

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**Tottenville High School**

**R455**

**100 Luten Avenue  
Staten Island  
NY 10312**

**Principal: John Tuminaro**

**Dates of review: April 23, 24 and 25, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Mary Barton**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Tottenville High School is a high school with 3,849 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 2% Black, 10% Hispanic, 82% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 89.4%.

### Overall Evaluation

This school is well-developed.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The curriculum offers a wide range of rigorous experiences and choices including arts and career education before, during and after school, which facilitates students' ownership of learning. (1.1)
  - The school has focused on key standards in English language arts and math in implementing the Citywide Instructional Expectations. Curriculum has been revised to reflect writing arguments in English language arts as well as constructing viable arguments in problem solving in math. Students have been exposed to Common Core (CCLS) aligned tasks found on the Common Core Library as well as tasks developed by departments. English and math teachers, as a part of the Career and Technical Education program, tailor their readings and math to the program students are enrolled in to make curricular connections. An extensive offering of Advanced Placement and College Now courses exists through partnerships with Kingsborough Community College and St. John's University. As a result, students' are moving toward meeting and exceeding standards, as evidenced in interim assessment reports.
  - Teachers plan units based on Depth of Knowledge. In most classrooms visited, students showed their thinking through a higher level of task, including classrooms with English language learners and students with disabilities, where teachers targeted provide support. English language arts and math teachers utilize City University of New York rubrics serving as expectations as they plan. The English department requires all seniors to write a research paper using informational text in an authentic way and to present their findings. Teachers use the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing as a guide for this work. Thus, students are given opportunities to demonstrate their thinking and to form habits that will enable them to be ready for college level work.
- The principal strategically uses time and resources to further the school's instructional goals, resulting in improved outcomes for students. (1.3)
  - To increase the graduation rate, reviewing data from Regents and assessments and with suggestions from teachers, courses that were taught over two semesters are now extended to three or four semesters to meet student needs and afford them success. Special education teachers with dual certification in content areas have been hired to work with students. Professional development is a priority for the Integrated Collaborative Teacher (ICT) teacher teams. A consultant provides assistance with planning lessons and units and in providing differentiated instruction using data to meet student needs. This has resulted in teachers providing differentiated instruction and collaborating as evidenced in teacher observations. Special needs students accumulate credits in a timelier manner as evidenced by scholarship data.
- Teacher observation, feedback and performance evaluations are used to elevate instructional practices. (4.1)

- In addition to formal observations, the school uses the Danielson framework to provide feedback and provides professional development around it. The specific competencies around questioning and discussion and the use of assessments were used to have teachers reflect on their practices. Feedback is provided to teachers through conversation and in writing. Teachers stated they appreciate the feedback and feel it has improved their teaching skills. New teachers are assigned mentor teachers, many of whom volunteer, to visit and work with new teachers throughout the school year. New teachers spoke of the help received and the relationships formed through classroom inter visitations. Administrators review student performance on periodic and summative assessments to assess teacher performance and make decisions as to teacher assignments, tenure and retention. This results in teachers being aware of expectations and encouraged to improve their practice.
- Students are engaged in their learning, influence decision making and appreciate the support received for their personal and academic growth. (1.4)
  - Students spoke of the importance of the services of the guidance counselors who consult with them on attendance, course selection, and job and internship opportunities as well as problem solving structures if they have a social or emotional problem. Students reported appreciating a room the school has set up for students who do not want to go to the cafeteria during breakfast and lunch. In this “safe haven,” students are able to have small group conversations, play games or study in a quiet place. This support enables students to have more academic success, as evidenced by classroom observations and scholarship data.
  - Students have a voice in the life of the school. The principal meets with the student council monthly. Students serve on a nutrition committee giving input. Peer mediators work with fellow students to resolve conflicts. Students complete interest surveys around their courses and to plan future school initiatives. They spoke of teachers and guidance counselors being very accessible if they have a problem. One student stated, “They always point you in the right direction.” This results in students influencing school culture and being supported in their learning.
- The school has a very good communication system in place to share relevant information with families so that they can be an effective school partner. (2.4)
  - The principal states clearly through written notification and in public that the connection between families and school is crucial to students’ academic and social-emotional success. Parents stated that they always feel welcome to meet with their child’s teachers, guidance counselor and the parent coordinator. Parents complete surveys around how the school can further meet their needs. The school’s website is updated frequently. School Messenger apprises parents of events, updates and student absences and lateness. The school has instituted Pupil Path, offering multiple opportunities for parent training and on going support, so that they may monitor their child’s academics, including their performance on CCLS-aligned tasks, as well as attendance, credit accumulation and behavioral information. A majority of parents communicate with teachers using this tool. Consequently, parents have the opportunity to monitor

their child's data and this helps them to provide more effective support at home.

- The school provides a wide range of opportunities for students to acquire real world experiences allowing them to be prepared for college and career. (4.4)
  - The guidance department assists students and parents around the college application process, organizes trips for students to universities tailored to student interests and coordinates a large scale annual College and Career Expo, open to students and parents, with representatives of universities and prospective employers present. The Parent Association sponsors meetings around college readiness, financial aid/planning, SAT preparation and college selection. One parent commented on the support given and stated that the reason his child will attend the college of her choice this fall is due to the great care given by the school. As a result of the focus placed on the transition from high school to college and career, students and families are well prepared for the transition.
  - The school has an extensive career and technical education program. Beginning as sophomores, students may opt for a three year sequence in fields such as automotive repair/engineering, the Cisco Networking Academy for computer programming, networking and repair, culinary arts, dental technology, virtual enterprise as well as fine arts, instrumental and vocal music. Internships are available to students. Students leave high school having acquired certification in areas such as a Cisco-certified Networking Associate, a dental assistant or a technician. These programs have resulted in student employment or to having had the exposure to study in these areas as college students.
- The principal has established effective systems for school self-evaluation, review and modification of practice with a clear focus on improving student learning and achievement. (5.1)
  - To make curricula accessible to teachers, the school partnered with the Children First Network to purchase Atlas Rubicon, a web based curriculum management tool. Teachers receive training in posting their revisions, with departments having access so there is both a horizontal and vertical view of curricula. As the work of the school deepens with additional areas of curricula reflecting the CCLS, department members share these revisions with one another resulting in alignment of what is taught within particular departments.
  - As Pupil Path continues to be utilized to inform parents and students of performance and progress, the principal felt that student goals, geared toward the expectations of the CCLS, should be reflected in this tool so that information can be found in one place. The school is coordinating and paying for this function to be included and providing teachers, students and parents the training to utilize it. As a result, students and families can be supported using this tool to speak to specifics of goals and in progress as well as performance and attendance in all areas.

## What the school needs to improve

- Promote greater use of strategically differentiated instruction based on current data so that lessons reflect purposeful grouping, accommodation of learning styles and questioning extends thinking to maximize learning. (1.2)
  - During most of the classroom visits, students were working in groups on differentiated tasks or with differentiated text. In a few classrooms visited, while some parts of the lesson were differentiated, whole classroom instruction occurred with limited opportunities for students to be supported as identified on class or periodic assessments. As a result, opportunities were missed in a few cases for students to work in ways where they were supported based on their particular needs.
  - The use of questioning and discussion is a priority across the school in all disciplines. In most classrooms visited, students were asked questions that were thought provoking and evidence based with students responding to each other's thinking. In a few cases though, teachers dominated in asking questions and did not allow students to respond to each other's thinking. As a result, opportunities were missed to extend discussion and engage in higher level thinking generated by students.
- Ensure that all constituent groups are involved in goal setting that includes higher levels of challenge in order to accelerate student learning. (3.2)
  - Goals are set for students with disabilities in the Instructional Supports department as a part of their Individualized Education Plan. They are introduced and reviewed at the beginning and end of a marking period. English language arts teachers work with students in setting goals. While goals are set for students around success on Regents level work, some teachers are not able to pinpoint areas that subgroups of students need to make improvements in order to be successful, leading to missed opportunities for increased academic achievement for these students.
  - While goals are set for students in order for them to meet success in a course or on Regents testing, additional goals are not set, in some cases, around the results of formative assessments and then used to differentiate instruction. This missing piece results in some students not receiving specific supports on current instruction in the classroom.
- Further align assessments to curricula and use the results to meet individual student needs as well as to reflect on the effectiveness of classroom level decisions made in order to raise student performance levels. (2.2)
  - In visiting classrooms, most teachers have systems to check for understanding through the use of an exit slip or a piece of writing. Students also self reflect to ascertain their progress. In a few cases, checking for understanding is connected to the homework related to the lesson taught and teachers do not receive the information until the next class. In these cases, this does not enable teachers to plan for the next lesson with specific student knowledge in mind.
  - Teachers receive bountiful amounts of information related to the periodic assessments. Most teachers utilize the information to support particular

student needs as seen in classroom visits. In a few cases, teachers refer to the information and the specific breakdown for subgroups but differentiated instruction was not evident during these classroom visits. This missed opportunity does not allow for instruction to meet all students' strengths and areas of need.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

<b>School name: Tottenville High School / R455</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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?				<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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
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?				<b>X</b>
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?				<b>X</b>
<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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?		<b>X</b>		
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?				<b>X</b>
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?				<b>X</b>

**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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>

**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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?				<b>X</b>

<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>