

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2009-2010**

**Queens Gateway to Health Services Secondary School**

**Middle - High School 680**

**150-91 87<sup>th</sup> Road**

**Queens**

**NY 11432**

**Principal: Cynthia Edwards**

**Dates of review: December 14 – 15, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Jeffrey Soloff**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Queens Gateway to Health Sciences Secondary School is a secondary school with 640 students from grade 7 through grade 12. The school population comprises 48% Black, 15% Hispanic, 2% White, and 34% Asian students. The student body includes no English language learners and no special education students. Boys account for 36% of the students enrolled and girls account for 64%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 95%.

### Overall Evaluation

#### This school is proficient.

Under the leadership of a strong principal, the school is evolving into a true collaborative learning community that focuses on supporting the academic and social growth of students. Teacher teams analyze data to make informed decisions about instruction. Differentiated instruction is an embedded practice that allows students to learn at their appropriate levels. Teachers differentiate by achievement levels and learning styles in order to instruct each student appropriately. However, the way the school uses data to assess the progress of all subgroups is not fully in place. Although the school has successfully implemented teacher teams that use the inquiry approach, training for all teacher team leaders has not been completed thereby reducing the effectiveness of some teacher teams.

The school is a safe and nurturing environment that students and parents see as a "large family" in which everyone looks out for the well being of their neighbors. Students and faculty exhibit a high degree of trust, which is conducive to optimal levels of academic and personal success. The school's high expectations for scholarship, behavior, and attendance are known throughout the school community. However, communication with parents is inconsistent because not all teachers send progress reports home. This limits the ability of some parents to support their children's learning.

All students in the school participate in a two-week field experience at the Queens Hospital Center as part of the theme of this health sciences school. This partnership affords students an opportunity to learn about health and medicine first hand so that they can decide on a career path.

Leaders use data to make informed decisions on budget and instruction in order to maximize student-learning outcomes. Plans are revised based on evidence of student performance to meet the needs of all learners. The school does not have interim goals and benchmarks clearly established to enable the teachers to make modifications based on this data. An observation process that features a quick administrative response monitors teacher practice. Administration provides feedback from informal observations to teachers ensuring that recommendations for improving instruction are implemented.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has established effective systems for monitoring teacher practice with a clear focus on improving instructional practices.
  - The administration uses a successful formal structure of classroom observations to gain data that leads to decisions around teaching practice. Frequent informal classroom visitations provide additional information that administrators use to differentiate professional development. Post-observation conferences provide key feedback to further support teacher growth including next steps and modifications.
  - School leaders mentor new teachers by working one-on-one with them to explain their expectations for instruction and improve their pedagogical skills. New teachers benefit from a range of effective supports, including the assignment of a buddy teacher, intervisitations, and departmental assistance.
- All teachers collaborate using an inquiry approach to analyze data, examine student work, plan together, and visit each other's classrooms to share ideas and best practice through a desire to improve student outcomes.
  - The seventh grade teacher team has carefully reviewed the prior year's State mathematics test results to identify key areas of weakness. As a result, teachers share best practices around revisiting deficient skills. Students are now receiving better targeted instruction to support their learning needs. Teachers use data to plan instruction and determine next steps for students so that student-learning outcomes are improving.
  - An item analysis of the English language arts State exams identified skills, such as inferencing from text, which needed to be strengthened. Instructional strategies that could alleviate this problem were discussed so that all teachers could follow common practices that have been shown to impact student achievement.
- Internal and external partnerships provide both students and teachers with opportunities that accelerate their social, career, and academic growth.
  - A partnership with Queens Hospital Center gives all students in seventh through tenth grades an opportunity to spend two weeks at the hospital. During this time, students observe the different careers in medicine and nursing, observe patient care, and learn from the health professionals. Eleventh and twelfth graders undergo a two-week internship. This immersion exposes students to various health care fields and provides them with unique experiences and newly acquired knowledge.
  - The school's partnerships with various community-based organizations provide important services and resources that supplement the instructional program. A partnership with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) enables students to use the facilities to become physically fit. Credit recovery and college courses provided at Queens

College enrich the regular instructional program. The school offers ARIS parent workshops that inform parents about their childrens progress.

- The school is a safe and nurturing environment in which students are actively engaged in learning and academic growth.
  - The school’s academic environment provides an opportunity for students to learn and support each other while taking courses that prepare them for college. Teachers plan instruction that enables students to do well on the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test and the Scholastic Aptitude Test in order to get into the college of their choice. The graduation rate for 2008-2009 was 93.8%. The principal is proud to report that most of the students were attending four-year colleges.
  - A culture of trust and respect between students and staff is clearly visible. Students feel that an “open line of communication” between teachers and themselves assists them in their social and of academic growth. A parent stated, “This is a family that cares about all of its members.”
- Differentiated instruction is embedded in the instructional program and ensures multiple entry points and support for all learners.
  - The curriculum is well defined and aligned with the State standards using Essential Learning Outcomes. Teachers use rubrics created by each department to grade students consistently. A learning style survey, administered to all students, gives teachers another way to group them. As a result, teachers successfully create activities based on learning styles that maximize student learning.
  - Classroom instruction is differentiated based on the needs and achievement level of individual students so that all students’ needs are met. Students are actively engaged in instruction and frequently teach their peers in small group settings.
- Leaders make informed budgetary decisions that lead to optimized instruction and optimal student learning.
  - Creative scheduling makes maximum use of teachers’ time, provides for bi-weekly grade-level team meetings, promotes collaboration, and ensures a broad curriculum that includes advanced placement and college level courses that challenge students.
  - Budgetary decisions are based on data from test results and the monitoring of teachers’ performance. Data analysis led to the creation of academic intervention and enrichment classes offered after school and on Saturdays. These well-attended classes lead to higher student achievement.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Improve communication with parents so that they are better informed about the progress of their children in relation to the school’s expectations, and have increased opportunities to have a voice in school decision making.

- Although expectations for student achievement and attendance are mailed to parents at the beginning of the school year, not all parents are equally informed about student progress during the year. This means that they are not always in a position to understand the extent to which their children are meeting expectations or what more they need to do to succeed. Student progress reports are available on line, but are not mailed home to parents, thereby limiting the number of parents who get them. This prevents all parents from getting current information about their child's progress in all subject areas.
- Some parents felt that there were limited opportunities for parents to be involved in school decision-making,
- Strengthen the school's strategies for building adult capacity in taking on leadership roles.
  - Although teacher teams are functioning well, less than half of the teacher team leaders have received professional development in facilitating meetings. This lack of training does not always give teachers the opportunity to develop and practice leadership in professional collaboration settings or to benefit from professional development activities designed to impact both adult and student learning.
- Extend data gathering and analysis practices for relevant subgroups to provide a complete picture of student progress across all aspects of the school and to ensure that all students make equally good progress.
  - Currently, the school does not analyze data sufficiently well for all subgroups by gender and ethnicity and therefore is not always able to accurately identify trends, strengths, and needs for all subgroups, even though it is highly effective in differentiating the curriculum and instruction for individuals.
- Expand the practice of setting student level goals to ensure that there are systems in place to measure student progress toward interim and long-term goals.
  - The school has systems in place such as pre- and post-unit assessments from the Essential Learning Outcomes program that measure student progress toward interim goals. However, the lack of these goals for all students inhibits their progress.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

<b>School name: Queens Gateway to Health Sciences Secondary School</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?				<b>X</b>
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	▶	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X				
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X				
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	▶	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?				X			
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				X			
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X				
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				X			
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	▶	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?			X				
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	▶	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>