



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**Science, Technology, and Research Early College
High School at Erasmus**

Middle - High School 543

**911 Flatbush Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11226**

Principal: Henrietta Coursey

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Lead Reviewer: Ann Berger

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Science, Technology, and Research Early College High School at Erasmus, is a member of the national early college initiative in partnership with The Woodrow Wilson Foundation, Brooklyn College of The City University of New York and Gateway Institute for Pre-College Education with 470 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 85.3% Black, 6.4% Hispanic, 1% White, 0.8%, and 3.2% Asian students. The student body includes 0% English language learners and 1% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 93.4%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 63% eligibility.

The school is in its second year of taking students at grade 6 and 7 and is oversubscribed. The students complete most of their high school graduation requirements in two years and in the 11th grade begin their dual program of college level courses at the Brooklyn College spending two days on campus and three days at the high school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Exceptional leadership and sensitive management strategies have secured the success of the school.
- Detailed data analysis, including exceptional use of past performance data, drives the school's improvements and fully informs strategic decisions.
- Administration holds teachers to account exceptionally effectively by reviewing student performance and structuring teachers' self-reflection.
- Very creative scheduling and budgeting plays to teachers' strengths and ensures the school gets the best value from everyone.
- The school creates detailed short- and long-term goals for students and staff and rigorously and regularly evaluates progress towards them.
- Guidance counselors work especially well alongside teachers to achieve a seamless approach to resolving problems and improving outcomes.
- The school has an exceptionally well-articulated vision, which permeates the life of the school.
- The outstanding partnerships with Brooklyn College of The City University of New York, CUNY, Gateway Institute and Woodrow Wilson are highly effective in ensuring the school meets its objective of "college for all".
- The curriculum acceleration has resulted in very high graduation rates.
- The school has included the new younger grades very swiftly and has developed programs that best meet their needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure parents are aware of the goals set for their children so they can assist in their achievement.
- Extend the recording systems developed by the inquiry team to all teachers.
- Build on the very good differentiation strategies in many classes to ensure the few teachers that struggle with this become more confident.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Data is the engine of this school and the principal is the machine's driver guiding this early college model towards success. Her lengthy experience as an educator keeps this school on the right track to achieve its mission. She sets challenging goals collaboratively and then rigorously holds her staff to account for the outcomes. Teachers have many opportunities to develop innovative solutions to ensure they meet the goals. As one teacher put it, "You have the opportunity to be creative... so long as it works!"

The curriculum is very effective in achieving the aim of ensuring that all students get the opportunity to achieve college credits prior to graduation and take up their place at a college of their choice. The fact that the school's 97.6% graduation rate in June 2007 increased to 100% in January 2008 is a testament to this. Although there is a strong focus on the core curriculum in the earlier grades, there are a good number of enrichment opportunities available both within the arts and through the schools outstanding partnerships with Gateway Institute and Brooklyn College. These partners have been crucial in the school's development providing many opportunities to motivate students who maintain high aspirations for their own futures. School leaders have managed the budget and scheduling exceptionally well to get the best value for money and provide everything the students need to be successful.

Further enhancing differentiation has been a key goal this year following the last Quality Review. The school has made particularly good progress in math where the students have many good opportunities for additional challenge as well as consolidation where necessary. The practice remains variable however. As one student accurately put it, "in some classes we all do the same work but in others we are challenged to work at our own level." The inquiry team has developed a pragmatic and very effective approach to improving the performance of the students who are struggling in grade 6. Detailed analysis of each individual's barriers to improvement followed by well-matched interventions is proving effective. The principal and assistant principal challenge teachers to review their classroom practice to personalize their teaching styles to best match the students learning needs. They record this detailed work very well to maintain an overview of the strategies used and individual student progress to analyze and review trends over time. The school has rightly identified the need to spread this practice more widely across other grades.

There are many opportunities for parents to become involved in school and pass information both formally and informally to teachers and this communication is good. The school does not yet have equally well-developed systems to inform parents of very detailed short-term goals but the school has developed a school website that parents access for school information including teacher class pages and parent-student information pages. The school expects to further develop the website to improve communication among all members of the learning community.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school has a very objective view of its performance overall. This is because it gathers data from so many sources and corroborates the information whenever possible by checking quantitative data with qualitative information from its own surveys, observations and discussions. The school disaggregates data by gender, ethnicity, and attendance as well as by grade, class and subject. It then considers the data well to assist leaders in focusing on students who are underperforming. Leaders make excellent information available to teachers about past performance and they know exactly where there are significant differences in subgroups, between teachers and within grades and make detailed comparisons of outcomes against other similar schools. Though the Acuity information is relatively new, the school is able to access it easily and use it extensively for the younger students. It regular uses school-generated assessments to gather ongoing data, and grade groups meet regularly to track progress and observe trends in performance. The inquiry team has developed this work further and plans are in place to extend the very good recording systems to the other the grades to oversee all the information about the progress of individuals more effectively. The school is particularly effective in drawing together and analyzing information about special education students and disseminating it to teachers to use when planning their instruction. Teachers provide a weekly progress report to the instructional support teacher who maintains an overview of all the students at risk of not passing the grade. This report is very effective in ensuring that up to date information about students is at hand to inform instructional strategies.

Teachers have received very good training to assist them in looking at data to help them identify trends and problems for individual students. The management systems are in place to support teachers in collecting and reviewing the data and these are very effective. The inquiry team has developed particularly good recording systems to capture biographical data alongside academic progress and link this information to teaching strategies. Through this the team has been able to evaluate what works for individual students and disseminate this information to all those involved so that instruction can be differentiated. The school is at an early stage in applying this system across other grades.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

Goal setting is multi-layered and very effective. The approach at whole school level is highly collaborative and rigorous. The principal has allocated considerable professional development time to ensuring all teachers are familiar with how to set specific and time-measured goals. Grade level teams are given a carefully thought through questionnaire about the progress of students and they then set goals for the end of the year. Short-term goals derive from these that focus on individuals as well as the grade as a whole. The

school carefully analyzes data to identify students in need of improvement. It has developed additional packages to focus on individual needs. Additionally there is a very good focus on helping these students within the classroom through differentiating teaching strategies to build on individual students' learning styles.

The school uses a similarly thorough approach at whole school level to set goals and share them with the whole community. The Early College partners are heavily involved in this process and the focus on early college drives the whole school development. This mission keeps expectations high. This is illustrated by one students' comment, "My scores exceeded my expectations but that doesn't mean I can lower my guard as I am striving to get to a good college." The school reinforces its high expectations through the well-developed parent induction programme and subsequent meetings. Though parents are very aware of the whole school goals and those for each grade they have less understanding of the individual goals for their own child and therefore insufficient information about what they can do to assist in their achievement.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school has matched the core curriculum very well to the college courses to ensure that it prepare students well for the expectations when they leave. The close working with Brooklyn College has made a major contribution to this. Professors have worked alongside subject teams and teachers report that this has improved the quality of instruction and their understanding of their own subject. The school covers the full core curriculum in grades 9 and 10 ensuring a high level of challenge for students that they mainly meet. It has carefully planned the new grades 6 and 7 curriculum and as a result, these students have been included effectively.

The principal rigorously pursues accountability. The school follows up formal observation processes with informal walkthroughs to ensure that staff members address the areas for development. The principal's detailed understanding of what makes for good instruction ensures these areas are identified accurately and there is a very strong focus on taking students differing learning styles into account when planning and reviewing lessons. When data indicated too many students were struggling, the principal conducted a full review and concluded the need for a greater emphasis on visual and oral approaches. Consequently, teachers restructured lessons and this had a positive impact on the grades the students achieved in subsequent tests. The school has made good progress since the last Quality Review in ensuring that differentiation is secure in lessons but there remain a few teachers who still struggle to plan work for the fully range of learners. The school plans to continue to develop this work by establishing standards at four levels for each grade including high expectations for those above grade level.

School leaders have managed the budget and scheduling exceptionally well to get the best value for money and provide everything the students need to be successful. They pay excellent attention to ensuring the scheduling gets the best out of everyone. A teacher commented, "A teacher raised some issues about their program which was revised to make sure that teacher could shine".

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school provides good opportunities for teachers to improve their instruction through professional development and training. Through effective observations, the principal has a very thorough understanding of staff strengths. She also clearly understands where skills and knowledge need development to ensure continual improvement in student progress. Teachers acknowledge that the school is about "what is best for students" and that professional development aligns very closely to the achievement of whole school goals for learning. Nevertheless, the school takes individual needs fully into account and teachers have a "voice" in making specific requests to suit their own career course. Leaders invest in their staff and this promotes good working relationships and an enthusiasm in everyone to grow and succeed.

New teachers talk very positively about the professional dialogue they are involved in and the support they receive. Extremely effective organizational procedures and management structures support the journey towards successful outcomes and provide clear boundaries for students. Students fully understand the expectations and consequences, and say, "Everyone in this school is here to support". The guidance counselors are really "on the case" and no student slips through the net. They liaise particularly well with the class teachers to ensure they can intervene early before the problems disrupt learning. Excellent links with a wide range of partners promote student academic, personal and social development exceptionally effectively. These partnerships include the work with Brooklyn College and the Gateway that provide excellent internships to assist students in making good choices for their futures. This reflects in students' success.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The exceptionally clear vision of the principal drives the schools development. The school has a very high capacity to monitor and review its work and change tack if necessary. The formal structures for development planning are very well developed. The annual grade reviews include a requirement to analyze why students passed or did not. The school uses this information to set new goals for the subsequent years with three strategies to achieve these goals. Administration considers this carefully and weaves it into the strategic plan. Very careful regular reviewing of these plans ensures the school keeps on track and maintains its focus. Over the shorter term, at the end of each marking period, the school carries out a scholarship review for the whole faculty to consider all the data and revise plans in the light of the evidence. In addition to these excellent processes, goals are reviewed fortnightly at each faculty meeting and plans changed in the light of discussions.

Teachers are also very effective at reviewing their own data and changing their instruction accordingly for individual students. They also consider the progress of different groups compared to others within the grade. However, currently this is an informal process, which the school does not reviewed systematically enough to inform goals and actions fully. The school has sophisticated systems for the management of change that are very effective. Leaders make intelligent, strategic decisions to ensure all staff members are on board with the schools' vision and that everyone is working towards the same mission.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Science, Technology, and Research Early College High School at Erasmus

Quality Score

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				*	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?				X	
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?					X
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X	

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?				X	
2.2 focus on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area?				X	
2.3 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?					X
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?					X
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?					X
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?					X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				X	

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?			X		
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?					X
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?					X
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?					X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X	

* Not scored due to the absence of the population

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped