

# Quality Review Report

## 2013-2014

**Long Island City High School**

**30Q450**

**14-30 Broadway  
Queens, New York  
11106**

**Principal: Vivian Selenikas**

**Dates of review: April 7<sup>th</sup> – April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Long Island City High School, is a high school with 2522 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 12% Black, 62% Hispanic, 10% White, and 15% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 79.4%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is well developed.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School community promotes rigorous curricula aligned to Common Core Learning Standards that consistently challenge and cognitively engage all learners across all grades and subject areas. (1.1)
  - The school aligns its curricula with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and invests ongoing efforts to address the standards from a variety of perspectives, including focusing on looking at student work, engaging in professional development to strengthen classroom procedures and lessons around the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and designing productive professional development experiences around Teacher Effectiveness as implemented in 'Advance' protocols. Faculty routinely analyzes various data strands to design and implement grade and subject area CCLS aligned units and lesson plans. There are curriculum maps for all core content areas that are aligned to the CCLS. Furthermore, the school has incorporated the instructional shifts of literacy, writing, reasoning and modeling in all core subject areas to impact student learning. The school participates in professional development from the iLearnNYC to increase student engagement and differentiate instruction within lesson planning and in the classroom. Curriculum maps are available to the whole school community on Atlas Rubicon for the collaborative use by the Common Core Curriculum Teams. There is full implementation of 'engageny' Common Core work for all 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Grades. Intervisitations, as well as weekly PD sessions, around the modification of new lessons, to meet the needs of Special Education Students, English Language Learners and low performing students are present. Activities consistently promoted higher order thinking skills and rigorous habits across grades and subject areas in a coherent manner. Literacy routines and Depth of Knowledge projects are embedded in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade English classes, and all students including English language learners and special education students must demonstrate their thinking. For example, in 10<sup>th</sup> grade History, curriculum lessons are planned around the Cuban Missile Crisis during the Cold War. Students will analyze articles on the Cuban Revolution & Missile Crisis and identify key characteristics through annotation and group discussion. Students will form pairs and share predictions on outcomes and work collaboratively to complete a Z chart writing a response to the essential question: 'How much tension did the events in Cuba cause during the Cold War? Students with Disabilities have the same access to challenging questions and curriculum with scaffolds embedded. These supports emphasized in a coherent way have aided the school in promoting college and career readiness for all students.
- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect Danielson Framework for Teaching and the Instructional Shifts. (1.2)
  - Clear expectations for classroom practice, as outlined in the Danielson Framework for Teaching, reinforce school-wide beliefs about how students learn best. Lessons reflect activities designated as strategic, on level and advanced groupings, questions to activate thinking and graphic organizers

to gather information are present across classrooms. There is common planning time daily and weekly as 'Departments'. Constant refining of 'doing' instead of listening is one of the lenses that peer-visitations look for as a common trend. Students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products and have discussions that reflect high levels of thinking, participation and ownership. There is a shared belief among faculty, starting from the principal, that the analysis of student work products drives instruction. The school-wide belief that strengthening student engagement through group discussions, teaching high order thinking and student data driven lesson plans drives all instruction. Good differentiation, resulting in students being actively engaged in their lessons, through opportunities of working in groups around a common task, using rubrics, visual aids, graphic organizers, integration of content and academic vocabulary with scaffolds for organizing writing were evident. Teaching strategies include students collaborating to ask questions of each other and push critical thinking when working toward a solution. The results of these practices were evident in a well thought-out and intricate lessons in Foreign Language/Greek for example. An 11th and 12th grade class for English Language Learners who have not passed their English Regents sets a goal for readiness through 'critical lens' practice using reading passages and quotes to analyze. Students when asked were able to articulate their reasoning and 'back up their opinion. There were Bi-lingual dictionaries being used and the teacher made sure to have a language objective as well as a content objective in the lesson(s). Art and Music classes visited had writing tasks along with Document Based Questions on their assignment. In Algebra, 10% of students increased their scores and evidence of increased academic rigor across the school shown in the increase of 700 more students participating in Advanced Placement coursework. Teachers present challenging and intriguing problems that fosters student thinking to model and provide verbal solutions where peers provide feedback on whether the solutions will work or not. These systems re-emphasized the schools commitment to student led rigorous work reinforced by team discussions.

- The strategic use of resources promotes organizational decisions that clearly support the schools instructional goals to improve student academic performance that results in access to college and career readiness. (1.3)
  - The principal has purposefully established and maintained a number of valuable partnerships that provide students with college and career readiness opportunities. The schools Community Advisory Board is integral in finding both after school and summer paid internships that are ongoing off-site opportunities for students to gain real world job experience. Some examples of organizations proactive in the school are: Queens Paper, Con Edison, Chocolate factory, Hour Children, Global Kids, Inc and Gear Up through St, John's University. The Gear Up program (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) works with a cohort of students to help them meet the academic and social demands needed to go on to college. Students visit colleges and are paired with a 'Big Brother' or Sister mentor if they are in jeopardy of failing. Regents Prep classes are offered that further support academic success. The school structure of Small Learning Communities, 'Academies' has made it possible to increase opportunities for teacher collaboration and student academic and socio-emotional support. As a

result, students are known well by at least one adult, engage in challenging academic tasks and produce meaningful work products and show improved achievement. The school organizes staff time so that teams of teachers engage in thoughtful responsibilities aligned to instructional goals to improve student progress. Common meeting and planning time is embedded within teacher and student programs with each academy. Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) teachers and teachers of English as a second language (ESL) meet in teacher teams to co plan. Therefore, lesson plans aligned to the CCLS are also implementing structured language philosophy of dual learning objectives: Language and Content. Scaffolding academic language for English language learners is present in lesson plans and when students achieve independence, the scaffolding is removed and a higher goal is set. Teachers analyze student data and discuss case studies in their meetings. There are five lead teacher positions in each content area, assistant principals and a second parent coordinator who is bilingual to support and engage a growing ELL population. Guidance initiatives are present with family workers and social workers who frequently participate in teacher team meetings to discuss and plan interventions for students. The use of staff time is structured such that teams have substantial and regular meeting times, additionally; the principal strategically uses per-session dollars to staff after school Math, English, Science and History tutoring programs. To support students in credit recuperation, the school has invested in iLearn, an on-line technology program and on-site tutoring program that occurs every day after school and during lunch. There are lunch and learn periods for US History and English students that need extra help. There has been an increase in credit accumulation as compared to the first semester and a larger increase is expected at the end of this school year. There is a strong Saturday Academy specifically designed to support the defined needs of the groups of students served; consistently funded and staffed by strong pedagogues. The staff holds each other accountable for targeted student growth by collaborating and strategizing instructional interventions. The strategic use of resources has resulted in students acquiring skills that promote college and career readiness as evidenced by improved argumentative writing, student programs that lead students toward graduation and in some cases competitive college candidacy, and the opportunity for professional certification in specific technological fields. There have been monetary awards offered from colleges to students, such as The Culinary Institute of America, Johnson & Wales University, and the NYC College of Technology, these awards amount to \$217,000. Teacher recognition awards from the Big Apple Awards have been presented to LICHS as well.

- School leaders, teacher teams and staff constantly convey high expectations that support a culture of learning so that students achieve success in career readiness and college preparation. (3.4)
  - The principal has a clear vision for the school which is to convey high expectations and attainable success for all students to graduate from high school and enter college or connect to a path of career readiness. Staff, students and parents are enthusiastic and attest to the high quality of support the school provides for its students. The school climate is welcoming where parents have access to teachers and receive helpful ongoing communication. The emphasis on developing each student as a holistic individual, able the school to make informed choices on work and

behavior is a very strong feature of the school. The CORE Values program of the paw print is evident throughout the hallways...each paw print has a quote that conveys a 'way of thinking about success'. Regular pupil personnel team meetings provide information about students to enable counselors and the academic staff to update each other around issues of progress, attendance and discipline. The multiple guidance services for students and families, an advisory program and a college preparation program offered throughout the calendar year increases the student's potential of staying in school and succeeding. The school is motivated by a passionate and hard working staff and school leaders that communicates high and clear expectations to students and parents and sets a course of continuous progress. There are strong relationships between families and the school when new students enter. Parents expressed a sense of pride about the school and stated that they are always welcomed into the building. This translates into high levels of parent leadership and commitment to school goals and schools activities that the whole school community organizes, such as the Breakfast and Books program which takes place during period 0-3 and allows students and families into the building early. Conversations with students indicate that they understand what the school expects of them as young adults. Students describe participating in trips to college campuses. One student stated:" it is expected that we do well, graduate and go on to college". Another stated that "passing is not enough" and this philosophy is championed and is embedded in the school community. As a result, students reach for higher attainment and are prepared for the next level.

- Teachers Teams work collaboratively to align instruction to standards, plan common assessments, and analyze student work resulting in improvements in teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students. (4.2)
  - Teacher team meetings revolve around the Common Core Learning Standards while looking at data and creating benchmarks to get students to the next level. In addition teachers systematically analyze key elements of teacher practice for students they share or on whom they are focused. The Administrative Teams conduct informal observations daily to hold teachers accountable. To support teachers in data driven inquiry work, coaches, assistant principals and teacher leaders work with individual teachers and teams of teachers. Teachers receive information electronically from ARIS, SESIS, Daedalus, containing a variety of data from a range of sources so that they can design and monitor individual programs for students entering the school. From such information the students entering the 9th grade in the lowest third are treated 'proactively' not reactively' to ensure additional support. Teachers work together to write units of study. For example, detail analysis of student data from Regents results prompted the school to look at the language expected for these exams and instigated the integration of non-fiction text in content areas. Teacher teams within each small learning community use student assessment to determine item skill analysis and create scaffolded lessons for students. For example, in the New Explorers Academy, the entire 9th grade, the teachers have created an Inquiry Pacing Calendar starting with baseline assessments moving to teachers modeling writing strategies, students independently using writing strategy and then administering to students using the same testing conditions as baseline assessments and interim assessment. Teachers then compare all assessments including final data and discuss student strengths and weakness of strategy.

Teacher teams have a voice in decision making throughout the meetings and with the administration on a regular basis as well as on the School Leadership Team. This has impacted teacher empowerment which has motivated teachers to be actively involved in the school community. This form of distributed leadership is embedded resulting in effective teacher leadership. The school has established systems for monitoring teaching practices to provide a clear focus on improving instructional practices. Assistant Principals and coaches meet with veteran teachers, novice and struggling teachers. These systems enable all teachers to adjust classroom strategies, lesson design and the curriculum to increase student achievement. Data indicates a significant increase in the passing percentage on the January 2014 ELA Regents as compared to the 2013 exam. Students are involved in (PERC) Peer Enabled Restructured Classroom along with advisory from their teachers they are Teaching Assistant Scholars. This is the first step to college and to becoming a role model for other students. Students have received a total of \$35,000 in scholarships, including one student from their Culinary SLC with full tuition to Johnson and Wales. In addition, the ICT European AP History teacher is a semi-finalist for the Big Apple Awards for mastery in teaching.

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

- Refine instructional assessment practices to ensure teacher practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and in-depth understanding of next learning steps. (2.2)
  - The school administers uniform assessments, midterms, finals and mock Regents exams to focus on item analysis of needs. School leaders and teachers gather data that includes baseline and benchmark assessment to measure progress over time. Several classrooms utilize student exit slips at the end of the lessons to determine understanding of the lesson content from the student's point of view. Additionally, teacher teams analyze student work to assess progress and identify areas of need. Strengthening the use of these results across the curriculum, not just in Mathematics and English Language Arts would provide more consistent instruction and accelerate progress for all learners. Department teams create and administer uniform content assessments and formative assessment to monitor and assess the fidelity of standards-based initiatives. Targeted feedback on how to differentiate activities based on student needs as reflected in individualized Education Plans (IEP) and language development for English Language Learners is not evident across the curriculum. Real world application of mathematic reasoning and the use of claims and counter-claims in English and Social Studies classrooms help continue to shift the instructional culture of the school is less defined in other subject areas. The new Project Dignidad, just started this Spring 2014, will provide significant experiential learning to improve the development of student' English and Native Language literacy skills through drama. There is an artist in residence and teachers will receive training sessions, this program looks to increase parental involvement through family activities that have started to take place and will impact on the learning of bilingual learners and their next steps for learning. Build upon the Inquiry Teams to deepen the analysis of questioning techniques so that teachers make effective adjustment to meet all student' learning needs resulting in increased mastery for all students including English language learners and special education students.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Long Island City High School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score				X			
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<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				
<b>School Culture</b>							
<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			
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<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				
<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>