



# **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: October 9 - 10, 2007**

**Lead reviewer: Bruce Berry**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Flushing High School is a high school with 2713 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 18% Black, 58.3% Hispanic, 7.7% White and 16% Asian students. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 6.1% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 85.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 61% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal provides good leadership and direction for the school's vision for improvement.
- Teachers provide very interesting instruction, which engages the students.
- There are very good systems for collecting and analyzing data which allow the school to track the progress of students, classrooms, subjects and subgroups.
- Students in greatest need of improvement receive excellent support from teachers and other staff and make very good progress as they move through the grades.
- Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are very well structured to support instruction and student achievement.
- Guidance and advice systems provide high-quality support for students' academic and social development.
- Students are appreciative of the good quality support they receive in school.
- The curriculum and after-school programs offered by the school provide students with high-quality academic and cultural experiences.

### What the school needs to improve

- Develop consistency in the setting and monitoring of periodic goals for student achievement.
- Align professional development programs to the strategic areas of improvement identified from the analysis of data.
- Ensure that all teachers are knowledgeable and confident in the use of data to inform instruction and interventional support.
- Further develop the consistency in the differentiation of instruction to ensure that academic challenge is aligned to individual student's needs.
- Research ways of further improving communication with parents in respect of periodic assessments and student goals.
- Improve strategic planning to include interim measurable goals for improving achievement in classrooms and subjects.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

The school has addressed all the areas for improvement identified in the previous Quality Review. The instruction for English language learners is now closely linked to English language arts with a focus on improving reading and literacy levels. The use of computers in instruction has improved and the school's web site provides good information for students and parents.

The principal leads the school well and gives a clear vision of where the school needs to improve. Teachers provide very good support for students through good quality instruction. The various curriculum and enrichment programs provide a wide range of academic and cultural experiences for the students. There is very good support for students' academic and social development from the schools' guidance and advisory services. The school is an orderly community with a calm and caring culture. Parents and students are very positive about quality of education and the support they receive from the principal, teachers and other staff at the school. The inquiry team members have been identified and meetings and activities have been planned for the near future. The school does not have a consistent approach to interim goal setting for individual students, classrooms and subjects. There is an inconsistent approach to the use of differentiation in instruction in classrooms and subjects.

### 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 the student's progress over time.**

#### **This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The school has developed very good data systems for analyzing the progress of students at all levels of achievement. Marking period grades are collected and analyzed to give a very clear picture of the progress of students, classes and subjects. Many students arrive at the school well below grade level. The school has programs in place to support those students, who make very good progress during their time at the school. Special education students and English language learners make very good progress through the high-quality support and instruction they receive. The school groups students based on their achievement levels and provides good support for accelerating their progress. Teachers analyze data from the external tests for English language learners to provide information about literacy skill levels in order to target instruction. There is some inconsistency in teachers' knowledge and understanding of the ways in which data can be used to support and improve their instruction.

The school uses data well to track the progress of all subgroups. Data is analyzed at the end of each marking period to provide information about the achievement by ethnicity, gender and other groupings. The school has identified a clear correlation between the achievement levels of particular ethnic groups with those of English language learners. Instruction has been modified to focus on literacy across the curriculum for the identified groups of students. The school uses data well to monitor progress. There is evidence of good progress over the past three years in accelerating the achievement levels of students. The principal compares progress with that of two other local high schools with similar features and performance. The school also has links with a high performing high school, which provides senior staff and teachers with very good learning opportunities when sharing good practice.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The school sets general goals for improving achievement at subject level. Data is analyzed periodically and gives a clear picture of progress of each student and teaching group. Assistant principals have conversations with teachers about performance of students within their teaching groups. There is not, however, consistency in goal setting for individual students and classes. Some teachers use conferencing well with students in need of improvement to set goals for improving their achievement. Others are inconsistent in setting student improvement goals and using them to provide the next steps for learning.

Teachers and other staff provide excellent support for students in greatest need of improvement, who make very good progress as they move through the grades. On entry to the school, students are placed in groups in line with their achievement levels. Students below grade level are provided with interventions to accelerate their progress. The school provides a strong focus on literacy for these students. In math, for example, the assistant principal has split a double period, which provides a math focus for the first half and a math through literacy focus in the second half. Teachers have very high expectations, which is recognized and appreciated by the students. Many students are presented with challenging work. High performance students, who pass Regents tests, are transferred to advanced placement courses. English language learners, who are successful in external tests, are moved to high level groups in line with their achievement.

The school provides parents with progress information at the end of each semester. Parents are invited to attend parent and teacher conferences to discuss their child’s progress. Parents are usually only contacted after a marking period if there are concerns about their child’s progress. Parents indicate that they would appreciate information more regularly in order to monitor and help improve their child’s progress. The school provides very good opportunities for parents to be involved with the school through the parents’ association and the many workshops offered. The workshops cover a range of topics including behaviour and anger management, test preparation and college entry requirements. Parents are encouraged to share information with the school and to be actively involved in their child’s education. The school is now providing communication to parents in their home language.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is well developed.**

The very good curriculum and instruction provide students with engaging and interesting learning opportunities. High-performing students have the opportunity to take Regents tests early and then follow advanced-placement programs in a range of different subjects. Students in greatest need of improvement are provided with good support, with programs which focus on accelerating their academic progress. There is a strong focus on literacy across the curriculum to support English language learners and other students where a need has been identified. The school provides a broad curriculum which includes subjects such as art, music, law, legal literature and calculus. All students have a gym session each day and the school takes parts in the Fitnessgram program. Students are tested and provided with activities to maintain good health and fitness.

The instruction across the school is leading to high levels of student engagement and interest. Teachers use a varied approach for instruction, including the use of computer software programs as an integral part of the learning. The differentiation of instruction at classroom level is not consistent enough to ensure that academic challenge is aligned to individual student needs. In many classrooms, students are provided with the same instruction and activities. In a few classrooms, activities have differing levels of challenge. In these lessons, students make good progress in developing their skills and knowledge in line with their achievements levels.

The school budget is used very well to support instruction and guidance programs. Staffing and scheduling are used creatively in providing good support for all students, but particularly those in greatest need of improvement. Teachers have scheduled time to provide tutoring for individual students and the after school program provides further support opportunities. The school has a calm, orderly and respectful culture. Students give high praise for the instruction of the teachers and the help and support they receive from the guidance counsellors and the college office staff. The school has good attendance procedures in place. They include first-day contact for absence and tardiness, as well as home visits by attendance teachers.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The school has appropriate procedures in place for reviewing the quality of instruction, in order to provide the impetus for improving and accelerating learning. The principal and assistant principals undertake formal and informal observations. Conferences with teachers focus on strengths and additional growth points for instruction. The principal has identified three key development areas for the year. There is not, however, a strategic plan for professional development for the present academic year. The school does not, at present, make sufficient use of data analysis in order to identify the main focus for professional development programs.

The school provides opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers’ instruction. English language arts and English as second language teachers are undertaking peer

observations to gain an understanding of the needs of individual students. Teachers meet monthly in subject teams. English language arts teachers have a staff development day when they align English second language and grade level instruction. New teachers have an assigned mentor and receive support from their subject colleagues. There are no formal procedures for supporting experienced teachers who are new to the school. They do, however, receive good informal support from staff within their subject area.

Students have high regard for guidance and advice staff and appreciate the support for their academic and social development. There are strong links between guidance counsellors and teachers to provide very good support where it is most needed. Guidance counsellors and the parent coordinator provide an excellent service to students and parents in supporting students' well being. The college office staff also provide very good support for the students in preparing college applications. Effective and well understood procedures contribute to maintaining a calm and orderly environment. The deans work very well in supporting teachers and ensure any indiscipline is acted on quickly and appropriately.

The school has developed very good partnerships, which provide enrichment activities for students and professional development opportunities for teachers. A partnership with the City University of New York and another high school provides College Now courses for the students. Students have an opportunity to visit college to learn about a career in teaching math. Other programs include law, music, sport and helping to run a radio station. Links with Queens College provide good quality professional development to improve instruction practice.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The Comprehensive Education Plan has appropriate plans and goals which focus on improving instruction. These include the development of a language allocation policy, increasing language development and differentiation in the content areas. Implementation is monitored at monthly walkthroughs of classrooms. Subject-specific plans and goals focus on raising achievement. The school uses data well at the end of each marking period as an interim checkpoint of the progress of students. The goals and plans at classroom and subject level do not contain specific and measurable goals. They do not specify interim goals for measuring progress and monitoring success in meeting the goals.

Teachers use their analyses of students' progress well to plan instruction and interventions for individuals in need of improvement. Teachers adapt their curriculum and instruction planning based on their own assessments of student progress. As a result, students make good progress. There is not, however, consistent practice in using the marking period data to set individual student goals for the next steps for learning. The principal and assistant principals track student progress at the end of each marking for all students, classrooms, subjects and sub-groups. Assistant principals have conversations with subject teachers resulting in modifications to curriculum and instruction to improve student outcomes. Following a review of the previous year's curriculum and instruction, subject teams plan together for the next academic year. The principal, teachers, parents and students share the vision for continuous school improvement.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Flushing High School (Q460)</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>			X		

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?				X	
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				X	

### Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?					X
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?			X		
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			X		

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.**

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				X	

**Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?			X		
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?		X			
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?			X		
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?			X		
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X		

**Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.**

To what extent do . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?		X			
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?		X			
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?			X		
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?			X		
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to make strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?			X		
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X		