Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Flushing International High School

High school 25Q263
144-80 Barclay Avenue
Queens
NY 11355

Principal: Lara Evangelista

Dates of Review:
April 10, 2018 - April 11, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Robin Posner
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

Flushing International High School 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
<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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: Well Developed |

Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations. Across the school, teams meet on a consistent basis to analyze assessment data, student work products, and to share teaching strategies.

Impact

Collaborations within teams have strengthened teachers’ instructional capacity and established a level of schoolwide instructional coherence. Systematic analysis of student data and work products has resulted in mastery of goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- The vast majority of teachers are engaged in frequent inquiry-based professional collaborations across grades and departments. Teams meet horizontally in grade bands and vertically in discipline teams multiple times weekly. Teams identify a problem of practice and determine next steps to improve pedagogy and make revisions to curricula. The work products generated by the collaborative teacher teams, such as curriculum maps, lesson plans, unit plans, pacing calendars, and student materials, are shared at grade-level and department meetings. Support staff and content teachers reported that significant time is allotted for co-planning with the teachers that they co-teach with, making it easier to support the English Language Learners (ELLs), students with disabilities, students in need of intensive intervention, and students that can be accelerated to do work above grade level mastery. Teachers further reported that grade-level meeting time is also used to share teaching practices and embed into the curricula common literacy and math practices across grades and content areas to build coherence. For example, when science teachers noted that students were struggling with taking data and creating an appropriate graph with it, they met with the math discipline team to find out some strategies to incorporate into their lessons. As a result, on the next assignment, more students were able to complete a graphing question correctly. Teachers overwhelmingly agreed that the teacher team collaboration and professional learning time have improved their professional practice as well as student achievement levels. During inquiry, teachers examined multiple student writing data and realized that when it came to students needing to synthesize multiple texts for evidence, students were focusing in more on fiction texts, rather than informational texts. Teachers began implementing various strategies that had students comparing multiple texts. As a result of this, students showed a 12 percent increase in achievement, as evidenced on the January 2018 English Language Arts (ELA) regents.

- A review of various team agendas and meeting minutes show that teachers use inquiry time to analyze trends in achievement data and work products, informing strategic changes to curricula and instructional practice. For example, since performance-based assessment tasks (PBATs) are interdisciplinary, teachers meet across discipline teams to determine best practices that support students across disciplines. Teachers work to develop the driving questions and big ideas that connect to the content, figure out the skills the students need to take away for college, and then create a project around those that integrates the core competencies. Teachers follow up with a curriculum share for other disciplines to get feedback and input on how to possibly align strategies from other disciplines that students might need to complete the task.

- Department vertical inquiry teams meet weekly to analyze student work products and assessments. Following these meetings, they make revisions to curricula and identify instructional strategies to improve their teaching of the content and concepts they expect students to be able to master by the end of the unit of study. During an observed meeting, teachers used a dilemma protocol to analyze constructed responses from a recent task. Their focus was to determine the strengths and of the students in their classes and to identify possible supports that could be used to improve understanding of the task.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: Proficient |

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs informed by the instructional shifts that fosters higher order-thinking. Teaching practices allow students to be engaged in appropriately challenging tasks.

Impact

Although students are purposefully grouped and engage in differentiated work, not all lessons required that students engage with other students. Additionally, while some lessons contained extension opportunities, this was not evident in the vast majority of classes.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms teaching practices are informed by schoolwide beliefs about how students learn best, including the integration of the instructional shifts, student discussion, student thinking made visible, and collaborative activities that are differentiated and scaffolded for all learners. For example, in a global history class, all students were engaged in reading two articles about the Holocaust. Student engagement was supported by use of a graphic organizer to put their ideas together. Students then took on different collaborative learning group roles and shared their ideas about discrimination within their groups and then to the class at large. During an algebra I lesson, students were working in differentiated groups and pairs on solving equations of median lines. Based on the student answers within the group, the teacher would determine the “expert” or person best suited to work with struggling students for each group to support student learning in the next part of the lesson. In a grade twelve ELA class, students were engaged in literature circles. Students were given a differentiated graphic organizer to organize their conversations. However, in other classrooms, student tasks were not differentiated and did not contain extension or support activities for all learners.

- During a grade twelve ELA lesson, students were engaged in conversation with their peers around the different benefits that come with annotating texts. One pair discussed how annotating helps develop people’s understanding of the text by focusing students on important points. Another pair of students discussed how annotating helps students identify the facts and questions that lead to stronger inferences than if a student was to simply guess without having taken notes and underlined strong passages. In a social studies class, students talked with their groups about how to create a timeline showing the history of equity in our society. However, in other classes visited, there were missed opportunities for student to student conversation.

- Teaching strategies across classes offered scaffolds, including visual cues, purposeful groupings and pairings, small-group and individual conferences, technology assistance and language supports for ELLs and those students identified as low achieving. However, most scaffolds did not provide extensions for those students in classes ready to engage in more rigorous content and tasks. For example, during a ninth and tenth grade math lesson, student groups were engaged in appropriately leveled work throughout the room. The lesson was designed to focus students on deepening their understanding of how society uses data to influence people. In a grade nine and ten ELA lesson, students were also engaged in group work that included peer feedback on the use of transition words in their writing. In this class, students were in pairs and triads based on data and were tasked with work designed to challenge students at their level. Students were all completing differentiated questions and using various graphic organizers to record their answers. Although this class had specific extension activities, including detailed revisions and additional higher-level reflection pieces and specific and more in-depth writing assignments, similar extensions or opportunities for students to demonstrate higher-order thinking through purposeful entry points were not evident in the majority of classrooms, thus diminishing opportunities to demonstrate higher-order thinking in student work products.
Findings
School staff ensures that curricula is strategically aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, content standards, the internationals rubric and the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks.

Impact
Performance-based academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and ensure all students are cognitively engaged in their learning. Students demonstrate rigorous habits and critical thinking in their academic tasks, including PBATs.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricular documents across grades and content areas evidence consistent alignment with the Common Core and the integration of the math instructional shifts such as fluency, coherence and real-world applications throughout the PBATs that students must complete. For example, a PBAT on geometric tessellations charges students with creating an art gallery of tessellations that will appeal to a diverse customer base. A science PBAT on the human body requires students to synthesize materials from a variety of sources to hypothesize how the environment is impacted by humans.

- Curricular documents included assignments evidencing integration of both the ELA and math instructional shifts in PBATs. For example, a social studies PBAT includes multiple tasks for which students need to support answers to written questions with textual citations and to support their thesis with data. A math PBAT requires that students find evidence from a variety of sources to help defend why it’s important for students to be financially literate. All disciplines have outcomes aligned to the PBATs. Teachers from each discipline worked together vertically to determine the core content outcomes that spiral from ninth to twelfth grade to ensure students can complete their PBAT and graduation requirements.

- Higher-order skills and rigorous habits are promoted across grade levels and disciplines for all students through the implementation of schoolwide practices such as aligning essential questions, learning objectives, teacher questioning, and academic tasks to high leverage outcomes that are aligned level three and level four of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge protocol. Developing academic tasks that require students to think accurately with clarity while identifying and considering multiple meanings, take and support positions, and engage in disciplined inquiry and thought is a schoolwide instructional priority. All curricula documents evidence mastery-based work across grades and discipline areas. PBATs have core content outcomes that spiral from ninth to twelfth grade based on the student outcomes expected for all students. All students are supported as needed with interventions, scaffolding and literacy tutoring both in and out of the classroom.
## Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 2.2 Assessment  
**Rating:** Well Developed

### Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, rubrics are aligned with the curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. Common assessments, such as PBATs, provide clear data on student progress which then informs curricular and instructional decisions.

### Impact

Students and teachers consistently get meaningful feedback on student achievement. As a result of assessment practices and informed decisions, all students demonstrate increased mastery.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher-written actionable feedback. Feedback consistently reminds students to refer to research conducted and textual evidence to support claims. Some examples of that feedback were “You have identified a claim and supported it with evidence. Let’s work now on the formal essay structure,” and “Be sure to use more transitions words/phrases and include more details in your conclusion.” One student said, “The teacher writes comments on how I can improve on every draft. I use them to rewrite everything.”

- Teachers and students use rubrics as assessment tools and feedback mechanisms. Students also use common self-assessment checklists on topics such as peer editing, planning, revising, informative writing, and opinion writing. Additionally, rubrics were used as assessment and feedback tools attached to work in student folders as well as displayed on bulletin boards in hallways and in classrooms. Peer feedback practices are widespread across the school. When asked about feedback, students confirmed that it is a regular part of their school’s culture and routine, with one student sharing that “Feedback from my peers helps me with specifics, but feedback from my teacher helps me with the big ideas.” She went on to explain that peers provide feedback on things like spelling and specific sentences sounding good or not making sense, but that teachers give more comprehensive feedback about the overall piece of writing or project that she is working on. Another student provided two pieces of writing with post-it note comments written by a peer. The first one was from earlier in the year where the classmate had made more than twenty comments, and the more recent piece had about five. The student went on to explain that as the year went on she and her classmates learned to refine their feedback to focus on the most important areas. Further still, there is evidence that students self-assess by writing reflections and personal glows and grows after some assignments.

- Analysis of students’ results on PBATs resulted in the decision to embed supports for instruction through strategic student groupings and additional class offerings. School leaders and teachers also found that students were having difficulty with displaying mastery and required further differentiation. As a result, teachers began the practice of implementing reteaching groups for specific skills. Analysis of students’ results on later PBATs showed an increase from 20 percent to 50 percent across the board, including for ELLs and students with disabilities. Additionally, there has been a five percent credit increase for ninth and tenth graders as of midyear. Many of the students enter the school performing at level one in ELA and math. The adjustments to instructional practices and curricular modifications at the school have led to 57 percent of current twelfth graders having all of the requirements needed for graduation by midyear.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff through several vehicles including a staff handbook and memos. Additionally, school leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness to families.

Impact

Staff maintains and benefits from a culture of mutual accountability around high expectations. Partnerships with families support students in their progress toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders share high expectations through a staff handbook that details guidelines for all aspects of instruction including the schoolwide grading, homework and testing policies, indicators of a successful classroom, and instructional planning. Additionally, memoranda detail high expectations around staff holding high expectations for all students while providing high levels of support, knowing and understanding that not all kids are ready at all points and that it’s never too late for any students. There is a weekly calendar sent out on Sundays to all staff members so that everyone is up to speed on what will be happening that week.

- Expectations are effectively communicated to families through the school’s website, newsletters, at Parent Teacher Association meetings, as well as via text/email blasts and an online gradebook system. Parents reported that the school holds at-risk conferences two times a year, providing parents with the information they need to create an action plan and support their student at home and help him/her find success before the year is over. All teachers report students’ progress on written class assignments, group work, long-term projects, attendance, and preparedness in general during conferences. Multiple parent workshops are held throughout the year on curriculum as well as on college prep. One parent stated, and all present agreed that, “This school provides us with a roadmap to college for our individual child starting in ninth grade. They ensure we know and understand what the school is doing, and what we need to be doing, to ensure our students are ready.”

- Teachers hold each other accountable for high instructional expectations through their collaborative common planning sessions. Teachers spoke about relying on each other to give constructive criticism to each other when presenting problems of practice during planning sessions. Teams also assign different sections of unit and lesson plans to a variety of team members and must subsequently fulfil their responsibilities to each other in promptly attending to those tasks and bring the results of their work to the next planning session. Additionally, teachers hold each other accountable for their colleagues’ professional learning in that all teachers have participated in the professional development process by presenting best practices at whole-faculty professional development sessions.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders support teacher development with effective feedback and next steps from frequent classroom observation cycles. Feedback emphasizes strengths as well as challenges in alignment with the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

**Impact**

As a result, support practices positively impact teacher capacity and strengthens instruction across the school. Clear expectations support teacher growth.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Frequent cycles of classroom observations provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Each rated item on observation reports includes specific language from the rubric, evidence from the classroom that supports the rating, as well as actionable next steps. For example, one observation report includes feedback to the teacher on including the questions and assessments that will be used to diagnose students' learning. Another observation report detailed having the teacher work with students to focus in on one band of a rubric after students expressed anxiety about completing the tasks. Other examples of actionable feedback found within official observation reports advise teachers to use protocols that would increase student accountability through exit tickets or some sort of end of lesson check in and share out. One teacher reported that due to feedback offered by a school leader, she has been issuing stronger written feedback to students that includes actionable next steps and that students are using that feedback and improving their grades.

- In addition, there are examples of observation reports that reinforce feedback offered in earlier observation reports. For example, one observation report includes feedback that the teacher should be using more high-level questions. A future report indicates the teacher has begun to utilize Webb's Depth of Knowledge for higher-level questions. The fact that this specific recommendation was made in a previous observation report is also noted. In another example observation report, a teacher is advised to work with her department to consider the important skills and content all students need to know prior to graduation and work with colleagues to develop a unified scope and sequence.

- In addition to the reports resulting from official classroom observations are the conversations that follow informal classroom visits. Teachers shared the school leaders do not necessarily write up these observations, but do provide feedback on how coherent instruction aligns with differentiation. One teacher shared that he was advised to speak with the instructional coach and mentor in order to visit with a specifically identified teacher to observe the methods used by this teacher in implementing differentiation. Another teacher shared that the principal gave him advice on how to utilize the essential questions to drive his lesson planning. The teacher reported that reflected on the advice and has since implemented it and that his lessons have been much more successfully developed. As a result, he showed progress on his last observation write up.