



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Community School of Technology

Public School 59

**2185 Bathgate Avenue
Bronx
NY 10457**

Principal: Christine McHugh

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Reviewers: Joy Stopher/Tim Boyce**

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 59, the Community School of Technology, is an elementary Empowerment School with 550 enrolled students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. Students who are enrolled in pre-kindergarten continue through grade 5. Approximately two-thirds of students enter at grade 3 having previously attended another school.

The majority (72%) of students is Hispanic, 27% are Black and less than 1% is White. Recent entrants to the country come from the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Honduras and Africa. Over 16% of students are English language learners and 26.5% are special education students. Ninety-eight percent of students are Title 1 eligible which is higher than similar schools and significantly high than in City schools. Attendance, at 91% is generally the same as that found in similar schools but below the average for City schools.

The Annex, which provides for students in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, is housed in a separate building a few blocks away from the main school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Teachers work together well as a team and support newly appointed teachers very well.
- Counseling and support agencies work well in the school.
- The school provides good support for the community.
- The environment for learning in the Annex is very positive.
- The school has a wide range of partnerships which support learning.
- The principal provides the school with strong leadership.
- The analysis and use of data is a major strength.
- There is a wide range of after school and enrichment activities.
- The curriculum is greatly enhanced by the arts.
- The teaching of special education and vulnerable students is a particular strength of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Give higher achieving students the same emphasis as other groups.
- Further enable teachers to make better use of assessment data to support their own planning and instruction to bring about improvements in teaching.
- Promote the effective learning environment in the Annex as a model for the rest of the school to aspire to.
- Provide even better opportunities for teachers to work together, observe each other and share best practice within and across grade teams.
- Develop more strategies to involve parents in their children's learning.
- Continue to develop staff expertise so that they can play a greater part in the future development of the school.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The Community School of Technology, Public School 59, is a proficient school which has come a long way and is now ready to take the next steps in its development. Under the strong leadership of the principal, the school has moved to be a school in good standing. This has been brought about by the effective deployment of generous resources, high levels of support for students most in need and a determination to succeed. The analysis and use of data has been central in determining next steps, setting whole school goals and modifying and revising plans. Particular emphasis is given to providing support to students and the community to try to minimize the effect of social and emotional barriers to learning. A rich program of after school activities and opportunities, together with the arts programs and wide range of partnerships, are designed to improve the achievement and life chances of students. The teaching of special education and vulnerable students is a particular strength of the school. The school is now in a position to be able to raise expectations even higher by focusing on sharing best practice, developing staff expertise and understanding, and ensuring a consistently high quality of instruction throughout the school which challenges all students. The school's own self-evaluation is an accurate reflection of its strengths and areas for development. It is well placed to bring about further improvements and achieve its own goal of continuing to raise student achievement in literacy and mathematics. The strong sense of community and team work is evident and is a solid foundation on which to build. As one teacher commented, 'we are here for the students'.

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 well developed.

The analysis and use of data is a major strength. The school effectively uses a wide range of data to ensure that it has a full and up to date understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom and grade level. The principal keeps a strategic and comprehensive overview of data and analysis for the school as a whole. Various assessment tools are used and include the Princeton Review for reading and mathematics, although many teachers feel they have information which is more accurate and continue to use other systems. Improving literacy, for example, remains a key goal and the school makes use of Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills for grades kindergarten through 3. Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Reading Assessment is used in grades 3 through 5 in addition to the Developmental Reading Assessment at the beginning and end of year for grades 4 and 5. Classroom data includes interim assessments, portfolios, running records and conference notes as well as baseline and end line assessments in writing and mathematics. The performance and progress of ethnic groups is initially monitored using the report cards then information is further analyzed as necessary. The progress of English language learners and special education students is tracked rigorously. Teachers discuss individual students and record

the outcomes of this on a very regular basis. Collaborative team teachers are pro-active in evaluation and effective use is made of a bi-lingual psychologist to ensure students are in the right program. The special education coordinator monitors individual performance and progress against the individual education plans. Teachers gather student data for discussion in the frequent grade team meetings. Much of the data collected about areas of specific interest to the school is qualitative but good steps are taken to ensure it is recorded. The school is now beginning to recognize the need to give higher achieving students the same emphasis as those students who are most in need of improvement. The principal has collected and compared performance data each year since 1999 across a whole range of areas. She is able to demonstrate the considerable improvements that have been achieved. The school's performance is benchmarked against similar schools but one in particular is useful because it has a very similar mix of students. The disparity between the schools' most recent mathematics tests scores is currently being investigated.

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.

The goals for long-range improvement have been rightly focused on improving student achievement, particularly in literacy and mathematics. Immediate goals and plans derive from the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data which takes place at many levels. Collaborative working in grade teams is well developed and used to respond flexibly to create timeframes for improvement with built in measurements of progress. Grade teams work together to achieve this through instructional planning and professional development. Growth in guided reading, for example is monitored every six weeks. Whole school goals and plans, and those for individual students are well focused. The school's own evaluation has correctly identified the need to share data more widely, particularly across grades. The school is very effective in ensuring specific attention is given to those students in most need, as exemplified by the following. As a result of English language learners not doing as well in English language arts this year, particular attention has been directed to improving their performance. This has involved the bi-lingual coordinator, collaborative team teachers and English as a second language teachers working together to identify the areas for improvement and look at the performance of each student.

The principal has a clear vision for the school and high expectations for students and staff. Students benefit from a high level of one to one or small group work and are helped to understand what they need to do to improve. Students in the Annex have a lovely environment which supports and enhances learning and models high expectations. The hallways in the main building also have examples of high quality work and display. The parent coordinator has been very active and effective in establishing and maintaining regular communications with parents. The principal is well aware of the benefits of parents taking a more active role in their child's education and contributing to the achievement of the school's goals.

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 delivers the mandated curriculum but then continues to enhance and develop it to meet the needs of its students. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by the arts, both visual and performance, and the wide range of after school and enrichment activities. At the time of the review students and staff were eagerly anticipating an Irish dance club visit to Dublin. The school has access to a wide range of technology to support learning. This includes two computer labs, a library multi-media center, smart boards on each floor and computers in all classrooms. Physical education is given appropriate emphasis but the school has no gym and limited facilities. Teachers commented that ‘the whole school is accountable’ for improving student outcomes. The very effective deployment of resources has resulted in small class sizes and a high student-adult ratio. This has meant that individual needs can be met and appropriate support and instruction given. Staff know and respect their students and all adults willingly support those who have academic or personal needs. Students feel well supported. The extent to which teachers use assessment data to support their own planning and instruction is variable. As a result, some teaching is routine rather than stimulating and fails to engage all students, particularly the higher achievers.

Budgeting, scheduling and staffing decisions are constantly reviewed and revised in the light of emerging trends in data. The budget has been used well to support small group teaching and to give students a rich learning experience. This has been particularly effective in enabling students to go out and experience the real world around them. The use of cluster teachers has resulted in enhanced provision in music, art, science and mathematics. Scheduling decisions are under constant review and there is very good provision for common planning time. Attendance is given a very high priority and the school is constantly trying to find new ways to improve it. Attendance data is broken down by individual student, there are attendance concern folders and outreach programs. Students and staff are informed about attendance on a daily basis.

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 takes the lead in the hiring of staff and has clear criteria for selection. She is looking for teachers who are very dedicated, committed, idealistic and strong. There is a belief that the school has the capacity to support new staff and ‘teach them how to teach’. New teachers are very well supported by their colleagues. Teachers have begun to approach the school and the principal is actively seeking recommendations instead of the traditional method of using hiring halls. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this. Regular classroom observation is carried out by the principal and her assistant principals who do this in the grades for which they are responsible. Triangulation takes place if there is a need. There are also regular walkthroughs. Teachers are very supportive of each other and there are some opportunities for intervisitation within grades, if requested. However, there are few opportunities for teachers to observe each other and share best practice across grades. Planning, evaluation and revision is carried out in grade teams and this has been very effective in driving improvement. Teams work together well and

have a good time allocation. Each day a different planning team meets, back to back with a prep period and is facilitated by an assistant principal. Coaches attend and there are frequent opportunities for professional development. Again, the impact of this can be restricted to the grade team. Nonetheless professional development is given a very high priority and the availability of funding has meant that it has been plentiful. Teachers currently have ninety minutes per week, three times a month. Much effort has gone into improving instruction and helping staff to understand and interpret data. The school is now beginning to develop staff expertise, for example in involving a greater number in the design of the curriculum, so that they can play a greater part in the future development of the school. The principal is well respected for her very effective management of resources and her continued focus on extending the opportunities and experiences for students. The progress the school has made since her appointment is testimony to her capacity to effect change. There are effective procedures and policies in place and the school is an orderly community. Counseling and support agencies work well in the school. The school has a wide range of partnerships which support learning and help give the school a strong sense of a successful community. As a result of the partnership with Turnaround for Children the school now has a full time psychiatric social worker. Other successful partnerships include those with TASC/Renaissance After School Programs, St Barnabas hospital, La Vida Guidance Centre, Marquis Studios and the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families.

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 well developed.

The school's ability to constantly evaluate the progress of each student and modify its plans and practices accordingly has been a key factor in accelerating learning and bringing about improvements. A collaborative process is used in the formulation of the Comprehensive Education Plan. Groups meet to discuss what they did in the previous year and what improvements they think need to be made. The principal pulls this together and carries out the whole school data analysis. The goals and objectives are drawn from this and are based on a variety of assessment data. The action plans are then designed to match the goals and provide the tool for monitoring progress throughout the year. They have clear indicators of success, accountability, resourcing and the intervals of periodic review. Plans are modified as needed, based on the analysis of new data. Constant monitoring and comparison of student progress and school progress against its goals takes place throughout the year both at whole school level and by individuals and small groups. Running records are used to measure progress and create new groups. There is a constant realignment of groups in classes to meet students' needs. Teachers, coaches and administrators are effective in using assessment data to make decisions and action plans for individual students, specific grades and the school as a whole. The executive team addresses gathering, analyzing and future planning using data. Plans for the next year are firmly rooted in an analysis of the previous phase of goal setting. Use is made of backward planning to develop Understanding by Design units of study and assessments. The school intends to refine and improve this further. An example of the school's effectiveness in using outcomes to drive improvement planning is the intended focus on grammar. Curriculum planning for next year has already begun with all staff given an opportunity to be part of the planning team. Data has shown a need to incorporate more grammar into next year's program and the school has shown a determination to bring about improvement by realigning practice and program.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Community School of Technology (PS 59)	∅	✓	+
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