

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

**Robert H. Goddard High School for Communication Arts
and Technology**

**High School 308
138-30 Lafayette Street
Queens
NY 11417**

Principal: William Moore

Dates of review: December 14 - 15, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Kim Outerbridge

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Robert H. Goddard High School for Communication Arts and Technology is a high school with 277 students from grade 9 through grade 10. The school population comprises 8% Black, 43% Hispanic, 26% White, and 22% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 90.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The school is in its second year of development. The administrative team has created a collegial environment where all students and teachers are committed to reaching the school wide goals. Organizational decisions align with those goals. Teachers focus on integrating technology and planning interdisciplinary lessons that promote project based learning experiences. Parents appreciate the learning environment and are strong supporters of the school. High parental usage of the ARIS parent link and Engrade online reporting system ensures families clearly understand student performance and progress outcomes. School wide goals are public and are articulated. Students demonstrate a strong commitment to the school and appreciate the range of activities available to them and the opportunity to express their views. The student council meets regularly and contributes ideas as the school continues to develop. Students feel they have a voice and that teachers are caring. They monitor their own progress using multiple online systems.

The school utilizes online systems in order to develop teachers' instructional and organizational skills. It schedules opportunities for teacher teams to collaborate before and after school upon request. During this time, teachers have identified two targeted populations and recorded cycles of inquiry for each student. Additional reinforcement provides groups and individual students with consistent reminders of the expectations. However, there is not yet a coherent and consistent approach to determining how students learn best. Nor is there any formal identification of teaching strategies that work. Some teachers do not yet fully understand this part of the collaborative inquiry process. Consequently, this reduces the potential for teacher teams to be accurate and precise within the stages and steps of inquiry. Nonetheless, teachers receive a wide range of supports. This includes the breadth of data collected and shared, access to on-line information and support, and professional development opportunities directed towards individual needs.

The identification of a common instructional focus and a shared school culture has a direct impact on student achievement. This focus derives from a thorough analysis of assessment data and student outcomes to inform goal setting and action planning. Administrators and teachers review data sets during the period when interim progress report are distributed. Because of this, teachers are more empathetic towards student needs. Identifying "strategies that work" aligned to student outcomes and making increasing use of technology to differentiate instruction is part of the next stage of development for this school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Organizational decisions align with the school's goals to meet the needs of students and foster student performance outcomes.
 - During summer planning, staff explore and research project-based models. Thematic units of study are composed and put into practice in all subjects. Teachers make effective use of SMARTboards, laptops and projectors to enhance learning. The school supports this effective integration of technology and thematic based student projects by resources and allocations. Both are clearly identifiable in classroom lessons heightening student engagement.
 - Adjusted teacher assignments incorporate a push in model. They provide additional instructional supports to students identified as at-risk in the analysis of sub-group data, helping to improve their progress.
- The school provides a safe and nurturing environment that supports progress towards its goals by communicating high expectations to students and families and giving them opportunities to engage in an open forum.
 - An in-house learning environment survey gives an in-depth analysis of current school-wide needs. This increases the opportunities for an open forum of communication and supports the school's efforts towards reaching its professional, academic, and youth development goals.
 - During a student meeting, students shared their strong commitment to the school. They feel supported by both teachers and other support staff. In addition, students lead extra-curricular activities enabling them to give feedback. The student government meets regularly so students have a voice in school wide decisions. Numerous partnerships, clubs and in-school programs support students' social and emotional development as well as academic achievement. Arista, junior fellows, credit recovery offerings, lunch learners, sports, clubs, and other after school activities provide students with incentive along with motivation to do well during the regular school day.
- School leaders and staff gather and analyze a comprehensive range of summative and formative data supplemented by student work analysis in order to identify school wide needs.
 - All teachers receive data for incoming and returning students. In particular, grade 9 teachers receive the previous school year English language arts and math results. They create data folios and include historical data in the binder. Following discussion and analysis, administration and teachers identified reading comprehension as a school wide focus. The school implements a skill of the month with set learning targets as defined by the Acuity system. In this way, teachers are responsive to the global needs of students and are able to set well-considered overall goals.

- “Google docs” are available to house school data. Here teachers can view professional documents, track student progress, post ideas and engage in discussions in order to build teacher and student capacity.
- The school engages in timely communication and helps families use tools to understand student outcomes and progress, consistently reinforcing the strong partnership.
 - The school communicates with parents utilizing multiple resources such as monthly calendars, the ARIS parent link, progress reports, report cards, phone calls and in-school conferences. It makes interim progress reports available preceding formal report cards. As a result, parents feel informed and are able to articulate school goals and student outcomes. Parents express confidence in the school’s ability to achieve all set goals. The online system allows families to access student outcomes. One parent referred to notifications she receives via the internet and teachers monitor parents’ usage of the online systems. The ARIS parent link shows a high parent login of 72%.
- Assessment results and the analysis of student outcomes inform goal setting and action planning and result in a common instructional focus and shared school culture.
 - Identified as a school wide goal, reading comprehension is the focus based on the Acuity instructionally targeted assessment and confirmed through an item skills analysis. The school implements a skill of the month and drills down further to reveal the specific skills for students to master. Teachers post the skill, in this case sequencing, in classrooms throughout the school and across content areas resulting in an overall improvement in student outcomes.
 - School wide goals include the aim for all students to graduate with a Regents diploma. To support this, the online grading system allows students, parents, and teachers to view past, present and future assignments. Due to the school’s efficient organizational structures, 92% of all students are on track for graduation. Many students exceed the minimum requirements as seen in the STARS credit accumulation report.
- School wide teaching practices reflect a common instructional focus and supports for teachers encourage individual growth while positively affecting systemic implementation of a school wide focus.
 - Through formal and informal observations the administrative team acquires clear indicators that system wide implementation is successful. Defended by the teaching staff and embedded in all content area lessons, teachers also confirm student improvement in the areas targeted. Monitoring verifies the consistent integration of technology across the school, and the adoption of the thematic approach in all subjects with a positive impact on student outcomes.
 - Differentiated support for teachers includes formal and informal feedback from administrators, informal interclass visitations, focused webinars, and other school wide professional development. The school provides specific professional learning experiences based on individual teacher

needs. As part of the mentoring program for new teachers, the school couples them with an experienced teacher during the first year.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand teachers' understanding of collaborative inquiry so that teams share, reflect, evaluate and revise their own practices to improve student outcomes.
 - Although teacher teams meet and identify target groups and individuals, not all teachers have a clear understanding of what instructional strategies improve students' skills. Some feel, for example, that reminding students to complete their assignments is sufficient. Having little or no evidence to determine what has a positive impact on the outcomes of the target population teachers are unable to make specific instructional strategies explicit.
- Establish a coherent and consistent approach to how students learn by formally identifying teaching strategies that work and practices that need refinement.
 - Teachers informally engage in classroom visitations but the lack of structure minimizes the impact. The school does not yet effectively identify "best instructional practices" or have systems in place to share teaching strategies formally.
 - The focus of teacher meetings often relates to procedures and classroom management rather than pedagogy. Team efforts lack the processes to enable staff to identify sustainable approaches and engage in making instructional decisions.
- Foster and support the professional collaboration amongst teacher teams to ensure that progress monitoring is accurate, precise, and accessible and understood by all.
 - Teachers do not yet consistently use the systems and tools the school has in place as a means to communicate with other colleagues and closely observe student progress. Looking at overall grades versus skill sets is the overall determining factor set for progress monitoring. Leaders are aware that they need to encourage increased usage to maximize capacity building and develop alignment and coherence. A teacher meeting demonstrated that teachers are beginning to develop team norms and standards. This emerging use of systems led to the recognition of the need to establish criteria and benchmarks.
- Broaden the implementation of computer based self-adjusting programs for students in order to foster and cultivate the differentiated model of instruction.
 - The school has worked consistently towards achieving its goals related to the use of technology and differentiated instruction, providing training and resources for staff. Leaders recognize the need to sustain these efforts as the school grows each year and additional funding becomes available. One computer-based program is an online application that adjusts to student ability but currently this has limitations.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: The Robert H. Goddard High School for Communication Arts and Technology	Δ	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed