



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**Flushing High School**

**High School Q460**

**35-01 Union Street  
Queens  
NY 11354**

**Principal: Tyee Chin**

**Date of review: May 20, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Rosemary Stuart**

## The School Context

Flushing High School is a high school with 1,863 students from grade 9 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 19% Asian, 22% Black, 54% Hispanic, and 3% White students. The student body includes 21% English Language Learners and 14% students with disabilities. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 83.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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 <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
---------------------------	------------------------------	----------------	-------------------

### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate expectations to families connected to preparing students for college and career. Teacher teams and staff consistently communicate high expectations and offer ongoing feedback and supports to students.

### Impact

Families understand the progress students make toward graduation goals. Students engage in experiences that prepare them for the next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- Members of the guidance department meet with parents, including parents of students with disabilities, several times a year to review the college process and provide detailed specific information about their children's progress in obtaining credits and meeting graduation requirements. Parents receive a checklist that outlines the steps to be taken in each year for each grade level. The eleventh grade checklist is broken into two sections to indicate what must be completed by January, and what must be completed by June. One session, at which 21 parents of students with disabilities attended, addressed the specific diploma requirements for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and planning for college and career.
- Several sessions were held for parents on navigating PupilPath and the school's website. Over 100 parents were present and obtained passwords to access the system. Over 25% of parents actively use PupilPath to obtain information about their children's performance on a day-to-day basis and to track their progress to graduation. Assistant principals monitor the timeliness of teacher updates to ensure parents have the most up-to-date information. In the first week of May, teachers across the school entered information about students into the system over 1800 times. One parent stated, and others agreed, that because he knows his child's performance, "I can step in and help when the difficulty is happening."
- There is a dedicated college guidance counselor and the school partners with a community based organization (CBO) to provide college and career advisement. The CBO selects and trains students to be youth leaders who provide peer mentoring on the college search process, as well as supporting students and their families as they apply to colleges and complete financial aid applications.
- Students track their progress to graduation through the "Are You Green?" initiative, which identifies how well students are on track to graduate using red, yellow and green highlights. Charts outlining credit accumulation and completion of Regents exams, using partial identification numbers to preserve confidentiality, are organized by small learning community and posted in a hallway. Most students were eager to discuss their status as they pointed out where their records were on display.
- The school offers College Now courses through LaGuardia Community College and almost 10% of students enroll in courses such as statistics, psychology, biological sciences, literature and propaganda, and introduction to business.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
---------------------------	---------------------	----------------	-------------------

### Findings

Teaching strategies do not consistently provide multiple entry points for all learners to produce meaningful work products.

### Impact

There is uneven engagement in challenging tasks and inconsistent demonstration of high levels of student thinking and participation.

### Supporting Evidence

- Many tasks assigned to students were not differentiated to meet the needs of individual or groups of students. Worksheets in some classes were translated into Spanish for English Language Learners (ELLs). In one math class for students with disabilities, the activities as well as the support provided were customized for each group allowing all students to engage with rigorous concepts. This level of differentiation was not consistent across grades and content areas.
- Not all instruction followed the planned lesson. For example, a science lesson plan indicated the students would be engaged in a lab experiment, but the students indicated they had not conducted it. Instead, the teacher asked the students to turn in a paragraph stating a claim and using two pieces of supporting evidence. However, the students were not given enough time to complete the paragraph before the end of the period. In another class, students worked on the Do Now for almost half of the period before the teacher introduced the content of the lesson and the text they were to address. Thus, students did not consistently have the opportunity to complete challenging and rigorous tasks.
- Discussions during lessons were frequently teacher-centered, flowing from teacher to student and back to the teacher. In one class, the students were completing a worksheet on using subordinate conjunctions that required students to explain why they chose a particular conjunction to complete sentences. When the teacher asked the students to share their answers, they were not asked to share their thinking about the word they chose. In two classes, the teachers conducted the lessons from the front of the room without giving opportunities for students to discuss important content in groups or monitoring whether students were taking notes as they had been directed to do. Some of the students in this class were attempting to initiate appropriate group discussions, but the teacher moved to another activity. As a result, student discussion does not always reflect high levels of thinking and participation.
- Some students produce rigorous work that reflects high levels of interest and engagement. A group of students in the Virtual Enterprise program created a digital mobile app with an accompanying PowerPoint presentation that explained how the app would help a fictitious company improve its marketing strategy and overcome the obstacles of an inexperienced sales and marketing team.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

### Findings

Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are inconsistently emphasized across classes. Some tasks reflect planning to provide all students access to the curricula.

### Impact

There is uneven cognitive engagement in learning for students with disabilities, ELLs, and general education students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers in some departments work with school leaders and coaches to plan and refine lessons to provide students with access to the curriculum and to emphasize rigorous skills. Several lesson plans were created using a common template that requires referencing the Common Core or content standards, the aim, essential question, learning objectives and pivotal questions. Plans created on this template include check off boxes to indicate areas that teachers identify as possible areas of struggle, which Writing Is Thinking (WIT) strategies are emphasized, and strategies to differentiate by content, process, or work product. However, few teachers utilize these prompts to customize their lessons for specific groups of learners.
- Some lesson plans reflect planning to address the specific learning styles of groups of students. However, the planning is not always purposeful. One lesson indicates that students would be grouped “by performance level and their ability to work together constructively.” This plan does not specify which performance levels are used to group the students nor does it differentiate the activities for learners with different skill levels. However, a math task in a self-contained classroom was differentiated to allow students of widely varied abilities to engage in activities on graphing piecewise functions.
- Teacher-created resources for student use, such as worksheets that implement the WIT strategies, occasionally exhibit incorrect punctuation or capitalization leading to opportunities for students, especially ELLs, to be confused about writing mechanics. After analyzing student performance on sentence skills, a teacher noted that mechanics should be the next learning target because it “is the basic aspect of language that should be tackled first.”

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

### **Findings**

Assessments, rubrics, and ongoing checks for understanding are unevenly used across classrooms.

### **Impact**

Students receive limited feedback about their performance and teachers do not always make instructional adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The grading policy allows grades to be determined by results of formative and summative benchmark assessments, projects, participation, and attendance. Departments may include additional content or performance related components such as the science department including lab reports. If a course culminates in a Regents exam, then the results of the Regents exam can be included as part of the course grade.
- Feedback to students is sometimes aligned with the rubrics associated with the task. One student wrote an essay based on primary documents to prepare for the document-based question essay on the United States History Regents exam. Feedback to the student was detailed and included next steps to guide improvements that would lead to a higher score on the Regents exam. However, a former ELL student received a score of 85 on an essay regarding the presidential decisions. The essay had several spelling and grammatical errors that were not corrected or noted. Another student completed a unit assessment that assigned 40 points to the essay section which was accompanied by a 2-point scoring rubric. On the rubric, the teacher assigned the full score to the component dealing with errors in sentences even though the essay had multiple errors in subject-verb agreement and sentence construction that hindered readability.
- According to school leaders, teachers are expected to use rigorous questioning as part of ongoing checks for understanding, and to track student participation and adjust instruction and grouping accordingly. Some teachers made observations of individual student participation and their level of mastery of the material during the lesson. In one class, the teacher was keeping a record of which students had completed the Do Now. In another class, the teacher began the lesson by grouping students for the activity based on an assessment from the previous lesson. However, these practices were not typical of instruction across the school. In one class, the teacher asked, "is everyone finished with their work, yes or no?" and asked them to switch their papers with another group without getting any response to the inquiry about how they were doing. As a result, not all teachers are aware of learning needs in order to make adjustments to instruction.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
---------------------------	---	----------------	-------------------

**Findings**

Teachers collaborate in inquiry groups and teams that are beginning to implement strategies to achieve school goals. They analyze assessment data and student work.

**Impact**

There is some progress toward school goals, but this progress is not seen for all groups of students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers meet every week to conduct inquiry on teams such as the WIT team, and twice a month on interdisciplinary planning teams. Teachers create and administer tasks for units of study. After administering the tasks, they bring sample student work and data to their team meetings to discuss noticings, interventions and next steps. There is a team focused on implementing the WIT strategies to improve writing schoolwide. A teacher noted that when students used these strategies, sentence structure improved.
- Although the focus teacher teams are placing on improving writing is reflected by an increase in the percentage of all students passing the English Regents exam from 55% in 2014 to 70% in 2015, the percentage of ELLs passing this exam was 37%. The school's four-year graduation rate of 58% is below the citywide average and the rate for students with disabilities is unchanged for the past three years.
- Teacher collaborations also include intervisitations. Teachers in each small learning community visited each other's classes to observe the teaching strategies of their colleagues, specifically those from the WIT program. Teachers stated that such collaborations helped them see which WIT strategies worked well and noted learning how to use them during a mini-lesson. One teacher stated, "I had a chance to see in action how a teacher uses formative assessment." While one team reported they are highly engaged in the inquiry process, another team noted that the inquiry work was becoming "more routine than transformative."
- A cross-discipline teacher team was observed sharing student work and asking whether or not their targeted efforts to improve the use of subordinate conjunctions have been successful. They noted that their analysis of student work would inform the upcoming work to refine curricula over the summer. The teachers worked with a partner and some, but not all, of the teachers on the team used a graphic organizer to record observations about the work from targeted grade 9 students. Some of the targeted students were ELLs or former ELLS, some had IEPs, and some were general education students. The teachers had created their own worksheets on using conjunctions, such as, since, unless, although, when, or if. After recording what students struggled to master, they determined that one strategy they could implement would be to have students annotate the prompts to illustrate why they chose each conjunction to complete the sentences. They also discussed strategies to release scaffolds that were provided for students who master skills.