



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability
2010-2011**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Queens School of Inquiry

**158-40 67th Road
Queens,
NY 11366**

Principal: Meredith Rosenblatt

Dates of review: March 10 -11, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Marlene D. Wilks

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Queens School of Inquiry (Q252) is a Middle/High school with 491 students from 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 17% Black, 26% Hispanic, 18% White, and 38% Asian students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 96%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is Proficient

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The curriculum is purposely designed to challenge students to engage in rigorous tasks that are focused on college level work resulting in graduating students entering college with college level credits.
 - With College Readiness at the heart of Q252 instructional programs, the school, in collaboration with Queens College, emphasizes rigorous College preparation curricula complimented by a strong technology and arts program. Evidenced in the high level of inquiry-based tasks and the rich quality of student work products throughout the different subjects, is the school's commitment to ensuring that each student graduate with at least one college credit; with all graduating students having the opportunity to earn 62 tuition-free CUNY credits.
- School leaders make strategic decisions around scheduling and the use of resources that support the instructional goals and meet students' learning needs.
 - In their effort to realize their yearlong goal of creating a Common Core State Standard-based assessment, teachers meet daily on grade-level teams and weekly on subject area teams to collaborate on the development and the work around inquiry-based tasks and rubrics in use throughout the school. With five of the high school teachers working as adjunct professors at Queens College, the school is able to capitalize on these positions by offering college level courses during the day to 11th graders in addition to their high school courses. Additionally, teachers of 11th graders are available to offer more elective courses and provide smaller group support to students who remain on campus when 11th graders go off to the College campus.
- The administration is committed to providing teachers' with direct feedback on a regular basis through written observation reports and other technological devices in order to improve teacher effectiveness and performance.
 - Feedback to teachers is timely and interactive through the use of online communication and networking systems such as "Ning, GoogleDocs and Snapgrades. All teachers received at least one formal and many informal written observations which were further used by the administration to improve or support teaching practices. One teacher, for example, was assigned to observe how another teacher effectively used differentiated strategies to modify instruction for special needs students and was able to apply similar strategies in his classrooms to improve his students' performance evident in before and after work product. As a result, a large percent of the students passed their elective courses, and are back on track to eventually graduate with earned college credits.
- The school has made a concerted effort to engage staff, students and parents in open communication to ensure accountability, safety and trust.

- To support their vision of fully preparing their students for college and career, the school has created a safe and supportive environment that extends to all members of the school community. Advisory is one of the chief vehicles through which expectations are regularly communicated and where every child is guaranteed to be known well by at least one adult. One eleventh-grader who was very enthusiastic about his learning, shared that because of his constant struggle with mathematics, he was known by and received support from every teacher in the building as each teacher, at some point, provided him with individual support. As a result of his positive attitude towards his learning, he was placed in additional elective course called “Young Men’s Leadership”. He received elective credits for participating in the class as he was able to demonstrate a high level of perseverance. He passed his geometry class and is ready to move onto college level mathematics in the fall.
- A very effective communication system is utilized to encourage reciprocal feedback among members of the entire school community.
 - The school has successfully implemented an online interactive reporting system “Snapgrades” that allows parents and teachers/advisors to readily track students’ progress from missing homework to absence, lateness and performance trends. Parents spoke appreciatively of the constancy and care with which the school attends to the business of open communication, praising the principal and teachers for quick and personal responses and for the support and training that they have received that have helped them to access reporting systems like ARIS. One student shared that as a result of the “School’s Messenger Wake-Up Call” he is never late for school.
- Parents are partners in their child’s education and are kept well-informed of their child’s needs and as a result are able to keep abreast of their children’s progress or lack thereof.
 - The expectations that all students graduate with at least one college credit is constantly communicated to parents and students by way of advisory or one-to-one sessions with teachers. Teachers use common-planning time to conduct pre-arranged sessions with parents of students who are deemed to be progress deficient based on results from the Progress to Graduation Tracker. Parents fully participate in the registration of ninth grade students for college level courses and have interactive communication about progress towards collaborative goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand the practice of measurable, data driven goal setting across all content areas so that teachers concentrate on the academic growth of students through interim benchmarks to accelerate student learning.
 - While there is evidence of projected outcomes developed in the Units of study in literacy and science and identified in some of the shared goals by students interviewed, similar standards are not fully established and emphasized in all other subjects in order for teachers to readily pinpoint, whether individual students are meeting or not meeting overall defined

outcomes. Lack of such focus on individual student academic needs thwarts the overall school goal of college and career readiness.

- Continue to elevate the effectiveness of instructional and resource decisions in order to refine the adjustments made to accelerate learning and support instructional goals.
 - Due to the school's focus on college and career readiness and the general expectation is that every student is college bound, students who may not be quite ready to meet these expectations need more careful attention. Instructional resources and decisions do not consistently target the needs of these students who seem to be keeping up but in reality are struggling to do so base on their very competitive environment; a sentiment shared by the parents. One student shares that she struggles with reading because she does not like reading and is having a hard time keeping up. A failure to adjust her individual pace and level may contribute to her losing interest, frustration and eventually failure to meet expectations.
- Promote greater consistency among teachers in the purposeful delivery of instruction so that the needs of all students are continuously addressed.
 - Much evidence exists throughout the school that many teachers plan carefully and deliver instruction that motivates and captivates students' interests, one example being that of the science class on the rock cycle. However, this practice is not consistent throughout the school. Some lessons although introduced with the school-wide inquiry focus, continue to be the traditional teacher-directed lesson and as such does not provide students with many avenues to engage their peers in asking pertinent and relevant topic-based questions; making rebuttals using text-based reference, or engage in discussion that promotes a higher and deeper level of engagement. A lack of teachers knowledge about effective or ineffective teaching practices or an explicit school held belief about how student learn best will hinder growth especially at the student level.
- Elevate the level of data analysis so that student outcomes promote refinements to the curriculum and pedagogy in order to substantially challenge students' strengths and needs through differentiated learning.
 - As groups of teachers work to develop school-wide assessments in each subject area, the need to use formative data to plan current differentiated tasks across all subject areas has not been fully encouraged. In the absence of constant use of data to include student class-work provides insight into how to adjust instruction upwards or downwards based on students' individual needs, stymies the progress of students who may otherwise have made more progress if the aforementioned practice becomes the norm.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

| | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|----|
| School name: Queens School of Inquiry | UD | D | P | WD |
| Overall QR Score | | | P | |
| 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> | UD | D | P | WD |
| 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 |
| 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> | UD | D | P | WD |
| 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 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level? | | | X | |
| 2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, 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 |

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> | UD | D | P | WD |
|--|----|---|---|----|
| 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 |

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> | UD | D | P | WD |
|--|----|---|---|----|
| 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 | |

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> | UD | D | P | WD |
|--|----|---|---|----|
| 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 | |

| Quality Review Scoring Key | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|---|------------|---|------------|----|----------------|
| UD | Underdeveloped | D | Developing | P | Proficient | WD | Well Developed |