



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

**Quality Review Report  
Office of Accountability  
2008-2009**

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**The Queens College School for Math, Science and  
Technology**

**Elementary/Middle School 499**

**148-20 Reeves Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11367**

**Principal: Anastasia Schneider**

**Dates of review: November 24-25, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Kim S. Outerbridge**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Queens College School for Math, Science and Technology is an elementary/middle school with 476 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 43% Black, 33% Asian/Pacific Islander, 17% Hispanic, and 6% White students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the 2007-2008 school year was 96.6%. The school does not receive Title I funding.

The school operates under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Queens College and the New York City Department of Education. Students are chosen by lottery to attend this school from seven local districts within Queens. Part of the school is housed by District 75 students. The principal was in the hospital at the time of the review. The assistant principal made all the arrangements and represented the principal throughout the review, supported by a retired principal and the network leader.

### Overall Evaluation

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

The school has made some progress since the last review. The principal and assistant principal are strong advocates for the school and there is a good climate for learning. The school building is well laid out, with student artwork displayed in hallways and on corridor walls. The curriculum is challenging and engaging so students enjoy their lessons, are eager and excited about learning and convey allegiance for their school. Indeed, the whole school community is supportive and eager to learn. Parents are extremely satisfied with the school's performance, even though they are unclear about particular accountability tools.

The principal, assistant principal, and faculty effectively communicate their high expectations to students and their families. They consistently gather a wide range of data, including results from summative and formative assessments. Teachers have each created an assessment binder. They use this to organize and analyze class-level data in order to better understand the needs of their students, though not all are yet equally skilled at differentiating their instruction to meet these needs. An AUSSIE consultant and a literacy coach assist classroom teachers with the interpretation of assessment data. The consultant and coach also model practice for teachers based on their needs. The school designs professional development and makes instructional decisions at a practical level to create what they refer to as a "thinking curriculum". There is some student goal setting, but there is a lack of clarity and consistency regarding goals.

The school has partnerships with Queens College and the Lincoln Center initiative and utilizes many services provided by these affiliates. Both partnership organizations provide valuable support for staff and students throughout the school year. The school uses support staff effectively to further deepen academic intervention services for students. This includes the guidance counselor who regularly works with small groups of children.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- There is a clear vision of the school's future development that is understood and shared by the school community.
- School leaders and faculty effectively communicate high expectations about attendance, behavior, and academic performance to students and families.
- The school collects and uses data to create a picture of students' strengths and areas of need.
- The school delivers a challenging and engaging curriculum in the core subjects, including the arts.
- The school works effectively with a range of services, partnerships and outside organizations to enhance the academic and personal development of students.
- Students are engaged and show interest in their learning.

### What the school needs to improve

- Analyze school-wide learning outcomes to identify the needs of all student subgroups to better inform instructional planning and ensure that all students make at least one year's progress.
- Formalize systems school wide to communicate and revisit individual student learning goals, and to monitor implementation of action plans towards overall achievement of these goals within established time frames.
- Cultivate structures that encourage teachers to revise classroom practice as a result of continual analysis of student outcomes.
- Further develop teachers' use of differentiated instructional models.

## 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 proficient.**

The school collects a wide range of data to create baseline, midline, and end of line assessments. This includes the New York State English language arts and math examination, Acuity (interim assessment data), Teacher's College assessments running records, conference notes, and teacher-made tests and quizzes. The school analyzes this data on a large scale identifying trends and patterns school wide and then grade by grade. Teachers analyze data relative to their classes and base instructional decisions on student performance. School leaders and faculty use the data from English language arts, math, science, and social studies to analyze student outcomes with a focus on both individuals and groups of students. Staff and parents are informed of the latest Progress Report data, though there is not a clear understanding of how student progress impacts the final score.

The school chooses not to disaggregate and analyze student outcomes by subgroup population, although the cabinet has discussed socio-economic subgroups. As a result the school does not know whether it is meeting all students' needs as effectively as possible.

Each teacher is developing a teacher assessment binder (TAB). This collection of data is used as a cumulative source of information specific to their class or classes in the middle school. At present, teachers do not use the binder strategically to inform instruction and any differentiation of instruction is unfocused in most classrooms. Classroom teachers conference with students and set preliminary teaching points in order to collect current data, but the conferences often lack depth. The methods used to document conferences vary by grade. The records are sometimes in the student notebooks which makes them less accessible for frequent reference. Staff members give students and families feedback about report card outcomes at the end of every marking period. In addition, interim progress reports are sent home between report cards to inform parents of their child's academic progress. Additional support is provided for students identified to be at risk during the school day and/or in after-school programs.

**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.**

Teachers construct their professional goals based on the needs of their classes and small cohorts within each class, using data compiled sequentially in assessment binders. There is an opportunity for teachers to revise initial goals during one-to-one conferences

with the assistant principal. Teacher goals reflect a clear attempt to identify a focus for instructional decisions. Nonetheless, these goals lack sufficient depth.

Student goals reflect academic and/or character-personal goals. In the elementary grades examples of this are evident on student desks. Classroom teachers provide each student with index cards that are attached to individual desktops. Each index card specifies each student's goal. With guidance, students are able to refer to their short-term goal and can it articulate very well. In the upper elementary grades and middle school, teachers document goals by subject. Forms of documentation lack consistency within each subject and are general in most cases. Students are able to articulate their goals. These range from reading more books in the subject area of English language arts, to checking answers in math, to learning more about Canada in social studies. The majority of teachers set student goals with limited input from their students, as evidenced by the similar responses given by students when asked about short- and long-term goals. The school is working to develop and implement processes for students to set their own goals. Student action plans are also evolving.

The school works consistently to convey high expectations to students and their families. Displays of student art and other work enliven the school building and help to motivate and stimulate the young learners. A parent handbook has been introduced to improve communication and promote school-wide goals.

**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 proficient.**

School leaders and faculty provide students with curricula that are aligned to the New York State standards. The scope and sequence followed is from the balanced literacy approach to reading and writing. Aspects of the Teacher's College reading and writing project are also embedded throughout the curriculum guides. Everyday Math and Impact programs are used in the elementary and middle school, respectively. Recently, the implementation of thematic units became a school-wide initiative. Themes are diverse grade by grade and class by class. In one 8th grade class students were reading memoirs and writing problem essays for English language arts, and studying Cherokee Indians in the area of social studies. The arts program is impressive. Students are continually engaged in a yearlong study of multiple artists. Culminating work is displayed throughout the school building. The fine art program reinforces classroom instruction.

Teachers set objectives for their instruction. However, precise and systemic use of differentiation as an approach to meeting the needs of small groups and individuals is still at the beginning stages of understanding and implementation. Nevertheless, teachers are eager to learn in this collegial and warm school community. Teachers use a template developed in conjunction with the AUSSIE consultant in order to plan lessons. The six thinking levels template includes Bloom's Taxonomy and the indicators of multiple intelligences in order to assist teachers with organizing lesson activities. However, not all teachers fully understand how to align student outcomes on Teacher's College interim assessments to instructional next steps in the classroom. Similarly, not all teachers are yet consistently using the assessment binder as an informative tool for teaching and learning. However, in contrast, a seventh grade English language arts teacher utilizes the Acuity interim assessment data effectively and the students are

accessing the online system where the instructional resources are tailored to meet their needs. Similarly, a math teacher is able to provide small-group instruction based on the three skills identified as not yet mastered, while others work in independent groups, and a kindergarten class is working in stations based on assessments and teacher observations.

**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 proficient.**

The school's professional development program is constructed to support teacher's specific, diverse needs. The Santa Cruz model for teaching standards is used as part of the ongoing professional learning. Selection of professional goals is differentiated teacher by teacher. Each teacher is required to establish two initial goals in conjunction with the Santa Cruz model of teaching standards. This professional learning model also provides teachers with recommended revisions when the administrative team meets with teachers one-on-one. Classroom intervisitations help support collaborative planning. Using an agreed focus, teachers observe practices and reflect using a basic form to record this experience. Frequency and follow-up, however, are not structured, and the feedback forms from teachers lack depth and detail. There is also an open forum for feedback and discussion in order to further promote teacher collaboration

School and class websites are integrated to promote ongoing communication across the school community. However, building capacity within the teaching staff to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practice is still at the beginning stages.

The school benefits from strong partnerships with outside organizations. Consultants from Queens College plan with the school's instructional team to continually align partnership goals with the school's goals. Queens College provides a liaison person who is housed in the school building and who is also an active member of the school leadership team. The Lincoln Center initiative provides valuable support to teachers through professional development and ongoing residencies. Continuing collaboration with Lincoln Center and Queens College also provides support for students and families outside of the school setting. Parents and students are able to utilize the college facilities, participate in hands-on activities and attend in-school and off-facility performances and presentations.

**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 proficient.**

DIBELS is one of the interim assessments used in the early childhood grades to determine instructional groups, with a specific schedule of benchmarks based on the standardized timeline. Reading groups and academic service groups change regularly in response to outcomes. Independent reading groups are flexible. Teachers are using the Acuity system in grades 3 through 8. This interim assessment data is available and accessed by classroom teachers for online review. Instructional resources for students using Acuity in English language arts are differentiated, based on the outcomes of the fall predictive assessment taken in October 2008. Students are able to articulate their

learning focus. The teachers rely on the electronic reports in order to monitor and revise the next learning focus for their students.

This year the inquiry team is targeting a group of higher-achieving students because analysis of the summative data identified slippage within performance Levels 3 and 4. However, the use of data to evaluate effectiveness and inform strategic decision making is inconsistent. Some teachers have devised their own methods for monitoring their students' progress towards achieving their goals, but there is no systemic practice to support this notion. As a result, teacher practice in modifying instructional programs in order to accelerate student learning is not consistently well developed within and across all the core subject areas. Similarly, the importance of promoting student progress as defined within the New York City Progress report is not yet well understood across the school community.

Nevertheless, the principal and assistant principal are strongly committed to realizing their high expectations for all their students. The whole school community shares the vision and is determined to ensure the students make the best possible progress.

## School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name:</b> The Queens College School for Math, Science and Technology	Δ	▶	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>				
	Δ	▶	✓	+
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?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all subgroups of students?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>				
	Δ	▶	✓	+
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?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			<b>X</b>	
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?		<b>X</b>		
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?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

### 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, DYQ, 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

<b>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.</b>							
<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				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>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.</b>							
<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				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X				
<b>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.</b>							
<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				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>