



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

**Quality Review  
Office of School Quality  
Division of Academics, Performance, and Support  
2013-2014**

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**Queens Collegiate: A College Board School**

**Q310**

**167-01 Gothic Drive  
Queens  
NY 11432**

**Principal: Jaime Anne Dubei**

**Dates of review: November 25-26, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Juan Mendez**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Queens Collegiate is a secondary school with 652 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 53% Black, 18% Hispanic, 3% White, and 25% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 91.5%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders and teachers effectively align curricula to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and content standards and offer a range of learning experiences that engage students and support their thinking. (1.1)
  - The school customizes curricula to individual student needs to prepare students for the transition to new Common Core assessments. The middle school uses Pearson's Connected Mathematics Program (CMP3) to incorporate key instructional shifts. Students demonstrate improved levels of fluency through this web-based application whereby a teacher provides specific instructional items that appear on a student's computerized bookshelf so that particular skills can be targeted before advancing. Teachers also integrate CMP3's record keeping system to effectively track each student's progress. At the high school level, Integrated Algebra I teachers rely on newly released modules from the New York State Education Department, which appear on the EngageNY website. These modules provide teachers with a blueprint for the entire school year and allow students to sample rigorous mathematical problems that challenge students to transfer and apply math concepts to real world scenarios. As a result of these tailored supports, the middle school has increased its level 3 and 4 proficiency in math by 4% in comparison to the rest of the city.
  - Teachers plan a variety of learning tasks to motivate students with active learning experiences, as evident in grades six and seven, where science teachers engage students with Full Option Science System (FOSS) kits that integrate reading, writing and scientific exploration. Moreover, the use of these kits has allowed science teachers the opportunity to reduce the number of units taught while deepening student understanding of science standards. Furthermore, teachers modify curricula on the basis of student needs that are determined not only in class, but also through online web-based review sites such as Castle Learning, where teachers also cull a great degree of their content. Teachers adjust units accordingly based on the degree by which students meet expected targets through the use of Castle Learning platforms. This approach has allowed the school to heighten cognitive engagement while targeting underperforming subgroups. Only 15% of middle schools citywide have a greater percentage of students in the 75 or higher growth percentile among English Language Learners (ELLs) as compared to this school.
- Teaching practices across the school reflect a common belief about student learning and consistently provide purposeful supports to meet varied student needs. (1.2)
  - Teachers believe in the need to provide multiple entry points to enhance the learning experience for all students. For example, many classrooms provide visual and auditory approaches to instruction that were deeply embedded into classroom routines. Websites with vivid images, audio of Shakespearean plays, and weather maps are some of the many modalities used to activate student desire to learn. Modern translations of

Shakespeare's plays created a necessary scaffold to hook English as a Second Language (ESL) students in one classroom. Overall, these activities reflect the Danielson Framework for Teaching as referenced in component 3c, "A centerpiece to student engagement." As a result, the school has managed a 2% increase in the college readiness threshold on the English language arts Regents examination.

- Teachers allow students to make meaning of challenging work through discussion and strategic grouping. In one class, ESL students were partnered with more fluent students during a vocabulary exercise. In a science classroom, students were accustomed to "accountable talk" requirements and an extension exercise enabled students to draw images after reading. This was a creative variation of the Frayer approach to word building. Across classrooms, work products represent distinctive levels of rigor as writing is greatly emphasized. Each classroom visited required students to engage in short writes, journal writing, or complete-sentence responses. These student supports have yielded an increase in the overall Progress Report grade at the middle school level, moving from C to B.
- The principal's strategic leadership promotes organizational decisions that clearly support different levels of goals to constantly improve student outcomes and student progress. (1.3)
  - The principal strategically makes use of partnerships with The City University of New York (CUNY) to provide ongoing support for teachers and students. These efforts have involved professional development around the Danielson framework. A great degree of time, space and staff resources are used to train teachers on various Danielson competencies. The school has also budgeted for a trainer from the National School Reform Faculty to further train staff in research-based protocols in an effort to shift the focus from Danielson toward a deeper analysis of student work products aligned to school goals. The school's mission is tied to the instructional goal that strives for the increased "Use of backwards design and differentiated instruction, as detailed by Wiggins, McTigue, and Tomlinson." The use of a 53-minute team meeting on Wednesdays allows the staff with enough time for addressing concerns around the design and modification of curricula. Moreover, the school boasts of its use of iZone online classes to increase credit accumulation. Parents receive detailed workshops that prioritize ways to support children at home in an iZone school. As a result, the school has boosted its first-year credit accumulation rate for students who earn 10 or more credits by 2.6%.
- Teachers benefit from an observation process that is grounded in the Danielson framework and allows for the implementation of effective instructional techniques. (4.1)
  - School leaders provide teachers with time-bound and actionable feedback that allows them to grow and succeed as educators. Observation reports detail teacher strengths and highlight clear expectations in the form of "next steps." High expectations were documented in observation reports through pointed directions that address student grouping techniques or efforts to heighten the use of

critical thinking questions. Informal and formal observations occur with great frequency and vivid details re-direct teachers to key components of the Danielson Framework. One teacher opined on his use of the Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS) Learn, a video-based Department of Education resource: “I use ARIS Learn to really figure out the nuances behind the Danielson components.” This process has yielded effective or higher ratings among the vast majority of teachers.

- School leaders adeptly use the Advance web application as a means to surface shortcomings among teachers and guide them accordingly. The use of a transparent system in this collaborative culture has allowed teachers to willingly invite colleagues into their classrooms. A document titled “classroom intervisitation sheet” provides teachers with much-needed focus as they embark upon the peer-intervisitation process. This document requires teachers to specifically delineate what they have learned from the informal observations that will help them to improve their own practice. Teachers commented, “The school has a way of allowing us to borrow best practices from one another.” Shared approaches to instruction are evident in student writings that emphasize a key English language arts shift, calling for text-based answers. This informal approach to managing professional development has led to English language arts standards being implemented in social studies and science classrooms. This correlates with a 5.7% increase in the college readiness rate for the students in the school’s lowest third as measured citywide.

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

- Strengthen teachers’ assessment practices to reflect effective feedback resulting in instructional adjustments and clear next learning steps to improve student outcomes. (2.2)
  - The school integrates formative and summative assessments to determine student knowledge and improve the effectiveness of instruction. While this approach has enabled the school to work toward meeting several student-driven goals, many teachers do not consistently apply assessment approaches that result in direct and actionable feedback to students. For example, formative assessment approaches, such as “fist to five,” exit tickets, and journal entries were evident in only some of the classrooms we visited, yet many teachers mentioned exit tickets as a shared belief in student learning. The principal states, “We believe that a rising tide will lift all boats.” Nevertheless, the rising tide of increased use of rigorous formative assessments is uneven in its practice. Likewise, the creation of summative assessments is limited as many teachers rely heavily on computer-generated assessments. Although Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) baseline assessments reveal a greater need to infuse writing that includes citing evidence from texts in all content areas including mathematics and science, teacher generated assessments aligned to MOSL are deficient. Moreover, students mentioned that teachers frequently do not return written assignments in a timely manner, which limits students’ ability to clearly understand the next steps needed to improve their learning. This correlates with a decrease in the overall school performance at the high school level, as indicated in the New York City Progress Report that reveals recent regression from categorical letter grades of A to B.

- Further engage teacher teams in inquiry work to enhance teacher leadership and promote greater emphasis on instructional shifts to amplify student progress. (4.2)
  - School leaders are building capacity by immersing teacher teams in focused studies around the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teams meet every other day for 53 minutes. Although teacher team understanding of components from the Danielson framework has improved significantly, the work on teacher teams is only loosely connected with school goals. For example, recent teacher team trainings facilitated by the CUNY network targeted Danielson competencies 1E on student engagement, 3B that includes questioning and discussion techniques, and 3D regarding assessment. Additionally, to further amplify teacher team efforts, the school hired a trainer from National School Reform Faculty to lead a five-day workshop on the use of team protocols. While these teacher team trainings provide a solid foundation for future work, teacher teams have only begun to engage in the process of addressing goals related to student attendance and the overall graduation rate, which are cited in the school's Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP). In addition, teacher teams were observed engaged in discussions on rigor in assessments and more effective questioning techniques, yet distributed leadership practices were not clearly discernable, and a focus on instructional shifts was not readily apparent limiting the advancement of teacher capacity that leads to improved student learning.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Queens Collegiate: A College Board School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?			X				
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the 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 supports 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 those expectations?			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 student 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 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?				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					
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>