Quality Review Report

2018-2019

Business Technology Early College High School

High school 26Q315

230-17 Hillside Avenue
Queens
NY 11427

Principal: Patrice Henry

Dates of Review:
November 14, 2018 - November 15, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Michele Ashley
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

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>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>
Findings

The schools’ approach to culture building is informed by *Restorative Justice* practices and a strength-based approach to discipline. A *Transformative Justice* (TJ) team focuses on implementing restorative practices to improve school culture, attendance, and social emotional support.

Impact

The schoolwide approach to developing student strengths contributes toward a safe and inclusive environment in which students initiate and lead school improvement efforts that decrease lateness, and improve student engagement and college readiness. Social-emotional supports positively affect students’ academic and personal behaviors and students are known well.

Supporting Evidence

- The school is in year-three of its *Restorative Justice* program and the community has implemented a schoolwide research-based social-emotional learning curriculum. Students, staff, and parents shared that the school is a safe and inclusive environment. Students stated that they feel safe and are respected by all of the adults in the school. One student shared "The school is a place to be myself and explore opportunities in and out of school." A parent, new to the school this year, shared that she was concerned about her child’s transition but was happily surprised by the welcome she and her daughter received by both the staff and students. A review of Online Occurrence Reporting System data also revealed that the suspension rate decreased from 11 percent in 2016 - 2017 to six percent in 2017 - 2018. In addition, a comparative analysis of the number of suspensions from July to November 2017 and July to November 2018 demonstrates a decrease from 21 to ten suspensions.

- Students and faculty also shared that students play a meaningful role in school improvement via the student council, the development of student clubs, and initiatives to resolve school issues. Students lead peer mediation, conflict resolution, and college awareness activities. Students collaborated with the school TJ team to develop a plan to reduce lateness, class disruption and hallway incidents. Based on the student-developed plan, the TJ team implemented a hallway sweep program that encourages students to get to class promptly, and reduces class interruptions and the number of hallway incidents. Students also facilitate student-initiated clubs to increase student engagement at each grade level; such clubs include yoga, film, gay and straight alliance, computer gaming, and student leadership. Members of the student leadership committee and other clubs develop and lead a variety of initiatives to enhance the culture and climate of Business Technology and Early College High School (BTECH).

- The TJ team includes faculty and staff members who develop, lead, and support community building activities that include advisory, community days, peer mediation, social-emotional learning lessons, positive behavior intervention, clubs, and after school activities. Community days align to a calendar that outlines the theme and lessons to be shared with students. Lessons from September to November 2018 focused on responsibility, respect, and citizenship. Lessons for each theme align to the *Resilient Scholars* curriculum and include creating a social contract, taking full responsibility, and collaborating effectively. Faculty and school leaders shared that these structures ensure that every student is known well and students demonstrate increased motivation, engagement, communication, and self-regulation skills, as evidenced by the increase in student-developed clubs, improved attendance, and lower suspension rates. In addition, teachers reported an observed increase in students’ abilities to self-regulate and take responsibility for their own behaviors. Students also shared that this year there are 40 active student clubs compared to only five last year.

26Q315: November 14, 2018
Area of Focus

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

Although teachers use and create rubrics and assessments, limited feedback is provided to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers inconsistently check for understanding or engage students in self-assessment.

Impact

Some teachers provide feedback to students on assessments and tasks; however, actionable feedback is not a consistent teaching practice across grades and content areas. Teachers inconsistently make real-time adjustments to instruction, thereby limiting opportunities to meet all students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers share success criteria with students at the beginning of a lesson. In some classes, the success criteria are used to create a checklist that students and teachers use to assess student learning. Teachers have begun to use content-based rubrics to assess projects and written tasks. For example, a lab report rubric evaluated the introduction, materials and methods, results, discussion, cohesiveness, and grammar of the written report. This content was evaluated across four levels that include novice, apprentice, proficient, and expert. The novice level indicates that a student includes “no real introduction” and the expert level states that a student “presents a clear summary of the aims of the study and its significance and briefly describes the experimental design.” The use of rubrics is not currently a consistent practice across all grades and subjects.

- Some teachers have also begun to provide written feedback to students on tasks through an online classroom tool. Feedback from these teachers provides targeted next steps for students to improve their performance. For example, a science teacher used the online tool to add comments to a student’s methods section of a lab report. The teacher wrote, “The way you wrote this section is spot on. You are just missing the description of the actual set up. How could I repeat this?” An English teacher added comments to an electronic copy of a student’s essay on Siddhartha, by Hermann Hesse. The teacher wrote, “Explain how this new knowledge and practice of self-sacrifice led [Siddhartha] to expand who he was. You need to prove to the reader that this was a good decision.” This growing practice of providing comments directly to students’ written drafts is beginning to provide some students with actionable feedback that leads to revisions and improvements in their writing.

- Across visited classrooms, there was limited use of self-assessment and checking for student understanding. In an English classroom, the teacher checked-in with each student group, asking questions regarding the quality and quantity of the work being produced. This teacher also provided a sentence starter to a student who was having difficulty sharing his thoughts with his group. The student used the sentence starter to ask his group a question. Before closing the lesson, this teacher had students complete an exit ticket that aligned to the guiding question, “Is it better to learn from experience or teaching?” The exit question also asked, “Based on your reading, did your opinion change and why?” Although effective adjustments were made in this classroom to meet the needs of students, this was not a common practice across classrooms.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum
Rating: Proficient

Findings
Across contents, unit and lesson plans align learning objectives to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate opportunities for real world application and the use of text-based evidence. Lessons and units incorporate opportunities for all students to apply their skills through rigorous performance tasks and projects.

Impact
The use of a schoolwide lesson template builds coherence across contents by requiring that lessons include the answers to key questions that align to the what, why, and how students are learning. Tasks and projects align to the higher levels of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge and consistently emphasize higher-order skills for all students, including high-need subgroups.

Supporting Evidence

- Most lesson plans include a learning objective and align with targeted Common Core Learning Standards. Tasks require students to provide evidence for their claims and opinions, as well as provide opportunities for students to apply their learning to real-life situations. For example, an English lesson cites four English Language Arts (ELA) and literacy standards and the learning objective states that students will analyze the experiences of the main character from the lens of the essential question and analyze whether the character learned from experience or the teachings of a master. This lesson also requires students to cite specific evidence from the text to support their answers. A United States (U.S.) history lesson plan states that students will "cite specific textual evidence to support the analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information." A math lesson plan includes a performance task that asks students to apply their knowledge of transformations, specifically reflections, translations, rotations, and dilations on a coordinate plane, and to illustrate on a graph how a home could be moved from one plot of land to another.

- The schoolwide lesson template requires that each lesson plan include the answers to guiding questions, which include, “What am I teaching and what will they learn today?” “Why is it important for them to learn this?”, “How will they do it and how will you demonstrate?” For example, an algebra lesson plan answers the question, "Why is this important for them to learn?" by stating, "This task gives students the opportunity to perform arithmetic operations with polynomials in order to solve real world problems." A Spanish lesson plan states, “Understanding the integration of the unit vocabulary, impersonal expressions and infinitives and command forms will be crucial to the performance task where students will create pamphlets and ads promoting their own volunteer organization." This common structure builds coherence across the curricula.

- A review of performance tasks and projects across content areas reveals that assignments require students to practice higher-order skills. Lessons ask students to analyze, synthesize, apply, and prove their opinions and claims. A global studies unit states that students will “synthesize evidence from prior research and readings using a format of their choice to exemplify and support their claim about whether Socrates died a heretic or a hero." A U.S. history lesson plan states that students will “analyze the Indian Removal Act and its effects on the United States to develop ideas and opinions based on these policies.” Lessons also include planning for student misconceptions. A math lesson plan states that some students may struggle to identify a sequence of transformations and plans to provide whiteboards that will allow students to revise and edit their sequence until successful. Planning for misconceptions emphasizes higher order skills for all students, including high-need subgroups.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teaching practices align to articulated beliefs and core values around the climate and culture of the learning environment. Learning environments and tasks support student collaboration and discussion.

Impact

The core values of collaboration, resilience, advocacy, focus and tenacity (CRAFT) support the production of meaningful work products. Across grades and content areas, work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers shared that students learn best in a learning environment that supports their core values, CRAFT. Faculty also shared that these values would be evident in classrooms based on the tone and organization for learning in the classrooms, which would include the integration of technology by teachers, collaborative seating arrangements, displayed and discussed learning objectives, and success criteria. Across classrooms, teachers used technology to display instructions and provide students with access to online resources. Student desks were organized in small groups or clusters, which supported collaboration on tasks and small group work. Across classes, most students were engaged in the lessons and focused on their tasks and work products.

- Across classrooms, teachers displayed the learning objectives and Common Core Learning Standards associated with the current lesson. Teachers asked students to read the learning objectives and success criteria aloud. The learning objectives and success criteria remained visible throughout the lesson as a reference. For example, in an English classroom the posted success criteria stated, "We can successfully collaborate. Everyone has a role and a voice. We can identify three to four experiences and analyze the impact. We can cite strong and relevant evidence. We can construct a rebuttal based on potential counterclaims." In this class and others, students referred back to the criteria and used them to guide the production of meaningful work. Students in this class organized their groups to distribute the work and produce three to four examples with text-based evidence to support their responses.

- Teachers assign students to group tasks and provide essential questions and prompts that support student discussion and collaboration. Evidence of group work and shared thinking were displayed across classrooms and common spaces. In an English classroom, the teachers asked students to consider, based on their reading, if it is better to learn from experience or from a master teacher. Based on this prompt, students shared their opinions in small groups and used examples from their text. One student agreed with his classmate that experience is important but added that although the main character had many experiences, what he learned from the masters helped him to grow and led him down a different path. Across classes, teacher prompting and questions engaged students in tasks and supported high levels of thinking.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders consistently provide training and effectively communicate high expectations to the entire staff via newsletters, observation feedback, and grade level mission statements. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates high expectations for all students that align to the CRAFT values.

Impact

School leaders, faculty, and staff hold each other mutually accountable. Teacher teams and staff provide students with effective feedback and guidance regarding credit accumulation, graduation, and college readiness, so that all students own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders provide training to all staff that aligns to an articulated set of goals and an overarching essential question, “How does rigorous instruction impact student achievement?” Leadership has developed and distributed a professional learning calendar for fall 2018 that shares the essential question and four goals, which support the school’s focus on coherent instruction, assessment, questioning, and classroom engagement as outlined in the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The professional development calendar identifies session dates, topics, and aligned indicators from the Quality Review rubric and domains of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, a session on assessment cycles and tools is aligned to Quality Review rubric indicator 2.2 and domain 3D (Assessment). A session entitled “How does BTECH’s vision guide our Understanding by Design unit planning?” is aligned to domain 1E (Coherent Instruction).

- The school leader shares expectations for teaching and learning via verbal and written observation feedback and a weekly newsletter entitled, “From the desk of Ms. Henry…” An October 2018 newsletter included information for the current observation cycle and sections that highlighted look-fors and listen-fors for designing coherent instruction and using assessment for learning. A pedagogy section states that round one observations and feedback would continue throughout the week and focus on designing coherent instruction and assessment. Look-fors outlined in this issue included common board configurations, use of a Webb’s Depth of Knowledge tool, flexible grouping, pacing, and success criteria. Teachers developed grade level mission statements that hold themselves accountable and support the schools overall goals. The grade-eleven mission states, “Our mission is to ensure our students’ success through collaborative inquiry. We will target all students with an emphasis on the lower third, using high-quality instruction. We will maintain and strengthen our values of respect, high expectations, and a culturally responsive environment." Faculty and administration hold each other accountable to schoolwide shared expectations.

- CRAFT values are intentionally taught and embedded in both academic and social-emotional learning and support. CRAFT is posted in all classrooms and common spaces and integrated into mission statements. Faculty monitors individual and cohort credit accumulation and support staff meets with students to monitor progress toward graduation. Students are able to earn a high school diploma and an Associate’s Degree in internet technology and computer information systems from Queensborough Community College (QCC). Students and families sign a dual enrollment contract agreeing to the eligibility conditions, expectations, and requirements of BTECH and QCC. Faculty and staff have also identified BTECH indicators of success and readiness that identify expectations for college readiness based on active reading skills, writing fluency, writing forms, advanced writing, and communication. The graduation rate for BTECH’s first graduating class in 2018 was 90 percent and according to the 2016-2017 School Quality Snapshot, 91 percent of students earned enough credits in grades nine and ten to be on track for graduation.
Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:**

| 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development |

**Rating:** Proficient

**Findings**

The majority of teachers meet on grade level and content teams for structured inquiry-based professional collaborations. Teams consistently analyze data related to school climate and students’ academic performance.

**Impact**

Team collaborations promote the achievement of grade level goals and strengthen teacher planning, preparation, and practices that promote increased student success toward achieving goals and credit accumulation.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers meet weekly on grade and content teams to engage in data-based inquiry. Content teams meet once a week to address content-level decisions that span across the grades. Grade teams meet two times a week with one day devoted to inquiry around school culture and one day for academic inquiry. Grade team meetings follow established guidelines and use research based protocols to guide discussions of teacher and student work. A *Purpose of the Grade Team* document states that all grade team meetings will engage in inquiry cycles that focus on academics, positive behavior reinforcement, and attendance; all grade teams will create their own mission to address their specific population; and all members will take on a role during each meeting. The guidance document identifies and explains the following roles, facilitator, timekeeper, recorder, and equity manager. A review of team agendas and notes reveals that all grade teams follow these guidelines. Team meeting agendas include objectives for each meeting, the team mission statement, a list of attendees, and their roles.

- During the grade-twelve meeting, team members assumed the required roles and utilized a *Critical Friends Group* protocol to review student samples of a science performance task. During this meeting, the presenting teacher shared a student exemplar and the context of the assignment before colleagues reviewed the student work samples, asked clarifying questions, and provided feedback. Team feedback included next steps for instruction and student learning. Team members recommended that teachers provide feedback stems for students, review presentation skills, and review the components of actionable feedback to support peer feedback on tasks. Teachers across grades shared that their work on teams has strengthened their planning and enhanced learning environments across the school, such as the class seating arrangements to support group work, and the use of standards-based learning objectives and success criteria. These practices were observed across classrooms and planning documents.

- Teachers use student performance data from New York State Regents assessments, benchmarks, and performance tasks to adjust lessons and tasks. At the end of each interim assessment cycle, teachers participate in a data day to analyze the results, develop intervention plans, and re-teach lessons. This year’s analysis of Regents data resulted in a Target Scholar Academy that focuses on Living Environment and algebra instruction. School leaders and teachers shared that team inquiry results in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students. For example, teacher teams have implemented the use of exemplars across content areas to provide students with clear expectations for performance. Teachers in grade-ten highlight the use of exemplars as leading to increased numbers of students completing performance tasks. Leadership also attributes an increase in credit accumulation to team collaboration and inquiry. According to the 2016-2017 School Performance Dashboard, students completing ten or more credits in their first year increased from 87 to 91 percent over the two-year period from 2015 to 2017.