

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

**Business, Computer Applications and Entrepreneurship
School**

**High School 496
207-01 216th Ave.
Queens
NY 11411**

Principal: Miles Nash

Dates of review: November 9 – 10, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Jeffrey Soloff

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Business, Computer Applications and Entrepreneurship School is a high school with 498 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 85% Black, 8% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% American Indian and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 68% of the students enrolled and girls account for 32%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 86.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The school is one of four high schools in a shared campus. The second year principal serves as a role model for the school community by being visible, approachable and interactive with the students. In its quest to strengthen the instructional program, the administration has expanded the curriculum to provide greater choice of courses for students. Newly created curriculum maps for the ninth and tenth grades provide teachers with a year-at-a-glance view of the school's expectations. These maps are posted on the school's website for students and parents to view. As yet, the curriculum does not sufficiently challenge all students, resulting in students' needs not being met consistently.

The school has high expectations regarding attendance and lateness. Incentives encourage students to come to school ready to learn. A phone messenger system and an attendance teacher enable the school to keep abreast of truancy and take appropriate timely action. This has impacted the attendance rate favorably.

Data is insufficiently analyzed. School leaders gather and analyze summative data on student learning outcomes at the school level. Classroom level analysis on the learning outcomes of student subgroups is not fully embedded, hindering the delivery of differentiated and effective instruction. Procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams and the quality of organizational decisions are not in place. Goals have been established on the school level, but goal setting is inconsistent across the school.

Classroom observations and teacher self-selection determine the professional development opportunities offered. The plan, based on the four pillars of professional learning (leadership, growth, strategies and assessment), has resulted in uniform lesson plans and raised expectations for student success.

Partnerships with community-based organizations provide peer mediation, anti-gang counseling, and business-related opportunities for students. These programs have successfully helped students to make up the credits needed to graduate, raised awareness of the dangers of gangs, become involved in community service and receive counseling services outside school. The school has successfully increased parental involvement and information sharing. Parents have access to students' attendance through ARIS and to grades through the online Teacher Ease program. The monthly progress reports keep parents informed about student progress and achievement.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and administration provide clear and collaborative leadership to faculty in implementing new curriculum and resources that are aligned to the school's instructional goals and to student needs.
 - The school has expanded course offerings, field experiences and partnerships for its business program. Visits to financial institutions and guest speakers have created a reality-based program that motivates students to work toward pursuing a career in business. Students feel that these experiences "prepare them for a career in the business world".
 - The creation of teacher teams that meet regularly to discuss curriculum and scholarship results has resulted in a greater focus on student needs. As a result, teachers make curriculum changes and adjustments in instructional delivery to improve student learning.
- Professional development has high priority and is closely aligned with the school's goals for improvement, thus enabling each staff member to improve their practice in order to raise student achievement.
 - The school has introduced weekly professional development sessions aligned with its goals and curricula which are facilitated by an assistant principal. These meetings allow teachers to collaborate on strategies, develop lessons and discuss how to improve student learning outcomes.
 - The inclusion of leadership and professional growth activities in the professional development program is intended to build adult capacity. The staff is focusing on the indicators from the Santa Cruz Professional Learning Standards and the four pillars of professional learning in its effort to improve teacher practice.
- The school works closely with parents, sharing relevant information with them and their children, to encourage improved academic performance.
 - Progress reports, which include comments around individual student needs, are mailed to parents every three weeks in order to keep them informed about their child's progress. Areas for improvement are indicated so that students and parents are aware of the teachers' concerns.
 - The school's use of the Teacher Ease online grade book affords parents an opportunity to keep track of the progress of their children. Parent access to ARIS provides up-to-date attendance information. The phone messenger system helps parents understand the importance of helping their children arrive in school on time and attend regularly. As a result of these efforts, attendance has shown an improvement this year.

- The school has developed effective internal and external partnerships with community-based organizations to provide services for students and families.
 - Numerous partnerships that successfully address the educational, social and emotional needs of students have been established. They provide peer mediation, anti-gang counseling, credit recovery program and community service opportunities. Partnerships related to the business theme of the school provide role models and field experiences for students.
 - A campus wide security committee, created by the four high schools, has been created to ensure a safe, secure environment for students and staff. Teachers are being trained to make the building a safer learning environment.
- The school provides opportunities for an open exchange of information with students and parents which results in more informed parental support and increased student ownership of rules and policies.
 - High expectations for students are communicated to the school community via a student contract that parents and students co-sign. The contract communicates rules, grading policies, school goals and syllabi in order to better inform students and parents. The school promotes parental involvement by arranging college visitations for students and parents in an effort to emphasize the importance of choosing the most appropriate college.
 - Parent workshops on ARIS and ACUITY have been conducted. These give parents access to the latest achievement and attendance data in the school's efforts to build an informed partnership with parents regarding whole school and individual goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand differentiation, based on formative data, so that instruction reflects purposeful groupings and differentiated learning activities to ensure that all students are constantly challenged to maximize their learning.
 - The school does not use data to establish groups based on performance or skill to meet the needs of individual students or subgroups such as Hispanics, females or special education students.
 - Teachers are not differentiating instruction in a majority of classes. As a result, students are often unchallenged and individual learning needs are not being addressed.

- Establish a systematic approach to the gathering, analysis, dissemination and use of data at whole school, grade and individual student levels and extend this analysis to examine patterns and trends.
 - The administration reviews data for specific subjects and teachers but does not study data for specific subgroups in order to identify trends, strengths and needs. As a result, appropriate instructional programs and differentiated strategies are not being developed.
 - Insufficient data is gathered and analyzed to provide appropriate feedback with regard to evaluating the effectiveness of instructional and organizational decisions on student performance.
- Narrow the focus and inject greater rigor into the work of all teacher teams in order to accelerate the progress of identified students.
 - The teams have not selected specific subgroups to study. As a result, adjustments to in- and out-of-classroom resources to improve learning outcomes have not been identified precisely enough.
- Set interim and long-term goals with outcomes against which progress can be measured, adjustments made and success evaluated for all subgroups, rather than just for students with failing grades or credit deficit.
 - The lack of established benchmarks across subject areas hampers the school's ability to effectively measure student progress. As a result, the needs of all students are not being met consistently.
 - The school has not yet developed a system to set data informed goals for groups of students, including those who need to be challenged, so that teachers can develop additional supports for these students.
- Develop a method for evaluating curricular, instructional and organizational decisions so that adjustments can be made in a timely manner.
 - No mechanism for evaluating and adjusting the use of organizational resources in response to student needs is in place. As a result, decisions are made without a method to evaluate their effectiveness.
 - The school does not have a protocol for evaluating how instructional decisions are aligned with the school's capacity building practices. As a result, decisions are not always in alignment with student learning needs.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Business, Computer Applications and Entrepreneurship High School	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