

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

John F. Kennedy High School

High School 475

99 Terrace View Avenue

Bronx

NY 10463

Principal: Anthony Rotunno

Dates of review: March 8 - 9, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Kathleen Tuttle

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

John F. Kennedy is a high school with 1,699 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 30% Black, 65% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 3% White students. The student body includes 24% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 65% of the students enrolled and girls account for 35%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 82.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Kennedy High School has undergone a major reform that has led to a safe and positive environment for learning. Parents are a strong component of the school's core belief system and the good communication systems in place ensure clear expectations for both parents and students. Progress toward the four-year graduation rate has increased dramatically for special education students and English language learners enrolled in the second year of the school's Bronx Digital Academy. This has four small learning communities focusing on career development. The courses of engineering, business, entrepreneurship, digital video production and graphic design, are creating enthusiasm with students, teachers and administrators. Due to the school's internal capacity to support students and their families through their academic and social emotional growth, students are already considering their college options based on their interests generated from their learning. As a result, the school is transforming into a highly desirable educational choice for students in the Bronx.

The school routinely analyzes a variety of data sources to develop an updated picture of student achievement. Summative and formative assessments inform budgetary and instructional decisions. Teacher teams discuss student work and common assessments. While teachers use information to alter the curriculum and lesson planning, the school does not use the information to set student goals or to change teacher practice.

Students are interested in their class work and use rubrics to guide their work. While some teachers provide feedback on student work, they do not consistently give clear next steps to direct the student's revision or enable parents to provide additional support. Students are unaware of the tools available to self-assess their work, which results in a reliance on teachers to inform students of missing assignments and grades.

The school has school-wide goals based on their data from Regents, scholarship reports, and Periodic Assessments. Leaders review this data frequently throughout the year to evaluate curricular and instructional decisions. However, the school does not have a written action plan delineating long-term and interim-academic benchmark goals or a professional development plan. This results in the lack of a coherent school-wide effort and an accurate assessment of on-going capacity building. The lack of clear structures to evaluate instructional and planning systems does not allow for the effective assessment of classroom, curricular and organizational decisions.

What the school does well

- The school's systems and partnerships support students and their families in continual learning and promote students' personal growth and development.
 - All staff contribute to the mental model shared by students and their parents of attending higher education. A dedicated college counselor, through the college acceptance process, works with students and families from the freshmen year through graduation. The school holds workshops on Saturdays for parents and students for every aspect of the college process. This is resulting in a yearly increase of students entering higher education.
 - A guidance counselor is dedicated to each cohort and pays close attention to students and their families leading to a high level of personalization of support services. Counselors access many internal and external resources for continuous academic and social emotional support, resulting in two additional credits for students in the lowest third in Regents math.
- The administration along with in-put from staff and parents makes effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support student achievement.
 - The school's goals prompted expansion of the collaborative team teaching model for special education students and beginning English language learners in order to support students' learning needs and increase their chances of earning a Regents diploma. As a result, students' attitudes are becoming more positive about learning and they feel included in the school.
 - As part of the restructuring plan, the school is dividing into small learning communities phasing in the Bronx Digital Academy, which will expand yearly until the current school phases out. School leaders work successfully to secure multiple grants and outside funding to purchase computer, video and film equipment to support the mission of the school.
- School leaders, faculty and other staff, consistently communicate high expectations to students and families who they keep well informed of school programs and their child's needs.
 - The school demonstrates the importance of parent involvement by involving them in school leadership meetings, monthly parent meetings and the two-way communication through the parent coordinator. Parents have input into the school goals as well as the action plan to realize the goals, during the school leadership meetings.
 - Guidance counselors and administrators meet with each cohort in September to set the expectations for behavior and credit accumulation. Students and parents agree the school monitors students' grades and responds quickly to support student needs so they stay on track. This has resulted in increased credit accumulation for grade 9 students from 28% in 2007 to 63% in 2009.
- The school is a safe place where students are engaged in learning and appreciate the high level of support they receive for their academic achievement.

- Students link their increased academic success in school to feeling safe and supported because of the dedication of all the adults in the building. “We are a family” was a unanimous response from students. Students credit the after school tutoring options and the variety of clubs and sports for keeping them motivated to excel in school.
- Students grasp the concept that learning is their first priority at school. They recognize that teachers set clear expectations and link their content into real world experiences as observed in a geometry class as students used architectural pictures to identify the use of angles.
- Leaders and teachers gather a wide range of relevant data across subjects to understand individual student and cohort performance, progress, and learning needs.
 - School leaders and faculty gather and analyze a range of summative and Periodic Assessment data, that informs school goal setting and programming needs. Since the school did not make adequate yearly progress in English language arts, it hired additional English teachers and an assistant principal for special education to strengthen the programs. Early scholarship data indicates a higher percentage of students are passing their classes.
 - Teacher teams are working in their small learning communities to review data from common assessments to revise curriculum maps and daily lesson plans. Data from the Regents indicated students were not receiving full credit on the writing portion of the history exams. This led some teams to an interdisciplinary approach to improve writing skills, where English and history teachers collaborate on the content and skills and finally they produce a movie of their learning in the digital media class.
- Effective response and monitoring systems promote ongoing analysis of curriculum and organizational decisions towards meeting school goals.
 - Analysis of the scholarship reports over time led the school to begin implementation of advance placement courses to challenge higher achieving students. This practice is allowing students to enter college with credit accumulation towards their freshman year.
 - A weekly meeting by the cabinet and teacher teams leads to the evaluation and planning of organizational resources in response to student learning needs. Classes receive additional support based on the needs of the student subgroup such as the additional support given for students of other languages.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine action planning by developing timely interim goals and benchmarks to enable the principal and faculty to modify goals and objectives in order to optimize the impact of actions and to celebrate success along the way.
 - The school uses an extensive variety of data for goal setting. It has yet to consistently formalize systems to set measurable, long-term, and interim

goals throughout the year to target effective instruction to meet the needs of all students.

- Teachers lead the professional development during the common planning time. Presently, the school does not have a formal process for evaluating the effectiveness of the professional development or its leadership development opportunities.
- Expand the present data systems for collecting and monitoring data relative to the progress of student achievement in order to ensure the effective use of the information in collaborative inquiry.
 - The school uses annual planning processes such as the Comprehensive Educational Plan. However, it has yet to set interim goals and benchmarks throughout the year to measure school-wide goals for purposes of revision to achieve targets.
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers use common Periodic Assessments to track student progress. However, using the information to adjust plans and goals for student subgroups during the course of the year is not a consistent practice.
- Expand the use of data analysis to evaluate and revise, as needed, the processes and programs within the school that lead to effective professional collaboration.
 - Teachers have autonomy to develop programs and new courses for the school, which allows them to take a leadership role in school improvement. However, there is no consistent system to evaluate the impact of the leadership development opportunities.
 - The majority of teachers are members of teacher teams for their small learning community. Since this is a new practice, the school has not yet developed an evaluation tool to measure teacher team effectiveness.
- Formalize a collaborative approach across all subjects to help in setting improvement goals for student subgroups based on benchmark data to enable students to self-assess and raise their achievement.
 - Teacher teams use a tuning protocol to review student work and discuss targeted students. They use their findings to revise their planning but do not share the measurable goals or next steps with students to increase their level of achievement. Consequently, they rely on teacher feedback to know how they are doing because they are unaware of the tools they can use to self-assess.
 - Teachers agree the common assessments across the school are useful in revision of the curriculum and daily lesson planning. However, the use of the information to set differentiated learning goals for targeted students are not yet evident therefore limiting changes in classroom practice to accelerate student learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: John F. Kennedy High School	Δ	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: 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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and 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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of 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>	△	➤	✓	+			
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>	△	➤	✓	+			
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							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed