



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Queens School For Career Development

P752Q

**142 – 10 Linden Boulevard
Queens
NY 11436**

Principal: Lester Katz

Dates of review: June 4 – 5, 2007

Reviewer: David King

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

The Queens School for Career Development School (QSCD) is a multi-site school located on a range of sites in Queens. It has 460 students aged 13 – 21 years old. The school services students in ratios of 6:1:1, 8:1:1 and 12:1:1 who participate in either standardized or alternate assessment. There are 120 students following a standardized assessment program and 240 following the alternative program. QSCD consists of one self-contained building and three other school-based sites, as well as 24 work-study sites which contain a further 100 students. All of the off-site schools are for students who are fully included in the host school program.

A large staff team is led by a principal and three assistant principals. One of the off-site provisions is managed by an assistant principal and the work-study program is managed by a Job Developer. There are a wide range of support services including speech therapists, social workers and guidance counselors. The teachers are a balanced mix of young and experienced staff.

The ethnic breakdown of students is 78% Black, 13% Hispanic, 5% White and 4% Asian and others. The gender breakdown is 90% male and 10% female.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has led the school through a period of considerable improvement.
- The school is using data effectively to gain a clear understanding of the performance of all its students, classes and grades.
- A collaborative team approach is used well to set challenging goals for all grades and to review progress towards meeting whole school goals.
- The administration has established high expectations for all members of the school community, to which both staff and students respond positively.
- The school offers a wide ranging and enriching curriculum which meets the needs of each of its students as well as broadening their experiences.
- The school has a very effective behavior management system, the “Be SMART” program, which has been a significant aid in raising academic performance.
- The instructional program engages the students who enjoy learning and are motivated by the range of experiences they receive.
- Relationships in the school are positive: the staff demonstrates a genuine care for the students and they are responsive to students’ academic and personal needs.
- Rigorous observation processes help to support and drive a tightly focused professional development program.
- Budgeting, scheduling and staffing decisions are firmly based on the needs of the students.

What the school needs to improve

- Gather all the data available in the school into one coherent and easily accessible system.
- Develop systems for tracking the performance of all individual students, sub-groups, classes and grades longitudinally.
- Continue to explore ways of improving student attendance in the school and increasing parental involvement in the work of the school.
- Explore ways to enhance the use of technology throughout the school.
- Continue to develop effective links with parents.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

Queens School for Career Development is a District 75 school in which challenging targets are set for the students and the considerable success which the school has in achieving those targets is warmly celebrated. The school is providing the students with a wide ranging educational experience and using data effectively to track their performance.

The principal has enabled the school to make significant progress, particularly during the last two years, which has created an environment where students feel safe, where they are engaged by the instruction and where the staff plays a full role in moving the school forward. The principal has high expectations of the whole school community and he is deeply committed to his students improving their future opportunities. He knows the strengths of his staff and is ably supported by a knowledgeable and professional cabinet.

Relationships in the school are generally good, a wide range of data is collected throughout the year and a very successful behavior management system has had a significant impact on raising standards. The work study program for older students is effective in supporting students with the transition out of school. The budget is well managed and the professional development program is tightly focused on raising standards and helping staff to improve their practice. Relationships with the general education high schools with which it shares sites are good. Links with parents are improving and the school has is engaged in a continual drive to raise attendance.

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 is effective at collecting a range of data which it uses to track the performance of its students year by year across. The school makes good use of formal assessments, the Grow reports, Wilson and Read 180 scores, alternate assessments portfolios, Brigance inventories, Princeton review, behavior data, school wide incident reports and its own interim assessments. This enables teachers to record the progress of students, to discuss goals for improvement and keep written evidence on each student. The systems of collecting data are the same at each site although its form does vary. At the work study sites, alternative assessment folios which are well related to levels are kept for some students, as well as conference logs and résumés. Assessment portfolios at all of the sites are well organized and maintained; they include tabbed student work to indicate how to improve, and information on the performance of the students at regular intervals during the year.

The school has good systems for monitoring the performance of ethnic groups, gender and other sub-groups of students. It is particularly knowledgeable about the home circumstances of all of its students and uses this information to plan support when needed.

The school pays close attention to the needs of girls and has two initiatives so that the small number of them in the school can meet at regular intervals for additional support and advice. The school has ensured that no classes contain very small numbers of girls to avoid them being socially isolated and to help them to be well supported.

The school is fully aware of how its performance compares with similar schools in District 75. Its performance has shown a steady improvement in academic performance and in student behavior over the last three years. The school has yet to fully implement a system for gathering all of its data together into an easily accessible package so that it can track all individual students over a number of years.

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 well developed.

Academic and social goals are established for all of the students through their individual education plans. Those students following the alternate assessment programs have additional individual goals such as reading, comprehension, mathematical skills and process. The aim is to achieve 80% mastery before moving up to the next level of achievement. The individual education plans and the data collected is well reviewed and informs teachers’ planning effectively. Whole school goals are clearly communicated to both staff and students. The schedule enables teachers and paraprofessionals to meet regularly. At these sessions the collaborative groups thoroughly review data and identify strengths and weaknesses in the work they are doing. Importantly, the focus is always on goal setting and any decisions from the meetings are then shared with relevant staff.

Students are well supported by the academic intervention services. The Wilson reading program, Read 180 and the other projects such as Ramp Up are all used highly effectively to establish appropriate measurable and achievable goals for the students. This has proved to be a great motivator in improving student outcomes. The school is effective in supporting its students in greatest need, those with the most serious behavior issues, and has been successful in raising academic achievement amongst this group as well as enabling a number of its students to achieve full time inclusion and many of the older students to graduate from the work study program with paid employment.

Expectations within the school are high and students’ achievements are given a high profile. Parents are invited to share in the celebration of what their children have achieved. The school is continually exploring strategies to increase the involvement of parents and caregivers of students with emotional difficulties, whose involvement with the school is minimal.

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 is good at aligning instructional programs to meet the needs of its students. The school delivers a mandated program with appropriate modifications to support students' learning. For example, the group of students in the 8+ grade is engaged with a combination of Impact math and the Ramp Up program in mathematics. The curriculum is planned carefully and rubrics are well used to assess student performance. Additional intervention services staff are used where appropriate as are support programs such as the Wilson and Read 180 programs. This is proving effective in matching learning programs to specific student needs. In addition, teachers delivering alternative curriculum programs customize them effectively for individual students. These programs incorporate links to everyday life, so, for example one classroom is designed to give the appearance of a retail shop where numeracy and life skills are taught. The work study program is a particularly effective part of the individualized curriculum which older students receive.

The administration insists that each activity the teacher undertakes with the students must make reference to expected student outcomes. This means both the teachers and paraprofessionals are accountable for ensuring that the work they do in class is highly focused. Where possible, technology is made available. This is used to good effect in the music room, where there is a recording studio and students are encouraged to write, perform and choreograph musical pieces. A measure of the success of these programs is the high level of motivation shown by the students and the high levels of inclusion taking place. Similar activities take place across all of the sites. Technology is less well used in some other curriculum areas, a point for improvement which the school recognizes.

The budget is effectively used to improve student outcomes. A great deal of money has also been spent on supplies for classrooms and investment is being made in improving computer facilities with smart boards and additional laptop computers. These are proving to be highly motivational for students. Scheduling decisions support common planning time and there is a strong link between the arts and other curriculum areas. Grade 8 students undertake exit projects and regular curriculum reviews to enable the school to monitor their progress. The impact of this careful planning is noticeable in the high level of student engagement in the classroom. The students are well cared for and there is a mutual respect in the school between staff and students. The students have a number of staff they can trust and who can show concern for them.

Attendance is lower than in other District 75 schools and there are differences in the way each site monitors this. The school is continually striving to improve attendance.

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 staff shares the school's expectations and demonstrates a high level of commitment to ensuring that the students succeed. The principal is well aware of the strengths of each member of his staff and uses this well to match their skills and disposition to the needs of the students. The principal has a rigorous staffing procedure, aiming to hire specialists, teachers with energy and drive and an interest in the arts. There is no common professional development time with the hosting schools, so the school has put together its own program, driven by the cabinet. The school offers the teachers regular opportunities to complete an interest inventory and weekly cabinet meetings review the professional

development program. Professional development crosses over between all of the sites which ensure consistency and the sharing of coherent messages, although appropriately there is some which is site specific.

The principal and the assistant principals undertake frequent observations of staff following the staff rubrics generated by District 75. Feedback is supportive and includes helpful guidance to develop best practice and a clear indication of the next steps to follow to bring about improvement.

The school has a wide range of partnerships with community based organizations, all of which are used to support school and student goals. These have included the work study sites, Young Adult Institutions and several arts organizations. The sites run smoothly and the principal is well respected by all the staff.

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.

The school is setting challenging goals and targets in its Comprehensive Education Plan which are securely based on data analysis. The school is fully aware of its strengths and weaknesses and has clear priorities for improvement. Goals are therefore established in all areas of the school and the differences between the sites are taken into consideration. The cabinet is well placed to become even more systematic in their monitoring strategies.

Reference is made to the school comprehensive education plan during cabinet meetings, data is used regularly and goals are realigned and revised when new information becomes available. Systems are reviewed and changes are made where necessary, although it is not clear enough what the interim goals and new steps for action are for all members of the cabinet, and differences between sites are not always encompassed in the evaluation process. The staff are not clear about the goals and their position within the plan although they are very clear about their responsibility to ensure that students make progress and the administration assigns appropriate support to help them to do so.

Data is used regularly to take appropriate action where necessary and sometimes to review goals. This is best seen with aspects such as attendance, students moving to less restrictive environments, suspensions, students at levels 1 or 2 and work study programs. Not all of the school community is participating in establishing the school goals and in their monitoring. However, each planning cycle includes a full evaluation of goals and plans and subsequent practice is modified where necessary.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Queens School of Career Development P752Q	∅	✓	+
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.	∅	✓	+
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.	∅	✓	+
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.	∅	✓	+
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	