



Quality Review Report
Division of Accountability and Achievement Resources
2009-2010

Quality Review Report

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Khalil Gibran International Academy

Middle School 592

**50 Navy Street
Brooklyn
NY 11201**

Principal: Holly Anne Reichert

Dates of review: December 7 - 8, 2009

Lead Reviewer: James Machen

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Khalil Gibran International Academy is a middle school with 115 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 77% Black, 6% Hispanic, 10% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 61% of the students enrolled and girls account for 39%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008-2009 was 87.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The Khalil Gibran International Academy expanded to include grade 8 students this year and will expand to include grade 9 in 2010. The school has a vision to provide a high-quality education for the Navy Yard area and the Arab community of Brooklyn by building an inclusive school that serves all middle school age groups. It has recently hired several new teachers as the school continues to expand and works successfully to create a team of staff that is fully committed to that vision.

Collaborative team teaching and the many opportunities for grade teams to work together have created a staff with a high degree of professional trust in each other. Good relationships with the school's leaders help secure the school's continued development. The school's interdisciplinary approach to learning provides a challenging and motivating curriculum. Students value the support and individual help they receive from their teachers, and enjoy the variety of learning activities this approach brings. Most teachers use assessment data well to understand students' achievements and provide differentiated instruction to meet their learning needs. In some subjects, the school has a clear view of the progress made by different groups of students and the grade as a whole, but this does not yet extend to all subjects in all grades.

Student group goals in some subjects are highly individual and motivate students well. The involvement of students in creating and reviewing these goals is not consistent across all subjects and grades. However, the school makes very good use of the workshop model, "Understanding by Design" and consistent templates to support its students and their families. Parents value the support they receive from the school, although this does not always equate to significant parental turn out at many of the school monthly functions or extend to an understanding of the high expectations the school has of its students. These high expectations are known well by staff. They stem from the school's vision and from effective professional development that focuses on providing teachers with the necessary skills to work in a collaborative and inclusive school. Currently, there is no yearly professional development plan that aligns with the whole school and individual teacher goals.

Regular review of assessment data keeps a check on the progress of individual students, although the school has not yet put in place a full range of progress measures to take a management-level view of the school's performance and the progress of different groups. The school is highly reflective and understands its strengths and areas for development well. Its plans, however, lack the timeframes and interim goals to allow the school to be more systematic in its review processes.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Staff gather a range of relevant data across all subjects to understand student performance and regularly collaborate to identify trends and modify practice.
 - School leaders and teachers have a good understanding of the achievement and progress of their students. They use a well-organized data room containing detailed records that enable the school to keep track of student progress. Teachers use this data to understand the detailed learning needs of individual and groups of students. Many teachers use diagnostic assessments very early in the school year to ensure that they can do this as quickly as possible.
 - Teachers in all middle grades ensure the school supplements State tests with its own assessments. As a formative assessment, for example, it uses a New Visions data resource tool to measure achievement and student growth as the year moves on.

- Teachers frequently observe each other's teaching and support colleagues in the classroom.
 - The school shares the wealth of data and instructional strategies held by individual teachers through a collaborative process. For example, the use of collaborative visitation opportunities throughout the school gives the added advantage of frequent discussion through the lenses of most teachers, which often brings an even more detailed analysis of a specific area of work.

- Teachers work collaboratively and have numerous opportunities to share ideas and good practice to improve student learning.
 - The school's team-teaching arrangements have resulted in considerable collaborative work between pairs of classroom teachers. Professional development on the range of collaborative approaches available has supported staff well in identifying the most appropriate model to use in different circumstances and in planning jointly to make best use of teachers' strengths.
 - Professional development at the school is a priority and supported by group and individual meetings with the administration based on current and relevant data.

- The school curriculum, youth development and extension activities create a wide range of opportunities for students to grow academically and socially.
 - The school's use of the "Understanding by Design" curriculum approach and its consistent templates to create units of study has led to very creative curriculum maps. These both derive from the State standards and reflect the use of interdisciplinary approaches to challenge students academically and socially. Students value the individual support they receive from their teachers.

- The inclusion model of the school is proving beneficial for all students, but especially special education students.
 - Teachers and administrators collect and carefully review student work and use it to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at grade and individual teacher level. This enables teachers to focus more on the needs of individual students.
 - Core subject teachers meet frequently to review and design detailed assessments in all subjects. These reviews and assessments enable teachers to quickly diagnosis and respond to students' learning needs.

- The school is providing some well-focused professional development, well informed by whole school and individual needs.
 - The school effectively uses the observation process, one-on-one planning with the assistant principal and student data, to prepare individualized professional development plans for all teachers. The empowerment of teachers to have a significant input into their own professional development plans results in the delivery of more effective instructional practices.
 - The school consistently monitors individualized professional development plans and revises them as necessary based upon observations, individualized conferences, and student interim outcomes.

Areas for improvement

- Implement a yearly professional development plan that aligns with whole school and individual teacher goals and ensure the introduction of rigorous monitoring procedures to evaluate the impact on student achievement.
 - The principal and leadership team provide an extensive professional development calendar. However, there is no formal yearly learning plan established to set goals for the professional growth of individual teachers and provide formal feedback and goals based upon observations, student work, teacher reflections, student outcomes and school goals. The school evaluates itself and teacher needs well and has a sense of direction for the long term. Yet, at the classroom level, there is no clear definition of all the professional development needs.
 - The teachers meet frequently in department and grade level groups. However, the present meeting structure does not utilize methodology that contributes to the identification of evidenced based strategies for all teachers. Therefore, not all teachers participate in and benefit from the professional development on offer.

- Include measurable outcomes and interim checkpoints in all goals across the school to monitor progress and align instructional resources and strategies.
 - The school is beginning to set up timeframes and interim goals as a way of measuring and improving student performance and progress, as well as the quality and the impact on instruction. The teachers receive good support from the administrative team in the collaborative planning time. However, all teachers do not yet adjust their teaching to meet the needs of high achievers

as identified through different assessments. Teachers do not own this process yet.

- There is work to do to align all school resources with improved student outcomes. The school is not yet systemic in the strategic use of resources based on all assessment data to adjust organizational decisions.
- Refine instructional and organizational planning by developing structures and systems to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school to ensure that monitoring and evaluation focus more precisely on school wide needs.
 - The creation of a school for all grades from 6 through 12 fits well within the school's longer-term vision to improve education in the local community. Faculty subscribes fully to this vision and contributes to its realization with enthusiasm. The school's annual review processes are secure. However, the school's action plans do not yet include timeframes and interim goals that would allow the school to make systematic and regular checks on improving of coherence, policies and practices and make strategic adjustments as needed.
 - The principal and leadership team collect summative data and analyze periodic data on a regular basis to gauge the progress of students. This process does not extend to all core subject areas. The school has begun to share the thinking for a school-wide action plan, but to date the monitoring of progress in achieving these goals is in early stages of development. The school is not yet systemic or departmental in the strategic use of interim goals for monitoring progress towards reaching the agreed long-term goals.
- Extend the ways that the principal and faculty can engage parents in formal conversations about academic expectations and goals that are being set for their child and how they can support them at home.
 - The school works tirelessly to provide parents with opportunities to communicate information about the learning needs of their children through parent-teacher association meetings, workshops and formal and informal conversations. It communicates to families about student progress through report cards, parent teacher conferences and sends a progress report home prior to the report card. However, there are limited parenting support strategies and the attendance remains very low at many of these events.
 - The school's parent engagement plan has limited opportunities for staff, students and parents to work more closely together. This restricts the chance for parents to become an active and meaningful part of the school community.

School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

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

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.

<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of its future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X	
3.2 Use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X	
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			X	
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X	
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X	
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X	

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

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?		X		
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?		X		
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?		X		
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X		

Quality Review Scoring Key

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