Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Kingsbridge International High School

High school 10X268

2780 Reservoir Ave.
Bronx
NY 10468

Principal: William Gagstetter, IA

Dates of Review:
March 30, 2017 - March 31, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Daisy Concepcion
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**

Kingsbridge International 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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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<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>Developing</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</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>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>
</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>
</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>
</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>Area of Celebration</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations where they analyze work products for students whom they share. Distributive leadership structures are developing to support building leadership capacity.

Impact
Teacher teams are beginning to engage in inquiry, however, this has not yet resulted in improved teacher practices. Distributive leadership is emerging as evidenced in two lead teachers who plan professional development for their colleagues.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers at the school are committed to engaging in structured professional collaborations and continued to meet during the change in school administration. Social studies and English teachers identified the need to focus on writing skills and chose organization and citing textual evidence as key targets for improvement. As a result of this work, there have been small increases in the January Regents pass rates in these departments. The inquiry process is developing in the science and the math departments. In an interview, the new school principal was quick to praise the teachers for their dedication and highlighted their meeting together even during the administrative change. The latest assessment data indicate improved student achievement.

- In the social studies meeting, teachers analyzed student work to look for organization and the use of evidence. One teacher presented his work and received feedback from other teachers on a wide range of observations. Providing next instructional steps for groups of students did not occur. When teachers discussed working with English Language Learners they concluded there were not enough Spanish students to translate the material for them.

- Teachers shared that the new principal provides them with latitude to make the instructional adjustments needed to meet their students’ needs. The school leaders have set a focus on student engagement and the design of coherent instruction. Teachers feel supported by the two lead teachers who teach part time and plan with them to deliver instruction that meets student learning needs. These lead teachers’ professional judgment is respected and they believe they are receiving the support they need to impact key decisions and promote improved student learning.
Findings
Across classrooms, scaffolds, including native language supports, inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact
There is uneven engagement in appropriately challenging tasks with inconsistent demonstration of higher-order thinking in both work products and discussion for English Language Learners and students with Individualized Education Programs.

Supporting Evidence

- In an English class where students were reading *A Raisin in the Sun*, the teacher began with a review of vocabulary and the plot. Upon having read the play, the teacher invited the students to give a synopsis of the play and create a list of questions they felt were not answered. The students wondered about several characters and as a group begin to create an additional scene that included dialogue and stage directions to bring closure to the play. The academic tone of this class contrasted sharply with the disorganized tone in a grade nine algebra class. Students sat scattered across the room and yelled out to the teacher for support. While a learning target was present for both classes, a clear structure nor explicit instruction was evident in the math class. The teacher walked around the room and told the students to solve the problem because they should know how to solve it. The teacher stopped students twice, and instructed them to do their work. Scaffolds were not provided and students sat in front of blank papers as the teacher passed by without addressing them.

- In a global history class where the topic was World War II, the teacher had different stations containing various documents including a copy of the Treaty of Versailles. An academic discussion in Spanish took place although the task and documents were in English. Students in this class displayed deep content knowledge and higher-order thinking as students referenced documents they could not read in English but which they correctly utilized and discussed in their native language. The lack of scaffolds prevented the students from demonstrating their thinking in English. Similarly, English Language Learners struggled with the vocabulary in a history class resulting in their remaining silent during the lesson.

- In a grade eleven social studies class the teacher guided students through notes they had previously taken on the subject of neutrality during World War II. Once students had revisited their notes, students took part in a fishbowl conversation using primary documents such as the Zimmerman Note and the Monroe Doctrine. The conversation was structured and students engaged in higher order thinking. However, this was not the case in an English as a New Language class, where students boisterously sat in groups laughing and holding personal conversations. Most students struggled to make sense of the concept of a metaphor. Despite being provided pictures they could not understand the use of the phrase, “a blanket of snow.” Students stated that anything connected by the word “is” a metaphor. When asked for an example, one student said, “My dog is a cat.” Students were primarily inattentive. The teacher raised her voice and went from table to table to re-engage students who could not complete the task.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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Findings

School leaders are in the process of ensuring that curricula consistently align to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks inconsistently emphasize higher-order thinking.

Impact

The new school leader is working with faculty to make purposeful decisions about the curricula to promote career and college readiness and ensure rigorous tasks that include access for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- At the moment, everyone is working to ensure that the curricula they have selected builds coherence. Currently they use printed curricula that is online. The teachers agreed that it needed to be aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards. Explicit vocabulary instruction will be the focus for each unit. This was seen in several lesson plans that exhibited content vocabulary clearly identified for the lesson.

- Planning documents inconsistently reflect rigorous habits across grades and subjects. However, there is some evidence of planning multiple entry points for English Language Learners and students with disabilities. In one science unit students learn to read the Periodic Table of Elements and work to determine how to find the oxidation number of each element within a specific compound. Lesson plans indicate the use of tiered questions, explicit instruction, teacher modeling, a review of vocabulary, and the use of a note organizer. This was not seen in a math plan addressing polynomials and quadratics. The materials to be reviewed or the method of the review was not evident. Additionally, the questions listed in the plan were low level, direct recall questions.

- In social studies and English Language Arts planning documents, teachers use instructional grouping. These lessons also demonstrate an attempt to consistently emphasize rigor. Questions range from recall to compare and contrast. In one lesson, students were expected to use various documents to engage in a Socratic seminar studying the neutrality of the United States during World War I. A unit plan on Ray Bradbury’s short story, *The Veldt*, incorporated rigorous and differentiated learning tasks. However, this level of rigor was not apparent in a plan for an English as a New Language class where students were asked to match a few sentences of text with pictures to understand metaphors in preparation for reading *Romeo and Juliet*.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment  
Rating: Developing

Findings

Rubrics and checklists observed on hallway displays and used in class lessons are loosely aligned with the school’s curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices are limited and inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding.

Impact

Students receive limited feedback regarding their achievement. Inconsistency in the use of checks for understanding leads to few, effective mid-lesson adjustments to meet students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- In a meeting with students, review of their portfolios revealed the limited use of rubrics. The one rubric that was presented was a scoring rubric loosely aligned to the curriculum and used for grading. Students at the meeting were unable to articulate next steps provided them by their teachers. Bulletin board displays contained feedback, which lacked specific guidance for students to follow. Most feedback was limited and did not provide specific guidance for students to improve their work products.

- In an English class, students were grouped by ability and worked in pairs using a rubric that listed criteria such as the use of theme, evidence of analysis and linked the theme back to the text. Students read each other’s essays then used the rubric to rate their peer’s work and identify a next step before explaining their analysis to their partner. Students had to collect feedback from their peers and create a plan for revising their work. Students stated that engaging in this activity helped them develop a critical eye for writing. They felt it helped improve their partner’s work and their own work as well. While in other classes there was an attempt to have students provide each other feedback, a rubric was not provided, preventing effective adjustments necessary to meet all students’ learning needs.

- Across classrooms, checks for understanding were not used consistently. When they were employed simple thumbs up or raising hands to show agreement was the common practice. However, there were some teachers incorporating mid-lesson assessments. This practice was seen in a grade nine algebra class where the teacher walked around and noticed that students were struggling with solving a problem involving a quadratic equation. The teacher asked the students for their attention and helped them set up the problem before asking a student to provide the next step. Students were then instructed to use the procedure cards on their desk to finish the problem. Once this adjustment was made students were able to complete the problem independently.
Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and are developing clear avenues connected to college and career readiness. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations for all students.

Impact

The new principal has begun providing training aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and has established a system of accountability for these expectations. Providing feedback to parents with the level of clarity needed to help prepare students for their next level is emerging.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers stated that although the principal has just been assigned, he has made his expectations on lesson planning; differentiation and incorporation of academic conversations clear through emails, at faculty meetings, and in one on one conversations with each teacher in the building. In individual sessions, the principal outlined his expectations requiring teachers to plan clear learning objectives, provide differentiation, and opportunities for all students to engage in high levels of discussion. Teachers were quick to add that the principal asked what they needed in order to do their personal best. At the time of this review, the principal began a round of formal observations, aligned to his focus while beginning the development of a system of accountability for all staff.

- At the time of this review, the principal had not been formally announced and had not been able to have a meeting with parents but he had met with some parents informally. Parents quickly shared their need for a newcomer’s program due to the constant influx of newly arrived immigrants to the school. The principal acknowledged the importance of such a program and indicated that it was already being developed. Parents feel the school is extremely welcoming with a strong support system for both their students and the families. They were grateful for the opportunity for their students to learn English and prepare for college. Many parents were happy that English as a Second Language class is being offered so they could learn English and provide some support for their children. While there had been classes that informed them about the number of credits that students needed to graduate, they still did not understand the curricula, and had questions regarding special education programs.

- In a meeting with students, only the seniors were able to speak about college. Other grades had not received advisement on college or career readiness or expectations for their next grade. Students stated they all learned how to look at a transcript but many did not know what Regents they still had to take or how many credits they had accumulated. Students shared that since the arrival of the new principal there has been a more academic tone in the school with clear expectations for their learning. Students enthusiastically said they liked this. They want more structure in the classroom, uniforms, and a more formal atmosphere focused on scholarship and support for academic and personal behaviors. They were happy that this was underway.
## Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating: Developing</th>
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### Findings

The school leader supports the development of teachers with both formal and informal cycles of classroom observations. As the purpose of some of the observations has been informative they are not yet fully connected to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

### Impact

Feedback to teachers is beginning to be effective by accurately capturing challenges and providing next steps.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal has conducted a round of informal observations of all teachers in the school. The feedback was not evaluative in nature, but provided teachers clear next steps with regard to learning targets and a need to differentiate instruction. While some of these observations reference the quality of student work, it is too early to determine if the feedback is improving teacher practice and student outcomes.

- A review of the formal observations recently conducted show alignment to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. The feedback is beginning to support teacher development. The pattern of formal observations clearly outlines teacher strengths by providing quantifiable information such as "each time a volunteer was asked to read, at least 10 hands were raised." These observations capture implementation of the instructional shifts such as requiring students to cite evidence when providing an answer. Next steps include direct suggestions for teachers to use. One example of feedback asked how the use of "cold call" could invite other student voices to share their thoughts during mid-lesson assessment.

- While most observations are informal they are not yet fully aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. However, all observations use low inference data that clearly provide teachers with their strengths, challenges, and next steps. Reports are beginning to articulate clear expectations for teacher practice aligned to the new instructional focus centered on student’s knowing their goals, the use of ongoing lesson assessment and engaging students in academic conversation. While not specifically using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* format, the next steps suggested by the principal are aligned to the domains.