



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

**Kingsborough Early College
Secondary School**

Middle - High School K468

**2630 Benson Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11214**

Principal: Connie Hamilton

**Date of review: May 4, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Marcella Barros**

The School Context

Kingsborough Early College Secondary School is a middle - high school with 1312 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 8% Black, 57% Hispanic, 16% White, and 18% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 96% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.5%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	Focus	Well Developed
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	Additional Findings	Well Developed
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels	Additional Findings	Well Developed
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Celebration	Well Developed
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Additional Findings	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
---------------------------	------------------------------	----------------	-----------------------

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide staff training connected to the elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. School leaders and staff consistently communicate high expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness to students and families.

Impact

High expectations result in a partnership with families that support student progress toward those expectations. Staff training and high expectations has led to a culture of mutual accountability

Supporting Evidence

- Professional development (PD) teams are self-selected and focus on a variety of topics including inquiry, differentiation, college and career readiness, and literacy in the content areas. The topics are informed by needs assessments and teacher feedback surveys and facilitated by lead teachers and teacher volunteers. Conversations with teacher teams demonstrated that teachers find these trainings very helpful and provided examples of PDs they have offered to facilitate.
- School leaders and staff provide early experiences to students in order to communicate academic expectations and prepare them for the next level. Examples of these are a summer bridge program for incoming sixth graders, college activities on the Kingsborough Community College campus, a school advisory program on goal setting and college readiness, and college classes made available once they enter ninth grade.
- Conversations with parents and students demonstrate high expectations connected to college and career. Students stated that conducting research projects in their classes on topics such as, child labor, wind energy, and cyberspace markets help prepare them for independence in college-level work. Several parents stated they have seen a transformation in the academic success of their children compared to their prior schools. Support from various parent academic workshops such as, math and reading skills and frequent communication regarding student progress through Jupiter Grades creates strong partnerships between families and school staff.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-----------------------

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and continue to prioritize the integration of the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

As a result of the school's ongoing effort to continually promote college and career readiness, school leaders and staff have created a coherent curriculum that cognitively challenges schools at all levels, including the highest achieving.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricular documents demonstrates academic tasks that promote college and career readiness for all students. For example a ninth grade research project asks students to choose an inquiry question to research connected to the influence of music. Some examples of inquiry questions include, "How has rock music influenced our culture?; Why do humans love music so much?; Why should we have to pay for music?" Students define an area of investigation, gather and analyze information, draw conclusions and complete an evidence-based essay to answer their inquiry question.
- A lesson plan from a sixth grade mathematics class has students working in mixed ability groups to answer a statistical question by calculating the mean of a data set gathered from peers. For example, "What is the average height of female students in the class?" The task requires groups to create their own statistical question, survey the class to gather data, calculate the mean of their data set, and make observations based on the data to share with the whole class. Students who were more advanced could demonstrate how mean could be applied to more complex real world situations.
- Curricular maps and unit plans demonstrate evidence of school leaders and faculty building on current best practices around planning and refinement based on student work and data. A unit on statistics includes benchmark standards students should meet during every lesson and a section to track students' progress toward mastery in each benchmark. In addition, students create action plans in response to questions that include, "What benchmarks do you still need to master?; What is your action plan and when is it due?; When would you like to master these benchmarks?" These action plans further inform the refinement of unit plans and academic tasks so that individual and groups of students have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
---------------------------	---------------------	----------------	-----------------------

Findings

Across a vast majority of classrooms, teaching strategies strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports and extensions for all students.

Impact

As a result, students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, in student work products that result in student ownership of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Across a vast majority of classes, teaching practices provide students with high quality supports and extensions to ensure they are cognitively challenged. For example, in an eighth grade algebra class students are converting quadratic equations from vertex form to standard form and vice versa. Students worked in heterogeneous groups of four to complete two out of four questions of their choice and included a written explanation of their solution. When student groups finished they were directed to complete an error analysis with a partner where they described and corrected any errors in finding the vertex of the graph of the function.
- Student work products demonstrate evidence of higher order thinking skills across a vast majority of classrooms. For example, a tenth grade English language arts (ELA) class students were engaged in a “Pitch Party” where students presented research projects on a topic of their choice. One student researched fitness and created a personal training program to gain 15 pounds of lean muscle. Another student researched graphic novels and created a storyboard that she will use to begin writing her own graphic novel. Student audience members prompted presenters with questions using sentence starters provided by the teacher such as, “Can you explain why...How did you decide to...What do you think would happen if..?”
- Across the vast majority of classrooms, student work products demonstrate higher order thinking skills for a diversity of learners. In a US History class, students were exploring Miranda rights and their importance in protecting the rights of the accused. Students jigsawed several court case summaries, including *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966), and considered how the Supreme Court’s decision protects a person accused of a crime. Students worked with partners to discuss the details of the cases and responded to the following prompt, “Why do you think that the Supreme Court established new protections for people accused of crimes in the 1960s and 70s rather than the 1930s and 40s?”

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-----------------------

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers create and use curricular aligned assessment practices that consistently reflect the ongoing use of checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

As a result of these practices, students respond to meaningful feedback and next steps and teachers make effective adjustments that meet all students' learning needs and ensure students are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- In an eighth grade science ELA class, students were prompted to read a text on antioxidants. The teacher modeled the process of annotating text and role-played the discussion protocol with a student. The teacher then checked for understanding during group discussions and provided feedback such as, "Some of you are forgetting to use your coding symbols; this will help you to determine your claim and counterclaim later." Students used the symbols to identify areas of the text they agreed with, disagreed with, considered important, or confusing.
- Across classrooms, students have opportunities to self and/or peer assess in accordance with teacher-created rubrics and assessments aligned with the school's curricula. In a seventh grade ELA class, students wrote argumentative essays on whether school cafeterias should ban junk food. Students used a peer revision checklist that included categories such as, quality of the thesis, use of strong arguments, and suggestions for improvement to provide each other with meaningful feedback. Students then completed a self-reflection to prepare for their next steps in the revision process. Teachers monitor this process to determine ongoing student mastery.
- Teachers' assessment practices reflect varied uses of ongoing checks for understanding to meet student learning needs. In a tenth grade Global History class, students engaged in a whole class discussion on the differences between Martin Luther's goals and German nobilities' goals. The teacher periodically checked for understanding by asking students to self-assess by holding up the number of fingers corresponding to their level of understanding (1 finger=I don't get it at all, 5 fingers=I understand perfectly). The teacher circulated during group work to monitor conversations for errors, as well as check their progress on paraphrasing a few of Martin's 95 Theses. At the close of the lesson, students submitted an exit slip with answers to three Global History Regents questions that connected with the topic.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
---------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------	----------------	-----------------------

Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that promote the implementation of CCLS. Distributed leadership structures are embedded allowing teachers to play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Impact

Professional collaborations have strengthened the instructional capacity of teachers resulting in school-wide instructional coherence and increased achievement for all learners. Effective teacher leadership has positively affected student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- During an inquiry team meeting teachers shared that they participate in self-selected inquiry cycles where they read research about a topic, gather student data that will support their learning, create an implementation plan to track student progress and conduct inter-visitations in order to inform adjustment. Examples of these inquiry cycle topics include active learning, content literacy, college readiness, managing student behavior and assessment.
- Teacher engagement in structured professional collaborations results in strengthened teacher instructional capacity and school-wide instructional coherence. For example, a teacher team focused on differentiation examined the types and frequency of differentiation strategies used across their classes. They realized that there was a lack of differentiation in the actual tasks assigned to students. They collaborated to create student menus for tasks to provide students with more choices to demonstrate their learning. They noticed an increase in the level of student engagement and on-task behaviors.
- Conversations during an ELA team meeting demonstrated embedded teacher leadership through the use of the Tuning Protocol. Teachers discussed their progress with helping students to expand upon their evidence and to support their claims and analysis. The team discussed how much time they spent explicitly teaching *analyzing evidence*, the results of pre-assessments, student struggles with the skill and then examined three samples of student work products from a music research project. They provided each other feedback on how to leverage the students' writing strengths, use sentence starters to increase elaboration, and prompts for discussion.