



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Queens Preparatory Academy

High School 248

**143-10 Springfield Boulevard
Queens
NY 11413**

Principal: Tashon Haywood

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Reviewer: Cheryl Baker

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Queens Preparatory Academy is a growing Empowerment School currently serving 197 students in grades nine and ten. Students with special needs are approximately 11.5% of the population. Nearly 73% are Black, just fewer than 10% are Hispanic, about 4.5% are Asian and 1.5% is White. Data regarding the backgrounds of 11% of the population was not reported. The school does not receive Title I funding. Attendance has averaged just below 90%, above the average for the City.

The school opened in September 2005 in its current location which is the site of a former large high school that is now shared by five small learning communities. It receives substantial guidance from its partner, the Institute for Student Achievement, and is funded, in part, by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. As an Empowerment school, it has greater discretion with respect to decisions about expenditures, professional development and assessment practices and benefits from reduced paperwork and reporting requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a clear vision for the school and possesses the knowledge of practices that will assist teachers and students in achieving its mission.
- Students are well known and supported in their academic and social development through a clearly structured advisory program that enlists the efforts of the administrative and teaching staff in taking responsibility for students' lives.
- Students respect the principal for her clear expectations and fairness regarding their behavior.
- Teachers are supported in their growth through regularly scheduled grade and faculty conferences that are well used to support their professional development.
- Parents feel welcomed in the school and trust the administration to continue the development of the school, its teachers and its students.
- Teachers are provided with opportunities to collaborate in planning curriculum, identifying mechanisms for supporting students and sharing instructional techniques.
- The design of the weekly schedule supports embedded extended day, advisory and enrichment activities for students as well as generous professional development time for teachers.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to assist teachers in developing skills in classroom management and the differentiation of instruction to ensure that the learning needs of all students can be met.
- Explore periodic assessment products and practices that will provide teachers with regular diagnostic information about students' specific learning needs so that instruction can be tailored effectively.
- Continue to provide guidance and time for the development of the curriculum that includes specific alignment with State standards and includes common and routine assessments of student progress.
- Support the orderly growth of the school by instituting strategic planning practices for all aspects of the school that identify goals, actions, timelines, responsible parties, and incremental measures of progress.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The school and its founding principal have made good progress in growing the school and developing its identity within the context of a facility that is shared by five small learning communities. Early challenges with respect to student behavior that was exacerbated by this configuration have, largely, been addressed. The school has embraced an organizational philosophy that includes high expectations and inquiry based learning that is espoused by its lead partner and it has benefited from guidance in that respect. The school knows itself well and understands what it needs to do to improve with respect to curriculum, instruction, data analysis and planning.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Because the school has not yet completed its second year, comparative trend data has not emerged, inhibiting the school's ability to make comparisons over time. However, the school makes good use of the data available through the Department of Education to understand the progress of students and teachers especially as revealed through the scholarship report and marks analysis. The principal tracks the performance of each student and meets with teachers to review information from the scholarship reports as they become available. Thus, progress of each grade level, classroom and academic subject area is well understood and monitored regularly. The school has administered the periodic assessment provided through the Institute for Student Achievement. While it has not provided significant diagnostic information of students' understanding, some general areas of strength and weakness relative to academic strands has begun to emerge and the Institute does provide a comparison of Queen's Preparatory success relative to that of other Institute schools.

In its first administration, 95% of the students who took the Math A Regents passed while fewer met with success on the second administration. This led to an item analysis of the results to inform realignment of the curriculum. Teachers monitor student progress through routine tests, quizzes and project evaluation. The faculty utilizes the 'tuning protocol' for looking at student work as a part of their grade level meeting practice. This helps teachers of the same students to gain a deeper understanding of each learner's strengths and needs.

The school has not begun to disaggregate data by ethnicity. When the population of special education students increased in its second year, the school hired appropriate staff and designed a program based on students identified needs that supports their inclusion in the general education population as well as providing targeted assistance through small group pull-out sessions. The school's Empowerment School Intensive focused on this

population as well as a sample of students entering at level 1 or low level 2. Through this study, average freshmen boys emerged as a category of interest as they did not progress with interventions as well as their counterparts. The school is exploring alternative instructional program options for these students.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

During its first year the school’s partner, The Institute for Student Achievement, conducted an initial review of all aspects of the school’s operations and created a two-year action plan for the development of the school bases upon the principles espoused by the Institute. This framework, representing a long-term vision of the school with high expectations for academic achievement, has informed the planning and actions of all members of the school community. For example, the principal’s performance review and the coach’s action plans both reflect the framework and further break down targets by outcome, activity and indicators of success. The principal’s goals and high expectations for student achievement are expressed in clear percentage gains, communicated to staff and parents, and inform the work of school in curriculum and instruction, professional development and student support.

The work of the grade level teams supports the ongoing analysis of student progress and planning for their increased success in the academic areas. Teachers share in the regular and on-going monitoring of each student and the school has established the practice of recording ‘decision minutes’ that describe the student or topic discussed, the action to be taken, the responsible party and the indicator of success. Collectively these ‘minutes’ , required of every meeting, create a tracking system for actions undertaken on behalf of students, subjects, grade levels or issues identified as a focus area.

The school has designed a number of mechanisms to support students in greatest need of improvement. In addition to the specialized interventions encompassed by the mandated special education services delivered to identified students, the school ensures that all students receive extended day tutoring and have access to Saturday school. For students in danger of failure, the school’s ‘55+Work=Passing’ program provides an option for students to demonstrate their understanding and achieve promotion. The advisory program, designed to support distributed counseling and discipline, provides students with daily support for their emotional, behavioral and academic growth. Advisors and teachers interact regularly to monitor students’ progress and devise interventions. These decisions are formalized through progress reports and referral forms.

Parents feel well informed as to the school’s goals as well as the progress of their students. They receive progress reports, letters and other forms of communication from the school and feel welcomed at the school by the principal and her staff. They, like the students, express pride in the school’s ambition for success in college and beyond. The effect of these expectations and the high levels of support provided to students on their achievement will become evident as more longitudinal data emerges.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

Teachers at the school develop curriculum based on State standards. They identify the essential question to be explored and how its understanding will be measured. The current focus is on the creation of units that are interdisciplinary in nature and incorporate ‘real world’ project-based learning activities. The inclusion of studio art as an integral part of the instructional program broadens students’ skills and cultural appreciation. Instruction varies with respect to engagement as teachers are at various levels of development. Some lessons captivate students’ attention while others do not. Instruction is most often differentiated by activity or by program. Teachers are held accountable for their instruction and student outcomes by the principal through formal and informal classroom observations as well as rigorous interrogation of scholarship data and Regents scores.

Decisions regarding expenditure, staffing and the schedule are informed by the analysis of data and the needs of students. For example, the need for additional student support services indicated by an increase in special education enrollments and incidents reports led to the hiring of an assistant principal, a social worker and a special education teacher, all of whom contribute significantly to the extensive network of supports for students. Discretionary funding supports teachers in curriculum and professional development. Significantly, the school’s commitment to provide all students with extended time-on-task, access to enrichment activities and daily advisory support led to the reconfiguration of the daily and weekly schedule so as to encompass these activities as well as ensuring common planning and professional development time for teachers.

Students feel very well cared for by the school. Their advisory sessions provide an added measure of support not found in most schools. They speak very highly of the principal and assistant principal and all can name an adult in whom they could confide. They like coming to school and understand the consequences of high levels of absenteeism and lateness. The school addresses absence immediately and tracks patterns weekly. The attendance team meets monthly to address issues regarding long term absence.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The principal, who founded the school and has hired all of the staff members, is recognized as a knowledgeable educator who champions the mission of the school. She elicits input from grade level teams and fellow administrators in the hiring process. Candidates must display a belief in the inherent capacity of all students to learn at the highest levels as well as a commitment to carry out the advisory role expected of each staff member. Their understanding of the relationship between assessment and planning is also explored. Teachers, many of whom are new to the profession, receive support through mentoring from the Institute, the network and from a staff member who performs mentoring, staff development and student support roles. Teachers also receive regular formal and informal feedback from the principal who monitors instruction on, at least, a weekly basis. Preparation for intervisitations has begun with instruction in how to observe

peer's instruction and the creation of observation forms. Some teachers have observed teaching in other schools.

Teachers benefit from regularly scheduled common planning time, time for grade level conferences and weekly faculty conferences which provide avenues for collaborative planning as well as opportunities for professional development and the analysis of student work. The school's relationship with the Institute ensures access to professional development opportunities during the summer, on professional development days and through personalized coaching. These programs and activities foster the development of the curriculum, the increase of skills in data analysis and instructional techniques, and the on-going implementation of the principles embraced by the Institute. These include initiatives related to literacy, inquiry-based learning and distributed counseling.,

The school is well run and has established clear expectations and practices that are well understood by staff, students and parents. The school supplements its rich array of support for student's academic and social growth through relationships with agencies such as Community Mediation Services, the Student Press Initiative and an after school arts program, 'The Me Nobody Knows'.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

To date, the framework for improvement and its attending rubric for measuring progress have served to steer the school as it has developed over the last eighteen months. This framework, developed and supported by the Institute and its support personnel has informed the principal's long range planning and goal setting and the actions of all members of the school community. The parent association and the school leadership team have been well informed of progress and, as the school moves into its third year, will be engaged in the process of developing a Comprehensive Education Plan or some other form of strategic document. While the plans to date have been informative as to specific targets and actions, they have lacked short term measures of incremental success.

Comparison of student progress within and across classrooms is a regular feature of the principal's monitoring practices and has influenced her suggestions with respect to instruction. Likewise, teachers meet in grade level teams to review, compare and monitor student progress, sometimes making decisions to change interventions. For example, after a review of student progress reports, grade level teachers reassigned students for extended day services so that they could receive needed support in their area of weakness from content experts. These shifts, while not part of established individual plans, are recorded in the 'decision minutes' that are monitored by the team leader. The school has engaged in the activities required of the Empowerment School Intensive which focused on special education and level 1 students at grade nine. The investigation included a review of data such as transcripts, State test scores, attendance and incident reports and performance in the classroom. The periodic assessment tool available to the school has not provided the depth of individual diagnostic information anticipated. However, progress monitoring of the subject group through the available data has begun to develop an understanding of the relative success of the interventions and has posed challenges to the school in creating avenues for success for unsuccessful learners.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Queens Preparatory Academy (HS 248)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each student, classroom, grade level, 		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 	X		
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all other categories of interest to the school* 		X	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X	

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.		X	
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	Ø	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.	X		
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	Ø	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.		X	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.		X	
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.		X	
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	Ø	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.	X		
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	