Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Queens Metropolitan High School
High School 28Q686
91-30 Metropolitan Avenue
Queens
NY 11375

Principal: Saida Rodriguez Tabone

Dates of Review:
May 3, 2018 - May 4, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Kimberly Bradley
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 Metropolitan 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></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>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>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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### 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>
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<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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</tbody>
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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>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide training to the entire staff. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations for a path to college and career readiness to families.

Impact

Communication and professional development around high expectations results in a culture of mutual accountability. Partnerships with families support students in their progress toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Frequent classroom observations provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the standard for professionalism and quality instruction. Observation reports include specific language from the rubric, evidence from the classroom observation that supports the rating along with actionable next steps so that teachers clearly understand expectations. Those expectations are also communicated and supported through the staff handbook, instructional handbook and professional development throughout the year focused on the school’s instructional foci, use of interim assessment data to inform instruction, and goal setting. In the school’s instructional handbook, school leaders outline the school’s instructional focus and what that looks like in a classroom and its alignment to Danielson. For example, teachers are asked to check frequently for understanding and adjust lessons based on these checks. This is aligned to the Danielson rubric for designing coherent instruction and using assessment. As a result of feedback and professional learning, teachers are supported in meeting the school’s expectations.

- School leaders consistently communicate the school’s instructional foci of “Frequently checking for understanding and adjusting lessons based on student understanding, providing students with opportunities to engage in productive struggle, insist that students use evidence to make claims through whole class discussion and/or writing, and writing across all content areas.” Posters of the school’s instruction foci are posted in classrooms, hallways and offices and referred to by school leaders, teachers and students and are also referred to in unit and lesson plans. The school also communicates its core values of Scholarship, Citizenship, Relationship, and Leadership. Teachers are expected to provide a course syllabus at the beginning of the year that outlines expectations for students, teacher and parents and states the class grading policy. Through clear and frequent communication, staff understand the high expectations of school leaders.

- Guidance counselors stay with a cohort of students for four years and ensure that they are on track towards graduation. Parents spoke of the partnership they had with the school and specifically referenced the school’s College 99-102 program, a four-year college readiness program. Parents are informed about Advanced Placement and College Now courses, the college application process and applying for financial aid through meetings and workshops. School leaders attend PTA and School Leadership Team meetings and inform parents of the progress the school is making toward the school’s goals. Parents spoke positively about the availability of the principal and the weekly updates and monthly calendars sent home, and that parents are included in the goal-setting and improvement process. The school also communicates expectations through the school’s online grading system, parent-teacher conferences, and the student-parent handbook. The school is successfully partnering with families to support students in meeting the school’s expectations.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations. Teacher teams consistently analyze data and the work of students on whom they are focused.

Impact

Teacher collaborations are strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers and supporting progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Common planning teams meet daily to co-plan lessons that incorporate the school’s instructional foci. All teachers are part of department teams that meets weekly and grade-level teams that meets 1-2 times a month. Each department team is led by a teacher leader who plans the team agendas and facilitates meetings. Department leaders meet with school leaders twice a month to share progress and address challenges. Department teams refine curriculum, analyze student work, create common assessments and analyze student data, while grade teams identify specific subgroups of students and discuss ways to support those students. As a result of the work of department and grade-level team collaboration, the implementation of the school’s instructional foci is promoted and the instructional capacity of teachers is strengthened.

- A review of agendas and minutes shows teams review student work and data. Teams looked at trends and patterns in student answers and why they thought students made specific errors. An example from minutes stated, "Students struggled with vocabulary in context, especially with three words in a sentence. Students needed more context for the words." Teachers and teams are expected to develop instructional action plans that identify the standard or skills they need to teach in a different way, analyze why the students did not learn it and the misconceptions and the data-informed instructional approach. In an action plan for Algebra I, the sub-skills identified for re-teaching included solving verbal equations, applying exponential functions, and polynomial operations. The teacher reflected, "I need to review how to take expressions and equations that they are familiar with that contain numbers and single variables and mimic them to represent equations containing only numbers. Students do not connect real world situations to what they learn in class. I will present students with real world artifacts and have them determine what algebra skills apply to the artifact, for example coupons, interest rates, and grocery shopping." Analysis of student work and data by teacher teams are resulting in progress towards goals for groups of students.

- During an observation of the ninth-grade English Language Arts team, members of the team discussed the day’s lesson focus on the reading of Romeo and Juliet and what adjustments needed to be made. The team identified that ELLs had a difficult time with the vocabulary in the play and struggled to understand the use of metaphor, simile, and personification within the play. The team determined next steps and adjustments for including designing a mini-lesson on puns that includes presenting a PowerPoint and providing guided practice as well as providing translations of key sections of the text for the ELL students in their class. Teachers commented that they meet multiple time during the week to review lesson plans and revise unit and lesson plans based on the review of student work and this impacts not only teacher practice but also progress for groups of students.
Additional Finding

<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 teachers ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects.

Impact
Purposeful decisions result in curricular coherence, building college and career readiness for all students and the development of academic tasks that are designed to deepen students thinking and learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Review of curricular documents revealed alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and New York State content standards where applicable, as well as integration of the instructional shifts across grades and content areas with a focus on text-based answers and writing from sources. The instructional shifts are also incorporated in the school’s instructional foci and there is evidence in lesson and unit plans that writing across the curriculum is incorporated across the majority of grades and content areas. Due to the purposeful decisions made by school leaders and teachers, there is alignment between the curricula and the school’s instructional foci.

- Curricular documents across grade and content areas demonstrate consistent alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards and the integration of the instructional shifts. In a geometry lesson focused on area, volume, and solids, students were determining the volume of spheres and hemispheres through discovery in order to relate calculations to real life situations. In the group task, students looked at a diagram of an ice cream cone and wrote responses and justifications for the following questions: “What is the volume of the whole scoop of ice cream?” “If one scoop of ice cream were to be put into the cone, how much ice cream, in terms of volume would be showing from the top of the cone?” “What would you notice about the volume of one scoop and the volume of the ice cream from the top of the cone?” Students also responded to the guided-practice question, “An ice cream cone is 5 cm deep and 4 cm across the opening of the cone. A hemisphere-shaped scoop of ice cream, which also has a diameter of 4 cm is placed on top of the cone. If the ice cream were to melt into the cone, will it overflow?” Academic tasks across grade and content areas are building college and career readiness for students.

- Lesson and unit plans across grade and content areas show evidence that academic tasks emphasize higher-order skills. The unit plan for an English class focused on the study of the play *Macbeth* describes the literacy and writing skills that students are to focus on, including “Provide textual evidence to support answers, analyze characterization/character motivation, understand denotative and connotative language, writing arguments with textual support, and using secondary sources to support analysis.” Some of the overarching and skill-based questions for the unit include, “Are we governed by fate or free will?” “How do women assert authority in a patriarchal system?” “How did Shakespeare revolutionize the English language?” and “How is ‘Macbeth’ an allegory of the political climate of King James II’s reign?” To support rigorous habits and higher-order skills for groups of students, students use a summary of the text, a modified version of the text, and the original version of the text. This ensured students are able to comprehend the complexity of Shakespearean language via pre-reading strategies and higher-order thinking questions. Students deepen their thinking and learning through the development of academic tasks.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy  
Rating: Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

Teaching practices reflect the articulated set of beliefs that students learn best when they are given opportunities to articulate their thinking and receive feedback from peers and teachers. The majority of learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- In a ninth-grade global history lesson focused on the Renaissance, students worked in groups on a Do Now that required students to Analyze, Interpret, Write, and Discuss, using the text as evidence. Students analyzed how the Crusades were a turning point in European history and underlined the evidence in the text. Students looked at a painting from the period and created a definition for the Renaissance using the visual as evidence. Students looked at two different quotes, analyzed the characteristics of the Renaissance and developed a claim. After their analysis and written responses to the Do Now prompts, students participated in a history party activity where they rotated around the room and shared their responses with a partner. If they heard additional information, they added it to their responses. Students then moved to their think-pair-share teams and looked at a map of Italy to locate Venice, Florence and Rome, examine the bodies of water that are located around these cities and write three positive impacts to support the claim that access to bodies water is beneficial. Across the majority of classrooms, there is evidence that teaching practices reflect the school’s belief that students learn best by articulating their thinking.

- Students in a twelfth-grade English Language Arts class were working in groups on analyzing how an author employs literary techniques to shape implicit messages. Student shared textual evidence with their groups to support their claims through the use of student-led discussion protocols. Students are grouped into analysis groups by ability level based on previous assessment data and student work and the text and literary element is leveled appropriately for each group. Students had the choice of two different tasks, “Choice A: In two well-developed paragraphs, explore how the exploration of social norms contributes to the overall meaning of the work. Be sure to use mid-size or luxury-level quote integration from anchor text. Choice B: In two well-developed paragraphs, explore why the author chose a literary element to create a particular message. Be sure to use mid-size or luxury-level quote integration from anchor text.” As a result of teaching strategies such as grouping and choice, students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks.

- In an Algebra I class, students are working in groups on applying the difference of two squares method to factor binomials. Students are grouped by ability and the level and number of problems for each group varies. Students in the high-level group are assigned additional extension problems after demonstrating mastery on their initial work. Struggling students were using additional guided notes and teacher guided questions such as, “How can you identify different types of factoring?” “Where does the middle term go?” “What happens to the middle terms?” “What type of question can/can't be factored using the difference of two squares method?” Through multiple entry points, groups of learners are provided opportunities to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments, rubrics, and grading policies aligned with the school’s curricula. Across classrooms, teacher assessment practices reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Teachers’ use of assessments and rubrics provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement and results in effective adjustments to curriculum and instruction to support the learning needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has a grading policy and academic expectations that are aligned with the school’s curricula and are communicated through the teacher and student-parent handbooks. Staff members use an online grading program to communicate to students and parents about students’ academic progress. Student work is evaluated in the categories of homework, classwork, projects/essays, labs, and unit exams/assessments and the grading policy is reviewed each year. Through the use of a common grading policy that is aligned with the school’s curricula, teachers and students are provided feedback regarding students’ achievement.

- Teachers create quarterly assessments that are reviewed by department teacher leaders and school leaders to ensure that the assessments are aligned with the school’s curricula and that modified versions provide appropriate scaffolding for ELLs and students with disabilities. Rubrics used in scoring assessments are aligned with the school’s curricula. In an English Language Arts interim assessment, students were measured on their mastery of grammar, vocabulary, reading and annotation, and an on-demand essay. In the essay portion, students were expected to have a structured introduction paragraph, a clear thesis statement, two structured body paragraphs, a structured counterclaim, textual evidence, analysis, a structured conclusion, a clear demonstration of text comprehension, and proper use of conventions. Other rubrics include measuring annotations, reflective responses, informational and argumentative writing, and Regents and Advanced Placement exam rubrics. The use of rubrics and interim assessment provide feedback regarding student progress toward mastery of the school’s instructional foci.

- Students reported that they participate in peer review and peer editing in multiple grade-level and content areas. In some classrooms teachers use checks for understanding in the form of questioning and trackers and provide feedback to students. One example is, “Your claim is complex and unique, and you fused your writing with your voice and chose a more sophisticated approach. Your use of high-level quotes helped create a snapshot for your audience. Your use of internal citations allowed your reading to know exactly where your strong textual evidence was cited from.” Students stated they reflect on their performance on interim assessments and determine what they need to work on. In the College 99-102 classes, students determine short- and long-term goals and reflect on those goals each marking period. As a result of checks for understanding and student self-assessment, the learning needs of students are supported.
Additional Finding

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<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 the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with effective feedback that accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

There is an alignment of schoolwide instructional practices. Feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice, supports teacher development, and promotes professional growth for teachers.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders support the development of teachers with frequent cycles of classroom observations as evidenced in the maintenance of an observation tracker to record the dates of formal and informal observations as well as pre- and post-observation meetings. School leaders review the tracker and are working with a coach to support the calibration of feedback given to teachers across the school. A review of written feedback given by the coach to school leaders includes evaluating the quality of questions and supporting teachers in the construction of text-dependent questions as well as providing specific feedback about the methodology and action steps to work on before the next observation. As a result of frequent observations and the work of school leaders around calibration, teachers are provided with effective feedback.

- Feedback from school leaders to teachers articulates clear expectations for teacher practice in alignment to the school’s instructional foci. An example of feedback stated, “During the whole class discussion, students didn’t generate many high-level questions towards each other to push student thinking. Model high-level questioning for students and create question cards that students can use to create their own questions, and over time remove the support of the question cards so students can truly generate their own discussion questions. Things to think about: Not sure if students initially understood the definition of ‘rotate’. Try giving them a context clue for geometry vocabulary if they appear to not understand. Action step 1. To increase student writing, give students an example and have them write why they did that math step. Also have students do error analysis where students will write first so they can justify their response then share out and make corrections as needed to incorporate more writing. Action step 2. Give students context clues to help students better understand the math vocabulary.” Feedback given to teachers describes next steps and supports teacher development.

- Peer-collaborating teachers work with specific teachers and provide low-inference non-evaluative feedback and open their classrooms for intervisitations. Teachers can opt in or out to this process. An example of low-inference feedback from the peer-collaborating teacher states, “I noticed that throughout the check for understanding, with both the read questions and ticket, that one student was the main participant. I also noticed that another student wasn’t writing her exit ticket, whereas all the other kids were. Were you able to check for understanding with the remaining kids in the class?” Another example of feedback stated, “During the second do now, student responses were vague and didn’t answer fully the questions you were asking. One student said, “The setting is both happy and sad.” What intervention can you put in place to ensure students can reach mastery?” Examples of action steps included “Action step would be to check for understanding, not compliance (through verbal or written expression).” “Action step is to use data acquired from Regents prep to drive instruction and address misconceptions.” Teacher development is impacted by the support structures provided by school leaders and peers.