



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Kingsbridge International

High School X268

**2780 Reservoir Avenue
Bronx
NY 10468**

Principal: Ronald Foreman

**Date of review: April 15, 2015
Reviewer: Mimi Fortunato**

The School Context

Kingsbridge International is a high school with 419 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 7% Black, 84% Hispanic, 1% White, 7% Asian students, and 1% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. The student body includes 90% English language learners and 1% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 85.0%.

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	Additional Findings	Developing
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	Focus	Developing
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	Developing
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	Proficient
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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness and offer families ongoing feedback to help families. School leaders, teachers and staff establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students.

Impact

A system of reciprocal communication with families helps parents understand student progress towards expectations. Guidance and advisement supports prepare students for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- Parents shared that there is frequent and ongoing communication with the principal and teachers through emails, phone calls, and in-person meetings, and that parents have opportunities to participate in college trips and tours and a school-wide gardening initiative. Parent workshops include English as a second language classes taught by teachers from the school using language-learning software, and college financial aid workshops facilitated by the social worker.
- Parents stated that they have opportunities to share ideas for school improvement. For example, parents have initiated the implementation of the school uniform policy for all students. A parent stated that the school has provided support to her child in preparation for college, and that her daughter was accepted to all the colleges to which she applied. Other parents affirmed that the school has supported their children's preparation for college and career through frequent transcript reviews, college search and application workshops, trips to college fairs, and college tours.
- Students shared that they are aware of expectations for academic performance and social behavior, and that teachers and the principal celebrate students' accomplishments and provide students with motivation to meet established expectations. In classroom visits, student behavior was consistently in compliance with the school's expected norms, and student interactions with peers and adults was respectful in tone. Students were observed translating for peers in classes, and students stated that they felt safe in the school, and supported by their peers and by the adults in the community.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies, including questioning and scaffolds in English, inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Although students have some opportunities to engage in peer discussion, full-class discussions are primarily teacher dominated.

Impact

Inconsistent implementation of scaffolds leads to disproportionate engagement in appropriately challenging tasks and irregular demonstration of higher order thinking skills in student work products, including the work of English language learners (ELLs) and student with disabilities. Across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classes, teachers do not consistently implement multiple entry points and scaffolds to engage all learners. Although some lesson plans noted strategies such as providing students with vocabulary support or appropriate level text, the strategies implemented were not consistently specific to individual students and, in some classes, strategies to support diverse learners were not observed. For example, in a United States History lesson, the lesson plan stated that the students would be provided with leveled text. However, all students in the class received the same text, and targeted supports for the diverse ELLs in the class were not observed. In an Earth Science class on the purpose of meiosis, the differentiation strategies noted in the lesson plan included grouping, diagrams, video, and symbols. However, in this lesson, all students were provided with the same classwork that consisted of 6 short answer questions, and homework that contained 7 short answer and 3 fill-in-the blank questions.
- In some classes visited, students shared that they were grouped so that they could translate or help others. In other classes observed, while students were paired or grouped during independent or group practice, students were not able to articulate the rationale for the seating. Teachers shared that they primarily utilize heterogeneous grouping in most lessons so that students with a higher level of English proficiency can help peers with more limited proficiency. However, targeted supports for students with limited English proficiency were not observed in classes visited, and those with more advanced proficiency were not provided with tasks or supports aligned to meet their instructional needs.
- The principal has identified trends in teacher practice, and has developed a plan of action to deepen teacher skills in providing students with opportunities to engage in rich peer discourse. Although there were opportunities for peer-to-peer discussion in some classes, whole group discussions were generally teacher dominated as teachers asked questions of individual students, who then responded directly to the teacher. For example, in a grade 11 United States History class on the Harlem Renaissance, students brainstormed ideas on their definition of the Harlem Renaissance. However, in the full class discussion in this class and in other classes visited, the pattern of teacher to student interaction was call and response, limiting student ownership of the discourse. In a grade 10 English class on *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan, the teacher posed questions to individual students, who then responded directly to the teacher, with the teacher echoing student responses and then stating, "Excellent" in reply to each student's response.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

School leaders and faculty are in the process of aligning curricula to Common Core Learning Standards and content standards, and are beginning to integrate the instructional shifts. Although curricula and tasks reflect planning to provide students with access to the curricula, they are not consistently refined using student work and data.

Impact

Inconsistent integration of the instructional shifts hampers college and career readiness. Limited refinement of curricula and tasks hinders access to the curricula as well as cognitive engagement for some learners, including ELLs and special education students.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricula maps and lesson plans provided evidence of a lack of coherence across grade levels and content areas, and inconsistent emphasis on college and career readiness skills and the integration of the instructional shifts. For example, in a Global History lesson plan on apartheid, students were expected to cite textual evidence to support their claims regarding the ways in which apartheid violated individual human rights. However, in a lesson plan for a Geometry class, the task was to find the missing length of a secant in a circle, and the plan did not outline how students might demonstrate a deep understanding of the problem or how students might apply the learning.
- The principal has established a key instructional goal of engaging students in student-centered tasks, and in non-fiction college readiness writing aligned to task-specific rubrics. However, lesson plans varied in planning for these foci. For example, an Earth Science lesson plan indicated that students would work in groups to research and collect information about lipids, carbohydrates, proteins and nucleic acids. However, in this class, the writing activity consisted of notes jotted on a graphic organizer. A grade 11 English class lesson aim stated, "Students will create clear and effective topic sentences." However, the lesson plan indicated that students would spend one-third of the class time working in groups to unscramble four narrative sentences to create a paragraph. One of the two topic sentences provided to students stated, "I like ice cream on a hot summer day," while the other stated, "My brother gets into trouble a lot."
- Although some lesson plans indicated that students would work in groups, lesson plans did not clearly indicate how these groupings would support individual student needs other than having students with a higher level of English proficiency help those with less proficiency. In addition, although all lesson plans contained a box titled, "Differentiation", planning for scaffolds and targeted support was not consistently evident. As a result, it was not clear how the ELLs and students with disabilities would have access to the tasks. For example, a Geometry lesson plan indicated that the differentiation that would be provided was that the teacher would move around the room helping students who appeared to have difficulties. In this class, and in most others visited, all students were expected to complete the same task, exit slip, and homework assignment.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, or grading policies that are loosely aligned with the school’s curricula and teachers’ assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment. Formative assessments do not always provide a clear portrait of student mastery, and teachers do not regularly make targeted adjustments to meet learning needs based on formative assessment data.

Impact

Assessment strategies provide limited feedback to students and teachers regarding student performance, hindering the consistent development and implementation of effective instructional adjustments.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers have developed a common grading policy that incorporates essays, writing, reading, unit projects (20%), examinations, quizzes (20%), classwork (20%), homework (20%), and participation (20%). However, as the formula contains a number of redundant elements, the information delivered to teachers and students does not always provide a clear assessment of mastery of learning standards. According to the school-wide grading policy, teachers are expected to develop grades for participation and classwork in each lesson. However, across classrooms, teachers used varied methods for assessing and noting the grade for participation and classwork. In an English class, the teacher grades included a check mark or a slash mark to assess students during each class, which provided limited information regarding actionable feedback to the teacher and students regarding student mastery. Most teachers were not observed calculating grades for classwork and participation in classes visited, and across classrooms students could not articulate how their participation and classwork grade was calculated.
- Teachers are engaged in the ongoing process of refining assessments and rubrics, and some teachers use the resulting data to identify student learning needs and inform next instructional steps. Some teacher feedback on student work provides clear next steps to move students from one level to the next, and is aligned to a task-specific rubric. For example, social studies rubrics displayed on bulletin boards provided feedback to students regarding next learning steps. On one student’s essay on the Civil Rights Movement, the United States history and Government teacher noted that the next learning steps would be to more effectively defend the argument stance. However, in some instances, feedback was limited to comments such as, “Great job!”, or “Excellent work”. Teacher feedback on some math work consisted of red check marks and Xs.
- While teachers were observed conferencing with individual and groups of students, the adjustment to instruction observed was primarily clarification of the task or a general comment such as “Well-done”, and students were provided with limited opportunities to self- or peer-assess. For example, an English teacher was observed moving throughout the class, providing support to groups of students and to individual students, noting checks on a document. A social studies teacher was observed noting students’ misconceptions on the back of the lesson plan. However, in these classes and in others classes visited, teachers were not observed adjusting instruction based on the formative assessment data gathered, and in the other five classes visited, teachers were not observed noting formative assessment data during lessons. While a student’s United States History essay on Manifest Destiny included a peer-assessment, throughout classes visited, students were not observed self- or peer-assessing during class.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in content area and grade level professional collaborations. A distributive leadership structure has been established.

Impact

Teacher collaboration promotes the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts, supports alignment of practice to the school’s instructional goals, and strengthens the instructional capacity of teachers. Teachers have opportunities to build leadership capacity, and have a voice in key decisions regarding student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of agendas and minutes provide evidence that teachers meet once each week in content and grade teams. Agendas and minutes indicate that teachers consistently engage in an inquiry approach in which they collaboratively analyze student outcomes. The social studies team was observed as they engaged in a professional learning cycle focus around writing workshops. They were sharing the strategies that teachers have begun to use to guide writing during social studies instruction. Members of this team were able to clearly articulate the outcomes of their work on shared improvements in teacher practice and on student outcomes. For example, social studies teachers shared that the writing workshop strategies have deepened their understanding of how to engage students more deeply in argumentative writing and citing textual evidence. In addition, an assessment of student work demonstrates increased student ratings of 3 from a previous grade of 2, and increases for some students based on a task specific rubric with a scale of 1 – 4.
- Teachers stated that they have a voice in instructional decisions and shared that their perceptions and findings are taken into consideration. For example, the social studies team implemented a writing workshop strategy across grade levels aligned to the school-wide goal of engaging students in non-fiction writing activities. Teachers affirmed that the principal’s open door policy encourages reciprocal communication regarding student learning.
- Teacher leaders facilitate content and grade level meetings, and teachers assume a leadership role in supporting colleagues. For example, teachers shared that the professional development team provides feedback to the principal on professional development planning, and the school participates in the Department of Education’s Model Teacher Program, with one teacher assuming a role of a model teacher. The model teacher provides support to colleagues through peer-visitation, coaching, and modeling lessons. Teachers stated that they appreciated the support that they receive from their peers.