Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Queens Gateway To Health Sciences Secondary School
Secondary School 28Q680
160-20 Goethals Avenue
Queens
NY 11432
Principal: Judy Henry

Dates of Review:
December 12, 2017 - December 13, 2017

Lead Reviewer: AJ Hepworth
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 Gateway To Health Sciences Secondary School serves students in grade 6 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>Area of Celebration</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>Additional Finding</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 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>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>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>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

Schools leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts with real world connections. Additionally rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in academic tasks and embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects.

Impact

Coherence in curricula promotes college and career readiness for all students and access to learning ensures all students can demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers create rigorous writing and critical thinking lesson plans that align to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts with an emphasis on fiction and non-fiction text. The learning objective included with a grade six-lesson plan, is for students to utilize details from “The American Slurp” to formulate their own conclusions by supporting answers with sufficient details and facts. Similarly, an English Language Arts (ELA) grade nine short story element unit will culminate with students demonstrating their understanding of literary elements an author may use by creating and presenting a poster. The poster will include analysis of story elements with evidence from a student selected story along with explanations of the authors’ element used within the story such as imagery, plot, irony, symbolism, character, suspense, conflict, or theme.

- All curricular planning documents embed real world applications to support students practice with reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence using academic language. A lesson designed to teach students how to determine the slope relations of parallel and perpendicular lines begins with a do now activity that requires students to identify two real world examples, including those found in their current classroom environment. Similarly, an Advanced Placement (AP) Environmental Science lesson plan tasks students to improve their discussion, active-listening, and writing skills by reading free-response questions and making connections between the content and real-world situations. Students will discuss and justify their understanding how insects can contribute to climate change.

- Rigorous tasks are embedded across grades and content areas coherently requiring students to create higher-order thinking questions, which support college and career readiness skills. Students create the questions building on new and prior knowledge using academic content. After answering challenging AP chemistry questions, groups of students will ask higher-order clarifying questions supporting their ability to classify elements based on its properties and internal structure. A math lesson on determining rate of change also states students will apply their calculations and independent practice to modeling real world scenarios in solving problems.
**Area of Focus**

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

**Findings**

Common assessment results are used to determine student progress towards goals across grades and subjects. Additionally, checks for understanding are used to monitor student learning by both the teacher and students themselves.

**Impact**

Effective adjustments to instruction and curricula are a result of common assessments and on-going checks for understanding.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Writing assignments sometimes include evaluations of completed work by the teacher, a peer and the student themselves. For example, an ELA short response about authors’ purpose and character development included an evaluation recorded on sticky notes by the teacher, peer and student. The student who completed the assignment memorialized the verbal feedback. They wrote, “I heard the teachers say that I…” and “I heard a classmate say that I did…” Additionally, the student themselves identified areas of commendation and recommendation. However, similar critical analysis and high-reflective awareness of next learning steps was not uniform across the vast majority of classes visited, although most students agree they do receive feedback to make effective adjustments to their work.

- Many teachers track student progress during instruction on checklists regarding academic and personal behaviors—such as: timeliness to class, completion of do now and homework, class participation, and additional comments as deemed necessary. However, it is unclear how most recorded comments that reflect the student “needs help,” are strategically used to make effective adjustments so students are aware what to do next to improve their work products.

- At the end of each quarter, analysis of common assessments guide re-teaching on concepts that were not mastered by the majority of students. Additionally, scholarship reports, passing rates, and class demographics are used in the analysis of curricular or instruction to make effective adjustments moving forward. In art, the drawing and writing baseline assessment determines student placement by group and assigned project. Following the first round of projects, students are reassessed for growth and ability to demonstrate the required skill. Those results inform new group and project assignments. Similar practices exist across grades and disciplines; however, not as consistently or varied.

- Serving both middle and high school grades, new students arrive primarily in the beginning of their sixth and ninth grade year. As such, baseline assessment results are used to teach academic skills for success, such as annotation and organization, to groups of students in those respective grades leading to increases in performance on math Regent exams and New York State English proficiency exams.
### Additional Finding

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

**Findings**

Teaching strategies consistently provide teacher-generated scaffolds for most students to engage in completing their work products. Additionally, classrooms reflect students engaged in discussions and academic tasks with challenging assignments.

**Impact**

Most students demonstrate higher-order thinking skills and participation during instruction.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classes, teachers generate and provide students with scaffolds and tools to support their engagement with challenging tasks. In an English nine class, a gallery walk worksheet supported students' access to the varied presentations around the room. Students were provided guidance and support to identify literary elements of the stories so they could understand and articulate how a variety of elements was used by the authors. Additionally, they took note of more questions they had while making notes and observations. Similarly, students in a chemistry class discussed and challenged one another’s thinking using a variety of questioning prompts, note recording sheets, and dry erase boards prior to sharing their findings with the whole class. The variety of teaching strategies provided students multiple entry points to engage them in their learning.

- A math teacher tasked the students to complete a table of values for a given function on a worksheet with subset questions. The worksheet engaged most students in challenging their thinking and showing their understanding; however, some students struggled to demonstrate their ability to substitute correctly. An input-output double t-chart requiring students to demonstrate their step-by-step procedures may have helped those who were challenged with engaging fully in the task to make their thinking more visible. In another math class, calculators were offered to students who may need one, once they began their work identifying trends and analyzing a graph. Overall, across the classes visited, scaffolds provided support to student engagement in appropriately challenging tasks.

- Students in a grade seven social studies class discussed the rubric criteria used to model expectations for a letter to an editor they were writing. Students further noted how they will also peer evaluate and aspire for level four criteria with their assignment. Students stated the completed assignment would not actually be sent to the author of their article; rather, the assignment was being completed “simply as work.” Some students conveyed a deep interest in their self-selected article. For example, one boy expressed he was fascinated by a recently auctioned Nazi coding machine. During an ELA lesson, students explained why they self-selected the particular short story they read and what they found interesting, such as interracial marriage or a variety of points of view.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

School leaders and staff communicate high expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness with on-going feedback consistently conveyed to families and students.

Impact

Families understand the progress for their child towards college and career while students understand the structures and culture that prepare them for the next level of their education through advanced placement courses and college partnerships connected to a medical pathway.

Supporting Evidence

- Students understand promotional requirements of course work, minimum credits, and attendance expectations across grades. Additionally, students are required to take College Board advanced placement courses during their junior and senior year, along with four years of math, science, and foreign language. Furthermore, eligible students will take additional college credit-bearing courses at partnership colleges. Students overwhelmingly value the work they experience as it is “designed to make us think critically,” because “teachers go above and beyond…to make us annotate deeper and do more than printer paper projects.” Lastly, students value the variety of expertise and career experiences their teachers have prior to transitioning to the classroom from various previous professions.

- Communication and feedback to parents occurs regularly regarding their child’s progress and achievements. Parents appreciate the advanced placement opportunities and believe the academics offered to their child are pushing them towards success in both the classroom and in preparation for college entrance exams. One parent noted the high expectations conveyed to their child would help them go further after graduation in “our dog eat dog world.” Other parents expressed the learning opportunities are preparing them for Regent exams, advanced placement learning, and college success.

- Structures in the school are established to support students’ understanding of the entire college application process and program requirements towards that path. A partnership with Gateway serves as a pipeline for many students towards a career in the medical profession. For example, selected students in their junior year participate in a medical program with a collegiate partner. All students experience college visitations and guidance support to fully prepare them for life after graduation. Students acknowledge they experience “focused academics” that are “connected to critical thinking and analysis,” which will help them in their future, especially college. Although students overwhelmingly value the learning opportunities afforded to them through their education, they desire more extra-curricular club opportunities.
Findings

Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Additionally, School leaders have an effective system that uses teacher observations to design professional development and succession plans for staff.

Impact

Teacher support and supervision elevates schoolwide instructional practices and implements strategies that promote professional growth.

Supporting Evidence

- Review of Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) evaluation forms demonstrates lesson-specific observed evidence used to rate teachers for each component connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Furthermore, additional evaluator notes are provided to each teacher that provide reminders or next steps for future instructional implementation. Several recommendations provided to a math teacher included, spiraling homework assignments, include Regent-type questions daily with instruction, and check student notebooks during instruction. These recommendations correspond with an effective rating in the area of using assessment in instruction. Similarly, an ELA teacher was provided recommendations to develop an assessment rubric with student input. This feedback aligns with the instructional focus of providing assessment during instruction so students will have ownership of the lesson.

- The professional development plan is aligned with the school instructional focus, specifically assessment and lesson plan criteria. Teachers discuss their professional development plan with school leadership when making informed decisions regarding their own professional growth. For example, one teacher noted feedback suggested he plan lessons to allow students to have more opportunities for accountable talk so students could self-assess their understanding of the content. Additionally, the teacher created a checklist to capture low inference notes and provide relevant feedback to students following professional development guidance. Another teacher noted, they have created a more student-centered classroom environment based on professional guidance and prior feedback from school leadership. Teachers note the improvement with their instruction and APPR evaluation form ratings as evidence of achieving alignment with school-wide instructional practices and professional development.

- Clearly written out expectations, succession plans and next steps are provided to support underperforming teacher development. For example, a succession plan for one teacher recommended that “lesson plans be designed to meet the learning objectives through a variety of instructional approaches, to meet the needs of individual students and emphasize student participation.” The plan further suggested that the teacher attend meetings with department leaders to continually study the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and included specific reference to the WeTeachNYC online resources for teachers.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in weekly inquiry-based professional collaborations that include consistently analyzing assessment data and student work using a specific protocol and document trackers.

Impact

Teachers strengthen their instructional practice while promoting the realization of school goals and students’ progress towards those goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers across grades and disciplines work together during weekly inquiry meetings to foster student engagement, collaboration, and best practices connected to writing. Their collaborative inquiry work and review of student work supports teachers’ development of instructional strategies they can implement. An instructional goal is to provide students meaningful feedback to improve their achievement. An inquiry discussion on warm and cool feedback using student-writing samples has led to progress toward achieving the instructional goal and improved instruction. One teacher noted their inquiry work has supported the development of students providing constructive criticism to their peers by requiring them to ask higher-order thinking questions based on the warm and cool feedback.

- Professional inquiry collaborations that support student learning has led to curricular adjustments by teachers creating more student-centered and engaging activities. Teachers note they are constantly going outside of their comfort box when developing lessons because of their conversations on best practices. For example, a teacher noted that she would next time add more directions to a guided reading project, provide students with baseline information, and offer students the choice to illustrate their understanding instead of just providing a picture. Therefore, she will be able to better support students’ ability to provide more detail and breadth of understanding while they are collecting constructive criticism during the activity.

- A teacher noted their inquiry work is a constant reminder to reinforce writing across the content areas and use reflective prompts during peer reviews. Additionally, teachers share out engaging strategies that support several of the writing assessment initiatives, including how to write a six-word story, identify “What stuck with me?”, and themed graffiti checks for understanding. Furthermore, inquiry protocols challenge teachers to reflect on the following questions: To what extent are we creating lessons that engage students? How do we know? Do engaged students have a greater chance of academic success? Take a position and support.