

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Pan American International High School at Monroe

High School 12X388

**1300 Boynton Avenue
Bronx
NY 10472**

Principal: Bridgit Claire Bye

**Dates of review: Oct 23-24, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Veronica Yurcik**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Pan American International High School at Monroe is a high school with 401 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 100% Hispanic students. The student body includes 77% English language learners and 2 % special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 84.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well-developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Meticulous attention to curricula development aligned to content and Common Core standards provides a coherent and challenging course of study across disciplines, promoting college and career readiness for all students. (1.1)
 - The school has been a member of the Internationals Network for Public Schools (INFPS) since its inception in 2008. It has written its own interdisciplinary curriculum demonstrating purposeful evolution over time in response to student outcomes. Department teacher teams recorded these year-to-year strategic adjustments in chronological narratives that highlight yearly performance results with subsequent revisions and interventions to increase student learning. One example of this ongoing reflection process is in the movement from stand-alone courses with distinct discipline emphases to the complete alignment of social studies, English and Spanish curricula so that the same topics are taught simultaneously, underscoring specific language objectives. Students attribute this reinforcement as helping them to be “always focused” and improving their comprehension. In addition, the school creates detailed documents by grade level to chart cross-disciplined outcomes for writing, reading, analytical, listening, speaking, and technology skills. Furthermore, the school disaggregates each skill, charting longitudinal expectations across grade levels to inform differentiated instruction. The school’s emphasis on project-based and collaborative learning supports acquisition of language for its population which is 100% recently-arrived non-English speaking immigrants. The school makes intentional choices to focus on vocabulary development, non-fiction and complex text, evidence-based writing as well as oral presentation, demonstrating close attention to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and instructional needs. The introduction of a college level science course this year provides rigor for advanced students as they grapple with lengthy college level complex text and design a college level research project. Additionally, school counselors created a college advisory curriculum which requires students to reflect on their areas of challenge and to create self-improvement plans. Thus, students increase their self-awareness by evaluating their progress every six weeks, making strategic adjustments in their study plans and submitting multiple drafts to meet standards successfully, resulting in high pass rates. Also, students explore issues around college entrance exams and learn necessary skills, such as how to judge the integrity of internet sources while researching. This advisory curriculum has helped senior students consider their interests, needs and aptitudes for writing effective personal statements and to complete college applications on time. Students articulate their learning, clearly explaining the instructional emphasis on vocabulary, research, textual evidence and writing, and make connections that are both personal and across disciplines. Thus, the school’s commitment to continuously review and amend curriculum facilitates strategic emphasis in integration of instructional shifts, resulting in coherence across grades and content areas. This coherence enables all students to make meaningful associations for building critical academic skills and personal behaviors, such as persistence and resilience, in

preparation for college and careers. Consequently students learn content successfully. The school scored at 99% of peer and 87% of city ranges for credit accumulation on its 2011-2012 Progress Report attesting to its students' consistent development.

- Teachers design learning experiences that highlight learning-by-doing and outcome based performance. A twelfth grade humanities unit analyzes the role of myth in civilization. Students read Sophocles' Oedipus the King and master writing textual evidence to describe how the author uses imagery, how plague functions literally and metaphorically, and how Sophocles suggests that Oedipus is a great man. Algebra projects require students to estimate safe speeds under various road conditions and to make recommendations on driving and highway safety. Algebra students also design cost-effective commercial packaging, using equations and expressions to present mathematical arguments that justify their reasoning. Such curricula and academic task development focuses on work that is of interest to students, supporting language development and application of skills so that all English language learners and students with disabilities demonstrate their thinking both orally and in written tasks daily in independent and collaborative work. Students are eager to talk about their work and are proud of their accomplishments. The school earned full credit for the four year weighted diploma rate for English language learners and full credit for performance of Black and Latino male students in the lowest third in the closing the achievement gap category of its 2011-2012 Progress Report.
- A strong, shared belief system enhanced by careful attention to both Danielson and the school's framework, establishes pedagogical practice that meets individual learner needs so that all students produce meaningful work. (1.2)
 - To ensure coherence between the Danielson framework and the school's rubric for English language learners, the school worked with other INFPS schools to create an inquiry group to identify commonalities. The school then conducted school-wide and team professional development to confirm coherence in use of both rubrics in implementing practice, analyzing data, and making responsive instructional adjustments. Consequently, teachers adhere to a core set of beliefs school-wide supporting heterogeneous, collaborative, experiential learning, resulting in well written and executed interdisciplinary project-based curricula supporting CCLS instructional shifts in all classrooms.
 - Teachers consider the unique characteristics of their students when writing detailed lesson plans and layered curriculum activity guides that reflect strategic selection and modification of materials and employment of Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) strategies so that all students access content. Across classrooms, teacher pedagogy consistently employs use of physical gestures, illustrations, strong emphasis on vocabulary and cross content connections, as well as bilingual explanation as necessary to support learning. Students use sentence starters known as clarifying bookmarks to help them summarize, compare, predict, and/or question to improve their comprehension of text. Mixed grade nine and ten students in a Global Studies class identified physical artifacts in New York City and wrote

explanations on how those artifacts reflect cultural priorities. For example, one student group noted that the presence of ambulances could indicate a caring society. Students accessed a beginner or intermediate language frame list to assist them in writing their explanations. In a mixed grade nine and ten English class, students cited personal examples of decisions they have made that could be considered Ulysses pacts. Eleventh grade students worked in teams to read varied primary and secondary source documents regarding new world exploration, taking notes, recording questions and documenting their opinions in preparation for a class debate to defend the actions of either Christopher Columbus or the native Americans. During the debates, students used a fifteen-item rubric to evaluate each debater's strength of argument, presence of supporting text-validated details, cogency of counter arguments and oral presentation skills. Grade twelve earth science students explained the relationship of temperature and barometric pressure and plotted latitude and longitudinal points of Hurricane Sandy, learning how meteorological data, maps and instruments can be used to forecast hurricanes in preparation for a project requiring them to design a device to keep storm surge out of New York City subways. Mixed grade nine and ten students studying Newton's third law of motion in a Physics class used worksheets with bilingual directions, illustrations and sentence starter scaffolds to complete a lab report using both temporal and content vocabulary. They recorded multi-step procedures and trial data to draw a conclusion after conducting balloon travel rocket trials. Advanced English language learners received packets without scaffolds and higher order thinking questions requiring them to write inferences on recorded data and pose modifications for future experiments. This careful coordination of pedagogical strategies to student levels ensures tactical use of scaffolds and extensions across classrooms so that all students are highly engaged and demonstrate higher order thinking in meaningful and challenging tasks, resulting in quality work products.

- Intensive design of assessments closely matched to curriculum provides realistic evaluation of learning that informs strategic and timely instructional adjustments, so that all students demonstrate academic improvement. (2.2)
 - Teachers share with students their pre- and post-common assessment results that inform individual goal setting. Outcome-based grading policies reflect achievement within levels of performance commensurate with well-defined project standards. Both teachers and students use detailed rubrics in all subject areas to evaluate student work and post to a Google platform that facilitates student-teacher interaction on grading and revisions. As a result, students express appreciation for the guidance offered by teachers and their willingness to accept multiple drafts to improve students' grades. One example of an email exchange between teacher and student acknowledged the student's improvements on a second draft and the need to strengthen the conclusion by making it more concise, to which the student responded with thanks, noting that although difficult for her, she would edit her conclusion and submit a third draft, thus improving her writing and grade.
 - Teacher teams conduct an in-depth post-unit data trend analysis examining performance in each core content area. For example, teachers' disaggregated data in analyzing ninth grade performance to

reflect students with high or low achievement in content area knowledge, reading, handwriting and native/non-native numeracy skills. Subsequent action plans include identification of supplementary instructional materials designed to address identified gaps or enrichment activities to extend learning, as well as tutoring and after school support. As a result of this embedded analysis, timely adjustments are made so that all students make progress. Unit one results indicate positive student growth for all students across eight content areas, as well as a positive one point rubric growth in writing journals across the school.

- Supervisors and teachers provide frequent and explicit feedback that elevates pedagogy and strengthens professional reflection and commitment, thus increasing teacher capacity and student achievement. (4.1)
 - Consistent supervisory support and the use of the school's framework for evaluating teacher practice paved the way for a smooth transition in adopting Danielson's Framework for Teaching (DFT). Teachers receive written reports from supervisors and peers evaluating their practice against the DFT rubric, accurately assessing practice and informing next pedagogical moves. The practice of peer-to-peer feedback is well established, with the principal steering teachers to visit particular colleagues during monthly collegial visits, based on observed needs. Teachers give detailed low inference feedback to peers. They include direct quotes, rate each other on the Danielson rubric and provide suggestions for next steps by illuminating both good and developing pedagogy. For example, comments in peer observation reports incorporate explicit reference to identification of specific questions that exemplify reflective practice as well as less effective questions. Suggestions included monitoring delivery of questions, student response, and use of wait time to ensure students have adequate time to reflect and fully respond as well as opportunities to pose higher order thinking by encouraging students to craft their own questions. New teachers have mentors, specialized professional development opportunities, additional supervisory support through increased supervisory observations and coaching sessions, and are embraced within the department and grade teams that are dedicated to the refinement of pedagogy in accordance with defined standards of practice. In addition, frequent examination of student work products and assessment results concretizes observations connecting pedagogy with student work outcomes. Supervisors redesigned their tracking system last year to better evaluate performance in each Danielson domain and they determined that ongoing checking for student understanding was in need of improvement. This prompted immediate professional development on assessment of learning increasing use of exit tickets and prompting institution of daily student journaling and pre- and post-assessments for every instructional unit this year. Thus, astute focus on learning outcomes fosters effective pedagogy elevating both student learning and professional growth.
- Scheduled professional collaboration is an embedded practice that promotes the use of inquiry data to create conditions that increase student achievement and the role of teachers in the decision-making process. (4.2)

- Subject departments and cross-discipline grade teams, each meeting at least twice weekly, use defined work agendas. These teams develop curriculum in support of CCLS instructional shifts, evaluate and refine assessments, use protocols to examine student work products and design instructional adjustments and improvement plans. For example, a team analyzed a student's science writing sample, observing that while the student's content knowledge was strong, the inclusion of too much information caused the writing to lack clarity. Teachers deduced that note taking skills may need improvement and that assisting the student to recall previous learning in science and English class about attention to details might help that student organize and discriminate pertinent facts better. Additionally, numerous teams composed of guidance counselors, lead teachers and support staff members meet regularly to monitor curriculum and assessment, focus on attendance concerns, plan for professional development and support social-emotional learning. Moreover, the whole faculty meets every Friday afternoon for shared professional learning. This inclusion of all staff in a multitude of teams that use defined protocols of investigation has established coherent instructional efforts school-wide that contribute to improvement of both teacher practice and student mastery of performance standards.
- School administration describes distributive leadership as the school's most promising practice. Both supervisors and teachers put in many extra hours and assume multiple roles for the benefit of students. For example, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) delegate teacher also assumes responsibility for being the lead in planning school professional development. Such strong distributive leadership empowers teachers to assume responsibility for collectively improving student outcomes. Due to collaborative efforts this summer, teachers were able to support the graduation of an additional fifteen students, raising the four year graduation rate from 54% to 68% and the six year graduation rate to 73%.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance further the strong current support structures for all students and their families so that the effective work ensuring students' academic and personal behaviors are maximized. (1.4)
 - The school's population is comprised of 100% immigrant students, 25% of which are students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) and 25% of which are overage students. The school's unwavering commitment to all students' achievement creates a school culture of trust and respect for its student population where every student is well known through its dedicated guidance team and a strong advisory program implemented by teachers. Students state that they love advisory," that advisory has helped them "to set learning goals," and "apply their learning" as they learn such skills as research and internet literacy proficiency. The purposeful and constant attention to youth development has enabled students to develop persistence in working towards academic goals. Students speak with pride about how they

are preparing for college and future careers. The school's college advisory curriculum for each grade level, college readiness courses, small group college mentoring, college awareness curriculum in Saturday parent classes, and SAT preparation courses, create an awareness of options and a desire to succeed. As a result, the school is seeing an increase in students registering for college preparation courses. The school excelled in its college and career preparatory course index in its 2011-12 Progress Report achieving 89.9% of peer range. Teachers' ongoing professional development in the area of second language acquisition increases their sensitivity to students' needs, promoting strategic approaches. For example, teachers used this year's unit one post- assessment results to re-group students, distinguishing between high versus low content and language skills, to further differentiate academic support. Students have gained confidence via the supports to tackle tough tasks such as portfolio presentations in every subject area, demonstrating self-regulation and persistence. The school's Progress Report weighted regents pass rates places it within the upper range of the top quartile for both peer and city ranges in all subjects, testifying to the personalization and movement of students toward high levels of impact on academic behavior. In addition, the school works with families to support attendance and new attendance protocols initiated this year have resulted in a 10% increase in attendance since last year. Parents as key partners receive information so they also can support their children on the road to success. Understanding the intricacies of each student's learning needs to help in fine tuning behaviors for success remains an ongoing focus for the school.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Pan American International High School at Monroe	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