

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Community School of Technology  
Elementary school 059

2185 BATHGATE AVENUE  
BRONX  
NY 10457

Principal: Sita Basu

Dates of review: February 2-3, 2012  
Lead Reviewer: Jacqueline Gonzalez

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 059 The Community School of Technology is an Elementary school with 570 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 26% Black, 68% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian students and 3% other students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 22% 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 91.8%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school environment is warm, supportive, and inclusive of students, teachers, and staff who work together as a team to create a calm, respectful, orderly environment for learning to take place. (1.4)
  - o The school's lively, and welcoming tone in hallways and classrooms allows for warm and friendly interactions, as evidenced by students who often stop to greet the principal. Across grades, students say they are able to connect to at least one adult in the school that they trust and believe will help them through any situation. Parents also echo their appreciation for the positive school tone and add that communication from the principal and support staff has contributed to sustaining a high attendance. As a result, there are positive responses for the past two years on the Learning Environment Survey in the area of safety and respect, and overall minimal disruptions to learning.
  - o The school offers extended day programming, to support students beyond the school day, that includes a Keltic Dreams Irish step dance team, student council, music, and art, which has resulted in increased participation for students beyond academics. Students are supported by college volunteers, who through mentoring and tutoring, serve as models to support students developing postsecondary goals. As a result, school leaders find that the structure and requirements of these additional programs have positively influenced students' work habits and response during the instructional day.
- The school makes purposeful decisions to design curricula and lessons that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and engage students in rigorous tasks and reflective practices. (1.1)
  - o The school's curriculum is reflective of the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), particularly in reading, writing, and math. In the development of tasks, staff make sure to include assessments that provide pre- and post-task data, and the ensuing analysis is used by teachers to collaboratively plan and identify gaps in students learning. As a result, teachers are able to design targeted instruction specific to student's learning needs.
  - o In kindergarten, students who are provided visual and verbal models for "subtraction stories" then create their own subtraction stories that they share with a partner. In fifth grade, students must come up with a theory that underlies their literary essay. In an integrated team teaching class students are provided with examples of how to use text and visualization to understand setting. As a result, student learning is accelerating across the school via the development of higher order thinking skills and rigorous learning habits.
- Across classrooms, lessons incorporate differentiated learning opportunities for students, promoting cognitive development and multiple entry points for a range of learners. (1.2)
  - o Teachers use a variety of strategies to engage students in learning. Lessons that include self and peer assessment, the use of manipulatives and opportunities for students to reflect and share their thinking, provide diverse learners access to the content. English language learners, who worked on a teacher-modeled life cycle project, are provided with a scaffolded language

activity and tiered process enabling them to be prepared for a future independent activity. Teachers ask questions that push student thinking by not readily responding to students' questions with answers, but rather guide them to possibly finding their own definitions for new words or alternate solutions to tricky problems. The integration of these varied instructional strategies supports all learners in their progress towards learning goals.

- Across the school, administrators utilize a common framework to gather information about teacher practice that leads to increased teacher self-reflection and informed organizational decisions. (4.1)
  - o The implementation of a research-based framework focuses teacher development in targeted areas of practice and allows for feedback and next steps that are aligned to improving instruction across the school. Teachers express that the feedback they receive from short frequent observations by administrators is meaningful and helpful and that the use of a rubric has helped them to self-assess their work. Additionally, the information from the observation process informs teacher assignments and matches staffs' strengths to student need as evidenced by several teachers reassigned from upper to lower grades this past year.
- Administrators regularly gather a wide variety of summative and periodic assessment data that identifies trends of strengths and needs and informs school level decisions. (2.1)
  - o School leaders analyze the school progress report, State assessment data, interim data from Acuity and assessments from Teachers' College literacy program by grade and class level to identify areas of need; data which is then shared with grade-level teacher teams. Based on results from Teachers' College interim reading assessments, teachers' use of the data informs adjustments to curriculum such as shifting the sequence of entire units of study or of skills taught within a unit, and drives instruction for individuals and groups with common needs. An increase by 10% proficiency in math, year-to-year, is attributed to increasing math instruction to a 90 minute block.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Ensure that organizational resources strategically support teachers and students in ways that promote the achievement of school goals. (1.3)
  - o The school's the new leadership has initiated a deep look at the use of resources and supports relative to student performance and progress with a keen eye on instructional planning and curriculum development. However, limited supports in content area staff development and in the use of technology as a tool to support teaching and learning results in missed opportunities to work towards established goals around teacher growth and student achievement.
  - o Although school leaders have made some decisions to assign teachers based on their strengths and students' needs around management, student groupings within classrooms and across grades have not yet fully resulted in differentiation by learning needs. There is no evidence of specific attention for example, to higher achieving students, thus missing opportunities to support them in further meeting their potential.

- Extend and deepen the analysis of data to ensure teachers identify grade level trends of student needs and strengths in order to make effective instructional decisions that accelerate learning for all students. (2.2)
  - o Teacher teams meet frequently and discuss units of study, lesson planning, and develop common rubrics and assessments aligned to the curriculum. Discussions often include teachers' noticings of their students' strengths and needs. However, this information does not lead to clearly articulated decisions about specific instructional strategies to improve student learning based on the identified skills gaps. As a result, there are missed opportunities to develop and implement relevant strategies to ensure that student learning is maximized across the school.
  - o Teachers use a tracking sheet to collect information from classroom assessments and use the data to inform small group instruction based on patterns of error in solving problems or responding to particular tasks. Groups are skills-based and flexible as students move through units of study. However, teachers do not identify grade level trends of strength and weaknesses based on specific subgroups or special populations, thus limiting opportunities for targeted support to advance learning.
- Increase the communication of student progress to families that clearly articulates student strengths and next learning steps thus enabling parents to support their children in meeting learning goals. (2.4)
  - o Student progress is communicated to families via individual student report cards and during parent teacher conferences. Additionally there is an Open House at the beginning of the year when parents receive information about school goals and curriculum. The parent coordinator holds many informational sessions for parents throughout the year and parents express that the school communicates their expectations frequently. However, when speaking of individual student's goals, parents are unclear as to what next learning steps are and how to specifically help their children at home. As a result of inconsistent practices in the use of ARIS parent link, other tools, and in the school's communication of student progress, not all parents are equally informed about how to support their children's academic progress.
- Ensure that the use of data informed processes to set grade-wide learning goals for students and specific subgroups leverage changes in adjustments to instructional practice. (3.2)
  - o Teachers work with colleagues including administrators and the data specialist to understand classroom level data and to set goals within each unit of study for their classes. They organize their classes for small group instruction and support students with individual conferences within lessons. However, there is no evidence of how teachers individualize learning goals or paths for students who have already mastered specific skills or content. Additionally, teacher teams have not developed a process for identifying the changes in practice that leverage higher student outcomes, thus missing opportunities for professional growth and improved student outcomes.
- Create a system to ensure that school wide goals include interim benchmarks and measurable outcomes for all plans so that progress can be measured, readjustments made, and success evaluated. (5.3)

- o School leaders have clear goals for overall student achievement and progress that are communicated to staff and community in ways that have generated collaborative support towards their achievement. The new principal is in the process of developing systems to assess effectiveness of annual planning from one year to the next. However, there is no system for monitoring the progress of students and teachers in reaching defined goals or identified interim benchmarks for students as they progress through the year. This limits the school's capacity to make timely and necessary organizational decisions and the ability to monitor progress towards attainment of carefully selected goals.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

<b>School name: The Community School of Technology</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>	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**

<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>
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