



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report 2010-2011**

**Long Island City High School**

**30Q450**

**14-30 Broadway**

**Queens**

**NY 11106**

**Principal: Maria Mamo-Vacacela, I.A.**

**Dates of review: June 1 – 3, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Catherine M. Powis**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Long Island City High School is school with 3420 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 12% Black, 61% Hispanic, 12% White, and 15% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 80.3%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Both students and families welcome and appreciate the high expectations consistently conveyed by school leaders and faculty that positively impact on student achievement.
  - Parents are quick to express that they are content with the high level of consistent communication presenting a united home-school connection, especially from the parent coordinator. “Have high expectations, stay in school, study hard, and go to college...” is the mantra for focused programs and partners that provide academic, social, and motivational support necessary for the students to seek and gain admission to postsecondary institutions. Scholarship opportunities and advanced diplomas result from several advanced placement courses and specialized coursework. The culinary arts program results in career and technical certification. For example, four students recently received scholarships to culinary institutes amounting to over \$125,000.00 while other students received partial scholarships to other colleges.
  - Parents play an integral part in decision making. For example, based on discussions at the School Leadership Team (SLT) the school’s small learning communities will have new college/career themes next year. Students and families completed an online survey ranking their choices for September and share the excitement of the high expectations for academic, career and college readiness, and personal support that each SLC will provide for all learners to achieve success. As a result, students and their families esteem the school as a site that offers all learners a diverse education.
- All stakeholders agree the school is a respectful, nurturing environment which enables students to receive a high level of support in their personal and academic development.
  - Students are very active in ensuring that their voice is heard. Student input as SLT members resulted in more personalized SLCs and offering elective courses to all. Other student leaders participate in a borough student advisory council that broadens their perspective on how other Queens high schools operate. Students manage fund-raising activities, such as bake sales to raise money for clubs, activities and trips.
  - In response to the learning environment survey and other data, SLCs provide the personalization, intimacy and sense of family comparable to a small high school. Dedicated staff, i.e., a teacher team, dean, assistant principal, counselors, and SLC coordinators focuses on academics, behavior, attendance, and college readiness for smaller student groups. Students share that they know their peers, have a sense of belonging, and student-teacher relationships encourage them to achieve their full potential. A freshman advisory ensures a smooth transition into the high school experience. Case conferences are planned for families to meet with core teachers to review their child’s performance and identify strategies leading to academic and behavioral success.
- Teacher teams reflect on their practice and provide each other with meaningful feedback that promotes shared adult learning and improves student outcomes.
  - The inquiry approach is an integral part of the action research that drives teacher teamwork dedicated to each SLC. Teams meet regularly utilizing protocols and common assessments to identify students’ patterns of weakness. Based on an analysis of a school-created writing assessment and matching rubric, all teams agreed that student

writing needed improvement; specifically organization, transitions and language use. Assessment results determine targeted students and research-based strategies to improve writing skills are implemented across contents. This iterative process leads to teachers being more confident about revising their practice and noticeable improvements in student writing as measured by seven rubric criteria.

- Students benefit from a broad curriculum, including specialized courses and a variety of electives, which prioritize key standards that drive student achievement.
  - Standards-based curriculum maps and pacing guidelines provide a roadmap for Regents classes and specialized courses. The culinary arts programs culminates in a Career and Technical Education (CTE) endorsed diploma and 17 advanced placement courses provide opportunities for advanced Regents diplomas. Students benefit from seven foreign language choices and several arts and music courses that afford a well-rounded portfolio for college applications. Regent preparation modules emphasize key standards for English language learners (ELLs) and special education students and refine tasks in order to address skill deficits identified in previous test item analysis and student work. Additionally, classes in English as a second language follow explicit pacing guides with intended outcomes for the Milestones program in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. As a result, student achievement is becoming evident in the significant increase in a three-year comparison of advanced Regents diplomas.
- Improvements in learning are supported by informed organizational decisions across several aspects of the school based on identified strengths and needs of students.
  - In an effort to increase the graduation rate this year, school leaders created several new pathways to graduation. Online learning and credit recovery are offered to make up deficiencies in prior course work. Online make-up modules are instituted so that students could demonstrate proficiency during the course instead of failing the course and requiring credit recovery. Students work at home or in the designated 'online room' available from 7 am to 5 pm. Furthermore, "boot camp" is now offered during recess throughout the year. After analyzing transcripts of those students for whom they are responsible, teacher teams invite students to attend this intensive credit recovery program. As a result, there is an increase in credit accumulation across grades.
- Assessment practices at the team and classroom level ensure ongoing identification of specific student learning needs in order to continuously improve student outcomes.
  - Teacher teams plan midterm and final common assessments in the core subjects. A reflective analysis of the results is completed highlighting students' successes, challenges and next steps to inform and adjust strategies in the classroom. Furthermore, Performance Series assessments are administered in September and June to determine progress in lexile ranges. This is coupled with student study guides that are generated from Acuity data. The math department serves as the model by using this data to inform instruction and curriculum. In turn, teachers plan strategies to re-teach and design activities and homework that leverage student gains as measured by increased course pass rates and in class item analysis of mock Regents exams.

## **What the school needs to improve**

- Plan for yearlong professional development with long-term impact tightly aligned to school-wide goals that ensures improved teacher practice and student outcomes.

- Math teachers take the lead by embracing the evolving state standards in a citywide pilot to achieve alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Additionally, new positions such as master teachers and SLC coordinators build adult capacity as they lead teamwork and tailor coaching for selected teachers. Nevertheless, professional development lacks short- and long- range strategic planning that is consistently data-informed, purposeful and provides for teacher inter-visitations with a specific instructional lens. This hampers a coherent approach to the promotion of professional growth that leverages pedagogical improvement.
- Enhance differentiated approaches to learning so that all lessons are meaningful, interesting, and sufficiently challenge students leading to achievement gains.
  - Across classrooms, teachers plan lessons and strategies that are modified to accommodate individual needs. However, teacher practice across classrooms does not always reflect a cohesive approach that supports strategically tiered planning or differentiation specifically intended to achieve IEP goals as evidenced in student work folders, notebooks, and tasks. Subsequently, not all learners are able to make consistent progress to reach their full potential.
  - In many classrooms students are highly engaged in project-based tasks and group work that encourage accountable conversations. In one ICT class, student groups use net books to access research resources on their chosen topics. Conversely, in other classrooms there is a general level of engagement as some students participate by taking notes, reading required text, and answering teacher questions. As a result, not all learners produce meaningful work that exceeds the standard.
- Ensure consistent improvement of instructional practice through explicit feedback by school leaders with clear next steps that result in advances aligned to school-wide goals.
  - CEP goals are linked to improvements such as differentiated instruction and development of standards-based rubrics. School leaders write observation reports with recommendations for improvement, and some assistant principals make surface connections to research-based domains of teaching responsibility and matching rubrics as next steps. However, not all school leaders consistently provide actionable feedback that encompasses an analysis of student data and work products with explicit next steps to improve pedagogy related to goals. Additionally, although coaches and master teachers are assigned to specific teachers for targeted support, it is not sufficiently monitored by school leaders. This hampers student progress in some classrooms as it is not clear what teachers need to do to improve their practice.
- Enhance systems for measuring the effectiveness of teacher teams and capacity building to ensure that modifications are made in a timely fashion and leverage improvement in student achievement.
  - Teacher teams are engaged in action research by tracking progress of student writing to determine the worth of the writing strategies they test in the classroom. Assistant principals check in at teams meetings and sometimes facilitate the agenda. The principal meets occasionally with coordinators to see how things are going. Periodic assessment data of teams are also reviewed. However, school leaders do not yet share a common and more formal system to frequently monitor and assess the work of the teams and the impact of the SLC coordinator position on team effectiveness. In turn, although school leaders feel that SLC coordinators need more time to facilitate teamwork, the determination is not grounded in more formalized data analysis of short-

and long-range benchmarks of expectations that measures team effectiveness and leadership development.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: Long Island City High School</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			<b>X</b>	

**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	

<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>