



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Flushing High School

High School 460

**35 - 01 Union Street
Queens
NY 11354**

Principal: Cornelia Gutwein

Dates of review: December 1 - 5, 2006

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Flushing High School is a medium sized comprehensive school of approximately 2700 students serving grades nine through to twelve. It serves a multicultural community and comprises of Hispanic 48%, Asian 24%, Black 22%, and White 6%, at an estimate. 23.7 percent of students are English language learners and 8.9 percent are special education students.

The school serves a constantly changing population, indeed 21.9% of students arrived in the United States within the last 3 years. Approximately 61% of students are Title 1 eligible which is higher than in other City schools. Flushing High is the oldest public high school in the City of New York, with a history dating back to 1850.

Flushing High hosts a range of optional programs including a very innovative Law program which makes use of their excellent courtroom facility, housed in the old tower. After school clubs such as 'Champions Club' provide opportunities both academic and otherwise to students requiring its support. Flushing also houses the regional suspension center.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Data is analyzed thoroughly and tracked effectively to enable individual students to achieve to their potential, both socially and academically.
- Achievement, overall, in mathematics and English is above average.
- The school promotes effective behavior and discipline.
- The school aims for high attendance which is currently at 84.6% for 2006.
- Provides a wide range of enrichment and optional programs, e.g. law.
- Has effective links with outside agencies, for example the Business Entrepreneurship Program and the Champions Club.
- Budget management enables the innovative use of resources, e.g. technology.
- A high quality learning environment is maintained.
- Parents appreciate the open access, communication and their involvement in student learning.
- Students feel that they are cared for, e.g. through ECHO.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop a consistent focus on the needs of groups of students particularly English language learners, and their families through professional development and instruction.
- Develop the website to offer information to parents in relevant languages.
- Develop the use of computers for adult/parent training and learning.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with many well-developed features and some significant strengths.

Since her appointment, the principal has been very successful in sharing and maintaining a vision. Flushing High is a place where students feel safe and cared for amongst a challenging community, where staff feel valued and are happy to give of their best and where parents feel included and warmly invited. Students are given many opportunities to achieve to their potential, both academically and socially. Some of those opportunities are enabled through extended school, after school clubs, enrichment activities and optional programs such as the law program, all of which impact on student progress. The diverse abilities, languages and cultures that the students bring to Flushing High are assessed and monitored through tracking systems which the school is beginning to translate into some innovative instruction, particularly in mathematics and science.

Staff aim to aid that progress by supporting this vision. Departments run smoothly and communication and planning within such is effective. Staff are beginning to build up a detailed picture of individual needs and strive, through creativity, to draw upon a range of intervention programs and teaching strategies to meet those needs. Such programs and strategies for teaching are in the process of being developed and consistently used throughout the school, with a focus on English second language learners. However, this needs to be fully addressed in order to meet the needs of all learners.

The principal is constantly reflecting upon what could be improved to raise the chances of her students and uses the budget effectively to purchase appropriate resources. Attendance within the school is good at approximately 84% which bears testament to the initiatives that have been put into place to raise it.

The areas for improvement identified in this report are issues which the school are already aware of and have been identified within the school self evaluation and the principal has already begun to consider ways of tackling them.

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.

The school uses a wide range of assessment and data at student, classroom and grade level. This data is used very effectively as evidenced through the case studies to provide a focus for students in terms of a clear objective. In the example of the case study, a student arrived at Flushing High requiring self-contained instruction due to emotional difficulties. After careful intervention, focused around social and counselling support, the student was able to access mainstream schooling. This was achieved through the checking of progress at all levels.

Data is also collected for English language learners. Flushing High is beginning to focus on the needs of these students, particularly Hispanic who failed to meet their adequate yearly progress target in 2006. As a result, strategies are being developed, to be shared with teachers that will target classroom instruction to impact on that area of achievement. This is in its early stages and is a developing area which will also be able to be applied to special education students.

The assistant principals for each department play an active role in the analysis of data and support staff in its application towards targeting students.

Where results, identified through assessment and data, have dipped, the school has been very quick to look for the reason why, as in the case of the English language learners. Furthermore, where an incoming student population has been identified that may require a different resource, e.g. a projected Chinese intake; steps are in place to resource the appropriate staff to address that need.

Within the classroom the teacher is also able to carry out ongoing qualitative assessment through questioning the student in order to ascertain whether a skill has been achieved. Teachers may use a portfolio in order to ascertain this over time.

The school is able to measure and compare its performance with similar schools.

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

This school is lucky enough to have a data analyst who is able to access data that may be requested. This frees up both principal and teacher time so that their focus can be concentrated on how that data translates into classroom instruction. At that point individual faculties are able to work together to develop goals and plans. Department meetings occur once a month where this is an agenda item. Departments, such as mathematics, are able to focus the data on individual students and those who need the most improvement. So, for example, students who find concepts in mathematics difficult to grasp are able to access an initiative called Geo Meter which enables them to use a preferred learning style, via a computer program, to reach a concept. In some areas that require improvement, for example individual students in maths, the department is well on its way to planning a focus for development, as the above example highlights. However, where students need support with language across the curriculum, particularly English second language students, such a focus is in its early stages.

Students are very clear about what their goals are and what they need to do to achieve them. In the mathematics program, mentioned in the above paragraph, work is also taken home and parents are also aware of the expectations. Parents are also very clear about the high expectations placed upon students. However, parents expressed that more information could be received through the school website.

The school places great pride in its high achievers. In a City wide mathematics contest Flushing High featured at the top of the table.

Plans are revised where appropriate and particularly if it is generally felt that a student, class or grade is not making progress towards a goal. Special education students who require a more appropriate curriculum are well catered for. Through the academic intervention service, intervention programmes and careful classroom differentiation attention is paid as to how progress can be aided. This area is very well resourced.

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 well developed.

The school has given a great deal of thought to expanding opportunities within the curriculum so that it is accessible to all students and that it is interesting and relevant to such a diverse population. In most cases all needs are catered for but there needs to be a consistent approach in alignment for English second language learners. There are good examples of this in the school, for example, the bilingual science lesson that was delivered to a mixed age class of Hispanic speakers. The teacher was able to deliver instruction on science content, with the aid of a Smart board. This increased student engagement and understanding in this session. Teachers make a good effort to improve their instruction to increase student outcomes and will appreciate the planned Professional Development to enhance this area.

The school provides varied optional programs for students that include the Thurgood Marshall Law Program, the Environmental Maritime Mathematics and Science Program and The Business Entrepreneurship Program. All programs provide enrichment to students and enhance their engagement. In addition, students are given the opportunity to advance their language skills through specialized classes such as RAMP-UP where the aim is to develop language skills. The English as a second language program is in the process of being developed further to raise the achievement of Hispanic speakers.

Teachers feel confident to select a curriculum that is appropriate for the students, and that is suitably differentiated. Instruction is planned based on individual needs.

The principal uses the budget effectively to target resources into areas of need. In particular, a recent focus has been on the provision of technology equipment. This is evident throughout the school with the provision, and good use of, Smart boards. Staffing provision and scheduling decisions are also based around student need. The principal foresees an increase of Chinese speaking students, as part of the school focus on English second language needs, for example. This has prompted the consideration of the recruitment of a bilingual Chinese teacher.

Attendance is high, mainly through a series of targeted interventions such as Attendance Counts. Behavior management is also good, students know the boundaries and respect them. This is reflected in behavior during lessons. Students know that, if required, they are able to approach a particular member of staff for advice/help.

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 well developed.

The principal has a well-established and supportive staff who are well supported in return. The principal is able to recruit staff who will fit a particular need, for example the Chinese bilingual teacher for the incoming population. They all strive for excellence and it is clear that they share the same vision and understand precisely what they are aiming to achieve. Staff are flexible in this goal and are able to adapt and amend teaching strategies, styles and plans in order to raise standards. They are confident enough to try different styles that are new and sometimes challenging.

Professional development is highly effective. Staff are able to access professional development at whatever level they feel is appropriate to themselves and that will be of benefit to the students. For example, one member of the English as a second language team felt that she preferred to learn through teaming up with colleagues and working together. Members of the science department felt that they needed to be kept up to date and preferred to attend courses and spend professional development time researching via the internet.

The principal and assistant principals are able to observe and monitor teaching on a regular basis. Cross department monitoring also takes place. Procedures within the school are clear to both staff and students and are well respected, as is the principal herself.

The school makes effective use of outside agencies in order to achieve academic goals. For example, the after school club 'Champions' is very effective in that it is able to provide a range of intervention, academic and otherwise, to those students who need it. A very effective and focused teacher runs this club.

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

A strength in the school is the use of and analysis of data. The principal and the majority of staff were able to use such data to help set goals and interim measures to target specific students. The principal is able to encourage self-evaluation throughout the school and this was evident throughout the review in classroom instruction.

Staff are able to make comparisons of student progress, particularly across classrooms within the school and address instruction to help affect future progress.

The school has identified through this process that they now need to look at the alignment of data into curriculum for English second language students and ensure that staff are confident to deliver the necessary strategies through their instruction. It has demonstrated that one of its strengths is in the flexibility of curriculum which was evident in the maths session for example, which suggests that an approach to English second language will be equally as successful.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Flushing High School (HS 460)	∅	✓	+
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	