



**Department of  
Education**

*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Khalil Gibran International Academy**

**High School K592**

**362 Schermerhorn Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11217**

**Principal: Winston Hamann**

**Date of review: April 21, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Mark Ossenheimer**

## The School Context

Khalil Gibran International Academy is a high school with 182 students from grade 9 through grade 11. The school population comprises 47% Black, 6% Hispanic, 28% White, 17% Asian, and 2% other students. The student body includes 36% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 57% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 87.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and promoted the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Distributed leadership structures are embedded so there is effective teacher leadership.

### Impact

There is school wide coherence regarding the instructional focus and shared leadership that results in increased student achievement for all learners, including English language learners (ELLs).

### Supporting Evidence

- Content and special education teachers meet twice weekly across all major subject areas to align classroom instruction to the Common Core and the instructional shifts, as well as plan for multiple entry points for diverse learners. A review of agendas and minutes demonstrates teachers discussing teaching strategies and scaffolds for targeted students regarding Common Core aligned tasks such as using text-based evidence to support claims, and using counter-claims in argumentative writing. The English as a second language (ESL) teacher also co-plans with content general education teachers across departments and then pushes in to support scaffolded tasks, thereby supporting the school's large ELL population access content during instruction.
- The math department participates in the "Accessing Algebra through Inquiry" (a2i) initiative through New Visions for New Schools in conjunction with the Silicon Valley Mathematics Initiative. The math department meets weekly within the school and monthly across the network of 30 schools, to look closely at student work, make instructional decisions and to share successful strategies focused on the Common Core standards and the necessary instructional shifts. For example, in an observed math department meeting, teachers shared best practices and findings connected to the Common Core math standard of attending to precision in communicating math concepts and problem solving to others. Teachers then developed instructional strategies specifically for English language learners and students with disabilities meant to strengthen this skill such as self and peer evaluation, as well as discussion and writing structures/prompts.
- Teachers lead the professional development committee that creates teacher led professional development based on school data and teacher needs that leads to increased instructional capacity. For example, teachers across subjects have developed common strategies to support student achievement such as the discussion structures of Socratic seminar and philosophical chairs. Teachers also hold key leadership positions such as the International Baccalaureate Coordinator, College and Career Readiness Team, Technology Coordinator and the Student Advisory Program pilot.

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

### Findings

Teaching strategies including questioning and scaffolds provide multiple entry points into the curricula across most classrooms so that students engage in meaningful discussion and produce meaningful work products.

### Impact

Teaching practices are aligned with the Danielson Framework for Teaching and students are engaged in challenging tasks, however discussions do not yet reflect student thinking and ownership of learning across the vast majority of classrooms.

### Supporting Evidence

- During a math lesson, differentiated tasks were developed for groups to collaboratively recognize patterns using trinomials with more challenging tasks incorporating perfect square trinomials. Strategic grouping was used to ensure a mix of high medium and low-medium performance levels as well as strong English speakers to support ESL students within each group. Accountable talk stems were visible in the classroom that included sentence starters such as: “I disagree/agree with \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_”, “How do you know that’s the correct answer?”, and “Can you show that answer in a different way?” However, during the group problem solving and discussion time the lack of a discussion protocol led to limited discussion within groups with many students working independently.
- Students in both a global history and an English language arts class were engaged in tasks that included student choice and the use of claim, text-based evidence, and the use of counter claim. Students in global history chose a side regarding whether the United States should have entered World War I in addition, has a role in keeping “the world safe for democracy”. Using the philosophical chairs protocol, group representatives presented the evidence to support their claims, after which students could switch sides or choose a side if they had been ambivalent. In English language arts, students chose one of three writing prompts on a theme from *Macbeth*, moved into a group of students with the same choice and used the text to find evidence to support the prompt.
- An English as a second language class engaged students in a task of developing a meaning for personal success through reading biographies that were tiered according to reading level. The Do Now was to activate thinking through an excerpt from one of the biographies on Mark Zuckerberg through a multiple-choice question. Students who raised their hand to participate in the discussion frequently used accountable talk stems that referenced previous responses. However, the pattern of discussion was teacher – student-teacher and the lack of discussion protocol that asked all students to explain their answer, limited the number of students who were able to demonstrate their thinking.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills across subjects.

### Impact

The school's curricular decisions promote coherence and college and career readiness for all students including English language learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- A review of Global History, Living Environment, and Ecology curricula demonstrates that the History, Science, and Technology Common Core Standards for literacy are embedded within unit and lesson plans. There is consistent use of claim, evidence, and reasoning for scientific and historical explanations, as well as an emphasis on key vocabulary into performance tasks. For example, reading and writing standards are planned in a unit on evolution by embedding a rubric based written task that asks students to use textual and data evidence from a lab to explain the relationship between variation, natural selection, and adaptation.
- The Algebra, Geometry and Algebra II curricula show alignment to the Common Core Learning standards for math and the instructional shifts. By participating in the Algebra through Inquiry (a2i) project, teachers across math subjects have full access to Common Core curricula, assessments, and performance-based tasks, as well as participate in sharing best practices among the schools. For example, the unit from Algebra II Trigonometry on exponential functions incorporates the standard of students representing their understanding in a variety of different contexts by writing a letter to a rich relative explain exponential functions in relation to money using graphs, tables, formulas, and written descriptions.
- Higher order thinking skills are planned in units and lessons using Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK). For example, an English language arts grade 9 curriculum map demonstrates that each unit has a performance-based task explicitly aligned with a level 4 DOK. For example, the unit on Romeo and Juliet has an analytical essay as the task using claim, counter-claim and textual evidence to decide, "Who is to blame of Romeo and Juliet's death?" An algebra unit on solving equations has a range of DOK level questions planned for each lesson that include questions such as "How will you check whether your value for x is correct?" and "Could you solve these equations using a different method? What would that method be?"
- Unit and lesson plans across subjects demonstrate purposeful planning to provide access to curricula for English language learners. These include the use of vocabulary reference sheets, world banks in both Arabic and English, planning for specific students to use iPads for translation support, tiered text, and tiered tasks.

**Findings**

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments and rubrics aligned to the curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress.

**Impact**

Aligned assessments provide actionable feedback to students and teachers. Assessment results are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The administration and analysis of the fall 2014 Measure of Student Learning (MoSL) baseline was used to determine the school's instructional focus for the year from the identified skill gaps. Teachers across subjects revised units and tasks to build in the use of claim, evidence, and counter claim to support writing and discussions. As a result, the science, history, and English language arts department developed literacy, discussion strategies, and performance tasks in the MoSL format.
- Rubrics are used across subject areas for all performance-based tasks that incorporate clear feedback to students that include next learning steps. Student work with rubric based feedback was reviewed in classrooms and during the student meeting for English language arts, algebra, earth science, history, English as a second language, and Arabic. In addition to alignment to Common Core or content standards most also incorporated the instructional focus of claim/counter-claim and use of evidence. For example, a science rubric incorporated a student self-assessment section on the quality of claim, evidence cited, and the scientific reasoning within the writing.
- The school regularly administers mock Regents exams and performs item analysis to inform instruction in regents based classes and develop supports such as after school programs and Saturday Academy. For example, Regent supports started in November for students taking January regents, and in March for students taking June Regents. The item analysis data is used to determine instructional needs for those after school and Saturday programs, as well as to target specific groups of students.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### **Findings**

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations regarding professionalism and instruction connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The school systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students, providing feedback and guidance supports to ensure student progress.

### **Impact**

The culture for learning results in a system of mutual accountability among teachers and ensures all students, including the high percentage of English language learners are engaged in their educational experience and are prepared for the next level.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- In early fall, all teachers reflect on their teaching practices in conjunction with the Danielson Framework for Teaching and observational reports to develop a Learning Development Plan. Teachers select components to further develop within their practice for the academic year reflecting and updated plans during the mid-year conference with administration and additional observation data. A review of observation reports indicates targeted and purposeful feedback to teachers regarding the goals within their Learning Development Plans. Teachers stated they provide feedback to each other through inter-visitations based on teacher developed areas of focus in relation to the school and Danielson expectations.
- After a successful three-year approval process, the school will begin to implement the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program for students in grades 11 and 12. This college and career ready advanced diploma offers academic rigor with an emphasis on personal development through creativity and community involvement. Teachers, staff, students, and parents indicated they have been involved in the approval process thereby understanding the expectations.
- The school has implemented a student advisory program to support high need students targeting grade 9 and 10 students. Teachers are responsible for a group of four students based on academic and personal data. Teachers meet individually with their students twice monthly to discuss academic progress, attendance, behavior, extra-curricular opportunities, short and long-term goals, as well as their personal lives outside the classroom. A review of the online forms submitted after each meeting indicates that the sessions are individualized based on student need and encourage greater student ownership of their education experience. Students set goals, brainstorm action steps for themselves and the advisor, and then revisit the goals as they make progress.
- In order to teach the expectation of on-time arrival for work based environments, the school implemented an attendance make-up program that tracks student lateness through an online Google document. Students on Friday afternoon or Saturday morning attend school to make up the missed work time. Teachers and staff provide coaching on missed work during these sessions, thus providing enriched academic support as well.