



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

**Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning**

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies**

**High School X520**

**470 Jackson Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10455**

**Principal: Leslie Chislett**

**Date of review: May 14, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Cyndi Kerr**

## The School Context

Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies is a high school with 143 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 30% Black, 67% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 24% English language learners and 33% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 76.0%.

## 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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<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 professional collaboration that promotes achievement in school goals. Teacher teams consistently analyze student work and share assessment data.

### Impact

Professional collaborations strengthen the professional capacity of teachers and progress toward goals for groups of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- The 9<sup>th</sup> grade team is implementing a Writing is Thinking through Strategic Inquiry (WITsi) in which the team meets twice weekly to review student writing for a focus group of students. Short-term, specific mastery goals are set, gaps are identified, and curricular and pedagogical decisions are made to address the gaps. Student work is analyzed for both mastery of a targeted writing skill and understanding of the content, which is resulting in teachers giving each other feedback on the quality of the tasks in relation to student outcomes in writing collected. Based on this analysis, the teacher team makes decisions on next steps. In observed 9<sup>th</sup> grade teacher meeting, teachers gave feedback to strengthen the tasks as well as specific strategies for the presented students. The teachers used a tennis chart to document and discuss four students' work using five math expansion sentences. The teachers had to record did the student understand the skill based on the answers and write yes or no. During the teacher team interview, teachers reported that using the writing strategies reveals what students understand in the content. One teacher said, "We are using the writing strategies to enhance our tasks, instead of asking students to write a paragraph for example, we ask students to write to details about the character which is revealing whether they understand the reading." A math teacher said, "The common core requires students to explain their work and the writing strategy helps them justify their answers."
- Department teams meet weekly and develop assessments and academic tasks, providing each other feedback to adjust content writing tasks for students. Grade teams meet twice weekly where they examine academic and attendance data. They develop a focus group of students with strategies and interventions for that student with different teachers becoming a point person to follow up. During an observed teacher meeting teachers discussed a range of academic strategies that in turn developed their own practice in addition to the other social emotion supports for each specific student. The guidance counselors facilitate the team and ensure teachers are tracking the status of the interventions. They use guiding questions such as "What specific student needs is the team targeting today?", "What are the key findings, decisions, and insights from discussion?"
- A review of team minutes and agendas demonstrated a consistent cycle of inquiry that includes reflection and revision on team progress toward school goals. The end of year reflection sheet prompted teachers to focus on two specific interventions. Teachers stated they wanted to "focus on using writing strategies to check for students understanding content" and ensure students were "more aware of what they need to progress."

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

### Findings

Across classroom teaching practice are becoming aligned to the schools instructional focus that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Across classrooms teaching strategies that include scaffolding routines or questioning inconsistency provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

### Impact

Across classrooms, this has lead to uneven student engagement, in appropriately challenging tasks and uneven demonstration in higher order thinking skills including the work of English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms visited, teachers practices were inconsistently aligned to the schools instructional focus which was “If teachers plan and implement ‘appropriately challenging’ (rigorous) tasks that require students to analyze text, use accountable talk and support arguments with evidence, then students will be actively engaged with problems and content and demonstrate high-level thinking.” In the 9<sup>th</sup> grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math class students were in four small groups and students were working collaboratively on the task that asked them to analyze three different bank saving options. One teacher was rotating to groups and answering questions while the students were annotating, writing questions and discussing their answers. However, in a different math class there was low student engagement in academic tasks with no student discussion and no purposeful grouping.
- Students were grouped for a purpose with an appropriately challenging task that led to academic engagement. In a chemistry class, the teacher was circulating while students were organized in four different areas working on Chemistry Regent’s tasks. One student was annotating the question and asked the teacher “What is STP (Standard Temperature and Pressure)?” and the teacher answered him with a question “Who are we solving for?” The group of three students were taking a practice Regents with the specific goal of practicing the questions that are particularly hard. The groups of four were using a question review worksheet the teacher had created and were annotating and discussing collaboratively how to solve. However, in several other classes, the pattern of teacher support was from the front of class with teacher centered lessons, with not all students engaged. For example, in a history class six out of sixteen students were answering the teacher with short phrases, and in another self-contained class the teacher was not asking open ended questions.
- Classroom practices are beginning to demonstrate the school wide instructional focus through greater use of rigorous grade level text. A primary resource was used in the US history class from World War 1, and in global history students were creating meaning from a historical map on the spread of Islam. In addition, in a ninth grade ICT English language arts (ELA) class, the students were using a WITsi strategy to expand the sentence “They are growing apart” by using an excerpt from *St. Lucy’s Home for Girls Raised by Wolves*. Both teachers were supporting students across the room organized to work individually, in pairs and in threes crafting their own individual answers. Students were using a rubric for the quality of the sentence.

## Additional Findings

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

School leaders and faculty are in the process of aligning the curricula to Common Core Learning Standards, curricula and academic tasks inconsistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher thinking skills across subjects.

### Impact

The school's curricular decisions are creating greater alignment across subjects and tasks according to Common Core Learning Standards and content standards

### Supporting Evidence

- The teachers and school leaders agreed that improvements in curricula were needed. The school decided to adopt curriculum and curriculum maps, and is implementing EngageNY in ELA and components of algebra. The principal partnered with the School Renewal Initiative (SRI) and uses SRI coaches to work with specific lead teachers, in the context of weekly meetings, to begin implementing EngageNY in ELA, algebra and geometry. As school leaders noted, the Common Core Learning Standards instructional shifts are incorporated unevenly in classroom practice.
- The curricula tasks are not yet consistently rigorous or aligned to Common Core standards. For example, in a 9<sup>th</sup> grade algebra class, the lesson plan target was "I will be able to determine geometric patterns and algebraic relationships" based on a Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) task however there were not clear steps in the plan for students to accomplish the task cooperatively. Also in a US history class the learning target was "I will be able to analyze documents regarding the restrictions on free speech in the United States during World War 1." However there were no clear steps towards plans for modeling the skills necessary to complete the task nor were their clear steps for the collaboration written on the plan.
- The school is in process of incorporating the instructional focus into planned units and lessons. For example, a common lesson plan format was adopted this year to incorporate certain components from the focus regarding rigor and engagement. However, the planned use of Depth of Knowledge questioning and specific accountable talk moves is not yet evident across the majority of plans.

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

Across classrooms teachers use rubrics and Regents aligned assessments that are becoming aligned to the schools curricula. The school is developing their use of common assessments to measure student progress across grades and subject areas.

### **Impact**

The uneven use of rubrics and assessments result in limited feedback to students and teachers regarding student progress toward content standards. The use of common assessments is beginning to result in the adjustment of curricula.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Adoption of MOSL rubrics are beginning to provide clarity of expectations and standards and improved feedback to students. In an Algebra worksheet reviewed, the teacher explained that the students were given a MOSL task several times over the year. Students graded their own work using the rubric and explained why they would earn the grade. The problem stated “Lucero built square designs out of three different colored pattern unit squares and included three steps asking the students to explain how they know the answer, write a function and describe and show how they figured it out”.
- Student work on bulletin boards and in student work folders demonstrate limited actionable feedback to students. For example in a living environment MOSL task, actionable feedback was given to a student “provide explanation of your controlled variables” as a next step, however during the student group meeting feedback was predominately checks without clear next steps. One student explained “This is the assessment after we review the 2014 MOSL once.” Another student said “We practice the same material multiple times.” One student interviewed stated that “The MOSL practice was helpful, I saw that when I did the MOSL.”
- The school analyzed data from the New York City (NYC) Performance Task and developed a series of interim unit based assessments using the same standards to measure student progress over time. Teachers have begun to develop academic tasks based on the MOSL structures and standards, which has increased the rigor embedded in the task itself. For example a chemistry teacher has implemented multiple MOSL tasks that were evidenced by the growth in skill and writing in four students’ work over time on a bulletin board with an October pre-assessment, and post assessments from February and May, while a history teacher stated he implemented the first one and will be assessing this week.
- Grading policy was revised to create greater consistency across classrooms and has added an expectation of Habits of Work and Learning (HOWL) criteria. The HOWLs are 20% of their grade and was evidence in several lesson plans. For example, a HOWL from a self-contained global history class was “I pay attention and give my best effort. I am kind to others.”

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

School leaders and staff are developing expectations to college and career readiness. The school is developing a system to provide feedback to families and students regarding student progress toward meeting those expectations

### Impact

The growing culture for learning is developing the feedback and advisement supports needed to help prepare students for the next level

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal consistently communicates high expectations through a biweekly newsletter called *FLAGS Personal Electronic Notification (PEN)*. Excerpts include invitations to join the MOSL committee, to expectations of lesson plans and announcements of key team meetings. The principal created a Professional Expectations Checklist that clearly delineated teacher responsibilities for school culture. For example “Assist in the hallway during transition by standing in the doorway and incorporate Habits of learning reflection in your lessons.” Observations reviewed had consistent next steps with high expectations. In one written observation the principal referred to clear next steps “Be sure the learning target and activity are solidly aligned and that you specify how you will be tailoring to the diverse needs of your students in your plan. In addition post a Habits of work and learning, also known as a “HOWL” to reinforce the attributes connected to the school wide focus on responsibility to learning and community. Refer to these when appropriate. “
- The school has implemented Skedula, a web-based management system for teachers and staff to input and track student performance and attendance. PupilPath provides access to course expectations and course grades so that students can measure their own progress. The school plans to engage parents further in using the online grade system. Students interviewed reported that in addition to reports sent home they use the PupilPath app on their phone to check their grades. Events for families included introducing them to a Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies (FLAGS) Student Graduation Planning Regents Exam Pathway.
- The school in partnership with the Center for Supportive Schools increased student’s social emotional supports resulting in a new advisory program called Peer Group Connection and peer leadership elective class where 12<sup>th</sup> graders are trained as mentors for 9<sup>th</sup> students in the transition to high school and understanding expectations and adopting positive academic behaviors. A 9<sup>th</sup> grade student reported that he was able to go to his 12<sup>th</sup> grade bilingual mentor to “discuss personal problems and felt he was supported in the hallway and other classes.”
- Students at each grade level stated that they had met with the guidance counselor and knew where they stood with graduation requirements as well as the afterschool and Saturday academic supports that are available to them. One student said, “The school keeps you on track.” Another student said, “Everybody knows you.”