



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**PAN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL  
24Q296**

**45-10 94TH Street  
Queens, NY 11373**

**Principal: Minerva Zanca**

**Date of review: November 6, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Musa Ali Shama**

## School Context

Pan American International High School is a high school with 382 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 0% Black, 99.7% Hispanic, 0% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 82% English language learners and 2% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 87.3%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</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>Developing</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>Developing</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>Developing</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<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>Proficient</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<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

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders share their high expectations with staff and consistently communicate expectations to families connected to college and career readiness to help them understand their child's progress in meeting those expectations. The administration's expectations for faculty regarding professionalism, instruction, and communication are supported through professional development and routine feedback to teachers.

### Impact

The school culture results in productive home-school partnerships that support student success connected to a path to college and career readiness. Consistent support for and emphasis on professional expectations leads to improved teacher practice.

### Supporting Evidence

- Administration has worked collaboratively with faculty to develop a definition of rigor that is memorialized throughout the building and is expected to be incorporated into lessons. The principal stated that she walks through classrooms daily and gives teachers actionable feedback. Teachers affirmed that they receive feedback regularly from administration as well instructional coaches.
- The school has organized a College Fair that the entire school was invited to attend. Parents, students, and teachers expressed enthusiasm regarding the college fair and the motivational impact it was having in the school community. Students spoke proudly of applying to college and feeling prepared for college. The 2014 School Quality Guide showed a five percent increase in the Postsecondary Enrollment Rate after 18 months in this year's School Quality Guide from the previous year.
- Parents offered praise in regards to communication from the school regarding their children and the information regarding their progress in meeting goals. Parents highlighted the school's curriculum night when they have the opportunity to meet their child's teachers and review the expectations for the class. They also referenced translated communication in their native language coming in multiple forms such as letters home, and phone calls from the Parent Coordinator, as well email and the school website. All parents present stated that they have meet with the college advisor and their child's guidance counselor to discuss expectations connected to college and careers.
- Teachers stated that they have had numerous opportunities to participate in professional development opportunities around the Danielson Framework for Teaching, utilizing Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK), and International Network for Public Schools (INPS) rubrics and principles both in the school facilitated by administration, instructional coaches on a weekly basis, as well as intervisiting with other international schools in their network.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Teaching strategies informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching are beginning to reflect an articulated set of beliefs and alignment to curricula that engages students in high levels of thinking and student participation through student to student discourse and reflected in student work products.

### Impact

Across classrooms visited, all students were not yet consistently engaged in tasks and/or classrooms discussions, resulting in uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal stated that “that students learn best in heterogeneous groups and that they learn from one another.” However, in most classrooms although students were seated in groups, tasks were not consistently developed so that students worked collaboratively or were engaged in student-to-student discussions. For example, in a 9<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish Native Language Arts NLA class were the essential question was “What factors influenced the rise and collapse of dense urban societies in certain parts of Mesoamerica and South America?” and students rotated through 4 stations filling out a graphic organizer and engaged in higher level thinking as they discussed the stations within their groups. However, in a 10<sup>th</sup> grade Global class with the aim “How did Europeans affect the Civilizations they encountered?”, there was no student discussion in a teacher-directed lesson that led to low student engagement with one-word answers from students.
- Although unit and lesson plans reviewed referenced Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), across classrooms there was inconsistent execution of incorporating strategies that engaged students in the instructional shifts aligned to the CCLS. For example, we observed a 12<sup>th</sup> grade participation in government class that required students to form an argument on perceptions and stereotypes of immigration in an online discussion to prepare students to write arguments citing evidence. However, in an advanced placement Spanish class students were reading texts and were asked to answer questions in groups but were not prompted to use close reading strategies or asked to cite evidence from the text to substantiate their responses.
- In some classes teachers employed strategies to facilitate high levels of student thinking and participation in classroom discussions and work products. For example, in a theater class students developed skit, identified main ideas, settings, and characters and used a rubric to discuss the level of development for each rubric indicator. Students sat in groups and engaged in rich conversation using the rubric and developing feedback and next steps for the student actors. However, in a 12<sup>th</sup> grade English language arts class in which students were asked to assess their knowledge of Maus using depths of knowledge, 4 students dominated the lesson by calling out answers and others sat silently without being prompted to share what they had written. In an integrated algebra class, all students were assigned the same set of problems related to linear patterns, a few students demonstrated that they were able to complete the task, while there were several student groups unable to move forward with the task because they did not understand what they were required to do.

## Additional Findings

<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 meet regularly to create strong professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals as well develop shared leadership and have voice in school-wide decisions that impact student achievement.

### Impact

Teachers value the time to work collaboratively with colleagues to support their professional growth and discuss instructional strategies aligned to school-wide goals leading to coherence and increased student achievement for all learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet 3 days a week in grade level teams and 1 day a week in content teams. Teams set weekly goals, develop agendas, and discuss curricula connections and instructional strategies.
- The teacher team “Portfolio Committee” meets daily and is tasked to lead the work in transitioning the school in having students meet new graduation requirements aligned to having students complete Performance-based Assessment Tasks (PBATs). The team leader attends monthly meetings with other schools in the International High Schools network to review and develop rubrics, student work, as well as share that information with school leaders and faculty. They have assembled a Mentor Handbook to support teachers who mentor seniors on the development of their senior projects.
- The 9<sup>th</sup> grade team articulated the development of writing rules that all teachers across the 9<sup>th</sup> grade are using as an outcome of team analysis of student work. They created a “writing rules” poster that was evident in classrooms.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

The school is in the process of developing coherent curricula and tasks that promote college and career readiness and consistently provides the diversity of learners with access so that they are cognitively engaged by looking at student work and refining curricula.

### Impact

Students are not consistently exposed to coherent curricula or have access therefore leading to missed opportunities to develop and strengthen skills that lead to college and career readiness for all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school has shifted to preparing students for Performance Based Assessments Tests (PBATs) in the 2014-15 school year and is in the process of developing units that prepare students in meeting these new graduation requirements. Administration articulated the curricula development process and shared evidence of giving feedback to teachers in units submitted with two units completed at the time of the review.
- The school utilizes professional development from the International Schools network to support teachers in adapting to project based learning and developing tasks to engage students in rigorous habits across subject areas. The faculty and administration has developed a shared understanding of rigor and is in the process of developing units and lessons that incorporate this shared belief and aligned to PBATs.
- A teacher team is dedicated to refining the senior portfolio assessment that 12<sup>th</sup> grade students are required to complete and are looking at student work to identify skills that students need to acquire in order to successfully complete the task. Teachers are in the process of mapping skills across grades to develop coherence through purposeful planning.

## Additional Findings

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Teachers use assessments and are developing rubrics to align to the school's curricula, however actionable feedback to students was inconsistent and teacher practice for utilizing checks for understanding and student self-assessment to adjust pedagogy was not consistently observed.

### Impact

Teacher feedback to students was not yet consistently evident across classrooms and did not yet contribute to a clear portrait of student mastery, thus limiting student achievement to higher levels. In addition, inconsistent use of checks for understanding during lessons led to limited opportunities to effectively adjust pedagogy in the moment in order to meet student learning needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- The Senior Portfolio Committee shared evidence of student work going through revisions based on feedback aligned to a rubric that was leading to increased student performance towards achieving mastery. However, looking through student work in classrooms and student binders, the level of feedback and the use of rubrics was not regularly utilized to provide actionable feedback for student next steps.
- As the school continues with curricula development aligned to preparing students for Performance Based Assessment Tests (PBATs), teachers are working collaboratively to create, refine, and align rubrics to assess student progress. Students stated that some of their assignments have a rubric and helped them better understand on what they were expected to achieve and were provided the feedback to help them understand what they had to do to get there.
- Across classrooms visited, the use of strategies that reflected ongoing checks for student understanding or a final summary of the lesson that allowed teachers to assess student comprehension of the material taught was inconsistent. For example, in a 12<sup>th</sup> grade social studies class, the teacher scripted interim checkpoints into the lesson plan and assessed student comprehension with an "exit ticket" lesson summary strategy. However, in a 9<sup>th</sup> grade algebra class the teacher plan included "summarize what they have learned (if the class is still going)" into the plan, and during the lesson was not observed recording any formative data of student comprehension and the class ended without the teacher doing a summary activity to assess student learning.