

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Flushing High School

High School Q460

35-01 Union Street

Queens

NY 11354

Principal: Carl Hudson Jr.

Dates of review: March 28 - 30, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Juan Mendez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Flushing High School is a high school with 2986 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 24% Black, 52% Hispanic, 4% White, and 20% Asian students. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 57% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 86.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Resources are becoming aligned to the school goals resulting in better support for teachers and students.
 - In the ninth grade, the school is organized into small learning communities each led by an assistant principal and supported by a team of teachers who regularly meet to evaluate student progress. Each Small Learning Community (SLC) is located in a specific area of the building creating a sense of individuality and independence. SLC staff share a common planning time where teachers are working diligently toward a review of individual student case load and analyze performance trends.
 - The school program provides teachers with common planning time to participate in teacher teams that focus on groups of students and align to the school's goals to improve student learning. As a result, conversations are emerging among teachers that are anchored in how to plan more challenging and thought-provoking tasks leading to improved student achievement.
- The school has developed a safe, caring and respectful environment that supports student and adult learning, leading to a collaborative school culture.
 - School leaders and faculty drive efforts to cultivate a safe, respectful environment for all students. The implementation of small learning communities provides the personalization, intimacy and sense of family comparable to a small high school. Various clubs, athletics and tutoring opportunities stimulate their interests and help to support their academic and personal growth. Twenty sports teams are offered ranging from basketball to wrestling alongside clubs such as foreign language and journalism. Student "lunch and learn" and after-school tutoring provide extra academic support. A Saturday Regents preparatory program supports students in their academic growth. As a result, students are ready for college, career, and life when they graduate.
- The school gathers data to set school wide goals that lead to improvements in student achievement.
 - School leaders and faculty analyze attendance, safety, Regents and credit accumulation data to inform progress and performance trends. In turn, school-wide and department level goals are matched to needs of students resulting in support for the growth and achievement of all learners.
 - School leaders and faculty utilize Acuity interim assessments and artifacts of classroom level student work to supplement the lens on trends from summative data. This deeper analysis reveals more specific areas of strength and challenges for special education and English language learners. As a result, the school is able to leverage greater success on the Regents examinations for these subgroups.
- Faculty and teacher teams have opportunities to begin collaborations with an eye towards improving their practice and raising student outcomes.

- Faculty is provided professional learning opportunities to support school-wide improvement goals and department goals with laboratory sites led by master and turnaround teachers at the school. Teacher teams have begun to review the evolving state standards and determine what adjustments should be made to current curriculum in order to make gains in achievement goals.
- A mathematics teacher team conducts item analysis of examinations to discover trends and identify topics that needed to be re-taught. Teachers had conversations on how best to present mathematics concepts to groups of students who showed lack of mastery in specific areas. However, the connections between teacher practice and student outcomes are not always the focus and, therefore, resulting improvements are not evident.
- Effective support services and collaborations provide students with a wide range of opportunities to grow personally and academically.
 - Staff and safety agents participate in professional development sessions regarding the need to provide a safe and inclusive environment for learning. The principal promotes a culture of respect through modeling as he interacts with students and faculty each day. Conflict resolution and mediation classes are offered where trained and certified students assist classmates in resolving disagreements. Additionally, Ramapo professional development training provides staff with ways to support a safe and respectful school environment. "Respect for All" lessons are given in all subject areas to further develop an inclusive culture of learning. Awards ceremonies are scheduled to recognize students' accomplishments and celebrate their success.
 - Parents have been provided a series of workshops on the topic of small learning communities to increase communication and familiarization with SLC model. The school has multiple partnerships with organizations such as Asian Americans for Equality, YMCA of Greater New York and the Leadership Program which provide internship opportunities for students. Mentoring and internship programs provide students with unique opportunities to explore career interests and witness first-hand the skills required for careers in corporate environments.

What the school needs to improve

- Design engaging, rigorous and coherent standards-based curricula including the arts that emphasize key standards in order to support a diversity of learners.
 - Curriculum mapping is limited to 9th grade English, world history and geography, and living environment. Maps for coursework in world history, geography, and living environment are adopted from other states, and therefore are not based on New York State standards. Additionally, maps do not reflect any customization in an effort to support the needs of all learners. In turn, lessons and student work do not demonstrate rigorous behaviors or tasks that are cognitively demanding. As a result, improvements in student learning are hampered.
- Develop opportunities for students to engage in data driven rigorous tasks in order to address the various learning styles and improve outcomes.
 - Teaching strategies and student activities in some classrooms lack differentiated learning opportunities based on student specific needs with an eye towards addressing the varied learning styles and skill deficits. Consequently, not all students make sufficient progress.

- In some classrooms, lessons are teacher-directed resulting in a general level of passive student engagement and whole-group activities. Therefore, there is little opportunity for accountable talk and group interactions that sustain high levels of engagement. Additionally, tasks are not thought-provoking, and therefore student work lacks cognitive growth. This impedes student progress in learning.
- Ensure coherence of teacher assessment practices across classrooms and content areas for periodic identification of specific learning needs of students in order to improve student outcomes.
 - Although Acuity results are analyzed by teams and individual teachers to determine trends in performance, this information does not yet consistently inform the planning of differentiated instructional strategies. Furthermore, classroom level data is not consistently gathered and analyzed across classrooms in order to develop a clear guideline of strengths and skill and content deficits for individual and groups of students. As a result, not all learners make timely and sufficient progress.
- Improve structures for evaluating classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes that result in greater coherence in instructional practices and improvements in professional growth and reflection.
 - The school is working earnestly to provide professional development supports through master and turnaround teachers that model highly effective instructional practices for new teachers. However, more strategic opportunities that promote differentiated support for teachers to improve pedagogy and content knowledge are not yet consistently offered. Subsequently, improvements in school-wide instructional practices are hampered.
 - For the most part, school leaders regularly observe classroom instruction and provide specific feedback to teachers to improve their practice. However, student progress and performance outcomes are not always included in post-observation conferences by all school leaders, nor are they strategically used to make retention decisions. This results in incoherent opportunities for professional growth and student achievement.
- Further develop professional collaborations to support a strategic school wide improvement plan with a focus on raising student performance.
 - Network support is not consistently utilized to structure teacher study groups, lesson studies in teams, and the use of an inquiry approach to formulate a plan for all students with a focus on school wide improvement. This hampers student achievement and success.
 - Although teachers and teams analyze student work, the conversations are not consistently anchored in what classroom practices or curricula and pacing calendars need to be adjusted leading to sustainable improvement. Thus, instruction is not deeply impacted and student work does not always show improvements.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Flushing High School, Q460	UD	D	P	WD
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>	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