Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Queens High School for Information, Research and Technology

High School Q302

8-21 BAY 25 STREET, Queens, NY 11691
District: 27

Principal: Carl Vincent Manalo

Date of review: November 20, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Miatheresa Pate

The School Context

Queens High School for Information, Research and Technology is a high school 391 with students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 49% Black, 43% Hispanic, 2% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 59% of the students enrolled and girls account for 40%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 87%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school…	**Area of:**	**Rating:**
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	**Additional Findings**	**Developing**
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	**Additional Findings**	**Developing**
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	**Focus**	**Developing**
School Culture		
To what extent does the school…	**Area of:**	**Rating:**
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	**Celebration**	**Proficient**
Systems for Improvement		
To what extent does the school…	**Area of:**	**Rating:**
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	**Additional Findings**	**Proficient**

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

School leaders embed high expectations in all aspects of school culture, focusing on college and career readiness, in alignment with the citywide expectations and the Danielson Framework for Teaching, to raise levels of success for all constituents.

Impact

Staff, students, and families are aware of the expectations of the school and the structures that support achieving these high expectations, thus ensuring a clear outlet leading to increased student achievement and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The dialogue with parents revealed that the principal routinely has one to one share-out of expectations for students and the school, with parents, as they enter the school and during parent teacher night.

- The dialogue with parents revealed that the teachers offer guidance, support, and regularly send updates via the 'Robo –call' and 'Skedula' system whereby parents have their own passwords for daily access.

- The school provides a College Advisor who assists students with Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) prep and their college applications in addition to the Senior Guidance Counselor who discusses their progress and how to complete their road towards graduation and beyond.

- The school has partnered with The City University of New York (CUNY) and The State University of New York (SUNY) representatives who come to the school to conduct presentations to seniors on the requirements that are needed for entry to college and finding the school that works best for them to ensure academic success and longevity towards the college and career readiness path.

- The school has ongoing college trips to St. Joseph, Queens Community College, and is developing relationships with other colleges to enhance students' knowledge of college life and financial options.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of rubrics, ongoing checks for understanding, student self-assessments, and limited feedbacks.

Impact

As a result of inconsistent assessment practices and inadequate checks for understanding, feedback to students regarding performance is limited.

Supporting Evidence

- The dialogue with the principal revealed that student self-assessment has been introduced to the teaching staff and is being used in many classes with the hope of it becoming a common practice in the coming school semester.

- Teachers across classrooms are in the process of honing the skill of using exit tickets, questioning and discussion as a tool for checking for understanding. For instance, the professional development calendars outlines ongoing training around these types of instructional assessments and teachers in team meetings were observed sharing best practices around implementation of these assessment practices.

- The review of student work products revealed inconsistent and limited feedbacks on student work across classrooms. For instance, when observing mathematics student work products during the student meeting there was limited feedback, additionally the observation of bulletins boards in content areas other than literacy feedback was limited.

- While dialogue with students indicated the receiving of verbal and written feedback in Global history and English Language Arts (ELA) classes, this same level of feedback was not evident across classrooms.

- Classrooms visited reflect an inconsistent use of rubrics via the display of in-class bulletin boards. Nor were the use of rubrics consistent during classwork activities observed.

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing

Findings

Higher order skills are inconsistently emphasized for all learners across grades and content areas. School leaders and faculty are in the process of deepening the implementation, refinement and planning of curricular units and academic tasks.

Impact

Curricula and tasks provide limited opportunities to engage students in all subgroups in rigorous tasks that emphasize critical thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- The school is in the beginning stages of implementation and planning of curricular units and academic tasks. For example, the school's has recently adopted the use of the Tri-State Rubric from Engage NY as a tool for analyzing the quality of unit plans.

- Lesson plans provided as evidence for review in all content areas did not emphasize higher order thinking. For example, an English language arts lesson plan required students to engage in a Socratic seminar that required students to systemically question, examine issues, and challenge the view point of classmates via the use of textual evidence. This level of high order thinking was not consistent in all content areas.

- Classrooms observed reflect an inconsistent emphasis on higher order skills in learning tasks for all learners across grades and content areas. For example, the Global History and Geography class required students to draw conclusions about Mongolian culture by examining primary source reading and visuals. This level of high order thinking was not consistent across grades and content areas. Additionally, in the review of lesson plans cross classrooms there were inconsistent embedding of scaffolds that create opportunities for English language learners and Special Education students to engage in rigorous tasks that emphasize critical thinking

Quality Indicator:	**1.2 Pedagogy**	**Rating:**	**Developing**

Findings
Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide entry points and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact
Inconsistent entry points into the curricula with challenging tasks limit the engagement of all students in high levels of thinking and participation that culminate in meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- While dialogue with students indicated a willingness to participate, the dialogue also revealed student's demand to decrease the amount of work packets given by teachers and to increase the amount of 'hands-on' work required by teachers for participation.

- Classrooms observed reflect inconsistent levels of student thinking and participation. During a science lesson the teacher organized students into groups based on learning styles. During this same lesson the teacher modeled the movement of a joint, used questioning to check for student understanding. This demonstration of an entry point and discussion was not observed across classrooms.

- Teaching practices inconsistently leverage strategies such as questioning and discussions that prompt higher order thinking. Strategic use of scaffolding techniques was inconsistent across classroom (e.g., modeling, needs-based grouping, effective use of graphic organizers, and building academic vocabulary—all of which may be in the student's native language or in English) limited multiple entry points to lessons and tasks for all learners including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Quality Indicator:	**4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development**	**Rating:**	**Proficient**

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in professional collaborations building their capacity in decisions relating to curriculum development, the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and analyzing student work.

Impact

Inquiry based teacher collaborations align to school goals and promote distributive leadership, resulting in increased instructional capacity and teacher voice in key decision-making.

Supporting Evidence

- The dialogue with teachers and administration revealed that the school participates in the *Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Teams (TALENT) initiative,* in partnership with New Visions for Public Schools. TALENT is a change model that places a team of teachers and a new school leader in a school that is experiencing a leadership transition. This team uses student data via "Student Sorter" in order to identify subgroups and priorities in our programming.

- The dialogue with teachers, administration, and the observation of a teacher team revealed that teacher teams have adopted the Learning from Student Work Protocol as a means to gather data and analyze gaps in student learning. For instance, during this process the peer teachers provide the presenting teacher with suggestions and instructional strategies to help the teacher's students. The presenting teacher chooses one or two strategies to employ and other teachers will observe this teacher implementing the strategies. Teachers will then provide feedback on the lesson as well as look at impact on student learning based on the new strategy.

- The data team has a voice in key decisions that affect learning across the school. For instance, after the review of data, the team collectively decided that the school wide focus should be placed on rigor and student engagement. This decision was agreed upon and supported by administration.