four-year graduation rate.
  - The school day is structured to strategically allow horizontal and vertical teams to meet regularly. The vertical curriculum teams, including teachers from a subject specific area, primarily develop curriculum and plan for implementation in the classroom. Teachers use protocols to review unit plans, tasks, assessments and projects and help each other better align the curriculum to Common Core

Standards. Grade levels teams, teachers who teach the same students but different subjects, analyze student work from various subjects to identify gaps that are then reinforced in all subjects on the grade. As a result, students are immersed in more rigorous learning opportunities that promote student success. A personnel team, comprised of the leaders from the grade and subject teams, meets weekly with the principal to review the work taking place in the teams.

- School leaders and teachers use a researched based framework to provide specific feedback aligned to teacher professional goals that foster teacher development. (4.1)
  - o School leaders involve teachers in frequent observations of other teachers and use a review of student work data to provide timely feedback and next steps for teacher development. Observation reports show that teachers are becoming more effective in planning coherent instruction with supports for ELL's and students with disabilities, (SWD's), creating a culture for learning, managing student behavior, in using questioning and discussion techniques, in engaging students in learning and checking for learning during instruction. As a result, instructional practice continuously improves.
  - o The use of the Internationals Network Model cross-walked to Danielson's Framework, both research-based frameworks for teacher development, allows for specific feedback on progress towards attainment of teachers professional goals. Teachers and administrators collaboratively assess where each teacher falls relative to the rubric, and develop goals for teachers so that they can grow to the highly effective levels. These practices result in improvements in teacher quality, instruction, and student performance. The weighted Regents' pass rates in math, science and US history all doubled over the last school year.
- The principal has a clear vision for the school that is focused on attainment of specific goals and action plans that drive student learning (3.1)
  - o The principal's analysis of Regents' pass rates, graduation rates, student portfolios, and scholarship reports enables the principal to effectively identify relevant goals including the improvement of reading and the four-year cohort graduation rate , the development of common core tasks, and the use of a common lens for observations. Consequently, the decision to focus on these goals drives continuous improvements in student learning.
  - o School leaders and teachers analyze Regents' exams, scholarship reports, and student portfolios, to inform goal setting and action planning to address targeted areas of need to improve student academic success. As a result, the school has risen above the Citywide average in closing the achievement gap for Black and Hispanic males.
- The school has a comprehensive curriculum that emphasizes key standards, and integrates Common Core Learning Standard (CCLS) tasks that are planned and refined to ensure that all students are engaged and learning. (1.1)
  - o The school's comprehensive curriculum addresses key standards such as reading comprehension, incorporates CCLS tasks, and prepares students for post-secondary learning. Wide spread use of computerized literacy academic software and a 65-minute silent sustained reading program engage students in daily reading. The use of a prescribed writing program allows students to spend sufficient time on writing, thus improving their English skills.

- o The school uses a researched based curriculum where the acquisition of language and content merge in academic tasks thus allowing its 100% ELL's to develop and demonstrate understanding of their lesson and increase their learning. The school scored above the Citywide average for ELL students in the bottom third on its Progress Report.

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

- Enhance teaching strategies so that differentiated lessons extend the curricula and increase student thinking to improve student learning. (1.2)
  - o Teachers on the curriculum teams discuss entry points for various lessons and provide differentiated supports. . Students are grouped so they can receive native language assistance to enhance comprehension but they all communicate in English in whole class discussions. However, as teachers indicate that the goal of differentiation was to get all students to the same content, opportunities are not yet offered to students who are ready to go to the next level, thus limiting learning for these students. .
  - o Across classrooms students engage and participate in a thinking curriculum. Teachers use Qtel strategies, think pair share, round robin, and graphic organizers. However, the strategic use of questioning and discussion protocols is limited. As a result students thinking and participation through discussion is not yet sufficient
- Extend data analysis to classroom data so that instructional adjustments are made to meet student-learning needs and next steps are identified. (2.2)
  - o Teacher teams analyze classroom level data to identify strengths and needs of individual students. They make plans to remediate students in need of assistance and to offer students support for academic behaviors such as completing homework and class work. However, staff struggle to make connections between their findings in the student work and their own instructional practice. Therefore, they do not yet differentiate lessons or use different instructional strategies to support students, thereby missing opportunities to move them closer to mastery.
  - o Teachers consistently ask low level questions to gauge student understanding, However, this practice does not provide adequate information for teachers to make instructional adjustments to meet all students needs, limiting learning.
- Increase the use of data sharing tools so that families are informed of students' progress in a timely manner to improve students' learning outcomes. (2.4)
  - o Advisors share student progress information including strengths, needs and next steps. However, the sharing of performance on CCLS tasks has only now started as the school implements the Common Core Standards. This limits parent discussions around these tasks.
  - o The school has structures that inform parents of their children's performance. However,, these structures are limited in scope to parent/teacher conferences, telephone calls, and at parent teacher association meetings. The school plans to train parents in the use of Google docs where a majority of the school's data is found to provide parents with timelier student performance information.

- Strengthen the systems that evaluate and adjust instructional practices and the use of organizational resources to better meet student needs. (5.1)
  - o School leaders have structures in place to accumulate data on the success of instructional practices. However, adjustments that are made by semester or school year are not frequent enough, thereby limiting the enhancement and effectiveness of teaching and learning.
  - o School leaders use organization resources in response to students' needs. The school values the use of technology but has not adequately funded its purchase. This limits enhancements in the learning experiences of all students.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: International High School at Prospect Heights	UD	D	P	WD
<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>	UD	D	P	WD
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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>	

**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.**

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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?			X	
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X	
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?			X	
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?				X

**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.**

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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?			X	
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?			X	
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?			X	
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X	

**Quality Review Scoring Key**

<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>
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