

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**Kingsbridge International High School**

**High School 268  
2780 Reservoir Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10468**

**Principal: Ronald E Newlon**

**Dates of review: December 8 – 9, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Alvin Jeffs**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Kingsbridge International High School is a high school with 441 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 11% Black, 82% Hispanic, 3% White and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 100% English language learners and no 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 85%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 87% eligibility.

June 2009 will see the first cohort of students graduate. Although the main body of students is Spanish speaking, there are well over a dozen languages within the school, including Albanian, Vietnamese and Japanese. At least 85% of each year's intake is assessed as "beginner" level on the State's English as a second language assessment. The large majority of students are new to this country and about a third of all students have suffered disrupted schooling prior to arrival at PS 268.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

Kingsbridge International High School has a vision. It seeks to turn all of its students into fluent English language speakers and simultaneously set them on the path to high achievement in the Regent's examinations. It has been remarkably successful in attaining both of these goals. A combination of skilled teaching and strategic planning means that all students are provided with a rich and challenging learning environment. Individual students benefit from teachers who know them well, use achievement data to plan their lessons and who consult with them on a very regular basis. The vast majority of lessons are well differentiated. This demonstrates itself in the widespread use of parallel texts to allow reading to take place at different levels of complexity. It is also apparent in the way all staff use language well to clarify concepts for new students and questions that challenge students of all abilities appropriately.

The principal's vision has also been to involve all staff in the direction the school should take. This "participatory management" means that, through regular and well led grade and subject meetings, all staff have a say in the development of the curriculum, scheduling and programs for individual students. Because of the sensitive way in which this has been encouraged, there is a very strong culture of trust and respect between staff. This, in turn, transfers well to students whose self-esteem grows very quickly upon entry to the school. Because the school is only a little over three years old, a number of very sensible procedures and practices that have been put in place have not yet had time to become an established part of everyday practice. Thus, although assessment is a strength within most classes, a few teachers do not yet use the data gained rigorously in setting goals with students. Similarly, there are very good techniques throughout the school for teaching reading and writing across the curriculum but staff are only just beginning to share good practice in this area. Information is shared well with students and parents, but new technology programs to make data more accessible are only just being introduced and the impact has not yet been monitored. Strategic goals are clear with rigorous timeframes, but not all plans within the school are well structured.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has a clear vision for developing independent learners that the administration has backed well with resources, imaginative scheduling and explicitly high expectations for all students.
- A strong culture of respect pervades the school and means that all students, particularly those with limited proficiency in English, acquire self-esteem very quickly.
- Consultation with students and their families about progress and performance is very regular and this makes a positive contribution to the good achievement levels.
- Differentiation is established in most classes, with careful attention to students' language levels, the readability of texts and the very individualized use of questions.
- Collaboration is excellent at all levels, contributing successfully to the sharing of good practice and building on strong partnerships outside of the school.
- The principal has successfully developed participatory management to the point where all staff feel responsible for the achievement of strategic as well as grade and learning goals.

### What the school needs to improve

- Implement the current technology policy to increase student and parental access to individual data and targets.
- Ensure that all goals within the school have clear review points to ensure their regular evaluation and amendment.
- Further strengthen those aspects of the professional development program that seek to enlarge teachers' repertoire of assessment and goal-setting skills.
- Further assist the development of literacy skills by strengthening the teaching of reading and writing in all subjects.

## 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 proficient.**

The collection of data allows everyone within the school to develop quickly a good understanding of each student. A major challenge is the lack of data available for most of the students upon entry to the school. This means that the school has to develop a baseline for each student using its own resources. It does this by using the ACUITY assessment and a range of predictive tests that produce a profile of basic language skills. Teachers build upon this using their own classroom tests and observations. The administration has introduced a powerful data analysis tool in the form of the computer program "Power School" and teachers report that they are now able to access and use the widest possible range of achievement data in planning lessons and identifying suitable groupings for students. The school is effective in using data to analyze the performance of each of the many ethnic groupings. The slower progress made by Hispanic boys has led to the development of a boys' club to engage boys in the writing process. Data is now being evaluated to examine more closely the performance of the three sub-groups that comprise African students.

Students and parents report that they discuss the available data regularly with each subject teacher and always see how present performance can be improved and difficulties addressed. For students, this is a regular feature in all core subjects. Teachers use a variety of ways to generate discussion, including the use of SMARTboard technology to display grids, graphs and samples of work. Sometimes the discussion takes place in a one-on-one setting, sometimes with a small group. The school's strategic investment in technology and software means that it is now developing ways in which parents and students can access data with a simple password. However, the rate of introduction of these programs is not yet rapid enough to ensure the fullest involvement of students' families in their academic 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 proficient.**

The school has the highest expectations of students and conveys these in many ways. This is apparent from the insistence on the use of English within many classes to the large amounts of time teachers give to discuss work and targets with individual students. The small size of the school has meant that staff are able to collaborate and share information as a whole faculty at their daily meetings. As the school has grown, grade meetings have taken on increasing importance. These provide the opportunity for all teachers within a single grade to meet and discuss classes and individual students. The

meetings usually relate to attendance, work habits and behavior. The importance of these meetings is emphasized by the growing practice of individual grade teams calling in students and parents to discuss issues in the presence of every teacher who works with a student. It is clear from the details of these meetings that this process conveys two messages. Firstly, all of the staff are interested in a student's progress. Secondly, there is an urgency communicated to parents that students need to take their work seriously if they want to graduate. Teachers also meet in subject departments, where curriculum issues and academic performance are discussed. These meetings allow the sharing of good practice and contribute to the growing continuity within a subject area over the four years of a student's life at the school. They also provide opportunities for teachers to discuss the "soft" data collected in the form of portfolios of student work.

It is an indication of the success of the principal's plans for the widest possible staff participation that these meetings are taking on increasing importance. The administration has modeled a rigorous way of working through its development of the Comprehensive Educational Plan. This involves consultation with every teacher and those parents in the Parent Teacher Association. Strategic goals, such as increasing the amount of differentiation, have a clear timeframe and specific points at which the goal will be reviewed. This level of rigor is being adopted within many teams. However, there are still occasions when plans are not time-limited or lack interim benchmarks, which prevent staff from evaluating how much progress is being made.

**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 well developed.**

The close collaboration evident within grade and subject team meetings is just one example of the powerful culture of trust that pervades the school. This means that teachers are very willing to share ideas and information. It is also reflected in the classroom where students are willing to contribute even when their proficiency in English is limited. "I can say things without anyone laughing at me." is one comment that conveys the security felt by many potentially vulnerable students.

One way in which students recognize teachers' interest in them is the prevalent culture of differentiation within classrooms. This is a school where teachers actively seek to make their English as clear as possible and their phrasing appropriate for each student. They also take a lot of trouble to devise assignments within class that relate to the many achievement levels of students. This is most evident in the way that many classes have access to parallel texts. Thus, within a classroom, students will often be able to work from books with varying levels of difficulty. Within science, and other subjects, many topics are dealt with by the use of worksheets that have three different readability levels carefully matched to students' level of understanding.

The curriculum is aligned to State standards. It is also enriched by a wide variety of visits and trips. Thus, work on American history is strengthened by a visit to the Statue of Liberty. Within school, close linkages between English language arts and social studies mean that subjects such as global history assist in the development of language, reading and writing skills. Many subject areas show a real sense of purpose in developing literacy skills relating to specialist vocabulary or styles of reporting. However, some subject teachers fail to ensure that literacy skills are reinforced in all subjects.

The rich curriculum and effective differentiation are supported effectively by the school's strategic use of its budget, hiring and scheduling. The creation of a data specialist post supports all staff in their use of assessment in planning. The block scheduling of subjects has allowed departments to work more easily with different levels of achievement at the same time. In addition, the funding of extra reading books, graphic calculators and science equipment enriches the classroom experience for all students.

**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 well developed.**

The professional development program supports the strategic goals that the school has identified. The plan comprises a number of strong elements. Classroom observations by assistant principals focus on the California Teaching Standards, which have been discussed intensively by staff at a number of meetings. The feedback from these observations provides a personalized program of development for each teacher. This, in turn, leads to opportunities for staff to observe each other, to work with a "Learning Matters" coach and possibly attend external training sessions with the Teachers' College.

There are two overarching purposes to the observations and the individual programs of training and support. The first is to develop in staff the key skills of differentiation and data usage. Secondly, these programs are designed to assist staff in aspects of teaching that are important to them personally. For example, work to develop skills with the SMARTboard has been a major initiative in recent months. This development has had a significantly positive impact on the engagement of students in classrooms using this technology.

The development of Inquiry Teams is yet another vehicle for staff development. The math department's Inquiry Team was very successful in improving the performance of students in 2007 - 08. Its work is now being replicated by teachers of English language arts and social studies. By developing small class opportunities for students who have not gained Regents, staff are identifying techniques that aid the speed and accuracy with which students use written information. The secondary aim of the work is "to make every teacher an Inquiry Team member" and develop reflective practice within the classroom.

The school has also developed an exceptionally strong network of partnerships that support students' academic and personal goals. Work with the Human Rights Commission has produced an effective peer mediation scheme. The Good Shepherd organization provides very effective counseling. Both have assisted in the improvement of behavior within the school. Work with Lehmann College has provided opportunities for higher achieving students to be challenged within the English language arts curriculum.

**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 vision of PS 268 is clear and powerful. It relates to ensuring the highest possible student achievement and the growth of skills that will assist students develop successful careers. It is the basis of every teacher-student conference and every parent meeting. It underlies strategic goals such as the improvement of student writing and the development of after-school and Saturday enrichment sessions. Above all, it provides motivation and immediacy for staff.

In its overview of the Comprehensive Educational Plan, the cabinet has been rigorous in using data to identify major areas for development, set measurable goals and include interim checkpoints for review and analysis of progress. This rigor has contributed significantly to the success of common planning times, the growth of intervisitations and the development of technological skills. There is a similar thoroughness in the identification of goals with students in classrooms. While much of the school's planning techniques have been replicated in grade and subject meetings, there is not yet the same stringency at every level. The school does not yet have clear timeframes, responsibilities and evaluation points for all of its developments.

A second major strand of the vision, but equally important, is the development of management involvement by all staff. This is another success. Staff attest to the fact that "the principal always asks us for decisions on the full range of issues". The purpose of this approach is to ensure that the school works well without a figurehead. It has enabled all staff to feel that they have a very real stake in the school's development. This empowering of staff has been as successful as self-assessment has been in making students reflective learners.

# School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: Kingsbridge International High 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>				<b>X</b>			
<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>				<b>X</b>			
<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>				<b>X</b>			
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed