

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2008-2009**

**Kings College School**

**Elementary School 094**

**3530 Kings College Place  
Bronx  
NY 10467**

**Principal: Diane Daprocida**

**Dates of review: March 9 - 10, 2009**  
**Lead Reviewer: Deena Abu-Lughod**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Kings College School is an elementary school with 1048 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 23% Black, 61% Hispanic, 2% White, and 14% Asian students. The student body includes 24% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 91.2%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 77% eligibility.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is underdeveloped with proficient features.**

Capably led by its energetic principal, the school is advancing with a thoughtful strategy to enhance instructional programs and practices to make a clear impact on student achievement. There are reliable and ambitious interim benchmarks for English language arts and math, differentiated by grade and the most important subgroups, which the school monitors regularly. Early indicators confirm that nearly every grade has surpassed these checkpoints in literacy, the area of greatest need, validating the principal's approach and the quality of implementation. The careful review of a wide variety of literacy and math data has resulted in timely adjustments in instruction and staffing to ensure equity. Data is disaggregated for only two subgroups, and systematic data collection and analysis has not yet been extended to other core areas. Art, technology, and numerous staff-led extra-curricular clubs and projects that engage the students in community service, provide students with a well-rounded curriculum.

Teachers work together to develop the general curricular goals and communicate them well to make learning expectations clear to the community. They are enthusiastic about their environment, which allows for meaningful relationships: "I would work with this principal any day of the week. She will work with us and also admit if she's wrong." Students are beginning to reflect on their own work and to use checklists and rubrics in some classes. They have not formalized specific goals so that they and their caregivers can work towards achieving them in ways that are more deliberate. The school affords families monthly opportunities to learn about assessment results and instructional strategies, and is looking into ways to accommodate working parents and speakers of languages other than English and Spanish. There is variation however in the frequency and nature of teacher communication with parents about individual student progress and how parents can help.

The leadership builds capacity through professional development that encourages the reflection, sharing, grade level planning, evaluation and supervision that supports improvement. Teachers have not yet formalized their own growth plans. Uniformly organized classrooms designate areas for student work and are well supplied with libraries, computers and manipulatives. However, lessons are not consistently differentiated, and do not make full use of opportunities to encourage student-to-student interaction. The inquiry team's work on vocabulary development is progressing well. It targets students in an integrated co-teaching class so that it can better monitor effectiveness and engage teachers closely. Team members are sharing their learning with teachers at two grade levels and are creating conditions for the successful extension of their findings.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Thorough systems are in place to analyze and monitor grade and subgroup benchmarks in literacy and math, enabling the school to evaluate and adapt its instructional programs and to reassign resources as necessary.
- Leaders and faculty collaborate to set general bi-monthly curricular goals and create action plans in all core areas, and they communicate these goals to parents.
- The curriculum is based on the standards, and is well supported with materials and, in many subjects, with pacing guides, instructional calendars and progress monitoring points.
- Professional development aligns with teacher needs, with good opportunities for teachers to reflect on practice and extend their learning to each other.
- The leadership's concern with building community and support for students' academic, social and emotional growth has led to intensified efforts to reach out to families and the creation of an extensive buddy system.

### What the school needs to improve

- Extend the excellent benchmarking systems in reading and math to analyze data for all subjects and subgroups, including gender and ethnicity.
- Use the rich, formative data to involve students in identifying specific next steps that are sensitive to their own points-of-entry, and share strategies and tools with them and their families to achieve them.
- Promote greater consistency in differentiated instruction so that lessons are sufficiently scaffolded and generate more opportunities for student-to-student interaction.
- Formalize teacher's professional growth plans so that they can apply measurable quality criteria to monitor their own progress in implementing the new strategies that support different kinds of learners.
- Deepen efforts to involve families in the development and evaluation of school plans and their own children's academic achievement.

## Part 3: Main Findings

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

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.**

**This area of the school's work is underdeveloped, with proficient features.**

The collection of achievement data by student and grade in literacy and math is frequent, thorough and systematic, and is disaggregated for English language learners and students with IEPs. In kindergarten, the school notes student readiness, and includes students who lack pre-school skills in the morning support programs to ensure a good start for all. Teachers gather a range of summative, periodic and formative data in literacy and math so that they can identify individual strengths and use this information to form homogeneous and heterogeneous groups as needed. Some teachers use informal approaches, incorporating their findings in lesson plans. However, others use templates to group students after conducting item analyses, a good practice they are beginning to share with others to better organize their work and improve student progress. Teacher assessment binders have cover sheets that summarize the results. These are submitted to coaches and assistant principals who use the information for planning and evaluation. Science teachers also collect individual student data. These good practices do not yet extend to all other subjects to ensure high student outcomes in all areas. Levels on the State assessment for English language learners are used for grouping, but the school has not yet planned specialized support for the subset of students who have remained at the advanced level for several years.

The school records some data electronically, but is not yet able to connect student outcomes efficiently across subjects and programs with attendance and biographical indicators. Data is not disaggregated by gender or ethnicity, where there are observable differences in outcomes. The school is trying to develop the technical skills to use the progress report data to measure gains of individual students and subgroups for more rigorous evaluation and planning. The school leadership presents information on overall student performance and progress periodically at parent meetings, but has not yet developed a system to help students and their families track their own progress.

**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 underdeveloped with proficient features.**

A thoughtful review of data, which coaches aggregate from the teachers' on-going assessments, is synthesized by the school leadership prior to the development of the Comprehensive Education Plan. Thus, the plan accurately reflects the needs of the school at every level. Collaborative reflection with staff generates meaningful action steps, which they re-evaluate and revise during the year. These well-established procedures for involving faculty in school planning are not yet fully extended to parents, who would like to collaborate more in the development and revision of school plans.

General curricular goals exist for all subject areas by grade, which the school communicates to parents through a bi-monthly newsletter and posts publicly to raise awareness. Students reflect on their work at the end of each unit using suitable rubrics and are motivated to meet the book challenges. They are not yet involved in specific goal setting so many find it difficult to identify the next steps that they and their caregivers can work towards. The school has high expectations by hoping for a 10-point increase in the percentage of proficient students in literacy and a five-point increase in math, and preliminary data indicates that these will be attained. However, some subgroups are not meeting their goals, as the monitoring checkpoints are not appropriate for lower-achieving students.

Teachers conference frequently with their students to review their progress in literacy and math. Their reporting of student progress to families is however less consistent. Some use homework notebooks effectively to report weekly progress while others communicate with parents only when students are having difficulty. Many parents do not attend parent-teacher conferences so the school reaches out to them by phone and invites them to events, to volunteer and join committees. Caregivers value the support from the school to improve leisure reading, and attendance at workshops on reading strategies and pre-school story telling has increased. The school is now looking at ways to accommodate working parents and to assist parents who do not speak English or Spanish. The school rewards excellent attendance for individuals and classes as part of its improvement plan.

**Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

Students receive a broad, standards-based curriculum, including art, which is supported in literacy, math and science with pacing calendars and collaboratively developed curriculum maps. Teachers have been "on their own" for delivering social studies instruction, and curriculum development in this area is a priority for the upcoming year. To address the school-wide need to build a firm base for literacy, the school adopted a published program from kindergarten through grade 3, where students work across grades so that each student receives the right level of instruction. Students clearly enjoy the program, and the data shows that it is having a positive impact. Struggling students receive a "double-dose" in a push-in program to maximize time on task and raise achievement. The school now has a number of extracurricular clubs, such as the STEP team, basketball, chess and art. Organizational decisions address the needs of students at different levels, using suitable interventions, such as Wilson and Sidewalks, assessments in Spanish and the flexible use of support services and extended day programs.

Efforts to differentiate in literacy and math are evident in the use of leveled books, flexible groups, charts providing additional academic and enrichment options for students who complete their work early, but these good practices do not extend to all core areas. Some teachers make special efforts to help students with low reading skills access the curriculum by reading aloud to them. However, there is little consistency across subjects in scaffolding for English language learners and student-to-student interactions in daily lessons are infrequent. The kindergarten annex stands out as a celebratory environment of active learning. There are very high expectations of what even the youngest students can master, such as conducting internet research on

butterflies. A school wide citizenship curriculum reinforces community building as students evaluate such concepts as responsibility, respect for oneself and of others and fairness, probing how “fair is not always equal”, in both family and societal settings.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The school leadership knows staff well and finds the most suitable assignments to capitalize on each teacher’s strengths. It provides valuable support to extend teachers’ experience, and for those who have taken new assignments. Classroom visits are frequent, with supervisors using checklists for informal monitoring and formal observations. Consultants are used effectively to support teachers’ particular needs by conducting model lessons and pre- and post-conferences. Because the principal is clear about high quality instruction and evaluates instructional practice well, she prioritizes strengths and areas for growth during specific teacher feedback. There are concerted efforts to enhance teaching skills by selecting high impact strategies for school-wide implementation, such as shared reading and using graphic organizers, and there are plans to develop teacher expertise in integrating instructional technology to make better use of installed capacity. Professional development is tailored carefully towards specific needs. New teachers receive support in classroom management and active learning while more experienced teachers are evaluated using more sophisticated criteria. Within the positive picture, teachers do not yet formalize their growth plans, especially in some cluster areas, to identify their accomplishments as well as their areas for improvement.

Teachers are actively encouraged to improve instruction. A number are receiving training to enhance support for English language learners and some attend conferences to develop leadership roles. There are clear expectations that these opportunities should improve standards across the school, so training is spread during weekly common planning periods. The inquiry team is diligent in its work, spearheading research and implementation of vocabulary building strategies. Working with both general education students and students with IEPs, it aims to find the most effective strategies to extend school-wide. The guidance plan includes peer mediation so that students know who to go to for support. The school helps families connect with external support programs, and even offers at home tutoring through its contracted supplemental education services provider. A new child-mentoring program provides staff ‘buddies’ for nearly ten percent of the students and is a support for their socio-emotional development.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 proficient.**

The school is self-reflective and uses the data it generates conscientiously to make decisions that will improve student outcomes, evaluate the effectiveness of procedures and to extend good practice. The successful implementation of published programs in literacy and the training of additional teachers demonstrates the school’s potential to achieve its objectives. The school established an excellent benchmarking system this year. By correlating reading and writing results with performance levels, the school

compares this year's achievement levels against the previous year by grade and subgroup. This leads to high goals being set meaningfully for the incoming students and allows the school to use reliable measures to gauge its interim progress. Preliminary data is confirming significant improvement over last year. Science teachers are collecting student-level data carefully so that they can extend this effective system of progress monitoring next year.

Many staff members are skilled at conferencing to identify their students' needs and they regularly reflect on their own practice. Although teachers actively seek and obtain necessary supports, they have not yet formalized their individual professional growth plans. Weekly meetings allow teachers, coaches and supervisors to review and document progress of students and faculty, and the leadership reviews the Comprehensive Educational Plan regularly. Monitoring procedures at the classroom level are less refined. For example, while literacy teachers use rubrics to keep track of student achievement on multiple qualities of writing, the comments on student writing do not always focus on the most meaningful areas for improvement, and there is no system for measuring progress on specific qualities from task to task to enable more deliberate planning. Because of this, students are less able to focus their efforts to enjoy observing how they are improving and why. Nevertheless, there is a clear sense of direction at the school, guided by the scrutiny of multiple sources of data. The school's focused approach has generated impressive improvements this year, and the self evaluation provides an honest and accurate picture of the school's progress and its priorities for the future.

# School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

|  |   |          |          |   |
|--|---|----------|----------|---|
| <b>School name: Kings College School</b>   | △ | ➤        | ✓        | + |
| <b>Overall QR Score</b>  |   | <b>X</b> |          |   |
| <b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.</b>      |   |          |          |   |
| <i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>   | △ | ➤        | ✓        | + |
| 1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?  |   |          | <b>X</b> |   |
| 1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?   |   | <b>X</b> |          |   |
| 1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?  |   |          | <b>X</b> |   |
| 1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress? |   | <b>X</b> |          |   |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>   |   | <b>X</b> |          |   |
| <b>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.</b>  |   |          |          |   |
| <i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>   | △ | ➤        | ✓        | + |
| 2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?             |   | <b>X</b> |          |   |
| 2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?  |   | <b>X</b> |          |   |
| 2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?  |   |          | <b>X</b> |   |
| 2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?   |   |          | <b>X</b> |   |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>   |   | <b>X</b> |          |   |

## DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYQ, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

| <b>Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.</b>   |                       |   |  |   |                   |   |                       |
|--|-----------------------|---|--|---|-------------------|---|-----------------------|
| <i>To what extent do ...</i>   | △                     | ➤ | ✓  | + |                   |   |                       |
| 3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?   |                       |   | X  |   |                   |   |                       |
| 3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?  |                       | X |  |   |                   |   |                       |
| 3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?  |                       |   | X  |   |                   |   |                       |
| 3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?   |                       |   | X  |   |                   |   |                       |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>   |                       |   | X  |   |                   |   |                       |
| <b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.</b>   |                       |   |  |   |                   |   |                       |
| <i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>   | △                     | ➤ | ✓  | + |                   |   |                       |
| 4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?  |                       |   | X  |   |                   |   |                       |
| 4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning? |                       |   | X  |   |                   |   |                       |
| 4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?   |                       |   | X  |   |                   |   |                       |
| 4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations 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 each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>  |                       |   |  |   |                   |   |                       |
| <i>To what extent do...</i>  | △                     | ➤ | ✓  | + |                   |   |                       |
| 5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?   |                       | X |  |   |                   |   |                       |
| 5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?  |                       |   | X  |   |                   |   |                       |
| 5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?   |                       |   | X  |   |                   |   |                       |
| 5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?   |                       |   | 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> |