



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

East-West School of International Studies

Secondary School Q281

**46-21 Colden Street
Queens
NY 11355**

Principal: Benjamin Sherman

**Date of review: March 4, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Hongying Shen**

The School Context

East-West School of International Studies is a secondary school with 661 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 11% Black, 15% Hispanic, 5% White, and 67% Asian and 2% other students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 97.0% for grades six to eight and 90.0% for grades nine to twelve.

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	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	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	Well Developed
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:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and staff effectively communicate high expectations to families and students and provide support to lead all students on the path to college and career readiness.

Impact

All students, from sixth to twelfth grades, are prepared for college and career and are supported to grow beyond academics for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff attend the Morning Muster in the school auditorium with all the students and regularly address the student body. This ten minute routine allows direct communications of the expectations to the student body and the staff for the day, every day. It provides opportunities for students to practice in public speaking and encourages student leadership development. During the Muster observed, two students came to the podium to greet the audience in four different languages. There was an open-mic where the counselor spoke about College Now program and the student government representatives announced the activities of the Latino culture club. The Muster observed ended with each grade taking turns cheering each other for the day.
- The school partners with families to support student progress and has a routine to invite parents to visit the school on the first Friday of each month for three hours. During the meeting with parents, many shared that when they come to school, they meet with the guidance counselor and the teachers who teach their children to discuss their children's academic and social emotional growth. Parents also use "pupil path" at home to keep track of student homework and grades. Parents encourage their children to join the after school tutoring program and all the club activities available at the school.
- The school has established a college-going culture. It offers seven advanced placement courses and College Now courses in two colleges. It also offers four years of science and math, and a language Regents in Japanese, Korean, or Chinese. Students all attend a workshop conducted by the guidance counselor and college advisor to discuss their PSAT scores and next step for learning. Some teachers had training in the ASD Nest program for high functioning students with autism spectrum disorders to service those high-need subgroups at school.
- Each fall the school closes for one day, and all students in all grades go on a trip to visit the colleges in the tri-state area. During junior and senior parent night, the college advisor and high school guidance counselor discuss with students and parents the expectations for senior year, graduation and the college process. At the meeting with students, they shared their learning experience of being dependent on teachers as a sixth grader, for example, writing a lab report, to being independent with the lab work as a twelfth grader, using rubrics to self-regulate and self-assess.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking.

Impact

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks, yet there are missed opportunities for strategic high-quality support so that all learners can demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in their work.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher practice around questioning and discussion across classrooms challenges students to demonstrate their thinking. For example, in a US history class, students worked in groups to evaluate various perspectives to determine if the United States should ratify the Treaty of Versailles. Each group was to perform the appropriately challenging task of looking for key claims in each argument and respond what should be the role of the United States in world affairs, but not every student in the groups was accounted for to contribute to the completion of the task.
- Teachers support diverse student groups to clarify and push their thinking across most classrooms. In a sixth grade math class, students worked on equivalent expressions to determine if it is possible to have two different but equivalent expressions for a given situation. Two groups were formed according to student readiness and the two activities on equivalent expressions provided different entry points for students. Each group was supported by one of the co-teachers. A review of the lesson plan shows that the students were to write an exit slip of a pair of equivalent expressions and an explanation of how they knew the expressions were equivalent to demonstrate their thinking skills. However, in a sixth grade social studies integrated co-teaching class, students were to answer the question of whether Genghis Khan be considered a hero or villain, with evidence from the reading. Though the teacher modeled how to cite evidence from the reading and provided the students with a graphic organizer for the task, some students were still in need of strategic structures during group work.
- In a seventh grade English language arts class, students were engaged in tasks that required their higher-order thinking skills to analyze the role of memory by citing and analyzing textual evidence from the novel *The Giver* and newspaper articles. During observation, students were asked to turn and talk about which piece of evidence from the article they would use to support their claims, followed by a whole class discussion.
- In an integrated co-teaching living environment class, the students were in groups of four to play a game to review trophic levels. The teacher used various ways to provide multiple entry points, including paraphrasing and verbally presenting materials in different ways, and the technique of using games to review what had been learned interested the students. However, some students had trouble following the questions and were not fully active in the game. Lack of support prevented some students from demonstrating high levels of thinking and participation.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across grades and content areas, curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and school leaders and faculty strategically embed rigorous habits and higher-order skills in curricula and academic tasks.

Impact

The school has made curriculum decisions that result in coherence in rigorous curricula and academic tasks across grades and content areas.

Supporting Evidence

- The school strategically integrates the instructional shift of writing from sources into the English language arts curriculum across grades. The departments and grade teams analyzed student writing samples through the lens of college and career readiness and noticed that students had difficulties citing and analyzing evidence and that they were not proficient in using language to defend a position, hypothesize or make comparisons. The English department maps the central texts, essential questions, and skills across grade 6 to grade 12 and designs lessons and research paper projects for each grade to build up student skills in writing essays and academic research papers, which increase in length, depth and complexity from grade to grade. For example, the seventh grade students are to locate articles and do research to develop a counter claim or argument on the question “Is revolution ever justified?” They write a research paper that is two to three pages in length. In the eleventh grade, however, the essay assignment is “Based on the characters in *The Great Gatsby*, are Veblen’s ideas about consumer culture accurate? Support, refute, or qualify Veblen’s analysis using one direct quote from Veblen and one from *The Great Gatsby* in each body paragraph.” Students are to cite from different sources, conduct critical analyses, and synthesize materials. The performance tasks are scaffolded with guiding questions and step by step instructions for students with different needs.
- Building upon the six Common Core aligned English language arts units per grade, the English department plans across curricula with the social studies department. For example, for the sixth grade unit “What is a Hero?”, students read *The Fly*, *The Scribe* and Steve Jobs’ Commencement Speech, and learn to identify cause and effect relationships, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant facts, analyze points of view and cite textual evidence in the English class. In the social studies class, students read about Mao Zedong, Menachem Begin, David Ben Gurion and Yasser Arafat and cite evidence to answer the question, “Should ___ be considered a hero or villain?” The social studies texts students read are chunked, with subtitles and guiding questions for English language learners and students with learning disabilities. All students are required to write a five paragraph essay that identifies three characteristics of a hero and provide examples to support the claim.
- All students study Korean, Chinese, or Japanese five hours a week, and the school follows the belief that learning an Asian language will help the students in their future. The language classes are built into the curricula, which require students to perform in listening, speaking, reading and writing in the target languages in context and students are supported to reach Regents-level proficiency in one of the languages, which enables them to graduate with an Advanced Regents diploma and prepared for college and career.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and create assessments that are aligned with school curricula in all subject areas, and the school uses the assessment data to adjust instruction.

Impact

The school's focus on analyzing student learning outcomes informs instructional adjustments in lessons to meet student learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses common assessment of writing research papers across grades and assessments are aligned with the school's curricula. Teachers provide students with actionable feedback regarding their work. Student essays bear teachers' general comments as well as very detailed explanations for revision and editing. For example, an English teacher used an online grading tool to provide written comments as well as a voice comment on a student's essay on how to see the characters with more complexity. In addition, the teacher provided feedback on how to correctly use passive voice so that the student was clear about how to improve her writing.
- Writing in content area classes is one of the school-wide instructional goals. Teachers examined student writing across disciplines and grades, and identified analyzing a prompt to write an elaborate response as a common weakness in student writing across grades. Each department uses a teacher-created rubric to examine the prompts from its discipline, and plans lessons accordingly to teach students how to analyze various prompts in different content areas and therefore help students improve their writing across disciplines. Teachers adjust instruction by focusing on teaching functional vocabulary, such as "identify", "analyze" or "cite" in all content area classes to help students understand prompts to write elaborate responses. For integrated co-teaching classes, teachers adjust writing instructions with scaffolded writing process to meet student learning needs. There is daily quick write to build student basic writing skills, and there is the use of MEAL (main idea, evidence, analysis, and link back to claim) paragraph to help student synthesize ideas. Teachers also implement the writing process of draft, peer edit and finale copy for teacher feedback after each unit.
- The school keeps track of every high school student's progress towards graduation by following their credit accumulation and Regents scores and the school further identifies those who need support on academic foundational skills and those who need one-on-one intensive intervention or small group tutoring for graduation. The student sorter records show whether each student is "off track", "almost on track" or "on track". The school also monitors all student progress after each marking period and assigns students for group tutoring with specific teachers or with Hodori, the after school tutoring program. Of the twelve students from grade 6 to grade 8 who were on the "at risk" list after the first marking period, eight of them are off the list after the intervention.

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

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations. There is teacher leadership in planning school curriculum, making instructional decisions and leading professional development.

Impact

Teachers successfully work together to make effective instructional decisions which result in coherent instruction across all grades. Improved instructional capacity and embedded teacher leadership has resulted in high levels of student achievement for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers on the department teams, including the English department team, meet biweekly to lead creation and revision of the English language arts curriculum. The English department team of teachers collaborates with the social studies team to facilitate the cross curriculum alignment. As a result, coherent instruction across grades and discipline is ensured. One of the teacher-led school-wide instructional decisions on citing and analyzing evidence in writing in content area classes is written into the school Comprehensive Educational Plan. The teams create common writing rubrics, map the teaching of writing skills for interdisciplinary research papers from grade 6 to grade 12, and develop instructional strategies that support students learning in citing and analyzing evidence. The English and social studies teachers lead the professional development sessions on writing strategies for all content area teachers and curriculum development.
- Teachers on the department and grade teams play a key role in making curriculum and instructional decisions that affect student learning across the school. The English and social studies teams follow a school protocol to review the curriculum, identify learning gaps by looking at student work, and make instructional decisions on the school wide instructional focus. The grade teachers make vertical alignment of the academic expectations of student learning for each grade level, especially the writing skills across disciplines, so that students can build on their skills learned from grade to grade and achieve mastery. The English department took the lead to model a strategy to all departments on understanding the task/prompt, which is one of the three focus areas the teacher teams have identified, and shared a teacher-made rubric to guide the teacher professional learning. The science department created lab report rubrics for different levels, which the teachers refer to as “building blocks”, from grade 6 to the advanced placement course.
- Teachers created a teacher-led team called the pre-individualized education program (IEP) team, which meets for each IEP student before each annual IEP meeting. At these team meetings, teachers from different departments review student data and discuss the annual student IEP goals in alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards. At the pre-IEP meeting observed, teachers followed the New Vision’s individual student work analysis protocol to look at one IEP student’s work products to target teacher practice and scaffolds to support students. In addition, teacher teams establish intervisitations and share best practices to benefit all learners. As a result, the school exceeds the student achievement target in 2013-2014.