

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

**Queens High School for Information, Technology and
Research**

**High School 302
825 Bay Street
Far Rockaway
NY 11691**

Principal: Michelle Williams

Dates of review: April 4 - 5, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Francesca Peña

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Queens High School for Information, Research and Technology is a high school with 170 students with grade 9 and grade 10. The school population comprises 67% Black, 25% Hispanic, 6% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 5% special education students. Boys account for 57% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 85%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Queens High School for Information, Research and Technology is a small high school in its second year of operation. The principal's leadership has enabled the school to make great strides in its short two-year history. Guided by a commitment to a well-defined set of values and high expectations, the administration and staff have established an effective instructional community in which the academic, social, and emotional needs of students are attended to well. The curriculum provides opportunities that challenge students. The school's collaborative culture is reflected through the range of partnerships with organizations and professional groups, especially in the area of youth development. These collaborations are having a positive impact on the students. One of the students said, "I used to be a big troublemaker, not anymore. I learned to speak to cops and changed my attitude and I have not been involved in any trouble this year." Consequently, students are respectful and engaged in their learning, as evidenced by the progress report showing 82% of its freshman class acquiring 10 credits or more.

Collaborative planning and decision-making are well-embedded practices. All teachers participate in structured teacher teams that meet weekly during common planning time. The effects of these collaborations are carefully monitored showing that they have made a difference in enabling teachers to evaluate curriculum, undertake research, share instructional strategies, and plan differentiated instruction more effectively, resulting in students' improved academic achievement and scholarship reports. In addition, teaming has empowered teachers to become leaders and as a result, they are key partners in the decision-making process.

Data collection is extensive and carefully reviewed to understand the performance and progress of individual students, classes, grades, and subject departments. However, at this time, the school does not have embedded systems for measuring progress towards interim goals and identifying areas where improvements in plans or strategies are needed. As a result, the school misses opportunities to improve student performance.

The school's improvement goals are clearly communicated to, and understood by, all members of the community. However, the lack of interim goals and benchmarks to measure incremental progress makes it difficult for the school to monitor progress and to make necessary adjustments towards reaching set targets. The parents interviewed are pleased with the school, but do not yet feel that they have the knowledge, or are sufficiently involved in school life, to understand their children's performance so that they are better able to support them at home.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Students benefit from an increasingly integrated curriculum, which includes a range of technology resources and research to validate the theme of the school.
 - All freshman students are enrolled in a strategically developed research class in order to improve student ability to research and analyze information, which aligns with the school's theme. The students are able to validate websites, advance searching techniques and they have learned to use the New York State information databases as evidenced by classroom observations. During their senior year, the school expects students to complete a yearlong research project utilizing the research skills they are presently learning.
- Strong partnerships with professional groups and educational institutions contribute significantly to students' academic, personal and social development.
 - Through collaborations between the school's guidance counselor, the Safe Space organization, and the Long Island Jewish Medical Center, and individual gender-based group counseling sessions have been developed to foster youth development and youth voice. As a result, students are communicating better with staff and their peers on an academic and personal level.
 - The NYPD Learning Influence Future Endeavour (LIFE) program places police officers in the school to serve as student mentors who, in collaboration with the Youth Development Institute, have co-facilitated workshops for staff. This support has guided the staff in the development of the student advisory program.
- School leaders and faculty regularly evaluate the school's professional development opportunities and structures to support distributed leadership.
 - Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms are discussed during team meetings and department meetings after every marking period to evaluate the impact of teaching practices and professional development. The curriculum and professional development is adjusted and refined accordingly to further improve student learning outcomes.
 - All teachers are afforded opportunities to participate in monthly Learning Walks to study the effectiveness of professional development on teaching and learning. Learning Walk observations are reported back to the entire staff and discuss at faculty meetings. Professional development is then fine tuned at team level to meet the needs identified in the Learning Walks.
- Teaching strategies and classroom routines are differentiated to insure multiple entry points for learners into the curriculum.
 - Teachers analyze results of exams, diagnostic assessments and authentic work samples to determine instructional objectives, maximizing in-depth understanding of strengths and specific sub-skills needed for the implementation of targeted strategies across content areas. As a result,

most students, including special education and English language learners, are making adequate progress as evidenced by the scholarship report.

- Every student is given a Learning Style and Multiple Intelligence Survey that identifies his/her preferred modalities for learning. Teachers use this information to guide them when they design their lessons. As a result, all groups are purposely formed.
- Teachers work collaboratively and passionately to exchange ideas and best practices that continually improve student achievement.
 - The school strategically uses the inquiry team members to heighten the data expertise of the grade-wide interdisciplinary teams. Therefore, teachers throughout the site are growing increasingly adept at using a variety of data sources, all of which specifically assess a balance of language proficiency and content knowledge. Similarly, teachers are gaining confidence in generating a variety of in-house, formative assessments across English language arts, math, social studies and science classes, and using the results from this periodic data to rethink and reconstruct interdisciplinary units of study.
 - Creative programming has created a paradigm shift in collaboration, affording teachers opportunities in daily common planning periods to lead in data analysis, decision making and professional development. The consistent frequency of these sessions has empowered teachers and is enabling them to accomplish the majority of essential tasks involved in lesson planning, sharing best practices, and analyzing students' written work.
- Relationships among students, teachers and school leaders are warm and respectful, resulting in an environment that is conducive to learning.
 - The school has structured sufficient time during the school day for teachers to support their students, who are very articulate and respectful. Students programmed for academic intervention classes before or after school are able to work one-on-one or in a small group with the teacher and participate in independent studies, remediation, research, and/or enrichment. This gives students the opportunity to work on their academic deficits, to challenge themselves and to enrich their studies independently.
 - The school has developed the Good to Go (G2G) campaign to keep students motivated and on task. Students may earn G2G tickets when they complete required assignments on time, follow dress code, and come to school every day. As a result, these students participate in school trips, and special recognition assemblies.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend the depth of data analysis in all core subjects to gain additional insights into individual student and subgroup performance and progress.
 - The school gathers, analyzes, and interprets a range of formative and summative data, but has not developed and implemented protocols to analyze students' work in depth in order to better prepare students to

achieve mastery in scholarship and Regents exams, specifically in math and sciences.

- The school collects a variety of information, but does not have sufficient systems to make data easily accessible. Thus, limited understanding of longitudinal growth and trends prevents timely intervention.
- Improve communication with families and develop a system to help them use tools such as ARIS Parent Link to understand and support their children in their learning.
 - The school does not offer families enough workshops, guidance, or meetings to help them support their child's achievement and school success. The school has not set up opportunities to enable parents to benefit from learning more about ARIS parent link, school progress reports and other tools designed to support parents' understanding of their child's progress at school. Parents only come to school when there is a serious problem with their child. The school is in the process of implementing another mode of communication via video-teleconference in hope to engage more parents in this process.
- Develop a strategic plan to actively involve more parents in school decision making to promote involvement and leadership of families in important school activities and decisions.
 - Currently, the school does not promote involvement and leadership of families in important school activities and does not provide support to enable their participation. As a result, parental engagement at the school is minimal.
 - Currently, the school does not have a parent coordinator. Parents indicated much frustration about their inability to bring other parents together to support school initiatives and to learn the use of tools to understand student performance.
- Ensure greater uniformity in the way school leaders monitor, evaluate, and modify systems employed to guarantee that school-wide interim and long-term goals are met.
 - Although most teachers utilize a well-equipped arsenal of monitoring tools to track and chart student progress, as well as to set appropriate long- and short-term goals, this practice is not consistent across all teachers. School leaders have not instituted an effective uniform tracking system to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of teachers monitoring the progress of their students. As a result, some teachers are not receiving next-step support to either maintain or improve their monitoring of student progress.
 - The administration does not post attendance goals or track schoolwide attendance figures as a motivational tool. As a result, the attendance rate has declined 5% since last year.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Queens High School for Information, Technology	△	▶	✓	+
and Research			X	
Overall QR Score				
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	△	▶	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?				X
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			X	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				
			X	
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	▶	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?		X		
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				
		X		

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X				
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X				
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?		X					
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X				
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.							
<i>To what extent does the school..</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			X				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X				
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals 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 progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school..</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?		X					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed