Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Queens Preparatory Academy
High school 29Q248
143-10 Springfield Blvd.
Queens
NY 11413

Principal: Tashon Haywood

Dates of Review:
March 28, 2017 - March 29, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Carlos Perez
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Celebration to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Focus to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as Additional Finding. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

Queens Preparatory Academy serves students in grade 9 through grade 12. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
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### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
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### Systems for Improvement

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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

School leaders and staff consistently communicate high expectations connected to a pathway to college and careers that is embedded throughout the entire school. The school successfully partners with families and offers feedback and supports to all students and their families.

Impact

Students are supported through a variety of means that empower them and prepare them for life after high school. This includes extensive focus on the college application process starting in ninth grade.

Supporting Evidence

- Students and their families are a part of each step of the college application process. The guidance department plays a pivotal part in this, offering parents and students step by step direction in order to ensure that students apply to the colleges of their choice. The school offers a wide range of workshops to help parents through the college process. For example, the school has an entire calendar that solely focuses on college. Items on the calendar include financial aid workshops, college trips, career exploration trips, college alumni day, career fairs, and the college application week pep rally. In addition, the school shares with seniors and juniors a detailed sheet that includes all dates and deadlines pertaining to the college application process. Items include the last day to register for SAT/ACT, when student's resumes are due, personal statement due date, and deadlines for all college applications including CUNY, SUNY, and all early action/decisions. During the student meeting, students shared how even ninth graders know when the deadlines for all college materials are due. They shared that the school is “constantly reminding us of the college process and let our parents know just as much as they tell us.” As a result, through February 3, 2017, 43 percent of all seniors have completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, which is 41 percent higher than this time last year.

- The school holds graduation conferences with every student and their parents to share progress towards graduation and what, if anything, is missing. During these meetings, there is a review of transcripts and scores on all Regents exams, detailing what the current graduation status is for each student. A plan is made for those students missing any requirements, and both parent and student commit to completing what is necessary in order to graduate on time.

- All students in this school are enrolled in a College Ed. course that meets once per week. The goal of the College Ed. program is to engage all students in the process of college planning as early as ninth grade. The College Ed. curriculum is organized around three consistent themes, “Who am I?”, “Where am I Going?”, and “How Do I Get There?” Each grade has a focus and a set of goals that each student must complete. For example, the goals for all juniors is to produce a post-secondary portfolio, set and monitor report card specific, measurable, assignable, realistic, and time based (SMART) goals, apply to at least two scholarships, and complete 35 hours of community service. In addition, all juniors must complete all of the necessary college application supplements by the end of their junior year as well as develop a well-balanced college list, write a personal statement/college application essay, secure teacher recommendations, and complete a resume. All students begin and must maintain a passing grade of 100 percent in College Ed. in order to successfully complete each course. During the student meeting, students shared how impactful the College Ed. course has been to them, and how, as a result, they feel “100 percent prepared for college.”
Area of Focus

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and offer multiple entry points across grade levels.

Impact
School leaders and staff are building coherence across all grade and subject levels, integrating instructional strategies, such as differentiation and scaffolding, and incorporating instructional shifts, such as citing textual evidence and writing form sources.

Supporting Evidence

- Evidence of differentiation based on prior lessons appeared throughout lesson plans reviewed. A lesson plan on Romeo and Juliet had students sitting in predetermined seats based on data from a recent assessment. This allowed those students who struggled on the assessment to sit with students who were successful. A ninth grade global history lesson planned for scaffolding that included detailed map images, modified copies of the text, heterogeneous groupings, and the use of technology for English Language Leaners (ELLs) to use Google translate. However, areas of planning in unit and curriculum maps was not as detailed as was found in lesson plans.

- Alignment to the CCLS was evident throughout the curricula that was reviewed. Additionally, instructional shift elements were in lesson plans, such as citing strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis that was part of ninth grade social studies plans. Writing from a variety of sources and responding thoroughly to diverse perspectives was also part of the curriculum for social studies. The chemistry curriculum included planning for citing textual evidence and comparing and contrasting findings presented in texts or from other sources.

- All curricula reviewed displayed planning and multiple entry points that allow all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, access to the curriculum. For example, the unit plans for chemistry included a variety of curriculum supports for all students, using visual tools such as PowerPoint presentations, guided notes, strategic grouping, restating information, alternative test settings, and the use of technology. A geometry lesson plan evidenced grouping based on student ability that allowed for additional time for the teacher to work with different groups based on need. In addition, plans included the use of the Smartboard for visual learners and having students check circle graphs by using a graphing calculator.
## Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings

A set of beliefs on how students learn best is reflected across teacher practices that are aligned to the curricula and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Student work products reflect high levels of thinking and participation.

### Impact

Student have opportunities to demonstrate critical thinking and are active participants in their learning. There is extensive use of instructional strategies that support discussion and active student engagement.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal shared that students in her school learn best when they are given opportunities to make their thinking visible by engaging in turn and talks, group discussions, and think/pair/share. This allows students ample opportunities to engage in rich, rigorous group and partner discussions. Additionally, real world connections in instruction should be a focus for all teachers. During an eleventh grade math lesson, students were involved in group discussions that gave them multiple opportunities to share their thoughts and express their thinking. Furthermore, the teacher reminded students regularly about using their accountable talk prompts and the academic vocabulary associated with the lesson. Students discussed whether they agreed or disagreed with whether a point can be on more than one circle at a time, and, in addition to discussing their claims, were also able to draw a picture that justified their answers. One group shared their answers and stated that there is only one point in a circle that matters: the center which allows them to find the radius.

- During a ninth grade English Language Arts (ELA) lesson, students were engaged in a world café discussion protocol in order to synthesize their comprehension of *Romeo and Juliet* that helped to determine which two factors most contributed to their deaths. This lesson evidenced high levels of student thinking and discussions, allowing students to make educated and supported arguments for their claims. One group’s discussion centered on how the families’ feud was the biggest factor that contributed to their deaths. They claimed that if there had been no feud, they would not have had to have been married secretly. A second group’s discussion involved how Romeo and Juliet’s parents should have been more supportive and understanding, especially since family members had already been killed. Said one student, “They should have seen it coming.” During a tenth grade Spanish lesson, students regularly used the target language, were involved in partner discussions using the target language, and had an opportunity to create and recite a text message to their parents using the target language.

- High levels of student thinking and discussions were seen during an eleventh grade ELA lesson. Students were engaged in a Socratic-style discussion that began with having students share their thoughts about whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement, “An idealist is a person who helps other people to be prosperous.” As students worked on this question, the teacher visited with student groups and asked scaffolded questions such as, “In what ways does this quote prove true or false?” and “Is the quote negative or positive?” Students then engaged in a “mix and mingle” where they shared their responses with at least two classmates. Next students arranged themselves in a circle, leaving four chairs in the middle (the inner circle). Students engaged in a respectful active debate where they presented text-based evidence to support the quote, “Does idealism often lead to downfall?” Student discussions were rigorous and articulate, offering clear evidence to support claims.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Teachers create and use rubrics, assessments, and grading policies that are aligned to the curricula. Ongoing checks for understanding offer a clear picture of student progress towards meeting goals across grade levels.

Impact

Teacher feedback is actionable and provides students with an understanding of their academic progress and achievement. Frequent assessments allow teachers to make adjustments to meet the needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use and create rubrics that are task-related, with ongoing revisions taking place during teacher team meetings. Rubric language is reviewed in class in order for students to have a clear understanding of what is expected to receive the highest grade possible. On the back of all rubrics, students can find guidelines with supports to assist them in those areas in which they struggled. This enables them to address those areas on the next assignment. Feedback to students is aligned to all rubrics and, according to teachers, is given to students immediately, both verbally and in written form. During the student interview, one student shared how all the feedback they receive from their teachers is easy to follow because it is aligned to the rubric. This makes it easier for them to not make the same mistakes more than once.

- During the teacher interview, several teachers shared how they have moved towards using checklists that students can use to self-assess. During the student meeting, students shared how peer-assessment and self-assessment are done during many of their classes. One student noted, “Hearing what my classmates have to say about my work is very helpful.” Additionally, many teachers have started the practice of taping specific rubrics to student’s desks or tables for students to use as a reference as they work. Freshmen shared that they use portfolios in their ELA classes and can see their progress throughout the year, including all of the areas in which they have shown growth.

- Teacher feedback to students reviewed was actionable and specific, offering students clear next steps. Feedback on a chemistry assignment included a “glow” that commended the student for persevering throughout and not giving up. A “grow” asked the same student how they could have explained their chemical structures; this included a line that showed the student which component of the rubric was missing. An algebra assignment offered feedback that praised the student for providing a complete response for question number one and asked the student to look at question number two and determine how the response might have been revised to be complete. Teacher feedback on a student writing assignment offered praise for sound analysis using text-based evidence to support the claim and for tying the conclusion to the claim and evidence. The teacher shared with the student that in order to raise the rigor in the student’s response, the support information should be accompanied by an in-depth analysis substantiating the claim.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

School leadership supports the development of all teachers through an extensive cycle of teacher observation and by providing feedback that accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps.

Impact

Schoolwide instructional practices and professional growth are being elevated through clear and precise feedback that is delivered to all teachers. Feedback to teachers comes from both school leaders and peers.

Supporting Evidence

- Feedback to teachers from school leaders is provided in a way that captures teacher strengths and then offers next steps that are actionable. For example, feedback to a teacher after a math lesson included commended the teacher for engaging students and for the use of academic vocabulary that both the teacher and students used throughout the lesson. School leaders shared with the teacher that questioning and discussion techniques, specifically moving toward Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) questions level three and four, are expected moving forward. In addition, school leaders asked that the teachers focus on incorporating more real-world connections to math lessons. Teachers shared how feedback provided to them is authentic and supported with data and evidence from lessons. Additionally, teachers shared how feedback is aligned to the professional development (PD) they have attended or will be attending in order to assure that there is coherence throughout the observation process.

- There is a formal and structured observation process that teachers and school leaders can clearly articulate. The principal shared that in addition to overseeing ELA and social studies, she also makes sure to observe all new teachers and those on teacher improvement plans (TIP). In addition, the assistant principal meets with this latter group of teachers as well to supply them with as much support as possible. Moreover, to offer further support and next steps to teachers, group intervisitations are done that include a school leader and a group of teachers. During these observations, teachers and school leaders offer feedback to the teacher regarding pedagogical practice and student learning. During the teacher interview, several teachers shared how valuable the group intervisitations have been, as they allow teachers to hear feedback from not only school leaders but from their peers as well.

- School leaders offer feedback that articulates clear expectations to teachers. With respect to feedback to students, school leaders are clear in what is expected. Feedback to one teacher focused on having the teacher refrain from simply stating that something the student did was “good.” The school leader reminded the teacher that feedback to students needed to be explicit and should be tied to the criteria. Another lesson observation offered feedback to a teacher that reminded him that multiple entry points such as graphic organizers are expected at all times. School leaders also remind teachers of the expectation to allow students opportunities to make their thinking visible. Feedback from one lesson directed the teacher to have students “engage as groups to make meaning of the text they read.” The school leader went on to recommend that the teacher assign roles to the group members, e.g. questioner to write questions he/she has as she reads the text and then shares with the group to facilitate discussion.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Teachers are engaged in regular collaborative inquiry sessions that analyze student work and instructional practices. Teachers take on leadership roles through a variety of ways, most notably through the group intervisitation process.

Impact

Collaborative planning and teacher voice contribute to schoolwide instructional coherence and increased student achievement. The work of teacher teams results in enhanced instructional capacity, building rigor, and student engagement.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders shared that because of teacher teams, there has been much improvement to teachers’ instructional capacity. The principal revealed that lesson planning has improved greatly this year, specifically in the planning of rigorous tasks which ultimately has led to improved student engagement. Teachers noted how having opportunities to meet as a team regularly have had a big impact on their pedagogy. All teachers claim that it “has really helped them reflect on their practice as teachers and the way they deliver the material to students.” Teachers also shared how team meetings “really helped them look at student work, not only in their area but across all grades and subject areas,” allowing them to see other areas in which their students may show strength.

- Teachers noted that distributed leadership opportunities have been increasing over the last few years. As a result, teacher involvement throughout the school has increased, which has generated more interaction between teachers and students. One teacher shared, “I feel like I am blooming again.” She offered that prior to coming to this school, she felt as if she was not growing as an educator. A second teacher mentioned how there is a feeling that the school leadership is taking notice of teacher strengths by constantly asking them to facilitate PD sessions based on what they see during observations or on teacher interests. Furthermore, another teacher shared how he went to school leadership and proposed the idea of creating a coding course to offer students more foundation in technology. As a result, leadership recently informed the staff that they will be receiving the computers necessary for the course, and it will be implemented next school year.

- Teachers have opportunities to work closely with school leaders and conduct group intervisitation, then reflecting on their findings. Prior to each visit, the school leader sends out a memo to the teachers informing them what the area of focus will be for the intervisitation and the names of the teachers that will be participating. For example, a memo dated March 9, 2017, informed the teachers that, “Using Assessment in Instruction” will be the focus of the session, which teacher they will be visiting, and where to meet prior to entering the classroom. Each visitation is documented on a standard group intervisitation form that has specific areas which allow teachers to take low inference notes and make connections to specific components or standards.