

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

**International High School at
LaGuardia Community College**

High School Q530

**43-35 Van Dam Street
Queens
NY 11101**

Principal: Jaclyn Valane

**Date of review: January 15, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Musa Ali Shama**

The School Context

International High School at LaGuardia Community College is a high school with 498 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 2% Black, 45% Hispanic, 13% White, and 38% Asian students. The student body includes 69% English language learners and 0% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.7%.

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	Additional Findings	Well Developed
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	Focus	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	Additional Findings	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	Celebration	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

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

Distributed leadership structures are embedded, and teachers work collaboratively to systematically analyze key elements of teacher practice, assessment data, and student work.

Impact

Teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning and result in shared improvements in teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Interdisciplinary teams meet twice a week, and teachers have common planning periods in order to facilitate teachers' working together on curriculum. Additionally, disciplinary teams meet monthly to discuss curricula. Teacher teams use data (attendance, portfolio, grade, credits, NYSESLAT, CUNY assessment exams) to identify struggling students and create an intervention plan that will support each identified student. All interdisciplinary teams develop individualized student support plans for struggling students.
- A team called the Peer Evaluation Team develops and presents portfolios to team members and uses a worksheet to review evidence and to capture detailed feedback that teachers received from their peers in regards to their strengths and suggestions for continued growth. This school year, fourteen teachers are presenting their portfolios through Option PROSE. The teacher and members from the portfolio team sit with the principal to evaluate the teacher using Danielson.
- There is a strong distributed leadership model where teachers are elected to lead six committees, such as Teaching and Learning, Personnel, Guidance, and Student Life. The chairs of each committee facilitate monthly meetings with teacher representatives from each interdisciplinary team and set goals for themselves each year. They report to the SLT with their work.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Teacher assessment practices are aligned to curricula and incorporate rubrics to make effective adjustments in lessons based on ongoing checks for understanding.

Impact

Assessment practices lead to students' receiving actionable feedback regarding their next steps to improve student achievement, and effective adjustments to lessons meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- As a member of the New York State Performance Standards Consortium (NYSPSC), all assessments are aligned with the school's Performance-Based Assessment Tasks (PBATs). Students in the twelfth grade present their graduation projects, that is, their PBATS. Starting in the lower grades students are exposed to PBAT rubrics and begin developing projects for their portfolios using the content specific PBAT rubrics.
- Teachers incorporate baseline and benchmark assessments in units in order to assess where their students need targeted supports. Strategies such as formative assessments, exit slips, multiple drafts, peer edits, self-edits, and use of Google Docs for teacher feedback, are incorporated into projects as checkpoints to monitor student learning and provide actionable feedback. Students work with a mentor teacher to complete a full self-assessment of their academic growth and develop a Mastery Statement, a requirement in student portfolio presentations made in tenth grade and twelfth grade.
- Teachers use various online Internet systems to provide students with frequent communication regarding their progress. They use EnGrade to post student grades and use Google Docs to provide feedback on student work to support students through the revision process of refining their projects as they prepare for their presentations.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are consistently emphasized in curricula and academic tasks across grades and subjects, and purposeful decisions are made to build coherence and to promote college and career readiness. .

Impact

The development of curricula and tasks that consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects promote college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. Review of syllabi and unit maps revealed alignment to CCLS and include tasks and assessments that are tightly aligned with the New York State Performance Standards Consortium's (NYSPSC) Performance Based Assessment Tasks (PBATs) rubrics in each discipline area. The rubrics in each NYSPSC's discipline area align with the standards and the practices of the CCLS and reflect the instructional shifts in each subject. Norming sessions are held with other NYSPSC schools throughout the school year to ensure that the curriculum is aligned with the CCLS and with the bands of the NYSPSC's rubrics. The rubrics in each discipline area assess the following; social studies, a research paper including viewpoint, thesis/claim, evidence and sources, analysis and persuasion, and effective organization; English, a literary essay including thesis and organization, analysis, style and voice, and connection; mathematics, mathematical application, problem solving, reasoning and proof, communication, and connections; science, project or original experiment that contextualizes, critiques experimental design, collects, organizes, and presents data, and analyzes and interprets results. However, lesson plan and unit plan formats differed in structure and elements recorded.
- In order to promote the use of higher order thinking skills, the school refers to the Hess Cognitive Rigor Matrix to analyze the depth to which tasks and projects engage students in higher order thinking skills. Faculty utilizes the Collaborative Conversations Resource published by the Internationals Network for Public Schools (INPS) that is aligned to "effective" teacher performance in the Danielson Framework for Teaching, domain 3b Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques and that highlights Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards.
- Tasks are planned to incorporate rigorous habits; for example, in a ninth-tenth English language arts unit Native Language Project Reflection: Stories of Resilience, the following activities were planned over a nine-week period. Part A: What is Resilience?, read, annotate, discuss "What is Resilience?" write personal stories of resilience, interview others in native language to collect stories of resilience, research stories of resilience, identify factors of resilience. Part B: read, annotate, discuss "Why Bilinguals are Smarter," and learn about linguistics elements of the English language, research linguistic elements of native language, and compare and contrast languages. Part C: draft, edit five paragraph reflection to accompany stories of resilience, read and peer edit one another's reflections to present in pairs and triads.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

All learners are provided with high-quality supports and extensions into curricula leading to high student engagement in appropriately challenging tasks.

Impact

Teaching strategies across the vast majority of classrooms facilitated high levels of student thinking, participation and student ownership as students demonstrated higher-order thinking skills in their work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers across classrooms employed high-quality supports and extensions in lessons so that all learners demonstrated higher-order thinking skills in student work products. For example, in a math class, students strategically broken up into groups and were given texts to read, annotate, and discuss to come up with answers to questions that the teacher had provided. Students were provided with a graphic organizer that had students identify vocabulary, main idea, conclusion, and that asked for students to create an illustration that describes a theme, main idea, or understanding of the article. Students then transitioned into a Talk, Think, Exchange protocol as each student presented his or her findings to the group. Students transitioned to another portion of the lesson that was to create a poster based on their findings that they would present to the rest of the class. The teacher had a poster-critiquing graphic organizer to support students in analyzing each other's work. In an elective on film making, the lesson open with a "Do Now" that asked students to write their own definition of mood. Students were then prompted to share their definition with a partner and capture their definition. The teacher had students share their definitions and elicited from students a shared definition of mood that was captured on the board. The teacher then transitioned into an activity that had students make observations as they watched a video of techniques used to create mood. Students were then prompted to discuss their observations with a classmate to explain what they had captured and what created the mood.
- In a ninth and tenth grade social studies class students were engaged in a lesson with the Aim, "How did Hinduism organize India's society?" Students were learning about the caste system, and the teacher had structured various activities for students to access the content. There was a video clip, a short reading, and a poem. Students moved at their own pace as they worked through each stage of the lesson with a corresponding graphic organizer or guided notes worksheet. Students answered questions such as "How did the caste system divide the people of India?" after watching the video, or were required to role play after being assigned a specific caste and writing a journal entry describing what his or her day was like based on their castes. The graphic organizers reflected levels of activities that reflected Webb's Depth of Knowledge levels one, two, three, and four and contained illustrations and highlighted content specific vocabulary. Students were able to articulate the various stages of the assignment and what they had to do in order to complete the task.
- Across the vast majority of classrooms, discussions reflected high levels of thinking and participation. For example, in a course called, Communication, students explored questions such as "How do cultural differences impact interpretation?" In the lesson observed the teacher had an activity called a "Block Party" where students chose quotes, annotated them, and reflected on their meaning. They then found other students in the room with the same quote and discussed their interpretations.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

High expectations are consistently communicated and a culture for learning pervades the school environment due to a systematic approach to providing all students with clear and effective feedback and guidance supports.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability to meet high expectations has led to systems and structures that support high-needs students in owning their educational experience as they prepare for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- The school counselors and early college coordinator work with the parent coordinator to organize two parent association meetings each year on college and career readiness. Students are inculcated into a portfolio development culture starting in the early grades. Starting in the ninth grade, students act as participating panelists on tenth grade portfolios; as eleventh graders, they sit as panelists for twelfth grade portfolio. Students in the tenth and twelfth grade are assigned a teacher mentor to work with them throughout the year to prepare for the portfolio. Teacher mentors keep parents informed of student progress.
- Teachers run weekly seminars where they lead students in reflection, goal setting, college and career readiness, and community building. Students are exposed to guest speakers, conduct college and careers research, and explore which college courses they should take.
- At the core of the school is the International High School Governance Map. Each team plays an important role to systematically communicate a unified set of high expectations. There are five instructional teams: Steering Committee, Guidance Committee, Student Life Committee, Personnel Committee, Teaching and Learning Committee, Early College Committee, and the Coordinating Council. These teams help ensure that all students that lead to students owning their educational experience and are prepared for the next level.