



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

International High School at Lafayette

High School K337

**2630 Benson Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11214**

Principal: Jon Harriman

**Date of review: February 25, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio**

The School Context

International High School at Lafayette is a high school with 364 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 8% Black, 25% Hispanic, 26% White, and 40% Asian students. The student body includes 85% English language learners and 0% special education students. Boys account for 66% of the students enrolled and girls account for 34%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90.0%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
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	Additional Findings	Proficient
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	Focus	Proficient
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	Additional Findings	Proficient
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Celebration	Proficient
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders communicate and establish a culture of high expectations supported by systems and programming. Teachers consistently communicate high expectations to all students and provide ongoing feedback that prepares them for the next level.

Impact

School wide systems of accountability and ongoing feedback to students are leading to progress towards college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The administration uses monthly newsletters and emails to communicate high expectations in the school. The November newsletter discussed how the principal would be having conversations on “how to further embrace the role of educator as facilitator, reduce teacher talk time and elevate student talk and dialogue.” In addition, the December newsletter indicated the expectations for the staff with regard to mentoring. It states, “At its foundation, the mentoring role should predominantly be one of support and encouragement.”
- School leaders communicate their instructional expectations through feedback sessions and professional development. A review of the professional development schedule reflects ongoing workshops on language and content, which is the instructional focus for the school year and outcomes-based assessment design, one of the school-wide goals. In addition, the administration provides feedback using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. One observation report asked the teacher to review the criteria of expectations with the students so that class-grading guidelines would be clearer and they would find the rubrics useful. In another observation report, feedback consisted of asking the teacher to find a challenging question or task for early finishers to encourage rigor.
- The school offers several programs to provide feedback and encourage student partnerships with careers including College Access: Research and Action (CARA), College Now and iMentor. The iMentor program provides students with a role model to work with who encourages reflection on credit accumulation, task quality and college enrollment. During an interview, one student stated that advisory support and CARA supported her acceptance into a medical internship that will help her reach her goal of becoming a pediatrician.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, practices consistently reflect the use of student groupings, high levels of questioning, student discussion, and scaffolds, where appropriate. The use of high quality extensions, however, varies among some subject areas.

Impact

Teacher practices result in opportunities for all students to engage in higher order thinking and participation yet do not lead to student ownership and high-level extensions for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classes, teachers provide students with scaffolds to engage in higher order thinking. In one math class, students worked on a task related to the “Extreme Makeover” television show. They used what they knew about the family to design and construct a new home for them while aligning the task to their understanding of the math concept of area. However, extensions to ensure challenge for higher-level students were not evident in the vast majority of classes. For instance, the teacher in one class provided pictures to the students from which to draw inferences in order to develop their own and the level of responses led to recalling facts and descriptions.
- Across classes, students work in groups and take on lead roles. However, high levels of engagement and thinking varies in a few classes. In one class, students constructed a roller coaster and took on roles such as the advertiser, researcher and engineer. Although some students used their roles to participate in higher order thinking and conversation around the construction of their roller coaster, other students demonstrated misunderstandings and lacked higher levels of engagement.
- During one U.S. history class, students worked in groups to conduct a debate on child labor. The students took on the role of child advocates versus millionaires in order to defend their points of view. Each group used text evidence and questioning such as “Was that humane?” and “Would you make your kids work in that factory?” Students combined into larger groups to debate one another. Although high levels of student thinking and discussion were evident across classes, this level of ownership was evident in only a few classes.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula align to the Common Core Learning Standards and emphasize rigor through academic tasks for all students, including English language learners (ELLs).

Impact

Curricula planning for rigor and alignment results in instructional coherence and promotes college and career readiness across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The school utilizes teacher created project based units and curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Curricula maps are available and used by all teachers across the school. Projects connect to outcomes-based assessments developed by teacher teams. During a final project for the “Barefoot Gen” unit, students wrote a persuasive essay that aligns to Common Core writing standard one, writing an argument to support a claim.
- Across tasks, teacher created scaffolds provide ELLs the opportunity to engage in rigorous habits. In one English task, the use of visuals, graphic organizers and group work enabled students to engage in rigorous tasks. In addition, sentence starters and frontloaded vocabulary supported ELLs during a global history unit on food.
- Teachers use the Depth of Knowledge matrix as they plan curricula and tasks. In a review of unit plans, essential questions and projects varied between levels 3 and 4. A project for one English unit asked students to create a technology based project on “Was the atomic bomb justified?” In a math unit, students had to use their knowledge of geometry and probability to design a bank vault.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School wide assessments, including rubrics, conferences, ongoing checks for understanding, and student self-assessment, align to the curricula and provide actionable feedback to support students' understanding of content related materials.

Impact

The use of assessments leads to actionable next steps so that students know what they need to do to improve. Adjustments to instruction promote meeting all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- This year the school used discipline teams to develop outcomes based assessment tasks with Common Core aligned rubrics. Across classes, students had access to rubrics for tasks they were working on. During an interview, students stated they receive feedback both verbally and in writing. In a review of documentation, work products contained feedback such as “too many quotes, not enough analysis” and “try to use sentence frames to help with analysis writing in your report.” In addition, students articulated how they use rubrics to determine their strengths and areas in need of improvement.
- Across classes, teachers use a variety of methods such as questioning and exit slips to check for understanding. During one group session in a U.S. history class, the teacher coached a discussion group. Focus questions included, “What did you see in the factories?” and “What were the conditions like?” In an earth science class, the teacher assisted a group of students with measurements using a scale.
- In a number of classes, students used rubrics and questions for self-reflection. In a math class, lead students were known as group contractors of a construction project and assessed the quality of engagement of their group. In addition, students said they found peer feedback “useful” and “helpful”. One student stated that she revised her writing based on the rubrics and her peer’s support after reviewing her work. Her peer asked her to add more examples, which she included in her revised draft.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The majority of teachers collaborate in structured teams that engage in self-directed inquiry work. There are opportunities for staff input into instructional decisions.

Impact

The professional collaborations lead to improved instructional capacity that enhances opportunities for teachers to make decisions that support student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly to discuss methods to improve instruction and develop structures including discipline goals, agendas, protocols, team notes, and supplemental materials, and to make curricula adjustments. Math teachers used their team meetings to revise unit outcomes using student data and work products to determine the needs of students toward the instructional focus on language and content. During one meeting, teachers discussed preparing a packet of academic conversation starters to share with other staff members.
- During an English team meeting, teachers reviewed student work and shared strategies with each other. Teachers reported that the student work sample demonstrated good structure and a clear claim. Shared strategies included using sentence starters and focusing on how the writer used analysis to elaborate and improve the quality of the writing.
- Teacher discipline and team leader meetings occur monthly with the school administration. A review of agendas and notes demonstrate discussions at a school-wide level on improving the quality of the portfolio process. Discussion included suggestions such as inter-visitations and presentations of strategies. In addition, team leaders provided school wide presentations on project ideas and strategies developed by teams. The science team developed a vocabulary activity and created similar versions of it for other content areas during their curriculum share.