The School Context

High School of Computers and Technology is a high school with 552 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 35% Black, 58% Hispanic, 1% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 86% of the students enrolled and girls account for 14%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 87.0%.

School Quality Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Culture</th>
<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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### Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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#### Findings
School leaders and staff successfully partner with families to support student progress towards high expectations connected to college and career readiness. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students.

#### Impact
The school has created extensive partnerships with parents that result in increased student achievement as well as provide clear, focused, and effective feedback and advisement supports to ensure that all students are prepared for the next level.

#### Supporting Evidence
- Parents, students and staff stated that the school communicates via phone messenger as well as End Grade, an online student grade book, for grades, tests, assignments, and postings and the Daedalus software system, a biographical system covering Individualized Education Program (IEP's), attendance, Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) reports, intervention logs, deans records, and entry times. In addition, school leaders and staff mentioned that the system links the scanning times as well as enables access to parents and staff. Teacher teams send out individualized progress reports as well as have a set day each week for personalized calls and emails.

- The school has established partnerships with the parents and the community. Parents have contributed to the school through a fundraiser, with the support of the parent association and the local Burger King, where a percentage of sales goes toward the school to assist in funding the prom and other senior activities. Another affiliation of the parent's association with a veteran's organization enabled the school to receive donations for used and new equipment. Parents have volunteered to assist the school's office with sending letters home, distributing report cards, and setting up the prom. Parents and teachers stated that parents volunteer on a daily basis in support of the school. Lastly, the parent president coordinated with Modell's to assist the students in establishing the Tigers school football team and with obtaining jerseys for the players.

- Parents and students indicated that guidance counselors, members of the school based support team and various members of staff support the process of students becoming college and career ready and the college application process. Beginning in grade 9, the guidance counselors and staff members promote college tours and conduct financial aid, admissions, orientation and high school transcript workshops. The school has established partnerships with the non-profit organization Minds Matter and Sponsors for Educational Opportunities for Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) preparation and writing courses. In addition, in grade 10, counselors continue to push into the classroom and the school has a College Now program, working closely with Lehman College for both high school and college credit courses. Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) courses start in grade 10 and there is an in house SAT prep. College representatives visit the school to teach the students about the college application process as well. Many students take part in the New York University College Access Leadership Institute, where they receive training on public speaking and financial aid and bring the information back to the school to turnkey to others.
Findings
Across classrooms, teaching practice reflects the belief that all students learn best when they are actively engaged in learning collaborations that involve high-level discussions and the exploration of rigorous tasks. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula to engage all learners.

Impact
While teaching strategies provide multiple entry points, they are not yet consistently strategic to offer high quality supports and extensions so that all students regularly participate in differentiated and challenging activities.

Supporting Evidence
- During a grade 11 trigonometry lesson, students actively worked in teams to analyze and find equivalent trigonometric functions. Students had to analyze the formula and apply the Pythagorean Theorem, using the theorem to enable an expert shooter an accurate shot on the target from his position. Afterward, student teams came together to discuss, question and support conclusions.

- In a grade 9 English language arts (ELA) lesson, students were engaged in a Socratic Seminar based on the topic of "West Side Story". Students were given graphic organizers and recorded their responses to guided questions along with recording their observations during the Socratic conversation. Although the lesson reflected the principal’s belief system of discussion and engagement, it was evident that the students were becoming familiar with the process due to the teacher’s constant prompting during the Socratic session.

- While the school demonstrated thorough and rigorous planning, it was evident that the level of discussion and engagement varied from classroom to classroom. For example, while one classroom promoted Socratic seminar another classroom demonstrated student to student conversation around the French Revolution.
Additional Findings

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings
School leaders and faculty ensure that rigorous habits and higher order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks are embedded in a coherent way. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data so that all students have access to the curriculum.

Impact
Teachers consistently challenge all students, including English language learners (ELLs), students with disabilities and the highest achieving learners, using higher-level tasks across grades and content areas. Students are thereby required to demonstrate their thinking, and receive the necessary supports to access those tasks, leading to cognitive engagement for all students.

Supporting Evidence
- All core major subject areas in all grades have developed Common Core aligned units and lesson plans with instructional practices informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Assigned tasks and lesson plans ask students to demonstrate higher order thinking. A grade 9 and 10 global studies unit on the Roman Empire asks students to evaluate how geography has affected the rise of the city-states in Greece and the rise of the Roman Empire by using multiple texts to support their evidence. In a grade 9 ELA unit map, students were required to develop arguments that reflect the greater themes within their novel studies as well as develop arguments and counter arguments from synthesizing a wide array of literary sources.

- Lesson plans reflected access for all learners as evidenced by a grade 9 ELA lesson that utilized differentiated strategies for the class’s kinesthetic, auditory, read-write and visual learners. In addition, the teacher planned strategic and deliberate pairings of a high-level learner with a struggling learner. Another example from a grade 10 English as a second language (ESL)/ Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) ELA class highlighted access to all learners by noting strategies for visual, auditory, verbal, social and solitary learners. Strategies ranged from independent exercises, think-pair-share, music cues, PowerPoint presentations and graphic organizers.

- All lesson plans demonstrated the use and implementation of exits slips to promote strategic grouping during classroom lessons. In addition, exit slip information enabled teachers to adhere to the principal’s and school’s belief system and the school-wide instructional focus of assessing for understanding.
Findings
Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics and grading policies aligned to the school’s curricula to provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers. Teachers consistently use ongoing checks for understanding, allowing them to make effective adjustments to meet all learners’ needs.

Impact
The monitoring of student progress and student work results in all students having a clear understanding of their next steps for obtaining their goals in all content areas and increased student achievement.

Supporting Evidence
- Across all classrooms and hallway bulletin boards, teachers post rubrics that are adapted to the subject. Teachers use rubrics that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the Regents curricula. The school moved away from a school-wide rubric and teachers and teacher teams developed their rubrics based on the curriculum, needs, topics, and levels. The rubrics are changed and adjusted to the college and career ready standards when the students reach grade 11 to reflect the college experience.

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, assessing for understanding strategies were evident and ranged from KWL charts, which track what a student knows (K), wants to know (W), and has learned (L) about a topic, surveys, genre emulation, summaries, think pair share, quick writes, Socratic dialogue, peer revision, and paraphrasing assignments. Some teachers used a random generator on the Smart board, an interactive whiteboard, and others used the electronic handheld assessment clickers for end of class assessment. Afterward, teachers upload the information and analyze the real time data.

- The school uses computer-based instruction and monitors student progress as the students work. In addition, during a technology lesson, the classroom was equipped with a server that enabled the students and teacher to see all that they do. Teachers were able to troubleshoot from the computer or proceed to a large group discussion.
<table>
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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</th>
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<th>Well Developed</th>
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**Findings**
All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based structured professional collaborations. Embedded distributed teacher leadership structures support teacher leadership across all areas of the school.

**Impact**
The professional collaborations have strengthened teacher instructional practice, resulting in school-wide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners. Teachers play an integral role in key school-wide decisions that affect curriculum, teaching and learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**
- Teacher teams are organized by grade and meet daily during period 5. All school decisions are made collaboratively with all staff members. Teachers also mentioned how they have established a practice of visiting each other’s classrooms after professional development to give feedback on topics learned in either large or small group sessions or during their professional learning teams. During the current school year, the teacher team focus included the high school transition process as well as parent outreach. The principal established a shorter school day each Friday, enabling all teachers to participate in school-wide professional development in support of improved teacher practice around the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

- Teacher leaders established a peer group connections team with a group of grade 11 students that pushes into gym classes and meet with groups of students. Students lead activities on common student issues, academics, how to do better in school, and school violence prevention. Princeton University trained teachers on the aspects of the program while students became partners with other students. In addition, the assistant principal of guidance noticed incidents of bullying and created an anti-bullying team that includes over 35 students. The team showed the movie “Bully” to the entire study body, with a focus on social justice, peer mediation and uses of preventative measures. Furthermore, teachers and students received training to prevent altercations and bullying as well.

- A teacher leader led a grade 10 teacher team meeting as the team analyzed the progress of three students who had been significantly late, arriving after period 2, with the goal of improving the students’ promptness. During the meeting, the teacher team leader described the academic and behavioral attributes of the three students represented on the agenda. As the teacher team met, the team discussed two intervention strategies from positive and negative reinforcement points of view and posed the question of which strategy to choose. From the positive perspective, the teachers decided to introduce a method whereby students would compete by classroom, group, pairs and individually and student winners would be awarded a button for a one day no homework pass. The negative intervention would have the teachers record tardiness by period 2 and reinstate the detention policy for tardiness. The team leader emphasized the school wide attendance tracker and re-posting the attendance charts inside the school. All agreed to post attendance charts and teachers decided to go with the positive reinforcement strategy.