



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Kingsbury  
Elementary School Q188  
218-12 Hartland Avenue**

**Queens  
NY 11364**

**Principal: Dr. Janet Caraisco**

**Date of review: November 19, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Dr. Rhonda Dawn Farkas**

## Additional Findings

Kingsbury is an elementary school with 692 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 2% Black, 7% Hispanic, 32% White, 57% Asian, and 2% multi-racial students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 97.0%.

## 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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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>
---------------------------	---	----------------	-----------------------

### Findings

Teachers participate in multi-level collaborations, including grade-level, cross-grade level, disciplinary, and cross-disciplinary curricula and instructional practices, and through the formation of their collegial relationships, have vast opportunities for reflection about their pedagogical practices and student learning, and have made dynamic contributions to curricula.

### Impact

The inquiry-based collaboration has resulted in the collective knowledge around student learning outcomes, the acceleration of student learning goals, and improved pedagogical practice school-wide. Furthermore, teacher leadership structures are rooted across the school to ensure that teachers engage in systematic high-level instructional talk and play an essential role in key decision-making that result in improved student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- The first grade teachers recreated the rubric on informative and explanatory texts to ensure that students could use it independently. Teachers across grades in the school created their own multi-level resources, such as variations of teacher-made graphic organizers, to improve evidence-based paragraph writing across the school for a wide range of learners, including high achievers.
- Grade-level teacher teams collaborate weekly and the school's vertical inquiry team meets every five to six weeks. During their time together, teachers analyze student work, share instructional strategies within and across grade levels, scaffold learning opportunities, and revise curriculum plans and pacing calendars.
- Teacher collaborations improve school-wide instructional coherence and increased levels of sophistication and integration of skills, such as student use of voice, domain-specific vocabulary, and text-based evidence.
- During weekly teacher team meetings, teachers across grades engage in deep high-level conversations, such as re-creating rubrics to align with their students' current understanding. For example, the first-grade teacher team created a packet of resources to improve evidence-based paragraph writing, such as variations of support to assist students with responding to the question, paper choice, including prompts, as well as student-friendly rubrics, such as one entitled, "Prove it or Lose it."

## Area of Focus

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

### Findings

Across grades and content areas, teachers consistently ask higher order thinking questions, provide multiple entry points, and scaffold instruction to support student learning and maximize participation so that the majority of students meet task expectations, and their work reflects high levels of participation, student-to-student discourse, thinking, and ownership; however, the use of incorporating technology in lessons is not yet utilized across all grades and subjects.

### Impact

As a result, instructional strategies do not fully incorporate technology to improved performance and progress for all learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers across the school consistently pose challenging higher-order questions, group students flexibly, make interdisciplinary connections, and avail students of graphic organizers, such as Venn diagrams to compare and contrast information, thinking maps to illustrate thinking processes, manipulatives, and rubrics to provide supports and extensions into the curricula so that all students meet task expectations and produce high-quality work products. Although there is sufficient technology available in the school, of the classrooms observed, the vast majority of teachers did not leverage existing equipment and integrate technology into their lessons to provide multiple avenues to support student learning.
- During a fourth grade science lesson on the importance of adaptation in the survival of all animal species, prior to encouraging students to create an animal that would be strong and resilient enough to survive in an environment they constructed, the classroom teacher used a video clip from [www.discoveryeducation.com](http://www.discoveryeducation.com), entitled "Characteristics of Deserts and Animal Adaptations," to accommodate student interests.
- Instructional strategies have led to the school achieving a 2% increase in ELA and a steady proficiency rate of 89% in math. Moreover, there was a 3.5% increase for students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) in English language arts. However, a review of the data revealed a 9.6% decline in math for this subgroup.
- Although teachers provide opportunities for students to research, develop essential knowledge skills, and experiences, the use of technology to enhance students' acquisition of digital literacy was not evident in all classrooms observed.

## Additional Findings

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

Curricula, aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards, embed the instructional shifts while ensuring that individuals and groups of students, including the school's relevant subgroups, are cognitively engaged and have access curricula and tasks.

### Impact

Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined to meet the diverse needs of students, including English language learners, students with disabilities, and lowest and highest achieving students, resulting in coherence and increased cognitive engagement, as well as capacity for independent thinking and ownership that position them for college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school uses Reading Street, Writing to Sources, and Sleuths in English language arts and *EnVision* and Exemplars for math and all curriculum maps are developmentally appropriate and include essential questions, such as *How is honesty important?* and *What are the rewards of helping others?* The curriculum maps also include the Common Core Learning Standards, key student learning objectives, a sequence of learning activities, mentor texts used, and assessments.
- A thorough review of the school's curriculum maps and unit plans reflect academically rigorous and engaging standards, as necessitated by the instructional shifts set forth in the Common Core Learning Standards, such as engaging in rich and rigorous evidence based conversations about text, using evidence from sources in writing to inform or make an argument, and building transferable vocabulary needed to access grade level complex texts. In addition, across the school teachers' lesson plans include targeted small group instruction and modified or differentiated assignments so all learners are suitably challenging, cognitively engaged, and work towards meeting grade-level specific expectations.
- Teachers' curriculum maps and pacing calendars, with weekly questions and concepts, as well as specific student outcomes, are available via GoogleDocs so that teachers are able to access their curricular documents easily for lesson planning purposes and making revisions, such as including addenda to their curricular maps that include additional resources and small group learning objectives, and next steps to meet the needs of students who require additional support and high-level learners. An example of an area of enrichment was the inclusion of higher range vocabulary words, such as *alternative*, *contribution*, and *dominant*, as well as additional objectives that include identifying base words and Greek and Latin words and investigating the way authors use figurative language, such as similes, metaphors, and personification.

**Findings**

Across grades and subject areas, teachers' use of curricula-aligned rubrics and assessments and offer a wide assortment of pertinent data that depict a clear representation of student mastery and consistently check for understanding and provide self-assessment opportunities.

**Impact**

As a result of the school's assessment practices, in all grades, beginning in kindergarten, students are well-informed about their learning progress, take ownership of their educational experience, and make necessary adjustments to their own learning strategies that lead to the increase of student academic outcomes.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms visited, teachers engage in the ongoing practice of checking for understanding throughout lessons to gauge student learning and to inform, monitor, and adjust instruction is pervasive throughout the school. For example, in all subject areas, teachers consistently used exit slips, discussion checklists, and formative note taking during individual and small group conferences. In addition, in the early grades, teachers use reading checklists to monitor student progress in listening and speaking during mini-lessons.
- Based on teacher knowledge of curriculum and student data, such as Teachers College independent reading level progression data, teachers make effective adjustments to instruction. For example, in a third-grade integrated co-teaching class, the teachers provided two different versions of an article using 690 and 990 Lexile levels, entitled *Extreme Sports: Too Dangerous for Kids?* In addition, students were afforded the opportunity to create their own higher-order thinking questions and present them to their classmates.
- Classroom visits revealed data were accessible and organized, and used for grouping for instruction. Teachers carefully track the progress of students, make grade-level or cross grade-level instructional decisions based on results from outcome assessments, such as unit tests, running records, and writing products. For example, teachers use discussion checklists that highlight student participation, accountable talk, and group work in the areas of speaking, listening, and focusing on their peers.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
---------------------------	------------------------------	----------------	-----------------------

### **Findings**

School leaders communicate high expectations and have built a culture of mutual accountability for staff and partner with families to enhance student progress.

### **Impact**

The school's culture of mutual accountability has resulted in school-wide coherency of high expectations. Furthermore, successful partnerships with families have led to parents supporting their children at home and students' proficiency levels on the statewide assessments have increased.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The principal and assistant principal consistently track progress in key components of pedagogy, using a form entitled, "Daily Teaching and Instructional Support" on which they identify key aspects of lessons, such as the teaching point, the quality of questions, and discussion techniques that encourage students to extend and enrich discussions. Additionally, school leaders track progress in key components of pedagogy such as engaging students in learning by inviting comments from their peers and monitoring their own learning to identify gaps in teaching practices and target professional learning opportunities. Teachers also write reflections on their teaching practices and are mutually accountable for pedagogical expectations.
- Weekly staff bulletins, prefaced by an inspirational quote and a word of the week, as well as professional learning activities, parent engagement events, and administrative tasks related to formative assessment are published and disseminated to teachers. Teachers on each grade also publish monthly newsletters in which they highlight the goals for each unit of study across the core subjects as well as the next month's goals. For example, in one segment of "The Kindergarten News," the teachers explained that the next math unit will focus on comparing and ordering numbers 1-10. Similarly, in a section of "The 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Times," parents were apprised of the next unit in social studies, which will include traveling back in time as the students follow the routes of European explorers as they learn about colonization on the east coast of the United States of America.
- Specific instructional goals, coherent grade-wide foci, such as questioning, student engagement, assessment, and curricula, as well as intermittent progress of students, including independent baseline reading levels, Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies (CARS), math exemplars, and writing baselines, are shared with parents, ensuring their participation in working towards grade-level goals. Student profile reports from iReady provide parents with ways to support their children at home. For example, to extend parents understanding of making inferences, suggestions such as, Model making an inference about an informational text and then ask, "What details from the text support this inference?" positions parents as partners to improve their child's grade-level goals.