



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

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2015-2016**

**Pan American International High School**

**High School Q296**

**45-10 94<sup>th</sup> Street  
Queens  
NY 11373**

**Principal: George Badia**

**Date of review: March 3, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: AJ Hepworth**

## The School Context

Pan American International High School is a high school with 391 students from grade 9 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 0% Asian, 0% Black, 100% Hispanic, and 0% White students. The student body includes 82% English Language Learners and 4% students with disabilities. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 89.7%.

## 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>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 <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Proficient</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>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>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

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

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity. Additionally, distributed leadership structures are embedded so there is effective leadership.

### Impact

School-wide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners exists resulting in shared improvement in teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students. Additionally, teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams ensure their professional learning community presents information related to student work and tasks, addresses clarifying questions, examines student work samples, offers cool and warm feedback and reflects on comments and questions presented to the team. During a humanities team meeting, teachers engaged in inquiry practices such as reviewing and discussing trends from student work assignments on proper annotation of text. Previous inquiry meeting minutes suggest teams reviewed findings and data analysis from prior English Regents exams which led to the creation of an annotation guide for students. Student work samples were shared showcasing pre-annotation guide and post-annotation guide work. Teachers concluded that many connections to main ideas were established and students were becoming more analytical. Teachers also noted students were developing their thoughts in a more thorough approach and the inclusion of the annotation worksheet made the task more engaging for students.
- Teachers shared that inquiry practices offer them the opportunity to learn how data informs them of student's strengths and weaknesses. The inquiry approach has had an impact on teacher practice by offering opportunities to make decisions on aligning curriculum coherently, as is exemplified by the balance between non-fiction and fiction text across grades. Teachers conclude that their practices have led to students being able to deeply understand the content and perform at a level of increased mastery as was demonstrated on the January, 2016 English Language Arts Regents exam; all students who took the exam passed and 78% were at a level of mastery.
- All teachers are assigned a content-based or grade-level team for inquiry and common planning, including those who have purposefully requested to join additional teams to support vertical and horizontal alignment of curriculum. Additionally, staff shared they have "lots of opportunities to step up and get our hands dirty" regarding their involvement in key decisions that influence structures that ultimately have an impact on student achievement, such as after school professional development, intervisitations, and working to develop student's portfolio. Several teachers shared they have presented professional development sessions after school to their colleagues based on seminars or conferences they have attended. Intervisitations are a part of the learning culture and teachers appreciate the immediate feedback and which they consider to be "more personal one-to-one."

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently focus on the school's instructional focus, including group discussion and the provision of scaffolds into the curricula for all learners, including English Language Learners.

### Impact

Students are engaged in challenging tasks and demonstrate higher order thinking skills in their work products and participation in discussions; however, the lack of extensions and high-quality supports limit increased student ownership.

### Supporting Evidence

- Students engage in group discussions in most classes and maintain dialogue reinforcing the school's instructional focus of a student-centered approach to learning. Students maintain the group dialogue although sometimes they redirect their attention to the teacher for confirmation. For example, a science discussion about toxic waste prompted by the teacher provided a framework for students to express their understanding of waste management, sources of waste, and strategies to deal with waste. In an English Language Arts class, students engaged in a Socratic discussion which was facilitated by a student who provided specific questions to promote dialogue. The student facilitator clarified his expectations to the groups as they shared out their interpretation of the story. During a math lesson, students discussed in small groups how a solution is determined using expanded sentence structures. Most group-led discussions provided opportunities for students to critically think and participate; however, additional supports for students with limited English proficiency were not provided, thus limiting their participation in the discussion.
- Multiple entry points were observed in most classes. Students worked with their partners using visual images, written articles, cartoon pictures, markers, and manipulatives to further engage them in their learning. In a math class, students were learning exponential graphing as they collected live data to graph by dropping various size balls from different heights. During an English Language Arts class, students discussed character conflict and interpreted the meaning of large printed images from a book. Dictionaries were provided to students to use when annotating text in another English Language Arts class. However, the grouping of students did not fully engage all students in appropriately challenging tasks, and therefore, they did not demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in their work products during the collection of information.
- The instructional focus includes application of real world text, discussion and questions. Throughout classes, students were asked to provide further evidence of "What they are noticing?" Students would provide an answer and give an expanded response to "why." They would share their thoughts with a partner through turn and talk, small group discussion, or a conversation with the teacher. Across the classrooms, although many students were actively engaged in discussions they relied on their teachers for direction throughout the lesson.

## Additional Findings

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

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts through emphasis on rigorous habits and higher-order skills and tasks that are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects.

### Impact

Coherent curricula across grades and subjects promote college and career readiness and all students, including English Language Learners, must demonstrate their thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- Unit plans are fully aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and lesson plans incorporate instructional shifts in all subjects. All lesson planning documents include a learning objective written in terms of what the students will know and be able to do. For example, students in a science class will “compare the four types of water contamination and determine the appropriate solutions for water purification.” In an English as a New Language course, students will “cite relevant textual evidence that supports my claim or counterclaim for my argumentative essay.” In an English Language Arts class, students will “explain a type of conflict by comparing textual evidence from the first three chapters of *Persepolis*.”
- Teachers plan their instruction with the knowledge that their students’ understanding of English varies from native speakers who can speak in Spanish during instruction, to those that are fluent in English and will lead class discussions. Additionally, translated versions of activity sheets are provided for students who need them. Most teachers take the initiative to translate the activity sheets themselves, including directions, questions, learning targets, and station tasks. Activity sheets are photocopied on different color papers so students know which form to use and teachers can group visually.
- Teachers consistently adhere to the development of a Common Core-aligned lesson plan template throughout the school. Each lesson plan has a structure consistent with the instructional focus and pedagogical model which is organized around five principles: heterogeneity and collaboration, experiential learning, language and content integration, localized autonomy, and one learning model for all.

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

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. Additionally, teacher's assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

### **Impact**

Actionable feedback is provided to students and teachers regarding student achievement so that teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school administers common assessments and mock Regent exams to assess student skills prior to the actual State exams. These assessments are used as key benchmarks in measuring student progress through teacher analysis on questions that most students did not answer correctly. An error report generated for a mock Regents using the January 2015 exam questions in Integrated Algebra highlighted two questions that all students answered incorrectly. This information is used to plan future instruction. For example, a lesson plan to address the gaps in instruction included simplifying expressions and a written explanation of how the expression was solved. Once complete, a four-point rubric is used to assess the student work and provide written feedback.
- Performance Based Assessment Tasks (PBAT) are used as criteria for graduation. PBAT rubrics are used for in-class formative feedback prior to student portfolio presentations. Individual student-printed rubrics highlight current level of performance and provide actionable steps to push students to the next level. Rubric feedback includes specific glows and grows of how the student can improve their portfolio. An example from one student's rubric feedback form suggests she needs "additional arguments to prove why giving aid is a viable option to stop illegal immigration." The rubric also includes recommendations for writing personal thesis statements and a tentative score based on 100 percent. All related information, including glows and grows, is stored in a digital tracker file used to monitor student progress towards mastery for graduation.
- Ongoing checks for understanding are embedded throughout lesson plans and lesson plan documents. Teachers use formative assessments to evaluate student understanding during lessons and after lessons with exit tickets. Professional development has centered on checks for understanding as determined by prior quality review feedback, teacher input, and learning walks. The teachers believe in supporting student achievement through nurturing a culture of revision with chance to improve. One teacher stated, "Now work is not something you just do, it is cultivated." This was evident throughout most classes as teachers referred to their checklists and redirected students through purposeful questioning to ensure their understanding.

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

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training. Additionally, teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students and provide clear and focused effective feedback and supports.

### Impact

A culture of mutual accountability for high expectations exists such that all staff, and students, including high needs subgroups, own their educational experience and are prepared for their next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff recognized a need to increase math rigor and experiences for all students. As such, a math coach was hired from Generation Ready and the International Network. A literacy coach works with the areas of high need and collaborates with teachers. Her “primary function is to work on curriculum with low-inference notes to inform teachers of their lesson planning and instruction,” so a set of high expectations are uniformly established across all grades. Through increased rigorous expectations for all, the percentage of students graduating with college credit in the current graduating cohort is 67%.
- Students track their learning and progress with a replicated passport which is stamped “to permit the student named herein to graduate without delay or hindrance and enjoy a future full of happiness and success.” Information collected (travels) within the passport include: first meeting with college advisor, college application review, college application submitted and paid, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) taken, proof of income submitted, attendance at college fair night, attendance at financial aid night, maintenance of 95% attendance, Regents requirements fulfilled in math and English Language Arts, mentoring hours requirement fulfilled, and graduation portfolio satisfaction. Students maintain their passports to track their own progress, throughout their schooling and community service. In addition, students who maintain high honor roll are invited to attend special trips such as a Broadway show; most recently the group saw *Aladdin*.
- High expectations are communicated to teachers through email, professional development, and one-on-one meetings. A review of some email communications from school leadership focuses on salient points such as the need for a strong sense of classroom culture, differentiated tasks being embedded in lessons to address the different levels of English speaking skills, and modeling to increase the level of rigor in assignments. Development of teacher skills is offered by school leaders dedicating time to address the needs of improving teacher pedagogy.
- A professional development calendar is shared with staff that includes project planning and assessment. A series of two-hour long workshops are designed to develop rigorous, project-based units of study. The workshop activities provide materials for follow-up and immediate implementation within the classroom. Participants have choice regarding what instructional moves they should make using the training and what approaches to take as a result of the formative assessment findings.