



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**College of Staten Island High School for  
International Studies**

**High School R047**

**100 Essex Drive  
Staten Island  
NY 10314**

**Principal: Joseph Canale**

**Date of review: April 21, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Joseph Zaza**

## The School Context

CSI High School for International Studies is a high school with 527 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 12% Black, 19% Hispanic, 57% White, and 12% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 42% of the students enrolled and girls account for 58%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94%.

## 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>Celebration</b>         | <b>Well Developed</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>Additional Findings</b> | <b>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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>Focus</b>               | <b>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</b> |

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

The school builds rigorous habits and higher order skills aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards into unit plans across content areas and designs data-informed tasks to provide all students with access to demanding curricula.

### Impact

All students, including students with disabilities, have access to rigorous curricula and academic tasks that demand higher-order thinking and are cognitively engaging.

### Supporting Evidence

- The vast majority of planning documents evidenced an intellectually demanding task that ensured that students meet Common Core speaking and writing standards. In an 11<sup>th</sup> grade American literature unit, students are asked to publish a 3-5 page research paper that requires them to both paraphrase academic articles and conduct a literary analysis.
- Rigorous tasks that promoted higher-order thinking across grades and subject areas are evident across unit plans and lesson plans. In an 11<sup>th</sup> grade United States history class, students are required to write a thesis analyzing the United States' participation in World War II using text based evidence, three claims and a counterclaim explaining their position. In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) college preparatory algebra class students are asked to apply their knowledge of quadratic functions through the exploration of real world problems related to architectural design.
- The use of the Hess Cognitive Framework is used consistently across units as evidenced by the use of essential questions that push students to demonstrate a high level of thinking. In grade 9 social studies, sample questions include, "Should people sacrifice freedom for safety" and "Did the Church play too great a role in the Middle Ages?" In grade 9 English language arts (ELA), questions include, "How does one create their own personal legend?" and "Why is the role you play on Earth important?" In a grade 10 ICT geometry class, students are asked, "How can you prove relationships between arcs and angles in a circle?"
- Unit plans and lesson plans clearly outline how instruction is planned and modified using student work and data to inform grouping. In a 10<sup>th</sup> grade ICT geometry class, plans call for students to be group based on formative assessment data. In a 9<sup>th</sup> grade social studies class, instructional grouping is based upon previous performance in seminars and the quality of their active reading notes completed in preparation for the seminar.
- Curricula and academic tasks are modified to remove barriers to learning so that all students can access rigorous content. In an 11<sup>th</sup> grade United States history class, all students must write a thesis research paper using primary and secondary sources. Students are divided into instruction grouping based upon assessment data and content is differentiated by tiering the work into "low, medium, and high" categories.

## Area of Focus

|                           |                              |                |                       |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Quality Indicator:</b> | <b>3.4 High Expectations</b> | <b>Rating:</b> | <b>Well Developed</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|

### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training. Although teachers establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations for all learners, student ownership over their learning is not yet evident across grades.

### Impact

The principal has created a culture for adult learning resulting in shared accountability among staff. Teachers provide effective feedback that enable students to uphold the values of empathy and pluralism so that they are prepared for the next level while moving them to acquire ownership of their learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school-wide instructional focus that is communicated via a faculty handbook, a weekly newsletter, and weekly professional development, asks teachers to align curricula to the Common Core and pedagogy to the Danielson Framework and thus holds staff to high expectations.
- The principal provides time for teacher teams to meet weekly and in common planning time daily to conduct inquiry by looking at student work together, revise curricula, unit plans and lesson plans. Teachers observe their practice through monthly instructional rounds aligned to a component of the Danielson Framework thus holding themselves accountable to high professional expectations.
- Teachers provide clear feedback to students regarding their academic growth. Teachers discuss Lexile scores explaining reading levels and suggest material and books they can read together to boast their skills and content knowledge. However, when asked, not all students could articulate steps to improve their reading skills.
- The school uses the Gradual Release of Responsibility model of teaching to move students to take ownership of their learning. Although students lead class discussion and are prepared for the next level, teachers, rather than students, review task instructions or protocols and norms before moving into the work.

## Additional Findings

|                           |                     |                |                       |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Quality Indicator:</b> | <b>1.2 Pedagogy</b> | <b>Rating:</b> | <b>Well Developed</b> |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------|-----------------------|

### Findings

The belief that students learn best when they are accountable to each other through high levels of discussion, debate and/or presentation both orally and in writing was evident across the vast majority of classrooms. Teachers plan lessons together that consistently ask students to demonstrate critical thinking skills and a deep understanding of the instructional shifts.

### Impact

Teaching practices are aligned to the Danielson Framework and teachers provide support and scaffolds for students so that all learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks across the vast majority of classes.

### Supporting Evidence

- In a 10<sup>th</sup> grade ICT math class, small groups took turns working together at “stations.” At each station, students needed to solve a problem, define terms, and explain their reasoning after forming a consensus. Teachers monitored their work and assessed student understanding on a skill based chart to track progress. After five minutes, students quickly and efficiently moved to the next of their six “stations.”
- Students in a social studies class were engaged in a Socratic seminar that required them to demonstrate critical thinking through analysis. They had to form an opinion based on the rule of Genghis Khan. Students quoted text as they shared their interpretations and responses to Khan’s various policies. One student asserted, “I agree with Ben that Khan was an influential leader but he was also ruthless and slaughtered people.” While students took turns responding to the answers of their peers using accountable talk stems, students in the outer circle took copious notes.
- An 11<sup>th</sup> grade ICT English class debated the question, “who was most responsible for Myrtle’s death in *The Great Gatsby*?” The teachers created heterogeneous groups to ensure students with an individual education plan (IEP) would be mixed into groups with middle and higher performing general education students. Student learning styles were also taken into consideration when forming the groups. To assist all learners, each student was equipped with a graphic organizer and a white board in order for teachers to quickly assess where all students are and to make adjustments where need so that students would not be overwhelmed by the fast paced debate.
- In an ELA class, students were group by Lexile score with the task of making a universal claim by learning how to construct a dialectical journal. Some students received a modified handout with sentence starters and/or and instruction sheet explaining the step-by-step process for creating a universal claim.

|                           |                       |                |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Quality Indicator:</b> | <b>2.2 Assessment</b> | <b>Rating:</b> | <b>Well Developed</b> |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|

### **Findings**

Across the vast majority of classrooms assessment practices ensure that actionable and meaningful feedback regarding student mastery is generated, and that student self-assessment, peer assessment and ongoing checks for understanding are in place.

### **Impact**

As a result, students are well aware of their next steps toward improvement and teachers make effective instructional adjustments both during class time as well as using data collected on students during the lesson and on formative assessments to inform future instruction.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- At the student meeting, students stated that, “Rubrics are big here at our school.” All students have a copy of a generic grade criterion that includes space for student self-assessment, self-reflection, and next steps. A global history 2 essay rubric on “belief systems” asks students to self-assess and justify their grade. Their essay is then peer reviewed before the teacher grades the final product.
- Teachers and student engage with one another through “post- it” comments on student work. In an essay on women in the 1920’s a student comments that she understands the “right way to analyze,” but now needs to find a useful article to “fit my claim.”
- The debate in the ELA class on *The Great Gatsby* served as an assessment to check on students’ ability to use textual evidence to support an argument.
- In a tenth grade ICT math class, the co-teacher asked students to place their answer on their white boards along with an equation to describe the graph that was pictured on the board. This enabled the teachers to see that all the students had question one correct but answers to question two varied. One teacher the led the class in whole group re-instruction while the second pulled a few students aside that shared common misconceptions to work with them directly.
- In two history classes and one ELA class, the teacher asked students to raise their thumbs (up, down or sideways) to gauge their understanding of the group task they were about to begin.

|                           |   |                |                       |
|---------------------------|---|----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Quality Indicator:</b> | <b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b> | <b>Rating:</b> | <b>Well Developed</b> |
|---------------------------|---|----------------|-----------------------|

### **Findings**

The vast majority of teachers engage in inquiry based work to improve student outcomes and teacher practice.

### **Impact**

As a result of using data as well as analysis of student work, teacher teams incorporate strategies to meet the needs of struggling learners into their lessons and improve classroom practice collaboratively.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher grade/advisory teams and department teams meet regularly as this time is built into teachers' daily schedule. Teachers work in academic department teams, advisory teams by grade, and grade level teams to ensure coherence through focusing on vertical alignment, the Common Core, and shared instructional strategies. A team of grade 11 teachers analyzed samples of social studies work across the year of a student selected by a team member. During this meeting, the subject area teacher described the task, shared an analysis of the progress of the student in analyzing information, and solicited low inference responses from their peers. Following this presentation, the teachers discussed next steps for the teacher to implement for this student as well as next steps to implement instructional practices across the content areas for all teachers to support learners that have trouble with the skill of analysis.
- Teacher teams developed the CSI Student Intervention Plan to address low performing or struggling students. The team adapted the "What, So What, and Now What" protocol to more explicitly have students understand their next steps in achieving the school's instructional focus. Using this protocol has also helped teachers plan around the needs of their learners.
- The work of teacher teams has had a direct impact on improving students' Lexile levels as measured by the Gate-MacGinitie test. Teachers plan and prepare together by looking at student work and sharing practices that they have found successful in reaching students. In the 11<sup>th</sup> grade team meeting a math teacher shared that she learned how to assist her students to improve their math literacy by incorporating active reading strategies she learned from her colleagues in the humanities.