

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**Business, Computer Applications & Entrepreneurship
High School**

High School 496

**207- 01 116TH AVENUE
QUEENS
NY 11411**

Principal: DR. HERMAN GUY

Dates of Review: March 20 - 21, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Veronica Yurcik

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Business, Computer Applications & Entrepreneurship is a high school with 368 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 84% Black, 5% Hispanic, 1% White, 6% Asian students, and 3% other students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 69% of the students enrolled and girls account for 31%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 85.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- A well-coordinated attentiveness to building safety and a genuine concern for students creates a safe and supportive learning environment for students and staff. (1.4)
 - o The principal, in his second year at this school, as the building safety supervisor, works effectively with the campus assistant principal in charge of safety to ensure school-wide cooperation and rigorous adherence to the overhauled campus safety protocols. Because of this tightly coordinated effort, a safe environment has been established, and the school was removed from its status as an IMPACT school. Students are attentive in class and engage in respectful interactions with peers and adults. This revitalized environment saw an increase in the school's Progress Report scores of graduation rate, and average Regents' completion rate. In literacy, the school's chosen area of focus, the English weighted Regents pass rate metric score increased by over 60%. Additionally, a significant decline in principal suspensions is noted, with a 50% reduction to date, as compared to the same time-period as last year. Furthermore, teachers attest to these significant changes, with a rare 100% concurrence in the Learning Environment Survey, unanimously agreeing that order and discipline is maintained in their school.
 - o Teachers administer learning style surveys to all students to craft assignments that enable students to use their strengths and interests to spur their learning. Positive outlook and genuine concern for students drive cooperative efforts among staff members, ensuring that students have an adult with whom to maintain good rapport and have on-going proactive support. Numerous structures such as bereavement counseling groups, a gay/lesbian support group, 9th and 10th grade advisories, an active Respect for All program, a peer leaders group, a developing peer mediation program, and a staff inquiry team devoted to improving students' attendance, ensure that each student is known and supported socially and emotionally.
- Clear and consistent communication of expectations increases motivation fostering positive work habits and achievement. (3.4)
 - o Curriculum, youth development, and discipline initiatives, coupled with regularly scheduled staff meetings, professional development sessions, and frequent classroom observations, serve to reinforce expectations and school goals clearly. As a result, staff members focus intentionally on improvement of pedagogical skills and delivery of service to students. Learning Environment Survey results confirm this with 100% of teachers agreeing that, "School leaders let staff know what is expected of them."
 - o Both students and parents clearly state the school's expectations for attendance, graduation, and college readiness. Monthly marking period reports and student graduation trackers help students and families monitor progress and seek timely support. Monthly assemblies and other programs throughout the year teach students and parents how to read transcripts, get additional academic support, learn about colleges and application processes, seek financial aid, and earn college credit in high school, all of which provide on-going support to help families successfully prepare for post secondary study as well as consistently reinforce high expectations. Acceptances into college doubled for last year's cohort.

- The principal makes strategic decisions to support enhanced learning and pedagogy to enable students' academic achievement. (1.3)
 - o Tactical shifting of resources, such as the assignment of school and network coaches to work with teachers on curriculum and lesson development, has resulted in defined pacing calendars, greater school-wide coherence in establishing standards-aligned curriculum, and in unified efforts by departments to deliver content while supporting much needed skills development in reading and writing. The use of online technology system, Datacations, facilitates efficient identification of students' course and Regents requirements, enabling the creation of schedules that are in line with students' needs, and the production of graphic update reports that help both students and staff track progress toward graduation. Schedule modifications, made possible by this year's school based-option, created time for 100% staff participation in inquiry teams, which is promoting collective accountability for student success.
 - o A modified hiring system requires candidates to meet with school administrators several times during the interview process and demonstrate skills by teaching a lesson. In addition, applicants meet with current teachers who help assess a candidate as to his/her pedagogical and interpersonal skills and attitudes aligned with the school's philosophy. Additionally, candidates are reviewed relative to the willingness to support the school's frequent outreach efforts and the demands of a monthly marking period system. Thus, newly hired teachers have been successfully integrated into the faculty team, and their efforts display their commitment to the demands of school priorities. In addition, tactical increases in number of staff meetings, classroom observations, inquiry participation, and required intervisitations, help to support teachers and foster a sense of shared responsibility for students' success.
- A dedicated focus on youth development supports students' social-emotional growth strengthening their self-confidence and attentiveness to achieving academic success. (4.4)
 - o Staff members receive training from Ramapo for Children and Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS) to increase the understanding and use of effective behavioral interventions that advance better academic and social outcomes for students. Teachers heading this year's inaugural grade 9 and 10 student advisories received training prior to implementation to ensure program success. These supports, along with the school's unrelenting emphasis on school safety, have transformed the school environment so that interaction between students and adults is respectful and students trust and depend on adults for emotional and academic help in a safe school environment.
 - o On-going guidance interventions and special programs, proactive outreach by the substance abuse prevention and intervention services worker (SAPIS), and the social worker's bullying prevention programs, provide many positive avenues of outreach so that students name personnel they trust and speak affirmatively about programs designed to provide them with a safe space to share concerns and resolve conflicts. Parents, as well, name staff members who have been very helpful in promoting academic and emotional support. One parent, who recently had to move into a shelter, praised the school profusely for its immediate and constant support. In addition, students speak positively about the school's business classes noting that learning is professional and "helps you be prepared for the real world." Forty percent of 12th graders participate in a virtual business enterprise where students assume full responsibility for all aspects of running a business. Demonstrating leadership and responsibility, their efforts earn them

college credit and Citywide competition awards for business acumen and professional presentation.

- Frequent observation of classroom practice encourages reflection that develops pedagogy. (4.1)
 - o All supervisors use a principal-designed observation rubric, incorporating several teacher effectiveness tools, to conduct regular classroom visits, occurring almost monthly, to date, for all teachers.. Consequently, teachers benefit from regular visits and timely feedback to improve practice. Supervisors target new and at-risk staff members for increased visitations that provide the necessary assistance for their continual development. A new teacher explained that on-going feedback has made him more mindful in pacing lessons and providing increased time for student verbalization. In addition, the principal frequently observes and provides feedback to campus teachers, not under his official supervision, but who teach special education students for several schools on the same campus, thus ensuring expectations for student learning are congruent for all students in his school, and information regarding instructional needs shared.
 - o Administration carefully reviews student performance results and teachers' progress relative to meeting specified professional goals to make assignments, retention and professional development decisions. As a result, the principal has successfully changed teacher's grade responsibilities to provide assignments that are better matched to teacher strengths, and he has counseled others into different career options. Using on-going observations, an identified sub-set of teachers was selected to work with an educational consultant to improve lesson planning and delivery, furthering school-wide efforts around coherence in effective lesson delivery and pedagogy.

What the school needs to improve

- Evaluate curriculum so that all students have challenging learning opportunities that promote college readiness skills. (1.1)
 - o While the school has done much work to develop a coherent school-wide curriculum with an emphasis on reading, writing, and vocabulary development, across content areas, it has not yet conducted a gap analysis between current units to expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. Thus, purposeful embedding of rigorous tasks is not yet sufficient to ensure that all students engage in challenging tasks that develop skills to achieve post secondary readiness and close the achievement gap.
 - o Although the school focuses on planning that incorporates grouping, differentiation, and questioning skills to engage all students, the practice of analyzing student work is a developing skill. Therefore, opportunities are missed for refinement of lessons to ensure that all levels of students are challenged, especially for more academically able students.
- Improve alignment of assessments to key standards so that critical academic trends are more apparent for creating targeted instruction that raises overall student academic performance. (2.2)
 - o Creation of assessments closely aligned with the school's chosen standards, identified needs, and common subject area assessments, is still developing. The use of old Regents' exams, unit tests, and online programs, to assess students do provide information on student progress but item analysis is not sufficient to

- craft the specificity of adjustments needed to accelerate student progress. Thus, information on potential trends and/or key individual skill needs is not always evident to provide feedback on the effectiveness of instruction and needed adjustments to instructional action plans. Consequently, improvement of progress metrics scores in the school's Progress Report continue to be an area of concern.
- o The focus of periodic assessment inquiry emphasizes individual results and thus analysis lacks identification of student subgroup strengths and needs, resulting in the lack of illuminating school-wide challenges to students meeting performance standards.
 - Hone belief systems to strengthen pedagogical moves so that all students have entry points for academic engagement that serve their particular learning needs. (1.2)
 - o A belief in collaborative learning drives creation of learning groups within classrooms. Across classrooms, however, grouping is not always strategic and expectations for student conversation not always explicit. Thus, opportunities are missed to do strategy work with students and engage students in substantial academic conversations with peers.
 - o While emerging differentiation practices across the school are evident in the use of student choice, entry and exit tickets, and the use of varied text levels, cognitive student discourse, and high order thinking questioning is not yet consistent enough to offer all student subgroups access to tackle tasks that meet higher-level performance standards.
 - Develop transparent systems to monitor progress towards academic goals so that effective adjustments are made to accelerate student learning. (5.3)
 - o The institution of 10 marking periods and regular review of scholarship reports was put in place to closely monitor progress and maintain a heightened focus on academics. However, the lack of defined interim benchmark targets hampers coordination of school-wide intervention responses to ensure achievement of designated annual goals.
 - o Although teachers are proactive, cooperative, and dedicate personal time to analyzing assessment results, they are still learning to use tools for online credit recovery programs to set goals for targeted students as well as developing skills to create assessment rubrics that clearly evaluate desired outcomes.
 - Strengthen understanding of inquiry work to improve strategic analysis and changes in practice that improve students' academic outcomes.
 - o Current inquiry work focuses on groups of students assigned to credit recovery online programs and providing individual student support. The understanding of inquiry as an iterative process of assessment, research, goal setting, intervention, re-assessment, and evaluation of teacher practice is still a developing skill set.
 - o Teams analyze inquiry students' assessment results and use information to coach and re-teach students in after-school sessions, but a focus on sharing learning to implement pedagogical strategy changes within teachers' daily routines is not yet a regular practice.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Business, Computer Applications & Entrepreneurship High School	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