

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**Riverdale/Kingsbridge Academy**

**Middle School/High School X141**

**660 West 237<sup>th</sup> Street**

**Bronx**

**NY 10463**

**Principal: Lori O'Mara**

**Dates of review: December 7 – 8, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Sonia Menendez**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Riverdale/Kingsbridge Academy is a middle and high school with 1302 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 13% Black, 49% Hispanic, 26% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 92%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The curriculum offers a wide range of rigorous experiences and course choices that result in high student engagement and active participation.
  - The curriculum is aligned to state standards and designed to provide opportunities for students to engage in problem solving and critical thinking in order to focus on college readiness. Students speak positively about the many advanced placement opportunities offered to them that suitably prepare them for college. Consequently, the school has a 90.3% graduation rate and an excellent college acceptance percentage.
  - All content areas follow the required scope and sequence with detailed curriculum maps using essential questions as a thread across grades and content areas. The school offers a good variety of challenging and mandated advanced placement and elective courses that were designed based on data and student choice. As a result, both high and low achieving students demonstrate an increase of credit accumulation from year to year.
- Budgeting, scheduling and staffing decisions are firmly based on review of relevant data resulting in improved teacher practice to meet student needs.
  - This year assistant principals' roles were redesigned so that one assistant principal in each level oversees the operational responsibilities and another provides better supervision of instruction. As a result, instructional assistant principals spend more time on classroom observations and provide effective and timely feedback to staff.
  - The schedule was revised to better accommodate necessary common planning time. The strategic use of common planning time enables teachers to examine and discuss student work. As a result of the strong teacher collaboration, teachers are sharing effective teaching strategies and participate in intervisitations.
- The use of frequent classroom observations with constructive and immediate feedback, result in improvements in instructional practice.
  - The school gathers information about staff professional needs efficiently through lesson observations, learning walks and analysis of student data. Teachers are afforded frequent opportunities to observe each other at work. As a result, training meets both individual and school needs.
  - Leaders effectively use the information from formal and informal observations, as well as an analysis of student data to create a high quality program of differentiated professional development that includes coaches, consultants and assistant principals. As a result, teachers' level of instructional expertise is increased across the school.
- Teachers share the administration's vision for continuous improvement by actively engaging in teacher teams where inquiry results in adjustments in teacher practice and monitoring of student progress.

- The school has established comprehensive systems to enable staff to meet regularly in teacher teams via content area and across grade levels. Review of student work is at the core of their discussions. As a result, teachers group students based on their needs and provide differentiated interventions via tutorials on specific deficiencies.
- Teacher facilitators lead the conversation in teacher teams supporting distributed leadership structures. Using an inquiry approach, teams brainstorm and implement intervention strategies. Consequently, teachers feel empowered to make key decisions that affect student learning. As a result, students receive effective tutorials to overcome deficient skills as evidenced by a review of student work.
- Parents are key partners in their children's education and are kept well informed of school programs and their child's needs thus impacting positively on student achievement.
  - The school works closely with parents and shares relevant information to encourage good attendance and academic achievement with a focus on future college readiness. Parents cite workshops, curriculum meetings, email communication and other school events as the varied ways in which the school engages parents. Consequently, parents describe a shared commitment to the school's high expectations.
  - Parents speak highly of the quality of the education and care their children receive. The parent coordinator plays an effective and important role in promoting communication with parents. The effective outreach efforts including a monthly newsletter supported by an active parent teacher association and community leaders resulting in good attendance in school sponsored programs.
- School leaders and teachers effectively gather and analyze a wide range of assessment data to monitor student progress, plan instruction and create intervention strategies as needed.
  - An analysis of the recent periodic assessment demonstrated that many students are not making adequate progress in literacy. Consequently, the school reviews the data with staff to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and organizational decisions to better identify needed supports. As a result, students receive targeted tutorials to improve performance.
  - An expert data specialist provides administrators and teachers a detailed report of students' strengths and areas of need using formative and summative data. As a result, the school has a clear picture of the school's strengths and needs highlighting groups of students who need additional attention which leads to targeted instruction addressing gaps.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Align assessments to the school's English language arts curriculum to adjust instructional decisions since students did not make adequate progress as indicated on the current middle school Progress Report.
  - The school administers diagnostic assessments in all content areas periodically to measure student progress. However, the assessments for

English Language Arts in the middle school are not uniformly aligned with the curriculum therefore it is difficult to effectively monitor school wide progress and curricular effectiveness.

- Teachers use the information generated by formative and summative assessments to identify instructional strategies and interventions needed in tutorials. However, there is inconsistent use of the information to differentiate instructional strategies in the classroom. As a result, differentiation continues to be an area that needs further development.
- Deepen the process of evaluating long term strategic planning based on key priorities and specific goals for improvement as a result of data analysis and the expectations of the evolving State standards.
  - The school has identified goals and analyzes data from periodic assessments to identify if students are making progress. However, the impact of this analysis is less secure in making immediate adjustments to the curriculum. As a result, the school tends to be reactive rather than proactive in responding to student learning needs.
  - Periodic assessments demonstrate that many students are not making adequate progress within their classes. The quality of the use of this data is variable according to the skills and expertise of individual teachers and teacher teams. As a result, measuring progress towards the attainment of long term goals is variable and not yet fully realized as part of each planning cycle.
- Refine the goal setting process by developing interim goals and benchmarks so that progress can be effectively measured, adjustments made and success evaluated.
  - Teacher teams meet consistently to analyze classroom data and plan interventions for targeted students. However, the school has not fully linked the work of the English Language Arts team to develop common assessments and amend the curriculum and goals based on where different student subgroups are not performing as well as expected.
  - Although parents feel that they share as key decision makers in the school, feedback to them continues to be variable across the school depending on teachers' chosen mode of communication. Consequently, some students may not receive the full range of parental support they need to improve their performance.
- Promote greater consistency in differentiated instruction so that lessons reflect challenge for all students with multiple entry points.
  - Teachers are keen to provide learning opportunities that lead to raised achievements but planning for differentiation is variable across the school. Lessons lack varied tasks or instructional pedagogy to support lower achieving students. This inconsistent level of differentiation results in lack of multiple entry points for lower achieving students.
  - The school successfully provides challenging courses for students in the Honors program. However, the same level of challenge is not sufficiently evident in non-Honors classes with some lessons being more teacher directed leading to less student interaction. As a result, progress in the middle school is limited.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: Riverdale/Kingsbridge Academy</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			<b>X</b>	

<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	

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			
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>		<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>		
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			
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>