

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**The Gateway School of Environmental Research and
Technology**

**High School X295
180 Lafayette Street
Bronx
NY 10473**

Principal: Clifford Siegel

**Dates of review: April 5 - 6, 2011
Lead Reviewer: Gwen Stephens**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Gateway School of Environmental Research and Technology is a high school with 510 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 33% Black, 60% Hispanic, 1% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 62% of the students enrolled and girls account for 38%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 81.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- A resourceful principal stewards the school's budget and makes strategic organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support teaching and learning.
 - School leaders make wise decisions regarding scheduling, use of resources, and staffing thus providing students at risk the opportunity to participate in different intervention programs. Additional support is provided during AM Advisory and PM School for counseling and tutoring as well as time to meet on common planning teams. As a result, students receive additional support for coursework, Regents, credits, meeting promotional, and graduation requirements, all of which align to the school goals. Additionally, the school uses data to assign teacher programs to meet students' needs. Consequently, students benefit from teacher expertise in specialized classes in technology and advanced placement courses that promote achievement and accountability for learning.
- School leaders and faculty collect and examine a wide range of student data to develop a clear picture of the school's needs to support the implementation of successful interventions.
 - School leaders gather reports from an array of sources to create an overview of the school's strengths and areas of need. In light of the State report and Progress Report data, the school focus is to make positive gains in English language arts (ELA) via Regents exams, with attention to special education students and English language learners. Students successfully participate in programs that provide greater support in writing skills and reading comprehension as evidenced in scholarship data that indicates a 6% increase in ELA Regents pass rate.
 - After a detailed look at attendance statistics, an attendance outreach program is in place to support 9th grade students identified as attendance at-risk students. An attendance coordinator, assistant principal and attendance teacher support the parent coordinator and the automated system in making calls to parents regarding lateness, absence and not completing the school day. As a result, the attendance has improved by 3% for this school year.
- The school works to ensure that it conveys high expectations to all students and families to create an environment that fosters a shared commitment to academic success and post secondary opportunities.
 - College banners from schools and universities where graduates now attend adorn the hallways. Teachers motivate students through effective communication regarding academic expectations and performance. "Going to college is what we do," said one junior. Students say the principal inspires them with daily greetings and words of encouragement that provide informal opportunities for students to understand how they can meet the expectations of the school.

- Parents are committed to the school's goals and participate on the school's leadership team and parent teacher association. They are responsible for the continuation of the Robotics team. In preparation for graduation, parents and students participate in a Juniors Night to review students' transcripts, discuss post-secondary options, and create an individualized graduation plan (IGP). With 85% of juniors' families participating in these activities, the overall graduation rate has consistently increased.
- The school's extensive guidance services and partnerships support students and families in continual learning and ensure that their personal and emotional needs are met.
 - The Graduation and Improvement Team work in conjunction with the network and community based organizations to provide staff with professional development on conflict resolution, recognizing abuse and other emotional issues that impact students. Teachers are trained to recognize and act upon students' needs by utilizing conflict resolution techniques and initiating direct intervention supports for students and families to meet their needs.
 - Students independently seek the help of partnerships with community-based organizations such as the Attendance and Drop Out Intervention Program. The Bronx Institute Gear Up program for 9th and 10th graders shows positive impact on attendance and graduation outcomes.
- Collaborative teams are engaged in inquiry work and reflect upon their teaching practice resulting in adjustments that improve student learning.
 - Teacher teams gather and examine student work and periodic assessment data to identify trends that inform classroom instruction. Curriculum is adjusted and new strategy tools, such as a universal paragraph writing rubric to make learning more relevant, are implemented thus addressing students' areas of need. Improvements in student writing are seen in student work portfolios and writing samples from mock English Regents assessments.
 - Leadership on the various teams represents teacher leaders, assistant principals and area specialists. This School Support Team is comprised of a core group of teacher leaders who review data and consult with the principal to influence decision-making and align teamwork with school goals to increase learning outcomes. One of these decisions was to ensure that collaborative team teachers (CTT) were able to meet in common preparation periods to focus on classroom improvements.
- School leaders and faculty design engaging curricula, including the Arts, that is aligned to State standards to support a broad program for its students.
 - The school offers an extensive menu of programs and classes such as Robotics, forensics, and advanced placement. There is a HYBRID program (Helping Youth Belong and Realize Daily Inclusion) in Spanish that combines students from introductory to AP Spanish, and special and general education populations. There is also music, art, core courses, electives, and extra curricular activities. These programs coupled with annual career and college fairs engage and challenge students to reach their potential to be college ready and access technology. Additionally, teams, utilize Regents and periodic assessment data to make changes to

the curriculum maps and pacing calendars that reflect decisions concerning which key standards to emphasize. The school is meeting students' needs as it reinforces concepts and skills necessary for students to succeed.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase the frequency and strategic use of observations to monitor teacher practice and leverage strategies that represent a common instructional focus and improve student performance.
 - The principal creates requirements for classroom instruction in an observation guide that identifies specific classroom expectations regarding rigor, engagement and assessment to create a common instructional focus and improve the quality of instruction. However, the frequency of these activities is not timely enough to build teacher capacity through actionable feedback and use of data to support next steps and accelerate learning outcomes.
- Expand rigorous differentiation practices across all grades and subjects so that lessons promote higher order thinking skills and questioning to engage and meet the needs of all learners.
 - Individual teachers plan differentiated lessons using assessment data however do not take into account varied learning modalities. As a result, high levels of engagement are not seen in all classrooms and learning experiences are not extended to meet the needs of all learners.
 - A large numbers of classrooms foster rigorous higher order thinking skills and thoughtful questioning. However, the process is not embedded throughout the school, creating various levels of instruction. As a result, not all students are able to reach their highest potential in all classes.
- Deepen the examination of classroom level data to identify the needs of students and differentiate instructional strategies to meet those needs and improve student learning.
 - Teams meet regularly to analyze student data and review student work. Teachers and teams select and design assessments to supplement summative data and align these assessments to the curriculum. However, not all teachers translate this work into data-driven classroom instruction that provides differentiation of instructional strategies in order to produce a greater impact on student performance.
- Extend the practices that use data to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams and capacity building so that adjustments lead to student progress.
 - Teacher team meetings are a forum for influencing teaching and learning, and analyzing instructional strategies. Administrators provide leadership to the inquiry and cohort teams. However, on-going development and support is necessary to drive efforts in building a stronger coherence and alignment between strategies and school-wide goals.
 - Lead teachers serve as catalysts between core and department teams and mentor first year teachers as they support the work of the teams. This creates team ownership and distributed leadership. However, a focus on

using teacher teams to develop instructional leaders that translate the impact and success of this work is not yet fully in place, hindering the acceleration of capacity building at the school.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Gateway School of Environmental Research and Technology	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