

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**Queens Transition Center**

**P752Q**

**142-10 Linden Blvd  
Jamaica, New York  
11436**

**Fritzy Sannon-Brown**

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**Lead Reviewer: Robin Cohen**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P752Q is a high school with 455 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 61% Black, 24% Hispanic, 5% White, 9% Asian and 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 73% special education students. Boys account for 75% of the students enrolled and girls account for 25%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 69.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders and staff utilize a research-based framework that ensure all teachers, including those new to the profession, receive ongoing effective feedback to promote professional growth and improved student outcomes. (4.1)
  - Through participation in the teacher effectiveness program (TEP), the school continues to deepen the work begun in 2011-2012 on implementing the Danielson framework to promote quality teaching. The principal provides clear expectations and ongoing support for best teacher practices that includes: designing coherent instruction (1e), establishing a culture for learning (2b), managing student behavior (2d), using questioning and discussion techniques (3b), engaging students in learning (3c), the use of assessments in designing instruction (3d) and growing and developing professionally (4e). Teachers receive immediate feedback on their strengths, challenges and progress towards meeting their goals with targeted next steps to ensure improvement. Administrators regularly visit classrooms to observe teachers for implementation of the feedback. The administrative team receive access to a trained talent coach, in person and online, to provide professional development activities to also support teacher growth. Teachers stated that the cycle of frequent observations, along with the common language around expectations, allows them to also assess their own progress and set goals to improve their practice for increasing student outcomes. There is a school wide emphasis on implementing Student Learning Profiles (SLP) as an additional measure of student learning. Teachers report that their participation in learning walks, collaborative team meetings and conferences with the school's instructional coach to look at and evaluate student work and the use of data, has helped their pedagogy and professional growth. This has resulted in student progress in meeting their Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals and objectives. Finally, as a result of the school's participation in TEP, there is an overall increase of 20% in the number of teachers rated effective during the 2012-2013 school year in comparison to the 2011-2012 school year, as well as an overall 10% decrease in the number of teachers rated ineffective.
- The collaborative design of rigorous, appropriate and coherent curricula across content areas including defined key standards, emphasize college and career readiness to accelerate learning outcomes for students. (1.1)
  - Queens Transition Center-P.752's Instructional Expectation and Curriculum Map provides a coherent overview of the curricula, aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), the 2012-2013 Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) and New York State Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) standards for a range of students of varying intellectual abilities. The school also utilizes the current Scope and Sequence in Social Studies and Science to build content knowledge for students through the reading of informational text and has integrated grade level units in social studies and science. The school-wide focus on

using Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) in the design of rigorous tasks engages all students, observed during class visits, as they work to locate answers from texts and respond to higher order questions posed by staff. In mathematics, the key focus is on problem solving and connecting learning to real life situations. During visits to both standardized and alternate assessment classes, students applied their knowledge of geometry by designing logos for a new business owner. Scaffolding of activities through the use of graphic organizers, computers, websites, I-pads and Smart-Boards contribute to high levels of engagement and students successfully completing academic tasks. Continuous analysis of student work products during collaborative team meetings yields revised units of study that include differentiated tasks to assure that all students are engaged. As a result of this focus, there is an increase in Regents passing rates where students demonstrated gains of 24% in Integrated Algebra and 13% in Global History. For students participating in alternate assessment, there is a 13% gain in students achieving level 4 in mathematics and a 3% gain in English Language Arts on the New York State Alternate Assessment test..

- There is an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best which is evident in teaching practices that lead to progress for students. (1.2)
  - Across the school, it is the belief that all students benefit from lessons that are differentiated, have multiple entry points, are related to their lives and provide opportunities to engage in conversation based on the text they are reading or the problems they are solving in math and science. Teachers apply the philosophy of “I do, we do and you do” to all learning experiences and provide needed supports, such as graphic organizers or working in small groups, to ensure high levels of student engagement. Across classrooms, there is consistent evidence of rigor in learning; for example, students participated in a discussion in response to the teacher posed question “think of a time when you made a prediction about the end of a movie or a story you read?” The classroom teacher then modeled for the students what her response to that question might look like or sound like. The students were then given the opportunity to explain their thought processes and defend their work against established criteria, resulting in high levels of student engagement that demonstrated critical thinking skills. There is a school-wide focus on explicit teaching of thinking skills across content areas. Learning experiences are planned to ensure students construct their own knowledge using these skills. During a living environment science lesson, students engaged in a hands-on experiment that required them to model a bony fish's swim bladder, relating its structure and function to that of a submarine. Again, the lesson plan followed the philosophy of “I do, we do, and you do philosophy”. The lesson design included bodily/kinesthetic, verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, and visual learning styles to engage all students. In addition, professional development during cohort meetings infuses the DOK matrix and Danielson's framework for teaching with a focus on questioning and discussion techniques supporting a key element of the school's chosen research-based framework. To address the varied learning styles and abilities of students within classrooms, technology is used to enhance learning experiences. Results of these practices have indicated that across classrooms students are engaged in higher order thinking processes and real world application of skills including modeling, argumentative discourse and writing and inquiry skills

as evidenced in classroom visits, authentic student work products, bulletin board displays and teacher observation reports. This is demonstrated by an increase of 80% in Regents Competency Tests (RCT) in Reading and 26% in RCT writing. There is also a 48% increase in RCT math, a 17% increase in Science and a 79% increase in Social Studies. Finally, there has been a positive effect with attendance increasing from 50% to 70%.

- The school leaders and staff consistently analyze student work, assessments and rubrics to ensure that students know their next learning steps so that teachers make instructional decisions at team and classroom levels. (2.2)
  - The school systematically administers curricular based pre-and-post assessments from the school's chosen English language arts (ELA) and math curricula. In addition, Scantron, Acuity, New York State Alternate Assessment results (NYSAA), Student Annual Need Determination Skill Inventory (Sandi), Brigance, Level 1 Vocational surveys and teacher designed checklists and rubrics provide student performance data. These results lead to adjustments in instructional plans as demonstrated in teachers' lesson plans. Throughout the school, student work products are graded using rubrics. This provides teachers with targeted information related to student performance from specific learning activities and guides instructional decisions such as whether re-teaching is necessary. The school emphasizes consistency of specific and actionable teacher feedback to students on their work as seen throughout student work folders, and the alignment of report card grades with student work products. Weekly professional development and support by the school-based coach support analysis of student work, using rubrics aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) developed by teacher teams. This determines progress in meeting their individual goals. Throughout the school, bulletin boards displayed student draft work samples with feedback provided and final work products with changes made. The coherence in planning and purposeful decisions has resulted in 10% of students moving to a less restrictive environment.

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

- Broaden the practice of communicating to staff and students the school beliefs of high expectations for academic and social learning to include parents and ensure that families are provided with supports as needed. (3.4)
  - The administrative team clearly articulates the school's vision of high expectations for all students to staff members during monthly and collaborative team meetings. The entire staff is provided with professional development on a consistent basis to support them in understanding how to raise the level of teaching for their students such as infusing technology and questioning techniques. Feedback to teachers from administrators, and feedback to students from teachers, foster and ensures that the school firmly believes that whatever a students' level, they are supported in moving forward. Parents state that there is good communication in terms of their child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), school events and celebrations, monthly newsletters, point sheets for behavior, report cards and phone calls to inform them of their

children's successes as well as issues. However, even though parents are consistently made aware of their child's current academic ability level, in all subject areas, parents stated they are not provided with specific supports needed to help their child at home. Parents reported that they would like a wider variety of different workshops such as "what does college and career readiness mean for my child". Parents also indicated that they would like to have meetings and workshops scheduled to accommodate working parents. As a result, this limits parents from being active participating partners with the school.

- Further refine and extend the school's approach to culture building, discipline and social-emotional support to ensure that the tone of the school is generally respectful. (1.4)
  - There is a school-wide focus on building a culture of positive behavior supports (PBIS) throughout the school and in all classrooms. The school is supportive and inclusive of students and staff who work together to create a calm, respectful, orderly environment for learning to take place. The school addresses the needs of students with supports such as: Power of Choice, SMARTS Behavioral Expectation, a Crisis Team, and the establishment of a Girl's Club for girls in alternate assessment classes. This year the school has established a PBIS inquiry team with a focus on improving students' social-emotional learning by increasing positive interactions with peers and adults. Students are well known by school staff and are able to convey concerns and discuss future plans. However, during the large student group meeting, students stated they felt safe within their classrooms but not always in the hallways. To guide school improvement efforts, the school involves students in certain decision-making processes and committees such as Student Government and Student Council. However, currently there are limited embedded feedback structures for family engagement thus minimizing the support of families for their children in the areas of academic and social behaviors.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

| School name: Queens Transition Center   | UD                    | D        | P                 | WD       |                   |           |                       |
|---|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| <b>Overall QR Score</b>   |                       |          | X                 |          |                   |           |                       |
| <b>Instructional Core</b>   |                       |          |                   |          |                   |           |                       |
| <i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>  | UD                    | D        | P                 | WD       |                   |           |                       |
| 1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?          |                       |          | X                 |          |                   |           |                       |
| 2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?   |                       |          | X                 |          |                   |           |                       |
| <b>School Culture</b>   |                       |          |                   |          |                   |           |                       |
| <i>To what extent does the school ...</i>   | UD                    | D        | P                 | WD       |                   |           |                       |
| 1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?   |                       | X        |                   |          |                   |           |                       |
| 3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?   |                       | X        |                   |          |                   |           |                       |
| <b>Systems for Improvement</b>  |                       |          |                   |          |                   |           |                       |
| <i>To what extent does the school ...</i>   | UD                    | D        | P                 | WD       |                   |           |                       |
| 1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?   |                       |          | X                 |          |                   |           |                       |
| 3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?   |                       |          | X                 |          |                   |           |                       |
| 4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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 <b>inquiry approach</b> that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?  |                       |          | X                 |          |                   |           |                       |
| 5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?   |                       |          | X                 |          |                   |           |                       |
| <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> |