



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Queens School of Career Development

High School 752

**142-10 Linden Boulevard,
Jamaica
NY 11436**

Principal: Lester Katz

Dates of review: February 4 - 5, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Ronnie Young

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Queens School for Career Development is a high school with 426 students from grade 8 through grade 12. The school population comprises 77.6% Black, 13.7% Hispanic, 5.1% White and 3.6% Asian students. The student body includes 7.7% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 85% of the students enrolled and girls account for 15%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 65%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 89% eligibility.

The school is based in one building which it shares with another school, and has six additional classes in a local high school nearby. Students at Queens School for Career Development are aged from 14 to 21 years. Those who have conditions ranging from autism to multiple disabilities follow the alternative assessment curriculum. Others who have severe emotional and behavioral difficulties follow the standardized curriculum.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The broad curriculum enriches students' experiences and provides opportunities for a variety of artistic and vocational pursuits.
- Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are made strategically, based on data.
- Effective procedures to encourage and monitor attendance have resulted in a 5% increase this year.
- There is good support for teachers new to the profession or to the school.
- There are range of partnerships with outside organizations which enable the school to extend students' opportunities and experiences.
- Teachers regularly and effectively use periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures to identify student progress.
- Emphasis on youth development includes a number of measures designed to improve behavior and raise students' self esteem.
- There is a very good system of work experience, which prepares students well for life after school.
- The school conveys consistently high expectations to students and their parents.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a clear and simple behavior management system which identifies consequences and rewards
- Ensure instruction is differentiated by task level and learning style, so students can develop their full potential.
- Clarify the role of paraprofessionals so they use their time in classrooms constructively.
- Break down data by ethnicity and gender and make comparisons with similar schools to identify possible trends in progress or performance.
- Devise a system in which students can identify and monitor their short-term goals to help them to take more responsibility for their own learning.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

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

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient

Queens School for Career Development is a Special Education High School on several sites that serves a student population with diverse needs. The school's broad curriculum engages students who are able to follow artistic and vocational pursuits as well as the core curriculum. Budgeting and scheduling decisions are made to help students succeed. A range of partnerships with outside bodies further extends students' opportunities and experiences. Good use is made of data to measure progress and to set goals for students. However, students take insufficient responsibility for goal setting and time scales for achieving their goals are sometimes too long term for noticeable impact. Personal and youth development are emphasized and attempts have been made to address behavioral issues and attendance, with some success. Differentiation is apparent in some classes but its use is patchy. Much teaching is didactic and not tailored to students' individual needs.

The inquiry team is looking at the correlation between behavior and academic progress for a sample of students. The school has made some progress in addressing the recommendations from the last Quality Review. Measures have been taken to address poor attendance and funds have been made available to purchase further technology such as smart boards. However, the school has made slower progress in creating an easily accessible data management system because it is awaiting ARIS to provide the foundation for a database. Despite the school's best efforts, lack of parent involvement is still a huge problem.

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 proficient.

The school uses a variety of assessments to understand the progress and performance of its students. Brigance, Scantron, Acuity and standardized and state test scores are used to measure academic achievement. The school relies on data from the School Wide Information Systems to assess behavior. Testing is routine across the school and, as a result, data collection and use is well established, especially regarding individual students, classes, grades and cohorts. However, the school has not fully disaggregated the data to enable it to analyze and compare the performance of specific groups of interest in detail. For example, the school tracks the progress of English language learners only by NYSESLAT scores which hampers individual goal setting for this group. Because the school analyzes data on ethnicity and gender only in relation to behavior, the reasons for behavior are not always fully explored and the data gives an imbalanced student profile. Students are tracked longitudinally where possible, but this is not easy because many

students are transient. However, the school compensates for this by making good use of Scantron and Acuity which provide additional data from students' previous schools. The school does not compare itself to other schools, as it sees itself as unique because of its student profile and curriculum, so has found little opportunity to share good practice.

The school has put into place straightforward structures and professional development to help staff to collect and analyze data. For example, all students following alternate assessment have their own data folio containing their individual education plans, alternate assessment summary sheets, samples of work, and results from Brigance testing, along with other relevant documentation. Data from students' standardized assessments is collected into a single portfolio belonging to one class. Information from eight to twelve students, including all test and diagnostic scores, targeted reading reports, copies of progress reports and data on behavior is therefore together in one place. Professional development is ongoing and plentiful, Training on Scantron has been particularly effective, as it has helped to simplify other assessments and is easy to use to drive instruction.

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 majority of goal setting is a collaborative exercise. All staff who work with individual students decide individual education plans and case conferences are routine for most students. Teachers collaborate well with paraprofessionals to set classroom goals and teachers work with team members when planning instruction. However, students themselves play little part in the goal setting and time-frames are often too long to have direct relevance to the student in terms of ownership or achieving them. The school's system for setting short-term behavior goals has little impact because not all students readily participate in it.

Whole school goals are regularly shared with all members of the school community, for example with staff at monthly meetings and students at advisory sessions. Frequent newsletters, orientation sessions and parent teacher meetings keep parents well informed. However, only a minority of parents involve themselves fully in the education of their children at the school, despite the welcome the school extends and its open door policy. The school sends frequent invitations for parents to give information on their children, discuss progress reports and partake in case conferences. Guidance counselors and teachers telephone parents at home and the parent co-coordinator is very active. Nevertheless, the school is making only slow progress to increase parent involvement. The school is quick to identify students most in need of support, especially those with attendance or behavior issues. Advisory sessions have led to timely interventions. After-school academic intervention is used effectively to support students' academic work. Data from Scantron and Acuity has been instrumental in identifying students most in need of improvement. The administration and teachers have very high expectations of students. Said one parent, "My son has improved so much – he has now realized he can go to college". Many students expect a lot of themselves, for example, by setting their sights on transfer to a less restricted environment.

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 proficient

The school curriculum provides a very good range of electives and enrichment activities which enrich the students’ experiences. For example, during the school day students choose from activities such as music, art, videography, computing, dance or band. These are supplemented by daily physical education, yoga classes and vocational options. After school the range is widened to include fitness, team sports, poetry, cooking and graphic art. At the age of 17, students in the alternate assessment program become eligible to participate in work experience at community work sites including care centers, senior residences and local businesses. This helps them plan for the transition when they leave the school.

The principal has made good use of the budget and scheduling by investing in advisory sessions. These are small learning communities run by teachers to help students to bond in groups and discuss matters of social or emotional importance to them, such as gangs or drug abuse. These sessions have helped students to relax and begin to trust each other, thus helping them to access learning. Classes have been rescheduled so key subjects are not at the beginning or end of the day which has increased concentration and improved learning. Effective measures for encouraging attendance have resulted in a 5% increase this year. Investment in technology has enabled the school to telephone parents automatically whenever a student is absent, and, in addition, an attendance paraprofessional makes home visits. The school rewards students for good attendance through a points system or visits to a local recreation and adventure centre.

Although differentiated instruction has been encouraged by the principal and staff have received professional development, its use is patchy. Some teachers use individual or group activities as part of their lessons. In standardized assessment classes most teaching is didactic with the whole class being taught the same thing at the same time. This allows little or no tailoring to individual need. Alternate assessment classes show more differentiation. Most classes have individual work stations and individualized programs so students show high levels of engagement. However, the role of paraprofessionals is unclear, and in some classes, they do not use their time productively.

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 advisory sessions, in which guidance counselors play a major part, are one example of the emphasis the school gives to youth development. As well as running mandated counseling sessions, counselors run girls’ groups where students discuss such topics as grooming and emotional and sexual matters. They are also available for students to discuss emotional or social problems. For one period each week, teachers work with students on the SMART behavior management program. The program has been successful with alternate assessment classes, where there has been a large decrease in behavior incidents. However, many students in the standardized classes do not take the program seriously as it contains no sanctions. Students speak also of inconsistencies by some staff members in applying the program.

The principal and assistant principals observe classes regularly and give feedback, ensuring constant monitoring of teaching and learning. The regular observation also forms

the basis of professional development programs. Intervisitation is, however, not well established. While there are regular visits between members of the English language arts team in standardized assessment classes, and coaches or the administration may send struggling teachers to learn good practice from their peers, the practice does not benefit all staff. Staff new to the school or to teaching are very well supported by a personal mentor who observes them regularly and models lessons. The school also provides buddy teachers from the same department and abundant professional development, both internal and external. Where possible, professional development for all staff is differentiated according to need or level of skills. There is ongoing professional development on data collection and use, which improves teachers' skills. However, financial and scheduling restrictions limit the amount of professional development the administration can provide. Partnerships with outside bodies, such as Vocational Education Services for Individuals with Disabilities and the Association for Help with Retarded Children plus various study and work sites in south Jamaica extend students' opportunities and experiences.

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.

Goals for improving student outcomes are set routinely by a variety of teams and most goals have measurable benchmarks. However, time-frames vary widely, from a year to two weeks and some goals are too long-term to monitor effectively or to measure impact. Goals for teacher outcomes are set at pre- and post-observation meetings and, although they are benchmarked, many of these goals are also very long-term and so are difficult to monitor and adjust satisfactorily. Teachers are confident in the use of periodic assessments and diagnostic tools which they employ regularly to good effect. Scantron and Acuity are used effectively in standardized classes to pinpoint skills deficiencies or mastery, and to measure progress. Staff readily revise plans and practices in order to reach student or teacher goals. This was evident in a standardized assessment class where a student was having problems with the comprehension of a poem he was learning for a competition. The teacher was quick to suggest an alternative, easier poem, keeping the original in abeyance for later use. In an alternate assessment class a student's records showed how her communication had improved after she had been shown a different technique.

While the principal has a clear vision for the school, members of the school community perceive this vision differently. This has hampered the school's progress towards becoming a unified learning community.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Queens School for Career Development	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
Quality Score			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		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			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		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			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		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			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		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X		

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped