



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Queens High School of Teaching  
High School 566  
74-20 Commonwealth Boulevard  
Queens  
NY 11426**

**Principal: Nigel Pugh**

**Dates of review: May 1 - 2, 2008  
Lead Reviewer: Isobel MacNaughtan**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Queen's High School of Teaching is a high school with 1155 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 38% Black, 15% Hispanic, 16% White and 26% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92.2%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school has three small learning communities each with a dedicated assistant principal, guidance counselor, teachers and nearly 400 students under one shared principal.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal creates an exceptionally strong vision and sense of direction which is understood by staff, students and parents.
- A powerful reflective professional process among staff, backed by structures and systems, supports rigorous scrutiny of practice.
- Supportive and respectful relationships operate in every aspect of the school's work.
- A model of distributive leadership develops and empowers all members of the school community.
- Innovative, imaginative curricular developments derive from collaborative enterprise.
- Collaborative teams develop trusting open relationships and contribute significantly to the school's development.
- The school has a focus on student improvement based on collection of a wide range of data.
- A highly successful model of inclusion has a verifiable impact on the achievement of special education students.
- The induction process for new teachers is successful.
- High expectations for students are explicitly conveyed to the school community in a variety of ways and increases self-respect and motivation in students.

### What the school needs to improve

- Develop differentiation to ensure that all students are appropriately challenged.
- Develop action planning systems including timescales and success criteria to guide future development.
- Use student achievement at start of year to establish projected target by end of year as a tool for monitoring progress.

## 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 well developed.**

The school has developed very good systems for the collection of data. There is an emphasis on collecting data which is authentic and student learning benefits as a result. Grade teams and collaborative teaching teams discuss data. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the achievement of their students and adapt instruction to be more appropriate to their needs. Assistant principals from the three learning communities analyze disparate data to ensure that the best systems apply across the school.

The principal ensures that whole school goals are well known and has set up strong collaborative networks to contribute to the setting of goals. Staff discuss the progress towards goals and make adjustments as required, but the school does not yet have a formal strategic or action plan. Staff set goals for students. Grade teams focus discussions around a variety of data which includes observation of teacher and student behavior. They adjust instructional strategies in response to the student achievement.

The curriculum is a particular strength of the school. The staff have high expectations of the students and the principal makes clear his expectation of teachers in the classroom. The school aims to make inquiry its main pedagogy. Not all teachers yet adopt this instructional method, but good progress has been made towards achieving this goal. This has ensured that the majority of students engage in their learning. There are many good examples of differentiation but this continues to be an area for development and pace of lessons is not always as brisk as it could be. All staff reflect on the impact of their teaching in a formal and informal way and develop methods to collect good informative data. The school has a strong professional development program and uses other resources to meet the school's goals.

Teachers and parents are aware of how the school is progressing and contribute to evaluation. The school ensures that the development of the school is transparent by making data available to all groups.

The school ethos is highly reflective and teachers are open to evaluating their own work. Within this context, the inquiry team has undertaken a very successful piece of research, considering, in depth, the progress of students in math. Using qualitative and quantitative data it researched practice and attitude in both teachers and students and uncovered issues with note taking in math and across the school.

Since the last review which focused on the development of Design Your Own periodic assessments, the school has ensured that teachers share their good practice in using these as a tool for differentiation. The monitoring of this work continues with a comparative study against Acuity.

## **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 principal, his assistant principals and teachers have a very good understanding of data systems and of the need to scrutinize and work from objective data to improve student achievement. One of the assistant principals has a specialist role in data collection and she is successful in ensuring that a wide spectrum of authentic data is available to inform the understanding and decisions about student learning. There is very good and well-used information about the progress of individuals and focus groups. The school has purchased the system "Data-Cation" to ensure that useful reports are generated. Due to this, the school has a clear understanding of the progress of individuals, focus groups within the school, and whole school trends. There is appropriate emphasis on making the data transparent to teaching staff and the school is successful in making data presentable. Good training is delivered and as a result, staff make very good use of data in their work.

The school's sophisticated collection of data feeds into its highly reflective culture. Students are well known and the data ensures that there is objective analysis to back exceptionally good subjective professional judgment. A principle which underlies the work of the school is the need to work in an authentic way; there is therefore a constant evaluation of data against the need to make it usable and valid to support students. Grade teams have initiated systems whereby they collect micro observations of student attitude and achievement and of teaching. These help teachers make changes in their instruction so that they focus better on the needs of individual students. The inquiry team presents a very good example of the way in which the school works. Their gathering and use of data is exemplary. Instead of gathering superficial data and making conclusions they use this as a starting point for asking questions and delving deeper. Thus further data is uncovered to inform very fully the conclusions which they draw. This attitude reflects across the school which is piloting a comparison between the use of Acuity and Design Your Own assessments to satisfy themselves as to the best system to inform their understanding of learning patterns.

**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 well developed.**

The school follows a model of distributive leadership and collaborative processes for developing goals for improvement are very strong. There is ample evidence of success in achievement in the standardized test scores and in some of the qualitative data developed by the school. The school examines data in a detailed way. This has meant that a variety of groups have become the focus for concern and research. One example is a recent project to improve the learning of gifted students in math. The school has identified gifted students as a cause for concern and has targeted this group with special intervention. Interim assessment of progress shows that this targeted support has been successful in raising achievement.

One of the greatest strengths of the school is the high expectation which it has for all of its staff and students. This is developed through regular newsletters to staff and in staff retreats. Staff ownership of this is clear and there is a constant interest in finding ways to improve the culture and teaching practice. One of the small learning communities, for example, bans the use of the word “lazy” from meetings, recognizing that this is a way to focus responsibility on the student rather than on the role of the teacher.

With regard to special education students there are very good systems for tracking performance. This informs teaching and special interventions which have proved to be effective. All students have a target for achievement and know of the steps and actions which they must take to reach that target. One member of staff, familiar with practice in other schools commented, “Kids with special needs who come here have a better chance, simply because they are here.” The principal is keen that the progress of the students and of the school on all fronts is clear to all stakeholders. Therefore, he makes data available to staff and parents. Parents are not yet fully aware of student goals for development and are not able fully to support their children’s preparation for tests.

**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 underpinning culture of the school and the organic development of its vision mean that there is a strong emphasis on the development of curricular approaches. The curriculum is varied and exposes students to a broad range of disciplines. The school uses a rich and varied pedagogy which ensures that students are engaged in their learning. On a day-to-day informal basis teachers collect evidence of student performance and what impact instructional strategies have had on their learning. The school targets its resources to meet its goals.

There is a high degree of accountability for work. All teachers are empowered by their leadership roles within the context of their collaborative teams and this leads to high standards of delivery. The principal and the assistant principals observe staff regularly and know their work well. Targets are regularly set for improvement. Collaborative grade teams have created systems for observation to support the better teaching practice of staff ensuring a high quality of delivery and a constant emphasis on better instructional practice. Staff differentiates work for students ensuring a good pace of learning for all. The school sees this as a continuing area for development to ensure that individuals receive the most precise support possible.

The very good environment of trust and respect is another one of the school’s strengths. The principal’s own demeanor and the structures which he has created throughout the school are key in the development of this. Students and parents praise the extremely high standard of relationship and the care that teachers have for their students across the board. The collaborative instructional methods develop respect which is evident within the classrooms between the students. At its most simple level, there is a high degree of courteous interaction between staff and student.

**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 well developed.**

There is no doubt that this is a reflective school and this underpins all that it does. This is the starting place to support all students to achieve their potential and the paperwork and quality of discussion between staff reflects this. The practice in developing capacity is impressive because of this culture. Teachers "buy in" to the need constantly to improve their practice to ensure that the goals set for improvement are met. Staff have developed a system for evaluating classroom practice through a number of different measures. Administration regularly observes lessons and a good framework for development and this means that teaching continually improves. The induction for new teachers is extremely good and begins with joint professional development with staff. Collaborative grade teams and the assistant principals give focused support to new teachers to understand the function and ethos of the school. New teachers praise the support systems highly.

The collaborative grade teams within the learning communities lie at the core of the school's ability to build its capacity. One member of staff described the leadership given to these teams in the following way, "Take off the bureaucratic shackles and we see people fly." Staff bring concerns about individual students and other professional issues to the meetings and much is resolved at this level. This ensures that the school runs smoothly. The high level of discussion about student progress and the quality of the support within the school mean that students experiencing difficulty receive skilled and sensitive help. Suitable professional partnerships support teacher growth.

**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 school has set clear goals for its development and a high standard for student achievement. The principal has set the model for professional collaboration and respect and there is a celebration of the strengths of the school. There is a constant reflection on progress against individual goals and whole school goals. Because of its nature, the school is responsive to information about progress and adjusts individual programs and whole school programs to reach targets. Discussions in grade teams show a high level of professional expertise. Within the small learning communities, staff know students very well and measure external data against anecdotal and observational information. This ensures a very good rate of progress in students. There is a constant drive towards improvement and data from assessments is highly valued. Because time to discuss data and other issues is prioritized within the school, there are very good opportunities to amend plans when appropriate. The quality of reflection ensures that these are well considered.

The assistant principals and the principal, who know in detail what is going on within the learning communities, monitor the work of the school most effectively. There is not yet however, a formal action plan with timescales, interim goals and success criteria to rigorously manage the school's development. The vision of the school, with its emphasis on high achievement, an inclusive setting and distributed leadership, is known by staff students and parents. They are proud to be part of the vision.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Queen's High School of Teaching</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 rigorous, 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 and tardiness?				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, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				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 makes 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

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>