



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Quality Review
Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning
2013-2014

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

School for International Studies

15K497

**248 Baltic Street
Brooklyn
NY 11202**

Principal: Jillian Juman

**Dates of review: May 14 – 15, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Safiyah Satterwhite**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

School for International Studies is a middle/high school with 479 students from 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 45% Black, 37% Hispanic, 12% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 88.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and staff ensure that all learners have access to academic tasks and units that meet their needs and embed rigorous habits so that all students must demonstrate their thinking. (1.1)
 - The school recently adopted International Baccalaureate (IB), a rigorous, international -based curriculum centered on the principles of Innovation, Consultation, Access and Service. These principles have aided the school in meeting its international mission through the offering of a diverse array of courses and projects that foster internationally minded students. Higher order thinking and rigor are embedded in the school's academic tasks which all contain a key concept and skill and a summative task (GRASP) whereby all students can demonstrate their thinking. For example, in an English class in which students were analyzing patterns (literary techniques) Gothic authors use to communicate the anxiety and fear behind a character's motivation, students were expected to create a literary gothic portfolio in order to present at a Gothic showcase for the school. These open-ended opportunities in which students can demonstrate their learning not only provide authentic assessments for all students, but also meet the principles of the IB framework. Lesson plans demonstrate a strategic planning and grouping of students where students of varying levels are provided differentiated activities in the classroom aligned to various skills of focus revealed by assessments. In one class during a mathematics unit on Quadratics, higher achieving students worked on the skill of giving and receiving peer feedback, while a middle group worked on conceptual review and lower level students worked on comprehension and perseverance. Similarly, assessments via item analysis reveal skills in need of support and results are used to adjust curriculum and instruction. For example, an English teacher made an adjustment to a unit after an assessment revealed that students were having a difficult time constructing essays because sentence structure was not fully grasped. These strategic moves across the school over time have resulted in a 39% increase in Regents passing rates in English language arts, a 10% increase in algebra and a 23% increase in global history.
- Teachers use and create assessments and rubrics that offer a clear portrait of student mastery resulting in meaningful feedback leading to increased mastery for all students. (2.2)
 - Progress across the school is indicative of a school culture that is clear on how students are performing. The school creates common rubrics and uses common assessments aligned to the curriculum and the International Baccalaureate program. Performance tasks reviewed represent a clear alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards as well as ensure student assessment is multi-faceted. This approach ensures that the school has multiple ways of gauging student progress in addition to providing students multiple avenues to demonstrate their learning. The school uses an assessment calendar to clearly communicate assessment dates and deadlines. Analyzing data via item analysis is a common practice amongst teachers. Mastery trackers are used per student and per standard so that teachers can clearly understand and communicate student progress toward mastery. For example mathematics teachers tracked student ability to

construct tables from equations. During an initial assessment roughly 70% of students mastered this skill, and, as a result of curricula modifications and re-teaching, 100% of students now master this skill. The IB program additionally requires frequent consultation, self and peer assessments to ensure that students are continuously clear on their performance relative to the IB learner profile, personal projects and classroom activities. Student portfolios are used to ensure that students have multiple opportunities to showcase their work. Curricula adjustments grounded in data and clear assessments to demonstrate progress have resulted in increased levels of mastery for all students, including English language learners and Special Education Students. For example, English language learners Regents pass rates have increased by 32% in global history and 21% in United States history, as evidenced by January Regents data.

- School leaders and teacher peers provide teachers with actionable feedback aligned to teacher professional goals and the Danielson Framework resulting in improvements in teacher practice. (4.1)
 - The school has identified Danielson Framework for Teaching component 3b: using questioning and discussion techniques as an area of focus and has aligned professional development and support therein. The principal conducts daily observations and has a positive relationship with teachers whereby they can collaboratively select which evaluations best demonstrate their performance to be documented in their file. Feedback provided to teachers in these evaluations clearly identify strengths, weaknesses and next steps for teachers aligned to teacher professional goals set in Individual planning conferences. For example, one teacher set a goal for strengthening assessment processes and questioning in the classroom. An administrator provided this teacher with feedback after an observation stating “you have mastered the art of facilitation within the class and there was evidence gathered of actively pushing students’ thinking...now it is time to actively track student proficiency in the skill being assessed: What mastery are you looking for? Do students know what you are looking for everyday? Provide students with an opportunity to generate questions and push the thinking of others on a larger scale”. This level of feedback was similarly provided to teachers across the school by administrators. Additionally, teacher inter-visits are conducted which provides teachers with the opportunity to give one another feedback through the lens of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. These supports intended to foster teacher growth have resulted in more than 60% of the teaching staff moving up 1 level of growth over the course of the school year in various Danielson domains. Teacher testimony further reveals that teachers feel supported through the evaluation system and have benefited from the support they have received from one another.
- The vast majority of teachers participate in inquiry team meetings focused on reviewing student work for students whom they share and providing one another feedback on teaching strategies resulting in mastery of student goals. (4.2)
 - Teacher team work at the International High School primarily consists of analyzing student work and discussing the needs of students using Student Work Protocols. Protocol guidance prompt teachers to explain the assessment and then describe and interpret the student work through the lens of “What skills does this student do successfully” “What skills or content does this student still need to learn” “What questions did looking at this piece

of student work raise for you?” “What steps could the teacher take next with this student?” Grade level teams and department teams meet frequently to specifically hone in on gaps in student skills relative to their analysis as well as write and refine curricula resulting in increased achievement for all learners as evidenced in scholarship data amongst all students including English language learners and special education students, as well as other various subject area assessments. Teacher leadership is embedded in the structures of the school, and through teacher interviews, teachers attested to feeling supported and encouraged to pursue leadership opportunities. Teachers have been appointed mentorship roles, grade level and department leadership, enrolled in external leadership programs and provided out-of-state and country, national and international training opportunities. Due to the structure of the school, whereby teacher voice and growth is valued, teachers know that they are the main voice that drives student learning across the school. Two teachers at the school were chosen as Wallace Fellows at Bank Street College, one teacher has been selected as a Common Core fellow, one teacher has been accepted to an international program to support the school and teachers participate in the citywide LEAP program. These structured opportunities for teacher leadership happen informally and formally throughout the school resulting in a community of teachers that play an integral role in school decision-making leading to increased student achievement for all learners.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen teacher practice to ensure a common set of beliefs across the vast majority of classrooms resulting in strategic supports and extensions and high levels of student thinking, ownership and participation. (1.2)
 - Across some classrooms, teaching strategies were reflective of a common belief about how students learn best, with an emphasis on student-to-student discussion which is aligned to the Danielson Framework. In other classrooms, students were engaged in resources resulting in work products that demonstrated higher order thinking. For example, in one classroom students were discussing how religion impacts people’s beliefs and actions and students grounded their thinking in John Winthrop’s speech. The speech was further used to develop an argument piece for which students were asked to think about if the speech was used to build a strong relationship between the puritan people or a strict form of social control. Various scaffolds and sentence starters were embedded in the teacher’s practice and provided as resources to aid students in developing their argument. The summary assessment was to create a newspaper headline that may have been written for the topic the class is studying. Teacher questioning in this and in some classrooms was rigorous; Socratic seminar and other methods were used to engage students in other deep discussions around relevant topics. However, these practices were not evident in the vast majority of classrooms and some teachers have not yet strategically embedded high quality supports and extensions into their planning and practice so that all students are engaged appropriately challenging material. In the absence of rigorous questioning that prompt deep discussion for all students and classrooms that move toward more student-to-student discussion and student-led activities, students are hindered from taking full ownership of their learning in all lessons.

- Systematize structures to ensure that students are provided an opportunity to lead school improvement efforts and have personalized school supports that impact the personal and academic growth of all students. (1.4)
 - The school has an intentional focus on the IB learner profile and has successfully embedded the corresponding habits of being inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective into various components of the school's programs. One of these areas becomes the focus each month, and due to this emphasis students are taking concrete steps towards embodying the traits valued by the program. Student needs are tracked by two guidance counselors and a college counselor in order to support their socio-emotional and academic growth. Teachers participate weekly in "Kid Talk" to further discuss any needs of the students they hold in their courses. In addition to these practices, the school is in the process of strengthening "Advisory" to assure that every child is reached. Student council is active and has spearheaded many programs and activities including the school newspaper throughout the year. Students believe that the school is safe and that with the institution of IB, the academic program has strengthened. However, although students are involved in student council, every grade does not have this opportunity for involvement. Furthermore, students exclaimed that they would like to see more sports and activities for them. It was evident in student discussions that although a student council exists, it is not yet at a level where the students are systematically guiding, and leading school improvement efforts. In addition, the learner profile is a new foci and although students are internalizing these effective behaviors, it is not yet embedded among all students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: School for International Studies	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?				X			
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?			X				
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?				X			
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations?			X				
Systems for Improvement							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
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				
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?				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			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?				X			
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed