Quality Review Report
2017-2018

Queens Satellite High School For Opportunity
High school 28Q338
162-02 Hillside Avenue
Queens
NY 11432

Principal: Thomas Mckenna

Dates of Review:
April 17, 2018 - April 18, 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


School Quality Ratings

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.3 Leveraging Resources</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</table>

### Findings

School leaders have ensured that organizational decisions, including hiring practices to close the achievement gap, partnerships, and the use of technology and teacher time, are aligned to and support the school’s instructional goals. Teacher teams meet regularly and their professional responsibilities are aligned to support the school’s goals.

### Impact

Resources are procured and used to support the school’s instructional goals as evidenced through student meaningful work products. There is a conscious effort to hire staff to effectively support access to college readiness and to focus teacher time on improving instruction and engaging students in challenging academic tasks.

### Supporting Evidence

- Resource decisions at the school are intentional and aligned to the school’s instructional goals. There is ample evidence that school leaders have made investments in curricula and materials. The Performance Based Assessment Task (PBATs) presentations are rooted in technology so grants are used to ensure all students have access to laptops and that classrooms have interactive white boards. A school improvement grant is used to provide professional development (PD) to teachers from outside organizations with experience working with transfer schools and students.

- School leaders have structured teacher time so that teachers meet frequently to further the school goals. Teachers meet by department or inquiry team and can also meet with administrators as needed to work on feedback, their professional goals or to discuss needed PD. In a meeting, teachers stated that this structure has allowed them to work on developing effective lessons and PBATs across curricular strands, as well as engaging in conversations about the use of scaffolds as a differentiation technique. Teachers feel that they have been provided with the time needed to help them improve their skills, as well as to plan challenging academic tasks to promote career and college readiness for students.

- Two goals are to support students and close the achievement gap and find people who can wear multiple hats to support varying student needs. A math teacher was recently hired because of his accounting and public speaking background. An English Language Arts (ELA) teacher was hired because of her theatre background. These decisions enhance learning opportunities leading to college and career readiness.
Area of Focus

### Quality Indicator:

#### 1.2 Pedagogy

| Rating: | Developing |

**Findings**

Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect an articulated set of beliefs informed by the instructional shifts.

**Impact**

Although some students demonstrate higher order thinking skills, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curriculum leading to uneven engagement for all learners including ELLs and students with disabilities.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The articulated belief that students learn best when they are engaged in individualized work, accountable talk and peer review was evident in some classes. For example, in an Algebra class, students were engaged in a peer review of another student's PBAT. Students sat in small groups, brainstorming feedback aligned to the rubric, which was then shared out to the class at large and recorded by the teacher. In a social studies class, students were engaged with completing a gallery walk where they worked with their group to determine examples of where world faiths coexist. Students completed a graphic organizer and used accountable talk stems to contribute, confirm, or contradict findings of other groups. As these practices were only reflected in three out of the nine classes visited during the school visit, they are not yet aligned across a majority of the classes.

- Teacher-centered instruction was observed in most class visits. Specifically, during an ELA class, students were asked to read portions of an article alone or with another student and to respond directly to questions posed by the teacher without being asked to engage in any discussions with the peers they were assigned to read with. Teacher-centered discussion was also observed during a social studies class wherein the students were asked to read an article in pairs and post responses on an online google hangouts without any student-to-student discussions. Responses were shared out by the teacher without any student-to-student interactions.

- In some classrooms, technology is leveraged to support students in working at their level. In a social studies class, the teacher circled around working with individual students, while other students worked individually or in pairs to annotate documents on Jim Crow laws. Several students watched a video with audio files of the articles. Students shared out their findings using Google Classroom and Google Hangouts using accountable talk stems to write their own response or build on another response. Some teachers have also begun experimenting with various apps that allow them to assign tiered challenges to students working at various levels. This allows students to read at various levels on the same subject, providing English Language Learners (ELLs) and lower achieving students with access to new words with built in vocabulary structures. Students also use Digital Reading Works, iMovie, Scholastic News and other sites and apps to further their learning.
## Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<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* and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data from teacher created or state assessments.

### Impact

Coherent curricula promote college and career readiness for all students. A diversity of learners has access to the curricula and tasks cognitively engage students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Curricular documents across grades and content areas evidence consistent alignment with the Common Core and the integration of the math instructional shifts. For example, an algebra PBAT has students using linear equations to solve problems for a start-up bakery looking to sell two different products. Students were guided through lessons on looking at different real life word problems based on given graphs of two linear equations and two included points. Learners were also asked to calculate quantities and graph equations. In a science unit, students were asked to apply the appropriate math concept when taking measurements or analyzing results during a unit on the effects of music on memory.

- Curricular documents included assignments evidencing integration of the ELA instructional shifts. For example, all units examined include multiple tasks for which students need to support answers to written questions with textual citations. A grade-twelve ELA unit requires that students find evidence from informational and literary texts in support of their arguments regarding how we learn about the human experience by analyzing literature.

- Across grades and content areas, curricula are planned and refined so that adverse learners have access to challenging materials. Teachers differentiate instructional texts by chunking the text and by inserting supports aligned for that section of text. These supports include vocabulary words, paraphrasing, vital textual statements, as well as leveled questions designed to increase in complexity and develop students’ analysis of the text. Other examples of differentiated supports for students include additional vocabulary supports and leveled graphic organizers.
**Findings**

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school’s instructional goals and the common core. Staff-created PBATs are used to help determine student progress towards goals.

**Impact**

PBATs are used to provide students with actionable feedback. Additionally, teachers use data from PBATs to inform instructional adjustments such as student groupings.

**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.

- Analysis of students’ results on PBATs resulted in decisions to embed supports for instruction through strategic student groupings and additional ICT class offerings in core curricula areas including social studies, ELA, math, and science to support students with disabilities. 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 PBAT results showed evidence of more students passing their PBATs and graduating during trimester one and two. There was also evidence of a higher quality of student work as evidenced by rubric scores.
### Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations and provide training to the entire staff. School staff establishes a culture for learning.

### Impact

Communication and PD foster a culture of high expectations. Student advisory teams ensure that students are prepared for the next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate high expectations though a faculty handbook that contains information connected to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, as well as sections covering the school's philosophy of education and how the classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities reflect that philosophy. Some examples of specific topics are teaching students through common entry points, student-friendly learning targets and creating PBATs that are of high-interest to students.

- Students shared that the school has an expectation that students will earn the credits and pass the Regents exams they need to graduate from high school. Students also acknowledged that they school expects them to then either attend college, a vocational school, or begin immediately working towards a career. They shared that their guidance advisory program provided them with a graduation tracker showing them exactly what they needed to do to graduate. Guidance counselors help students with all aspects of the college process including preparing for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), college applications, possible tuition help, as well as help with financial aid forms. One student shared, “I want to be an electrician.” My teacher printed out the test and spent his own time helping me study and prepare for it.” Another student said, “I know I want to do forensics and my advisor helped me research a program and find one at Queensborough Community College. Then she helped me apply and I got in!”

- High expectations have resulted in increases in credits earned by students, graduation rates, and passing rates on PBATs and the ELA Regents assessment. In trimester one, four students PBAT presentations were attempted and 100 percent of the students passed. In trimester two, 114 PBAT presentations were attempted and 111 students, representing 97 percent, passed. In trimester one, an average of five credits were earned. In trimester two, an average of eight credits were earned. In trimester one, 13 students completed all requirements for graduation. In trimester two, 17 students completed all requirements for graduation. 23 out of 30 graduates from both trimesters have applied and been accepted into CUNY and non-CUNY schools. In 2017, 11 students passed the ELA regents. In 2018, 32 students have already passed with more on track to pass in June.
### Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</table>

**Findings**

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured inquiry-based professional collaborations. Teacher teams consistently analyze data and student work for all students they share.

**Impact**

Teachers’ collaborations have strengthened their capacity in instructional design and delivery. Teacher team work has resulted in increased achievement on the ELA regents.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers have strengthened their instructional capacity through team collaborations. In one case, teachers reported that because of a conversation around successful instructional strategies for students’ providing evidence from multiple sources, and a subsequent analysis of student feedback, teachers had greater insight into what students needed to successfully complete PBATs. They then began to think about how to scaffold the instruction to provide supports for common pitfalls like explaining the synthesis of multiple documents, a skill with which most students struggled. As a result, more students could successfully complete their PBAT in the last trimester.

- During the social studies team meeting, teachers analyzed student work for assessing students’ writing progress, as well as offered constructive criticism regarding the task and how it might be improved. Analysis revealed further evidence of a school-wide trend that students are using more academic vocabulary then they were previously. However, students are not using the academic vocabulary effectively. Teachers then devised a list of strategies, including the use of station work and small group instruction and sentence starters that they could employ. The results of these strategies would be discussed at the next team meeting during which teachers would construct a department action plan toward the goal of increasing students’ effective use of academic vocabulary.

- All teacher teams analyzed the data resulting from the ELA regents. Using this data, all teams have employed strategies designed to focus their content areas on the ELA instructional shifts, while providing support in reading comprehension. Because of this teacher team work, 32 students passed the ELA regents in January 2018, versus 11 in June 2017.