

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

York Early College Academy
Secondary School Q284

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QUEENS
NY 11433

Principal: DEBORAH BURNETT

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Lead Reviewer: Juan Mendez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

York Early College Academy is secondary school with 400 students from grade 6 through grade 9. The school population comprises 65% Black, 10% Hispanic, 1% White, 22% Asian students and 2% other students. The student body includes 0% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 96.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's well-structured curriculum leads to coherent and purposeful instruction across subject areas and grades, emphasizing higher order thinking skills that support college and career readiness. (1.1)
 - School leaders and pedagogical staff have developed exceedingly detailed Atlas Rubicon curriculum maps integrating Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) tasks that support a clear and comprehensive scope and sequence within each subject. The maps also provide a rich, spiraled curriculum for students across subjects and grades. Teachers employ a Universal Agenda to promote curricular coherence school-wide, which includes supports for all students including students with disabilities and English language learners so that expectations for academic achievement are clear and transparent. The school promotes a college-going culture by offering college immersion programs in middle school and partnering with York College for college level courses in high school. Students state that as a consequence of personalized support, feedback and opportunities for college-level academic experiences, their levels of academic mastery have increased.
 - Teachers regularly discuss their practice and align curriculum based on data and student work products to ensure that all learners are cognitively challenged and to maximize their mastery level of understanding. This collaboration takes place through bi-weekly common planning on each grade. For example, during a curriculum development meeting, teachers examined a curricular topic on immigration issues in the United States to identify which collaborative work skills students need to effectively partner in small groups, edit each other's work and present their findings to the class. This work resulted in a unit of study in which students produced well-developed, evidenced-based essays, thus addressing important college readiness skills.
- Most classroom lessons include activities that allow students to employ multiple modalities and involve group work, resulting in deeper understanding and richer interactions among all students. (1.2)
 - Teachers provide multiple entry points for students to engage in the lesson, process new concepts, share with their peers and refine their thinking. All students are encouraged to use graphic organizers to deepen understanding, accountable talk to manage interaction and collaborative work skills to effectively partner in groups. Consequently, most students are able to clearly express and defend their position whether orally or in writing by referencing textual evidence in English language arts and social studies classes, solving a real-world problems in mathematics classes by applying concepts of quantity to provide mathematical proof and creating data tables to clearly generate evidence of chemical change in a science laboratory class.
- The use of teachers and students time is structured to support school-wide goals and the academic needs of all students, leading to students being engaged in challenging academic tasks. (1.3)
 - A school-wide focus on collaborative inquiry has led to the creation of teacher teams in areas such as CCLS alignment, subject area, special education and grade level teams. In turn, these teacher teams are charged with the

- responsibility to roll out and turnkey the professional development needed to implement school wide initiatives such as to increase opportunities for students to conduct research and use supporting evidence in their work. The principal meets weekly with her instructional team, plans support activities in collaboration with network leader and staff and conducts frequent conversations around the quality of academic tasks. Students are provided academic interventions through double period classes, after school tutoring and Saturday State and Regents preparation programs. Consequently, all teacher teams' work is aligned to school-wide instructional goals and action plans by identifying students areas of improvement and supporting them in achieving mastery, as evidenced in frequent modifications in the curriculum, changes in instructional strategies and rigorous student work products.
- School leaders have created multiple opportunities for teachers to meet and collaborate by providing vertical and horizontal teams common meeting time during the school day and week to support wide instructional goals of ensuring a college ready student body, developing a CCLS-aligned curriculum and fostering technologically enhanced learning environment. Therefore, all pedagogues meet frequently during their circular six assignment or professional development period. Consequently, school leaders and teachers use weekly teacher team meetings and bi-weekly common planning time opportunities to delve in critical reflections on curriculum, instruction and student work products that improve instruction and assist students in engaging in challenging tasks.
 - The school uses a wide range of student assessment results to monitor school-level needs, calibrate curriculum and modify instructional strategies at department and classroom levels in order to support improvements in student achievement. (2.2)
 - Department teams create and use common assessments that mirror State examinations to gauge the effectiveness of the implementation of the curriculum and, in particular, the emphasis on literacy based activities. For example, during a special education team meeting, pedagogues conducted an item analysis of student responses to ascertain which topics and concepts students with disabilities had not mastered and defined curricular strategies for how to assist them. Another team evaluated student science essays using State assessment rubrics. As a result, school generated assessments provide valuable feedback that support the growth and achievement of learners towards standards based goals, as evidenced by the average completion rate for remaining Regents of 93.2% and 79.2% of students earning 10+ credits in all grades.
 - Teacher teams supplement summative data analysis with periodic assessments from Scantron Performance Series and classroom assessment data in order to identify student strengths and areas of needs, monitor progress of student subgroups and make adjustments in the curriculum to meet the needs of students. For example, English teachers use reading assessment results to track and strengthen students reading comprehension levels. These teachers also use the editing and revision process to evaluate and support students' writing skills. Consequently, the school has been able to leverage greater success with students with disabilities, overage students and students in the lowest third performance range with the greatest gain of 12.2% in the 10th grade.
 - The school has established effective systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning with a clear focus on improving professional reflection and growth, resulting in greater school-wide coherence in instructional practice. (4.1)

- Schools leaders engage in frequent cycles of informal observations using the Danielson Research Based Framework to gather data, build reflection and promote teacher self-assessment. Timely post-observation discussions between teachers and school leaders take place to identify patterns, trends and next steps that align with professional development goals mutually agreed between teachers and school leaders. Written feedback is provided using a four-point rubric aligned to the classroom visitation tool. Consequently, teachers report that the staff forms a professional development community that deeply reflects on feedback provided during post-observation discussions and is vested in supporting school-wide instructional practice.
- In coordination with City University of New York School Support Coordinator, network team and teacher inquiry teams, the school provides a professional development plan that promotes differentiated professional growth and reflection around topics such as increasing student-to-student interaction, transforming practice through a student centered classroom and developing an inclusive classroom culture. Key recommendations made in formal and informal observation reports guide teacher practice to determine their impact on learning and student performance results. Consequently, based on the effective implementation of these recommendations, school leaders have been able to make informed decisions about Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) programs, generating an 18% increase in scholarship.
- School leaders and faculty consistently communicate high expectations to students and parents in diverse ways that generate a college- and career-ready culture, positively impacting student achievement. (3.4)
 - Throughout the year, the school conducts an array of parent outreach sessions including monthly parent association meetings, parent workshops, frequent invitations to school events and student work celebrations. In addition, the school seeks parent volunteers through consultations with the parent coordinator, meetings with the principal as well as the School Leadership Team. The school communicates high expectations that all students have the skills necessary to succeed in college level work without remediation. During open school week parents are able to gain first-hand insight into the rigor and demands of an academic program by following their children's schedule so that they readily support academic success at home. Consequently, families hold the school in high regard as a place that provides all students a high quality education, complemented by engaging support structures as evidenced in the School Survey report where parents provided metric values of 8.0 for academic expectations.
 - School leaders and staff employ guidance strategies such as grade level, cohort and college assemblies, high school and college nights, subject area academic celebrations, academic intervention sessions, student government meetings and school culture committee meetings to communicate increasing expectations of college success to students and parents. Students are grateful for staff commitment to after-school tutoring, lunch and learn support, Saturday Academic Intervention Support programs, college immersion activities and college level courses available at York College. As a result, students feel supported in the endeavor to attain the college readiness skills necessary for their future success. This has led to all 8th graders attending the college immersion program at York College and over 80% of high school students taking college level courses at York College during the year or in the summer.

What the school needs to improve

- Further enhance the integration of youth development support services and partnerships with outside organizations to shore up school activities that promote the personal growth and development of students. (4.4)
 - The school holds scheduled assemblies, provides individual guidance conferences with students and implements the “Respect for All” curriculum that enables guidance counselors and teaching staff to promote a safe, inclusive and respectful school culture. However, professional development to enhance staff capacity to provide students with the opportunity to develop their social-emotional skills is limited, thus hampering a highly effective school culture that promotes personal development.
 - Although teachers conduct student advisories and across grade levels students participate in varied school assemblies, there is inconsistent evidence of youth development opportunities and extensions for students to readily participate in performing arts and extra-curricular activities during and after school. As a result, students have limited venues that address a culture of personal growth and artistic expression.
- Strengthen the meticulous practice of goal setting to include differentiated student goals that are clearly understood and owned by all students, so that they might attain the desired levels of content mastery. (3.2)
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers use data to regularly conference with students and set curriculum goals. However, teachers’ levels of expertise in disaggregating data, establishing trends and identifying sub-groups vary, resulting in inconsistency in the rigor of goals that are set for students covering the same subject area curriculum. As a result, the school’s potential for supporting students to reach high levels of mastery is lessened.
 - Although teachers set meaningful and rigorous goals for their classes, these goals are not always solidly based on identified academic challenges for individual students. As a result, some students have generalized goals lacking clear next steps and the specific resources needed to achieve them, leading to average potential in student growth.
- Continue to identify and implement ways to increase parental participation in school decision-making that places parents as true partners in all aspects of school life. (2.4)
 - School leaders and staff regularly communicate with families about student progress through Engrade, email, school issued report cards and parent teacher conferences. However, the school has yet to provide parent leaders extensive opportunities to participate and contribute their views in the development of the school’s Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP). As a result, parent voices regarding student progress towards meeting school expectations are not extensively represented. As a result, a clear school mission derived without input from all stakeholders works against galvanizing the school community and hinders the necessary reinforcement of school goals.
 - The school strives to involve a high number of parents by providing regular communication through Engrade, personal meetings with school staff, and multiple workshops on topics and tools such as ARIS Parent Link. However, the

school has yet to establish suitable ways to encourage parent participation to undertake all available school leadership team positions. As a result, the school is yet to establish a high level culture of shared commitment for the benefit of students.

- Consistently use interim checkpoints to evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies. (5.4)
 - o Highly reflective discussions regarding engaging students in classroom activities that are student centered and differentiated have emerged throughout the school during teacher team meetings. School leaders monitor team meetings and hold a weekly meeting with facilitators to review the agendas for upcoming meetings. However, classroom observations reveal that systems to evaluate teacher effectiveness and to provide for distributive leadership are not in place as there is no system to evaluate and support the teacher team process or the effectiveness of their curricular adjustments and accuracy of their assessment products. This results in limited development of effective teacher leaders.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: York Early College Academy	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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?			X	
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?			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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			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, guidance/advisement 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, with particular attention to the CCLS?			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