



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

School for International Studies

Middle-High School K497

**284 Baltic Street
Brooklyn
NY 11201**

Principal: Jillian Juman

**Date of review: May 12, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Janice Ross**

The School Context

School for International Studies is a middle - high school with 430 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population is 43% Black, 41% Hispanic, 11% White, 2% Asian, and 2% Multi-Racial students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 82.7 % for the high school and 92.5 % for the middle school.

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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Additional Findings	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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core learning Standards and content standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricular and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Collaborative curricula development and refinement based on data has led to coherence across the school and the promotion of college and career readiness so that all learners have access to engaging learning experiences.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers ensure highly rigorous tasks in the curriculum through the use of the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum. This rigorous internationally-based curriculum centers on the principles of Innovation, Consultation, Access and Service. The school's curriculum maps are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards while their instructional focus (Talk like Scholars, Write like Experts, Think like Innovators, and Live like Global Citizens") is embedded across content areas. For example, maps reviewed showed alignment to reading, writing, thinking critically and connections to the real world. For example, in the English Language Arts (ELA) Genocide Unit students have a choice for their summative assessment, where they are selecting a group presentation that explores the effects of genocide on the world, or writing an essay analyzing the author's perspective (Night's Elie Wiesel) and how it affects the telling of the story. There is a non-IB vs IB school comparison chart where teachers can see the difference of what it means to create curriculum that embeds the International Baccalaureate principles. For instance, lessons in Classifications and Astronomy (science), Global Studies, and English all included consideration of "global context" and resulted in student work products that were aligned to the Common Core and required the use of subject specific vocabulary to explain the relevance and impact of the topic under consideration.
- Unit plans in all content areas illustrate multiple designs of academic tasks, with numerous scaffolds and entry points. For example, the social studies unit plan shows use of leveled readings, graphic organizers and student choice activities. The instructional shifts were embedded in the unit and lesson plans. For example, in the grade 9 English unit plan on Elie Wiesel's *Night*, there was evidence of students engaging in Socratic seminars, defending their claim and argumentative writing.
- In addition to the twice a month that teachers review curriculum with administration, they meet as a team, six Saturday's a year and for two weeks in the summer, to revise and reflect on their curriculum. For example, teachers revise maps to include more project based learning, opportunities for student choice, and the implementation of real world connections to support access.
- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers utilize the school's uniform lesson plan template which reflects the schools' IB and instructional focus. For instance, unit plans in Economics and 9th grade English both included "global context," statement of inquiry," "approaches to learning," "differentiation," "formative and summative assessments" that allowed for self and peer assessment, and "Common Core Focus Standards."

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. Across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking; however students are still in the process of taking ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the school's instructional focus of "Talk like Scholars, Write like Experts, Think like Innovators, and Live like Global Citizens" and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best, which is from each other, through prior knowledge, and through exploration. In the English class, students were engaged in a Socratic seminar where they were creating their own questions, discussing these questions and using a rubric to self-assess.
- In the participation in Government class, students engaged in a gallery walk. This activity was an introduction to a new unit to prompt student reflection on what they had learned from the previous unit, and how to apply it to this next unit. Students reviewed each other's questions. In the Advanced Placement United States History class, students were engaged in a discussion about future civil rights, and they were finding evidence from the text around an inquiry question: "Who has the power to make change?" in preparation for a "Socratic Smack-Down."
- Across most classrooms, lessons reflected a uniform set of beliefs about how students learn best. Although lessons were designed to promote high levels of student thinking and participation, not all activities showed evidence of full student academic engagement and consolidation of understanding across grade levels. For example, the 9th graders dug more deeply into the material and resources than the 12th graders, and their academic discussion was more rich and engaging. The conversation was more evidence based; students used accountable talk to evidence more student to student interaction.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. Throughout the school, teacher's assessment practices reflect varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessments.

Impact

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers' assessment practices reflect actionable and meaningful feedback to students regarding their achievement. Various ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment strategies allow for effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs so they are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- The school utilizes an assessment calendar where dates and deadlines are clearly communicated to staff, students and parents. The school creates assessments aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the school's IB criteria. Grade teams and departments collaborate to create and revise assessments and rubrics, which were evident within the unit plans reviewed. For example, unit plans show evidence of formative and summative assessments. Checks for understanding are in forms of questioning and discussion, peer assessments, cold calls, exit slips and thumbs up-thumbs down. Students in grade 10 English submitted a literary analysis essay on *Fahrenheit 451* via Turn-It-In and got back a rubric based grade (organization, analysis) and extensive edits and commentary from the teacher.
- The school uses data trackers in classrooms to track student mastery. Students are provided feedback in writing and online through the use of Jupiter grades. All students have an e-mail address, which is used to provide ongoing encouragement and feedback. This was evidence by the e-mails between the English teacher and her students in regards to writing their senior thesis paper. Students self-assessed via e-mail by identifying their strongest and weakest parts of their paper. Teachers, parents and students communicate through the school's e-mail system.
- Juniors and seniors utilize a program Turnitin.com where they submit their essays online and receive feedback from their teachers via this online system. At the student meeting, students discussed how the feedback allowed them to identify strengths and identify growth areas, such as analysis and selection of evidence, organization, and clarity of writing.
- At the student meeting, students were able to explain their summative and formative assessment results for each class. For example, one student said, "I had to write a persuasive speech on the Electoral College." They all spoke about the Global Action Project presentations as their summative assessments. At the end of each marking period, students are provided a summative assessment such as these group projects that tie back to the school's instructional focus and global relevance (IB focus).

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations to families that are connected to a path to college and career readiness. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students.

Impact

The school provides families with ongoing information regarding student progress to ensure they are prepared to meet the standards. School staff offers ongoing and detailed feedback and guidance/advisement supports to prepare students for college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal has established strong social-emotional expectations for students, and the implementation of the International Baccalaureate Program is now bringing academic expectations for both students and teachers to a higher level. Students who graduate with an I.B. diploma will leave International Studies speaking like Scholars, Writing like Experts, Thinking like Innovators and Living like Global Citizens. In addition, the school has created a skill chart defining grade level readiness and college readiness such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and organization, which are found in the school's unit plans.
- Teachers all received professional development on using formative assessment in instruction. The school utilizes an assessment policy that provides teachers with an elaboration on the philosophy of assessment at their school, the principles to guide these assessments and what the roles of all key stakeholders in the school community have in the assessment process. For example, parents should "monitor evidence of their children's learning and growth, provide opportunities for support to students and teachers, and celebrate learning." The assessment policy outlines the practices used at the school, and the various recording and reporting procedures, for example through rubrics, report cards, portfolios, conferencing, and how to ensure that special needs students' assessment practices and progress monitoring are followed.
- Families receive a weekly newsletter with updates regarding the school's mission, important academic deadlines and school events. Once a month, families are provided with a monthly calendar of events and the school-wide expectations for the next month. Parents are provided a link where they can visit to find out about monthly parent academy workshops. Families also utilize Jupiter Grades, an on-line grading system, to review data on their children's academic, social and emotional behavior, and feedback from teachers.
- Twice per year, teachers, parents and students come together for a formal conference. This gives parents, teachers, and students an opportunity to share and discuss student work and collaborate to improve the student's academic performance. In addition, every six weeks students engage in a case conferencing with their homeroom teachers. This provides students an opportunity to reflect on their learning, create goals for their learning, and make them aware of their next learning steps.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and promoted the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Distributed leadership structures are embedded so that there is effective teacher leadership across the school.

Impact

Professional collaborations have resulted in school-wide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners. Teacher leaders play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of the teachers have common planning time during each school day. All teachers in grade teams participate in “Kid Talk,” a protocol used for teachers to examine student data and implement new strategies, such as the use of accountable talk as a point of access to the curriculum and embedding Socratic Seminars and related discussion stems into classes, which increases student achievement across classrooms for all learners. The teachers expressed that the IB Curriculum system creates coherency and provides a common language for teachers and students. Students meet every Tuesday to collaborate, which empowers them as self-advocates in the school community.
- The principal created a School Intervention Team which consists of teachers, support staff, and guidance counselors. This team meets twice a week to examine data such as progress reports, student work, and Jupiter reports to assess student needs and creates academic and social-emotional supports and goals for students who are at risk.
- The school has six grade team leaders and six department team leaders. The principal meets twice a week with each set of leaders to discuss progress and instructional needs. Lead teachers meet with the principal bi-weekly to collaborate on professional development offerings based on Danielson Framework for Teaching observation data and teacher choice. Department teams meet once a week to analyze lesson plans, tasks, and student work. Grade teams plan inter-disciplinary units of study and plan lessons collaboratively.