

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Flushing International High School**

**High School Q263**

**144-80 Barclay Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11355**

**Principal: Lara Evangelista**

**Dates of review: April 27, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Michael Dantona**

## The School Context

Flushing International High School is a High School with 437 students from grade 9 through 12. The school population consists of 1% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 3% Black, 39% Hispanic, 3% White, and 56% Asian students. The student body includes 86% English language learners and 2% special education students. Boys account for 59% of the students enrolled and girls account for 41%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-14 was 94.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

### Instructional Core

<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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.	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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.	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

### School Culture

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations.	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

### Systems for Improvement

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning.	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**3.4 High Expectations**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

High expectations are consistently communicated to staff through The Danielson Framework for Teaching. Expectations connected to a path for college and career readiness are consistently communicated to students and families by school leaders and staff.

### Impact

The professional learning environment of mutual accountability that has been established through consistent communication to staff has resulted in a culture for learning and professionalism. Ongoing communication to parents promotes a successful partnership to support student growth.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have developed a Youth Leader program, whereby Flushing International High School students are trained to support their peers with the college application process. A youth leader shared that she had received the same training as the college advisor within the school and provides workshops for her peers. Another student shared that she and her peers are given the opportunity to participate in an internship based on their interest. Students also explain that they take College Now classes at Queens College, which give them the idea of what college is like.
- Students express that their teachers and counselors provide them with guidance and support. A student shared that the support of her counselor resulted in a college scholarship. Students also explain that they receive information from their teachers through the Jumprope online portal, where they can access class performance data.
- School leaders provide parents with monthly workshops which are college focused. Parents state that “communication is superb.” Parents explain that the school communicates with them via telephone, memos and the online Jumprope program. In addition, one parent explained that the school provided a workshop on communication which has enabled her to improve her communication with her son. Another parent added that she likes that the school requires the students to present their portfolios because it is preparing them for the future.
- School leaders communicate high expectations to staff through a weekly newsletter that highlights best practices, shares successes of colleagues, and provides professional readings. Teachers explain that they have opportunities to engage in formal inter-visitations resulting in direct feedback from their peers. One teacher shared that she was able to visit a peer implementing literature circles which enriched her ability to do so in her own classroom. In addition, teachers state that the feedback they receive from the building leaders is insightful and encourages reflection and provides ongoing training on the schools’ instructional focus of questioning and discussion techniques.

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

### Findings

Across classrooms, teacher pedagogy reflects a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that are aligned to the curricula and informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching; however multiple entry points and high levels of student thinking and discussion that promotes student ownership was not evidenced in many classrooms.

### Impact

While students were provided with opportunities to engage in project based learning that required reflection and evidence, in some classrooms teaching strategies did not fully engage all learners in appropriately challenging tasks, limiting opportunities for higher order thinking and student discourse.

### Supporting Evidence

- School-wide expectations are to engage students in project based learning experiences. Across classrooms teachers developed lessons which required students to work collaboratively in groups to complete classroom activities and tasks. For example, in a math classroom students created presentations using exponential and linear functions to improve financial life and shared them with their peers. One student explained that purchasing a used car would fit his lifestyle because it was cheaper than buying a new car, which would allow him to save money. These project based tasks encourage student thinking and promote student discourse; student ownership was not evident across the vast majority of classrooms.
- Teachers provided multiple entry points into the curriculum, such as varied text and questions aligned with specific student needs. For example, in a math class the teacher grouped students according to specific areas of need and provided hands-on activities and manipulatives to support student learning and deeper conceptual understanding. One group of students shared that they were using dice to help them get a better understanding of probability. While the use of multiple entry points was evident across classrooms, not all teachers use these strategies effectively during instruction. For example, in a science classroom the teacher established varied activities to meet the needs of her students. However, some groups needed additional scaffolds to grapple with the text in a meaningful way, limiting their ability to engage in high levels of thinking and discussion.
- Across classrooms instruction reflects a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, which was evident as students engaged in experiential learning through solving real-world math problems and the use of text coding to develop meaning from complex text. However, in some classrooms, instructional planning limited opportunities to augment learning for students. For example, in a Humanities classroom, the teacher used a peer editing process as students worked toward revising writing with a partner to refine an essay. While the students were grouped and were peer editing, protocols for group discussion to ensure that students are accountable for their conversations did not support student ownership. For example, one student shared with her peer that his testing question was “kind of arguable.” However, she did not provide an explanation as to why she felt that way or how the question could be improved, and no strategy was presented to guide that discussion, which limited student ownership

## Additional Findings

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

School leaders and staff align curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts while embedding rigorous academic tasks for all learners to demonstrate their thinking.

### Impact

The curricula alignment promotes college and career readiness for all students building coherence across grades and subject areas. The school-wide focus on the use of project-based learning has promoted rigorous academic habits and higher order thinking for all learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- School curriculum maps and unit plans are teacher created and developed around the school's core belief of experiential learning. For example, a Humanities unit requires students to engage in an inquiry based research project, whereby students explore cultural, political, social and economic aspects of New York City. Unit plans across content areas include essential questions, project descriptions, unit outcomes, Common Core Learning Standards alignment, enduring understandings and language development.
- School curricula promote academic tasks which emphasize higher order skills through project based learning tasks. For example, in a math classroom students were expected to develop a presentation answering "How do we as recent graduates decide on the best vehicle to purchase so that we do not incur loans or debt?" The class was expected to create a presentation using linear equations and inequalities to support the completion of the project promoting the math instructional shifts.
- School leaders and staff utilize the Internationals Graduation-level Tasks Rubrics and Junior Institute Rubrics, which are based on the New York Performance Standards Consortium rubrics and aligned to the CCLS, to ensure that student tasks and projects are aligned throughout the grade levels and promote higher order skills across grades and subject areas.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

Across grades and subject areas common assessments are utilized. Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

### **Impact**

The formative data that teachers collect and analyze is used to monitor planning decisions and student progress and to support instructional adjustments so that the needs of all students are addressed and they continue to progress toward learning goals.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders and staff have developed and implemented two performance based portfolio tasks for students to complete during the school year. One assessment is administered in the fall and the second assessment is administered in the spring. Teachers utilize the portfolio assessment as a means of measuring student progress. In addition, for newcomer English language learners, the school administers a language specific literacy and mathematics assessment, which is designed to measure home language skills.
- Teachers regularly collaborate to develop curricula and assessments based on data collected from Jumprope, a standard based online program. School leaders and staff regularly generate reports on the individual student and class level to support school-wide instructional decisions. Reports are developed on a 0-4 scale based on specific standards based outcomes as well as the overall work habits of each individual student.
- Across classrooms, there was evidence of rubrics aligned with school curricula along with corresponding actionable feedback to students. Students explain that they always receive feedback. One student shared that she needs to work on adding more evidence in her writing to support her research. Another student shared that he is working on adding more transition words into his writing to make it flow better. Teachers provide written feedback on student work as well as electronically. For example, a teacher shared feedback with a student encouraging her to include the source connected to the quotes and provided an example to support her.
- Across classrooms, teachers utilize ongoing checks for understanding, such as teacher conference notes and exit slips, as well as providing opportunities for students to self-assess using rubrics to support their needs. For example, in one classroom, as students presented their math project to small groups of their peers, the teacher circulated from group to group assessing the performance of the presenter as well as ensuring that the audience was accountable by peer assessing the presentation. In another classroom, students were asked to complete an exit slip which required that they assess if they collaborated with members of their group, discussed the story in English, found evidence to support their answers and how they can improve.
- Teachers utilize Jumprope data to support instructional decisions. For example, an integrated algebra mathematics teacher identifies students' needs and provides additional supports for students who are far below, approaching, meeting and exceeding the standards. Supports include the use of graphic organizers, the use of visuals to represent math vocabulary, purposeful grouping and the use of hands-on interactive skill based activities.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

Teachers are engaged in structured team work that promotes the achievement of school goals through the analysis of assessment data and student work products.

**Impact**

Teacher team structures have resulted in the strengthening of school-wide instructional capacity of teachers, improved pedagogy and student progress.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams analyze student work and discuss classroom practice using a “Sharing Teacher Practice Protocol”, whereby each teacher presents student work and has an opportunity to receive feedback from his/her peers. The English language arts and English language learner team focus question is “How Do We Support Students’ Reading of Difficult Texts?” After each teacher presented, the teachers within the team completed a graphic organizer to determine the next steps to support student learning thereby strengthening teacher capacity. This was evident as team members shared strategies to improve English language learners ability to read complex text.
- Teacher teams consistently analyze data from their standards based online program. Data is broken down into individual standards and is analyzed across teachers. The school-wide instructional focus on writing has yielded student progress. Teams focus on students’ ability to produce clear, coherent writing, summarize text, connect text to other text, interpret text and revise writing. This has resulted in improved outcomes across classes. For example, students demonstrated an improved ability to connect text to other texts, evidenced by a .65 average increase comparing the fall and spring project based assessment using a 0 to 4 scoring rubric.
- School leadership has developed a culture of collaboration through the development of teacher teams. Teachers explain that they meet weekly and have a team leader, which corresponds with the schools’ Coordinating Council. The Coordinating Council uses data from the team leaders to make school-wide decisions. Administrators and teachers engage in dialogue to promote the achievement of school goals, teacher capacity and student achievement. For example, school leaders and staff have collaboratively developed protocols for the project based portfolio rubrics which are utilized to determine student eligibility for graduation.