The School Context

Crotona International High School is a high school with 252 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 10% Black, 85% Hispanic, 3% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 93% English language learners and 6% special education students. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 85.0%.

School Quality Criteria

### Instructional Core

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Focus</td>
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<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Celebration</td>
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**Area of Celebration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</table>

**Findings**
Distributed leadership structures are in place through teacher collaborations in structured inquiry team meetings that promote achievement of school goals and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards.

**Impact**
Teacher team work promotes shared leadership practices that strengthen teachers’ instructional capacity to improve student learning.

**Supporting Evidence**
- All teachers are scheduled to participate in structured professional collaborations as outlined in teachers’ schedules. Vertical and horizontal teams meet weekly using the Graduation Worthy Portfolio Checklist and Tuning Protocol to review curricula, student data and work products in order to strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers and align teacher practice to the school’s goals and instructional shifts. Team meetings are memorialized through team minutes and agendas, which are shared with the principal and school community. A review of Social Studies team meeting minutes reflect norming and analyzing student work to refine curriculum to include projects that help scaffold the writing process through questions that create more relevance and purpose for students. A Math team meets for collaborative lesson planning to address mathematical standard practices around creating/writing arguments through revisiting different strategies to address students’ language development in mathematics.

- Teacher teams meet regularly to contribute to the achievement of the school-wide focus to increase rigor and student-centered lessons. During a teacher team meeting, teachers described their process as a series of cycles to improve tasks and rigor by looking at student work using the Tuning Protocol to inform the design of the next task for a lesson. An example was the refining of a lab report to include an explanation of statistical methods students should chose. Additionally, a review of team minutes for English language arts and math reflect meetings that focus on rigor and student-centered tasks. As a result, the school has seen an increase in credit accumulation.

- Distributive leadership structures are in place through team facilitators. Team facilitators set agendas and coordinate team meetings. Facilitators meet regularly with the principal during regularly scheduled meetings to discuss instructional observations, suggest professional development and next steps for teachers. Review of the various team meeting notes indicate that collaborative group norms have been established: each meeting has a focus/next steps. Minutes from an English language arts team meeting reflects a focus on using the Tuning Protocol to discuss task alignment with the school-wide Graduation Worthy Portfolio Project checklist. Next steps include suggestions to use several passages from a text version of the film in addition to formatting as a persuasive letter. Teachers serve as facilitators during meetings and provide feedback to their colleagues around curriculum and lesson planning. Teams show consistent focus on different aspects of pedagogy and content-area teams’ meeting notes reflect foci around language development, rigor in tasks and student-centered tasks.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Developing |

Findings
There is an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best by doing. Teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points or scaffolds into the curricula and there are uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact
Across classrooms, there is an uneven level of engagement in challenging tasks, and demonstration of higher order thinking in student work products and discussion is inconsistent.

Supporting Evidence
- During a Living Environment lesson, students work in groups to review peer lab reports and provide feedback. Each group member is assigned a different part of the report to provide feedback as they pass around a laptop using a checklist to guide comments. Although students were grouped heterogeneously they do not engage in discussion. Students who finish early are to begin revising lab reports. In an algebra class, students were grouped to complete parts A, B & C on a worksheet. Most students were working independently and did not engage in discussion. With two minutes left to the class, 12 of 22 completed the task; however, the teacher started reviewing the problems without most students’ attention. There was a lack of scaffolds to ensure engagement and access for all learners.

- In classrooms visited, students’ participation in rigorous discussion was inconsistent, and student work products did not always demonstrate mastery of learning objectives. Dialogue was often teacher-student-teacher with mostly full-class discussions being call and respond, with a limited number of students responding to teacher-directed questions. In a second algebra class, students respond to questions such as, “After one month, in 30 days, is it possible for you to get one million dollars? Is it a growth factor? The same 5 of 19 students responded to the teacher’s questions. Students do not respond to each other or generate questions. In a Global History class, students were given clearly defined roles for group work using a document protocol to read, annotate and answer questions connected to an assigned document. Students worked together to annotate and answer questions that supported their argument about industrialization being positive or negative for the country they had researched. During the dialogue some students engaged in discussion to justify their annotated selections while others were passive. All groups must come to consensus for the final group answer.

- Across classrooms visited, students were provided with opportunities to work in groups or independently; however, tasks did not consistently challenge all learners. In a 9-10 English language arts class, all students were provided with the same graphic organizer to work independently on their thesis paragraph that required answering one of three questions in their own words and completing four lines provided for the “I think” portion of the task. In a physical science class, students work in groups to prepare for classroom presentations. As each presenter reads verbatim from the paper, students do not take notes and do not ask questions. All questions were presented by the teacher. At the conclusion of each presentation, students were instructed to work in groups to collaborate on presentation ratings, but after each presentation students do not engage in discussion with their peers or ask questions; additionally students who were more advanced were not provided with higher level opportunities to challenge their thinking.
Additional Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
Curricula across all subjects are aligned to Common Core Learning standards (CCLS) and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact
The school’s curricula decisions provide coherence across disciplines and grade levels, which results in access for all learners to engage in rigorous tasks that push thinking and promote college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence
- Teachers design units of study across grades and disciplines using core competencies, scope and sequence and benchmarked skills identified for seniors to graduate. Curricula are refined using the Consortium Standards Rubric (CSR) utilized by the International’s Network for Public Schools. A review of Curriculum maps reflects alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards as well as the “Consortium Standards Rubric” (CSR) which measures proficiency across grades and disciplines. An example is a CSR used to measure core competencies for mathematical skills across all grade levels. Units of study across grades 9 through 12 aligned to this rubric include problem solving, reasoning and proof, communication, connections and representations. Problem solving for grades 9 through 10 includes making attempts to construct mathematical representations to record and communicate problem solving and by the grade 11 will construct appropriate mathematical representations to solve problems or portray solutions.

- The school’s checklist of graduation worthy skills is used as a tool to help define rigor and ensure that tasks are rigorous and Common Core aligned. Skills are targeted and scaffolded from grades 9 through 12. A review of benchmark rubrics revealed that questions were not pushing advanced students which prompted a shift in the curriculum to include more higher order questions for advanced students. Additionally, language development was highlighted, prompting a focus in curriculum around developing original thesis statements and building in a series of feedback loops throughout the writing process. Starting in grade 9 students in English classes begin the process of conducting research and learning paragraph construction and writing for complete essays in their native language. By grade 12 students engage in full research and complete a final research paper.

- Curricula and academic tasks are refined from the beginning of the school year using the school’s looking at student work protocol to inform adjustments. In June, Atlas software is used to conduct gap analysis to inform decisions around curriculum refinement. Student work is analyzed on benchmark tasks leading up to the graduating performance portfolio. A review of student work and curriculum lead to refinement in math curriculum to include more problems that require analysis and organization that allow students to contextualize and articulate math in meaningful ways.
Findings
Formative and summative assessments are aligned to curricula and utilized to analyze information on student progress toward goals across grades and subjects.

Impact
Assessment practices provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student progress and are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence
- All students participate in annual language and literacy assessments using Ed Performance online followed by 1-on-1 Quality Reading Inventory (QRI) assessments in English and in native language. Data from these assessments is used to place subgroups of English language learners into appropriate Language and Literacy courses for foundations of English, decoding, fluency, guided and independent reading.

- Teachers create mid-year rubrics and use them to make recommendations for movement from Language and Literacy courses. All discipline teachers review and norm yearly with the common in-house rubrics utilized across all grades and content areas. Common rubrics are used to provide actionable feedback to offer a clear picture of student mastery. A review of student work reflects feedback on a student’s essay that tells the student to organize their evidence with an example for how to do so. A science report reflects feedback that points out wording in a sentence that can be confusing to the reader. An example of how to make the change is provided.

- All teachers meet at the beginning of the semester to analyze outcome data from the previous school year in order to create subgroups for targeted instruction and support. This process is repeated in April and then in June. A review of student data prompted adjustments of the curricula to include additional rich tasks that target conceptual development, computational skills in math and argumentation and evidence to support claims.
Findings
There is an established culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff and students and provides support to achieve those expectations.

Impact
A system of accountability among staff supports the high expectations for students which prepare them for the next level.

Supporting Evidence
- Teachers use benchmark rubrics for students in grades 9 through 11 to scaffold learning toward graduation expectations. These rubrics communicate a shared expectation for student progress that is used to demonstrate mastery toward graduation/college ready levels across content areas. Additionally, teachers use the school’s checklist to create a shared understanding of defining rigorous tasks/activities that ask students to think critically and demonstrate mastery of a variety of outcomes across disciplines. In chemistry, students would be rated on mastery in formulating a hypothesis and in English mastery would be checked in speaking and conventions.

- Clearly defined expectations are shared with students and parents at the beginning of the school year during orientation sessions and revisited during periodic town halls and parent meetings. Regular recognition/celebrations of attendance and incentives for excellent attendance, consistent modeling of behavior aligned with the school’s core values, and exceptional academic performance communicate the school’s expectations for college and careers. Counselors and the college advisor meet with parents and students to review transcripts, discuss the college application process, internships and facilitate FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) workshops to support families through the post-secondary process.

- Teachers self-assess using the Danielson rubric and identify four goals for the school year. Two of the goals must support the school-wide instructional focus for engaging students in rigorous activities/tasks/projects and implementing student-centered instructional strategies to engage all students in rigorous activities/tasks. A review of the school’s professional development plan reveals sessions to engage teachers in workshops that target the school’s focus. Additionally, all staff participate in College Access Research and Action (CARA) professional learning to reinforce the school’s expectation around college and career access for all students.