

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

**Business, Computer Applications and Entrepreneurship
High School**

High School 496

**207 – 01 116th Avenue
Queens
NY 11411**

Principal: Myles Nash

Dates of review: February 26 – 27, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Geri Taylor-Brown

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Business, Computer Applications and Entrepreneurship School is a high school with 511 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 82% Black, 8% Hispanic, 2% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 64% of the students enrolled and girls account for 36%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 85.8%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The Business, Computer Applications and Entrepreneurship High School is a place where the recently appointed principal serves as a role model for students, staff and parents. His vision for improving student achievement has already begun to render positive results as student attendance has increased this school year.

Students and parents are able to access attendance and academic information in all subjects at anytime through an electronic grading system. The consistency of practice in this strategy stands as a model. School leaders and faculty have not yet developed consistency in the practice of gathering, analyzing and using data to drive classroom instruction. Some English language arts and math teachers have adopted this practice with successful outcomes. As a result, students have made progress in these subjects on class exams and in their class grades.

There is eagerness in the students to learn and to be successful. The school offers a curriculum that is especially interesting and engaging in the areas of entrepreneurship and business. However, the school has not yet sufficiently implemented instructional practices that differentiate lessons to meet the varied student needs. So not all work is matched to student need. Additionally, parents and students do not receive information that clearly states students' current and future learning goals or how to achieve them. This means that students are unclear what they need to do next academically, and how this work can help them to succeed.

Teachers, like students, eagerly look forward to opportunities to continue learning. The school is moving towards developing individualized teacher professional development plans through the creation of the staff "individualized improvement plan". However, these plans do not clearly state the direct linkages between teacher development and student academic improvement. This consequently limits the delivery of instruction to support the leaning needs of individual students.

There is a shared vision for long-term school improvement that has begun to take place in the creation of the School Climate Committee. This team's work has rendered a noticeable change in the hallways during class changes. The school is committed to continue working towards school improvement by establishing firm checkpoints for the thorough examination of student data.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal serves as a positive role model for students and has a vision for increasing student achievement through clearly noted strategies to support teaching and learning.
- School leaders and faculty provide students and their families with current grading, giving them the opportunity to track current attendance and academic progress.
- The school offers a broad curriculum aligned with the State standards and highlighted by diverse course offerings and occupational programs including entrepreneurship, virtual enterprise and business courses.
- Students are eager to learn, want to succeed and appreciate the support they receive from school leaders.
- The school has set high expectations through the implementation of behavioral protocols that have resulted in improvement to the school climate and student attendance.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop clear and consistent approaches to gathering, analyzing and using student data across all core subjects.
- Train all teachers in the development and implementation of instructional goal setting so that students and parents know and understand short-term learning needs and next academic steps.
- Ensure that classroom instruction is differentiated appropriately and consistently to meet all students' academic needs
- Develop individual professional development plans for all teachers that directly connect the development of their teaching skills with the learning needs of their students.
- Establish a system of interim checkpoints that provide for regular ongoing analysis of all school data to influence student achievement.

Part 3: Main Findings

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The school leaders have developed systems to collect and review student data several times during the school year. Specifically, there is a practice of closely examining credit accumulation data. This has resulted in the development of two class credit recovery programs for 9th and 10th graders in English language arts and math. Another credit recovery program focuses on moving 12th graders towards graduation. Data verifying the success of these intervention programs is not yet available.

This practice of close examination of data is also evident but only in English language arts and math classes where teachers use their class work and homework grades, Acuity and standardized State examination data to group students for optimum learning conditions. The school has not sufficiently or consistently developed this practice in other core subjects. Some teachers in other core subjects have developed independent data collection and analysis practices. However, these efforts have resulted in inconsistent and uneven usage of student data in class lessons.

Students expressed great pleasure in their ability to access their class grade and attendance information electronically. The school also does well in disseminating student progress reports prior to the distribution of report cards. This effective practice gives students and parents additional verification of how students are progressing prior to receipt of the official class grade. The dissemination of these reports is at least two weeks prior to the report cards. This good practice allows time for students to produce work that could improve their class grade.

There are pockets of effective practices used by teachers in outreaching to parents for an exchange of information about student growth. One teacher successfully uses cell phone text messaging. Another distributes a monthly parent newsletter. These effective practices are not yet consistently established. This means that students and their parents do not engage in discussions about student progress in all core subject classes.

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 underdeveloped with proficient features.

The school has done well in developing school-wide goals for the 2008 - 2009 school year. Based on the chancellor's goals and the principal's performance review goals, school leaders and faculty have chosen to focus on credit accumulation,

communications and professional development. While clearly related to student progress, these goals are not sufficiently specific to the school. This is because they were not directly derived from student achievement data that indicates specific academic barriers to graduation for student sub-group populations.

The practice of goal setting throughout all core subjects has started to take root in the school as all teachers have begun using the mid-year goal setting form developed by the school this semester. This recently adopted practice exemplifies growth by means of a technical change. Some teachers have begun setting whole class goals. Additionally, some have worked with students on setting behavioral goals. These practices show evidence of the school moving in the right direction by providing students with a focus on success. However, the school has not clearly defined the meaning, purpose or process of academic goal setting. All staff members do feel the urgency to provide students and their parents with plans for improving learning, but they are thwarted in providing this service sufficiently because they do not operate within a common framework or effective implementation process. Nonetheless, both the English language arts and math departments have effectively embedded practices of conferencing with students to discuss their academic status and to support them in developing ways to improve their learning.

The principal has effectively led the charge to influence positive student behavior and improved student attendance. Working in concert with the assistant principals and other school leaders, he has been instrumental in raising expectations for students. The Climate Committee has focused successfully on changing the mindset of students specifically in regards to student behavior. The school has made some headway in changing the school climate and has rendered noticeable improvements especially during the change of classes.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.

This area of the school’s work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The school offers a broad curriculum aligned with the State standards in all core subjects. The additional course offerings in entrepreneurship and business provide opportunities for students to engage in real world business ownership simulations. These courses also connect students to after-school clubs such as the business Professional of America. The school does well in providing in-class and after-school activities that provide engaging and realistic chances for students to see the clear connections between academic achievement and career success.

The school class offerings and the curriculum are varied. Some teachers clearly utilize student data to create class groups or partners based on a mixture of student strengths and weaknesses, which promotes student-to-student interaction and learning. Some English language arts and math teachers regularly use item analysis to determine specific learning needs. The positive outcome of this practice is the development of student interdependence in learning. However, exemplars of this nature are sparse. School leaders and faculty have not yet established consistent practice in using student data to direct the development of differentiated instruction in class lessons. Where

teachers do use varied instructional strategies and aspects of differentiated instruction students are motivated and more fully engaged in learning.

The eagerness of students to absorb knowledge is evident. In addition, teachers are strongly passionate about their desire to deliver good instruction in helping all students to succeed. The offering of tutoring during lunch exemplifies the commitment of both students and adults to improve achievement. Additionally, students are fully confident that faculty members fully support them. One student states, "Our teachers work you hard. They want you to gain character and be ready for the outside world."

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

School leaders began a staff professional development plan this year that involves each staff member completing a written individualized improvement plan (IIP). This was a good effort by school leaders to include teacher input in their plans for professional growth. However, these plans lack depth and do not include other critical facets of professional development planning, such as solid recommendations from classroom observations. The school has not developed individualized plans for staff members that effectively influence teaching and learning for student success.

Teachers participate in department meetings and faculty conferences, and attend various in-school and off-site professional development events. However, there is no clear connection between teachers' specific instructional needs and these workshops. As a result, the school misses opportunities to link concretely the improvement of teachers' skills with improving student academic performance, hampering instructional development.

Teachers work cooperatively as they visit the classrooms of their colleagues to observe varied instruction. New teachers speak about feeling fully supported by their colleagues. This informal collaborative work serves teachers well in developing their own practice, as they are able to see some variety of teaching styles and approaches. However, this good practice is not fully embedded throughout the school and is not a practice formally adopted by the school.

The school inquiry team has made some strides this year. One team member states, "We are learning how we can best move students along in a positive way." This team has positively influenced the conversations in the school as more staff members talk about the working effectively with students in the "bottom third". They also serve as an example of effective teamwork as they perform their inquiry process tasks as a single unit.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 underdeveloped with proficient features.

The principal is a positive role model for students. For example, he specifically selects and reads encouraging quotes to motivate students and staff during the morning announcements. He has developed a good three-year vision of improvement for the school.

The principal is fully aware of the importance of including all stakeholders in developing and implementing school improvement plans. He is currently working with the assistant principals to ensure this takes place, thereby encouraging effective ownership. To support this process, students and teachers are already involved in improvement planning. Students spoke excitedly about the plans of student government to focus on how to get more students involved in all school matters. Teachers are proud of their collective strength in working together to share best practices through informal class visitations. The school faces the challenge of ensuring that all these stakeholder voices are heard and realized in all plans for school improvement.

While intentions and plans are clear, the school has not yet established a process that provides time to examine the implemented plans, measure and analyze progress, and determine next steps. Consequently, the school is not in a strong position to measure student progress effectively over an extended period. School leaders are moving towards the adoption of clear plans that outline a solid pacing calendar of checkpoints.

The school staff is shifting their focus to reflect on the current impact and influence of their work. The inquiry team has begun this practice as they examine both academic and social implications of the work they are doing with their targeted population. The plans for continued improvement show the promise of being a step in the right direction.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: The Business, Computer Applications and Entrepreneurship High School	△	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score		X		
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?		X		
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?		X		
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			X	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?		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 student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?		X		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?		X		
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?		X		
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X		

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYO, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.

<i>To what extent do ...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?			X	
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?		X		
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?		X		
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.

<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?		X		
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?			X	
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?		X		
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X		

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

<i>To what extent do...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?		X		
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?		X		
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?			X	
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X		

Quality Review Scoring Key							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed