

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

East-West School of International Studies

Secondary School Q281

**46-21 Colden Street
Queens
NY 11355**

Principal: Ben Sherman

Dates of review: May 01 - 02, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Juan Mendez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

East-West School of International Studies is a secondary school with 580 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 17% Black, 20% Hispanic, 4% White, 58% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 96.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well-developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty align all content course curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and make purposeful decisions that engage a diversity of learners, leading to college readiness. (1.1)
 - The school has developed coherent curriculum maps for all departments including the Arts that highlight relevant CCLS that are aligned across grade levels and subject areas. In subject area and grade level teams, teachers and coaches revise curricula to address the needs of all students and promote post-secondary readiness. These detailed curriculum maps are shared with the entire school community through Google Docs. Careful attention is paid to offer Regents level and Advanced Placement courses to position students to earn Advanced Regents diplomas and college credits. Consequently, 95% of students earn more than 10 credits per year and 82% of students earn Regents diplomas upon graduation.
 - The faculty has carefully planned curricula and academic tasks so that the needs of all students, including lowest and highest performing students, are addressed. To this end, students' State, Regents, school level assessments results and anecdotal evidence from guidance counselors and teachers are used to ensure that students are cognitively engaged. Therefore, on curriculum maps a column is reserved to differentiated individual and group activities to support subgroups. In addition, a daily twenty-minute period of targeted reading and writing instruction has been instituted. For example, in the 11th grade social studies curriculum students are required to write arguments and claims citing text-specific evidence. As a result, Regents examinations pass rates increased in Global History and Geography by 39%.
- The school leader makes informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support improvements in learning. (1.3)
 - In light of overcrowded classes in the eleventh grade, the principal strategically hired three teachers from the auxiliary teacher reserve to target instructional support in English as a second language and reading for the lowest achieving students. Consequently, all students passed the January 2012 English Regents examination. In addition, in order to provide support for underperforming students in English and mathematics, the school approved school based options that included reprogramming the 37.5 minutes every Thursday so that grade level inquiry teams could provide direct services to small student subgroups in these subject areas. The principal also strategically programmed teachers for professional development meetings four times per week and once a week for planning curriculum. As a result of this two pronged approach, 52% of students who had previously failed passed the Integrated Algebra I Regents examination in January.
- The school employs a balance of formal observations and coaching using a hybrid research-based framework that supports teacher effectiveness, resulting in increased teacher awareness for appropriate modification to instruction. (4.1)
 - School leaders provide teachers frequent feedback and detailed next steps through an ongoing structured observation process of formal and coaching using a Danielson hybrid teacher effectiveness model. All teachers set three goals with

action plans in consultation with school leader. Classroom coaching visits provide feedback around selected goals and revolve around the effective implementation of these goals. Teacher portfolios with sample student work and performance data are used to norm discussions and expectations. Professional development is tailored to promote professional growth and reflection around teachers established goals and action plans. As a result, teachers are able to adjust teaching practices to address the learning needs of students including lowest performing students, English language learners, and students with disabilities. Teachers incorporate feedback quickly resulting in students achieving learning targets.

- In a highly collaborative and professional manner, schools leaders provide pedagogues feedback that accurately record effective practices and hone in on actionable next steps. Post-observation meetings take place within 24 hours of classroom visit with written informal observation report soon after. In addition, these feedback reports and formal observations are used in mid-year conversations that include positive validation and a critical lens. Documents used include running log with dates and actions taken by administration. As a result, teachers are able to modify instructional practices and implement strategies that further improve student achievement. One key impact of this approach is the increased level of credit accumulation as evidenced by the school's 95% passing rate in the Fall 2011 scholarship report.
- All constituents have embraced the opportunity to develop the social-emotional facets of the community so that increased trust and collaboration permeates teacher and student work. (1.4)
 - Although the school does not have a history of high-level infractions, the rich diversity of cultures requires active integration. Through Google Docs the school has developed a platform where teachers, guidance counselors and school leaders are able to communicate incidents and consequences in real time. In this way the entire school is proactively involved in supporting the social-emotional growth of students. As a result, only two physical altercations between students have occurred during the academic year.
 - In an effort to sustain academic and cultural engagement of students, at the onset of each day, the school community holds "muster" assemblies. During this time, the school unites as a single entity to focus students and teaches on priorities of the day. Teachers and students are given the opportunity to share the entire spectrum of school activities including after school Regents preparatory sessions, upcoming plays, club activities and school trips. Another unique facet that keeps students interested in their learning is the school's international trips to destinations such as China, Japan and Korea. These trips strengthen the cultural ties that many students have to their own heritage and for others it provides a window into another culture. Consequently, the ongoing positive positioning of students coupled with the deep academic rigor of the school have resulted in 89% of graduates successfully attending higher education institution.
- Students and their families benefit from regular and ongoing opportunities to examine and discuss student performance and next steps, resulting in the vast majority of students being on track for graduation. (2.4)
 - Based on varied data sources such as school survey reports, telephone outreach to parents in multiple languages and oral feedback during student assemblies and parent meetings, the school identified a need to further support parents and

students by increasing communication and providing them with opportunities for engagement. Therefore, evening series have been offered to parents in a variety of subjects including: trainings in varied technology tools such as ARIS, Pupil Path, online curriculum maps and school's website; regularly scheduled information meetings tailored to immigrant parents in their respective native language; produced parent handbook; weekly outreach to parents with specific agenda topics such as understanding Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). The school has also changed their Parent Association meeting from Tuesdays to Saturdays to accommodate more parents' schedules. Additionally, translation and childcare services are provided to families to support them when attending school meetings. At student lead conferences, students present their work to parents, provide a self-assessment of their own learning and proposed a detailed plan on how to achieve at higher levels. Students are also active members of the School Leadership Team and student government leaders provide the school leader with regular feedback. As a result, parents' use of technology tools and participation at scheduled meetings has increased from 40% to 80% and students take greater ownership of their learning, regularly reflect on their accomplishments, set goals and action plans for achieving mastery, all of which gives students and families a very focused view of the learning path.

- The school has established a culture of high expectations as common language for students, their families and staff members, which leads to high levels of college acceptance and sustained enrollment. (3.4)
 - Throughout the school year, school leaders and staff conduct frequent meetings with parents that consistently communicate high expectations to ensure all students are college and career ready upon graduation. This culture of high expectations is shared at School Leadership Team meetings, which include parent leaders. It is also conveyed at Parent Association meetings where the importance of high attendance, academic performance, student leadership and college and career readiness are expressed. School leaders and community assistants regularly conduct home visits on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and Saturday morning to interview parents, students and families. These numerous home visits are also logged in the Google Docs system. A parent ambassador is a member of the principal's cabinet to effectively convey a partnership that leads to college and career readiness. In addition, parent monthly newsletter and telephone calls further generate "parent connections". Consequently, families hold the school in high standing as a place that provides all students a high quality education as evidenced by 82 percent of 8th graders who earn high school credit and 31.3 % of students enroll in college level course while still in high school.
 - School leaders and staff employ guidance strategies to regularly communicate a culture of high expectations for all students. These support systems are conveyed daily during school wide assemblies called "muster" where teachers schedule individual conferences with students; faculty and staff recognize student achievement and improvement at honor roll ceremonies; and students motivate each other to excel and become part of the fabric of success. Using an in-house email system, teachers and students exchange communication regarding curriculum and student assignments. Teacher teams support students, including high-need subgroups, in mastering the curriculum and communicating expectation of college success to students and parents. Students are grateful that individual teachers and teams of teachers support them through after-school tutoring, lunch and learn sessions and Saturday academic intervention services programs, frequent college visits and college level courses available through Queens College of the City University of New York. As a result, students feel

deeply supported in the pursuit of college readiness skills necessary for their future success with 76.7% of high school students enrolling in college after graduation.

- School leaders collaborate well with faculty as they continuously analyze and modify curricular decisions, aligning data trends with organizational resources so that students' needs are addressed. (5.1)
 - The school cabinet, which includes school leader, assistant principals, teachers, guidance counselors and a “parent ambassador,” meet on a weekly basis to examine school structures in order to gauge their effectiveness and, as needed, make recommendations for improvement. While reviewing curriculum maps, the cabinet noticed a disjointed curriculum format across subject areas and grades. Teacher teams in collaboration with curriculum consultant then designed and implemented a highly organized planning template which establishes a higher degree of curricular congruence and clearly reference CCLS and differentiation strategies. To further increase student passing rates in all subject areas, a planning template with action plan was instituted to track progress for targeted individual students and student subgroups, resulting in greater student engagement and increased completion rates across all grades.
 - The school leader meets with a Lead Data Facilitator every two weeks and extensively for several days in the summer to review and evaluate the effective use of resources such as budget and scheduling. In addition, the school leader and assistant principals select an areas for improvement and conduct an in depth analysis on how to improve such areas. One such area identified was the need to change assistant principal goals to be more centered on teacher support instead of being solely supervisory oriented. Consequently, more than 100 unannounced teacher mini-observations with timely and actionable feedback provided have been conducted this academic year.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen teacher understanding of the benefits of the workshop model with multiple strategies that will support students during independent work time and result in optimized engagement of all students. (1.2)
 - Acknowledging that in the past the classroom has been dominated by a “chalk and talk” framework, the school has shifted to increase use of the workshop model across subject areas. At this time, however, a couple teachers continue to dominate the discussions in the classroom, leading to limited student contributions and thereby minimizing opportunities for student engagement, critical thinking and formative assessment.
 - In most classes, teachers use varied question techniques leading to general student participation. For example, “How was the world ready for William Shakespeare?”, “If you see a parallelogram, what do we use?”, and “Is a market of command economy more beneficial?” As a result, deep cognitive engagement is not yet evident in students writing across the school.
- Systematize teacher practice with data collection of periodic checks for understanding so that real time data is captured regularly and used in a timely manner to maximize support for student subgroups. (2.2)
 - Special education teachers look deeply at a variety of formal and informal assessments such as Acuity, State and Regents examinations, classroom

- projects and test scores. They further examine that modifications inscribed in students' individualized education plans are applied to routine in-class assessments as well as on annual State examinations such as an accommodations room and extended time by students to take assessments. However, teacher practice with data collection needs to be further strengthened in order to allow timely and actionable collaboration among special education and subject area teachers so that they have a clear plan of action on how to best support this student subgroup.
- Teachers collaborate to generate uniform assessments, ongoing checks for understanding and students self assessment to meet all student learning needs. Most teachers gauge that they have met the lesson learning targets by eliciting oral feedback, collecting exit slips or evaluating written work from individual or groups of students through a peer editing process. However, some teachers were less effective than others in their use of questioning techniques and inconsistently made adjustments during the lesson, resulting in an uneven ability to meet the needs of all students.
 - Increase student engagement in the interim reflection processes of their academic goals so that students fully understand the content and skills required to accelerate credit accumulation. (3.3)
 - The school has taken meaningful steps to set school wide goals and track progress towards achieving these goals. In addition, the school has multiple data collection systems in place that support this endeavor. However, some individual teachers have not yet engaged their students in reflecting on subject area goals and knowing the specific content and skills they need to achieve mastery, thus they are not yet addressing the necessary adjustments needed to meet the goals for individual students and student subgroups in support of school wide goals. Consequently, this missed opportunity to empower student to guide their own learning hinders progress toward increased number of students who graduate with Advanced Regents diplomas.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: East-West School of International Studies	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score				X
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<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?				X
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?			X	
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?				X
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
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.				
<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?				X
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?			X	
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?				X
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?				X
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.				
<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?				X
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?			X	
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?				X

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			
1..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							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed