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 High School Of Teaching, Liberal Arts And The Sciences 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

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<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>
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### School Culture

To what extent does the school...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
</tr>
<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>
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### Systems for Improvement

To what extent does the school...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>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>
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<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 5.1 Monitoring and Revising Systems | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders and faculty have an effective and transparent process to purposefully evaluate and adjust curricular, instructional, and assessment practices. Additionally, the organizational structures related to teacher support and supervision are regularly monitored and evaluated.

Impact

Coherence of policies and practices from transparency of leadership to the collaborative spirit of the School Learning Communities (SLCs) exists throughout the school improving student learning and teacher effectiveness.

Supporting Evidence

- Several professional learning communities reflect continuously on the instructional framework regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment building alignment and coherence. As such, five strategies frame the instructional core across classrooms: essential and focus questions, agendas, student engagement, student work recognition, and classroom organization. Additionally, the assessment loop is a transparent system of instructional planning, facilitation, assessment, reflection, and revision aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Furthermore, the adopted and continuously reviewed program, Engage all Students in Learning, results in an inquiry-based, student-centered, cooperative, and rigorous model driving instruction. The frequent evaluation of these frameworks has led to improved student achievement and coherence of policies across grades, and departments.

- Teachers' lesson plan studies monitor and evaluate the techniques used throughout the school, as well as identify best practices across curricula. Groups of teachers develop and critique lesson plans based on research-supported strategies aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards. Results shared during schoolwide meetings and with school administration guide professional development. Furthermore, common misconceptions associated with student achievement are identified across courses using midterm analysis results to inform next steps and strategies for implementation. The theory of action states teachers will develop differentiated learning experiences that are inquiry-based, student-centered, and scaffolded by research-based pedagogical strategies.

- School leadership meet weekly for two and a half hours to discuss progress toward schoolwide goals. The leadership meetings allow for instructional alignment across the three School Learning Communities (SLCs). As such, schoolwide issues involve input from each SLC, including specific feedback from grade level teachers who facilitate and present teacher feedback during these leadership meetings and survey results from professional development workshops. This allows the principal and the leadership team to gather multiple perspectives and make an informed decision. One area that has improved as a result of the consistent evaluation and monitoring of systems, is the norming of observations between the three assistant principals and principal regarding use of the Danielson Rubric. This had resulted in equitable evaluation and high standards of teaching and learning across all SLC classrooms, and ultimately, increased student achievement as evident on year-to-year Regent Exam results.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
Teaching strategies consistently provide a variety of learning goals and entry points aligned with Common Core Learning Standards for students to further engage in their work and class discussions.

Impact
All students engage in appropriately challenging tasks, although limited extensions in classrooms create opportunities to demonstrate students’ higher-order thinking skills and further discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- Across all classes, teachers generate three learning goals for students to engage in a progression of challenging tasks. During an algebraic literacy class, students used manipulatives and applied trigonometric ratios and the Pythagorean Theorem to identify and confirm if triangles were right triangles. Students discussed the relationship formed to determine if it was consistent with their understanding of the relationship between the three sides. Some students were able to conjecture a formula and demonstrate their understanding of the math concept. However, several students whom had prior knowledge of the Theorem were limited in extending their inquiry and conceptual application.

- In a heterogeneously grouped science class, students read and annotated a Regents-based state mandated lab. During reading, the teacher suggested students underline and define specific content terms for comprehension. However, no high-quality supports or accommodations supported their annotation or memorialization of additional notes. Furthermore, the teacher facilitated all conversations between students regarding identification of closely related species, thus preventing deeper connections and ownership of learning goals. However, in a psychology class, opportunities for students to generate consensus by challenging their peers thinking prior to sharing out with the whole class contributed to a rich and genuine discussion. Overall, discussions resulted in the demonstration of deep understanding and challenged most students, however some missed opportunities for more existed.

- Although students are presented three learning goals in most classes, most progressions of learning are designed for all to meet standards with few extensions, thus limiting opportunities to expand the mastery of skills to additional aspects of the learning experience. For example, in a grade nine social studies class, students were provided only two learning goals connected to understanding what makes a leader great. Students had to identify characteristics that describe Alexander the Great and analyze documents about him to determine if he deserves his title. Critical thinking and learning beyond the required goals was hindered by a lack of high quality expectations and supports according to the needs of the learners.

- Students in a grade ten English Language Arts (ELA) class revised their counterarguments with text-based evidence and justified their thinking to peers. Most students shared their findings in an attempt to convince their peers why their evidence-supported claim is most accurate. In some other classes, teachers primarily facilitated discussions to ensure students engaged in critical thinking while completing the task.
Findings

School leaders and faculty agreed that lesson planning consist of learning goals embedding rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills. Unit and daily lessons are planned and refined using student work and data coherently across grades and subjects.

Impact

All students, especially the lowest-achieving students who are in Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classrooms are provided with opportunities to demonstrate their thinking as evidenced in purposeful differentiated planning documents, resource tools, and scaffolds. All students have access to tasks that ensure cognitive engagement, although they are not delivered with the same fidelity as they are planned.

Supporting Evidence

- Lesson plans include an essential and focus question emphasizing rigorous habits and higher order skills for all students. An ELA lesson plan essential question states, “What makes a strong argument?” The focus question further challenges students to answer if they can see both sides of the argument. Similarly, the essential question in another ELA class is “How do writers use literary devices to craft a short story?” The focus question tasks students to answer the essential question through the lens of literary techniques used to create tone in *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allen Poe. The focus questions push students thinking to meet expectations embedded in student friendly learning goals while being cognitively challenged.

- Coherent curricula with rigorous expectations for students exist across all classes. All lesson plans embed higher order questions to ensure students have opportunities to engage in critical thinking and demonstrate their knowledge in writing or discussion. Questions from a variety of lesson plans require students to connect social psychology concepts and identify “How social interactions affect individuals?”, make an argument regarding “Do we need stricter gun control laws in the US?”, or determine “What makes an effective counterargument?” to justify society’s adoption of self-driving vehicles.

- Teachers review completed student work samples and identify curricular revisions for future planning. The social studies department reviewed and identified trends from samples of thematic essays. Some findings included that students do not cite enough evidence and concepts, nor accurately match evidence with the correct task, and that students continue to struggle with analysis. Suggested next steps include differentiated work on content specific vocabulary and elaboration, especially for the lowest-achieving students, and targeted work on elaboration and analysis for the highest-achieving students. Subsequent lessons included modifications connected to curricular revisions based on findings and students’ needs. Initial results on new essays demonstrated student growth in areas of the inclusion of content specific vocabulary, specific evidence and analysis responses to task, and more elaboration.

- General education and special education teachers plan lessons together using student work samples to ensure the appropriate scaffolds and modifications are in place to engage all students and advance them through their learning. For example, a geometry lesson designed for students to understand the relationship between interior and exterior angles of a polygon purposefully includes structures to support recall of prior knowledge, hints, and models with procedural steps, in addition to some challenge questions for students seeking an extension. All modifications are based on review of prior assessment data and the review of student work products.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

Across grades and content areas, teachers use a variety of assessment measures to align curricula and offer a clear portrait of mastery for student progress toward goals while providing actionable feedback. Additionally, teachers’ use common assessments to track progress and check for understanding continuously.

Impact

Actionable feedback, assessment results, and instructional checks provide students and teachers with information regarding achievement and guide curricular adjustments so students have an awareness of their next learning steps, thus meeting learning needs and increasing mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- Students reported the feedback they receive from teachers and peers informs them of how to expand ideas and provide more insightful evidence to make their thinking more visible. For example, a student shared a revised essay written in an Advanced Placement Language and Composition class highlighting alignment to the rubric criteria and correct application of rhetorical strategies and imagery in their writing. Another student provided an ELA seminar rubric noting a loss of points for organization, while stating, “I could have developed my claim better to get more points and although I explained my reasoning well, I could have given more detail.”

- Teachers use a variety of assessment measures to adjust curricula and interventions for each group of students. Action research conducted by staff concluded failure to complete projects, assignments, or classwork involving multi-step tasks required attention. Strategies to drive curricular and instructional adjustments provided a select group of students in ELA and Global History scaffolded assignments and guidance to complete one part of the assignment before advancing to the next part. The intervention strategies improved learning outcomes and performance for all the students with an Individualized Education Plan and recognition for why they improved. As such, plans to scaffold and create effective student organizational habits will be expanded and initiated earlier next year, thus ensuring the student progress continues.

- Staff review common writing samples and word problem responses on common assessments to track student skills and progress toward mastery of goals. Improvements to graphic organizers are made based on the results from the review cycle. One modification consists of students clearly noting the feedback they previously received to guide their current assignment goal, resulting in their increased comprehension.

- Teachers and student peers consistently use a variety of assessment practices to check for understanding during instruction and make effective and timely adjustments to meet the needs of a diversity of learners. Students use a peer review template to provide actionable and specific, warm and cool feedback connected to a rubric grade. In an ELA class, time management protocols and teacher questions guided students to convey their agreement or disagreement with a claim about self-driving vehicles. Students also challenged their peers thinking with follow-up questions.
Additional Finding

3.4 High Expectations

Rating: Well Developed

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations connected to student engagement and instructional non-negotiables. The faculty has established a culture for learning through an advisory period that systematically communicates a belief and vision of high expectations related to college preparedness for all students.

Impact

Teachers hold themselves accountable for strategies that embed professionalism and effective lessons across grades and subject areas. Students own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level resulting from their clear guidance and support.

Supporting Evidence

- Staff hold themselves fully accountable for meeting instructional non-negotiables aligned to the vision and values embedded in the schools’ learning environment, thus ensuring a diverse group of learners have access to rigorous, personalized, and well-aligned curricula. Several non-negotiables include, well-developed lesson plans that differentiate learning goals so all students have access to learning, heterogeneously grouped classes creating the least restrictive environment for learning, and rigorous tasks which engage students critically. Staff also receive and review these high expectations communicated in the weekly principal information sheet newsletter at weekly teacher-led department meetings. They hold one another mutually accountable for meeting these expectations by reviewing lesson plans, co-planning for ICT instruction, and attending on-site and off-site professional development to support the design of coherent curricula. Furthermore, staff is provided professional research-based articles connected to meeting these and other professional expectations.

- Teachers lead lesson plan reviews with colleagues to ensure that learning goals align with the instructional focus and best practices teachers value. For example, teachers regularly collaborate on lesson plan reviews to identify how the tiered learning goals ensure all students can meet the first goal. Additionally, they review the other two goals to ensure there is a logical progression of rigor to meet the needs of the highest third of achievers. An earth science team reviewed a lesson plan regarding how students can produce good models of the Earth. The progression of learning included ensuring all students will be able to summarize the Big Bang theory, while most students will be able to identify two pieces of evidence for the Big Bang theory, other students will be able to predict what will happen to the universe. All teachers complete similar mutual accountable reflection across grades and content areas.

- All students beginning in grade nine are paired with an advisory for their four years in one of the SLCs to ensure they are prepared for college and career. Some advisory classes are mixed grades, while others are homogeneously grouped. Students are made aware of their progress towards life beyond high school, including understanding credit accumulation, criteria for graduation, college application process, and career skills that support achievement of those expectations. Teachers provide guidance and advisement in advisory daily to a small groups of students specific to them. Students overwhelmingly report, the advisory period helps them prepare for college and career options.
**Quality Indicator:** 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development

**Rating:** Well Developed

### Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based collaborations. Additionally, distributed leadership structures exist across the three school communities.

### Impact

Schoolwide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners towards increased graduation rates and improved teacher instructional capacity are evident. Additionally, teachers play an integral role in guiding initiatives that affect student learning across the school community.

### Supporting Evidence

- Seamless protocols exist for all teachers to engage in weekly inquiry work that improve their pedagogy by reviewing student work and lesson planning documents. Teacher leaders along with special service providers, collaboratively review student work samples and documents to support and further student achievement and instructional practices. Teachers also align instructional practices to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The impact of their work is evident in the establishment of cohesive practices and instructional improvement. A recent ELA inquiry team reviewed formative assessment responses regarding students' understanding to qualify a claim. Staff concluded that exit tickets need to be more thoughtful so academic language embedded in questions is strategic and connected to content thus leveraging change for the next day's lesson. Although consensus was not established if students do not reach the learning goal, teachers are promoting instructional practices focused on improved student learning. Furthermore, review of inquiry agendas and minutes, demonstrates clear work towards disciplined collaboration based on identification of gaps in standards-based learning along with development of instructional strategies to support student success.

- Teachers identify a problem of practice during their inquiry work leading to curricular and instructional adjustments. A grade ten inquiry team developed a content specific rubric to support student extended responses across Regents exams. As a result, students in math will receive a variety of completed student work models and have to determine the rating with justification. Similarly, students in social studies will analyze a short text to investigate and match rubric criteria, while students in ELA will look at completed models and write the criteria for each proficiency level. Inquiry work has resulted in an increase in the graduation rate for students with disabilities while closing the achievement gap in English and math.

- Teachers lead initiatives and guide their SLC to create programs that play an integral role in affecting student learning. Teachers analyze their current instructional practices based on problems of practice they understand as a learning challenge for their students. These problems address content and social emotional learning aspects across grades. Initiatives driving advisory group structures, lesson plan format, role of intervisitations, and use of technology represent several distributed leadership structures staff has influenced for improved student learning.