

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

# Final Report



<b>BEDS Code</b>	<b>620600010014</b>
<b>School Name</b>	<b>John F. Kennedy School</b>
<b>School Address</b>	<b>107 Gross Street, Kingston, NY 12401</b>
<b>District Name</b>	<b>Kingston City School District</b>
<b>Principal</b>	<b>Melissa Schultzel-Jamieson</b>
<b>Dates of Visit</b>	<b>February 19-21, 2019</b>



## Purpose Of The Visit

This school was identified as needing additional support by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Because of this identification, NYSED arranged for an Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) to visit the school. The visit is intended to help the school identify areas of need that are making long-term success a challenge and provide several visible Quick Wins that can be accomplished and demonstrate the school's commitment to improvement.

The report provides a critical lens to help the school best focus its efforts.

## School Performance

New York State uses multiple indicators to determine the identification status of schools across the state. For each of these indicators, schools receive a number of 1 (lowest), 2, 3, or 4 (highest) that corresponds with how the school performed in relation to either other schools and/or performance targets. More information about how these levels are determined can be found at: <http://www.nysed.gov/accountability/essa-accountability-designation-materials>

The most recent results for the "All Students" group at the school are as follows:

### *Elementary/Middle School Performance Indicators*

Composite Performance Achievement Level	Student Growth Level	Combined Composite and Student Growth Level	English Language Proficiency Level	Average ELA and Math Academic Progress Level	Chronic Absenteeism Level
2	1	1	-	1	1

John F. Kennedy School serves 346 students in pre-kindergarten through grade four.

## Information About The Visit

- The visit was led by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from NYSED. The team also included a district representative.
- The team visited a total of 22 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited 16 classrooms with the principal during the visit.
- Team members conducted interviews with students, staff, and parents.
- Team members examined documents provided by the school, including schoolwide data and teacher feedback.
- In advance of the visit, 41 staff members (51 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.
- On the second day of the visit, the school was dismissed at 1:30 p.m. instead of 3:00 p.m. due to inclement weather. As a result of the early dismissal, IIT members were unable to visit classrooms on that day.

## Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. In September 2018, the principal communicated the expectation that teachers should use student-centered and small-group instructional practices. As a result, teachers have created student-centered classrooms to deliver their instructional program. During class visits, the IIT observed 85 percent of teachers providing small group instruction using student academic data as a basis for student groupings. Interviewed students stated that their teachers support their academic needs.
2. At the beginning of 2018-19, the school implemented a response to intervention (RtI) program in reading. The principal emphasized the importance of tier three interventions using programs such as Orton Gillingham, Wilson Reading, and Leveled Literacy. Data from the Renaissance's Star Reading Assessment showed that students in grades two, three, and four who received interventions achieved an average increase of ten percentage points from the fall to the winter's administration.
3. For 2018-19, the principal has focused on creating a positive climate where everyone feels respected. Each morning and afternoon, the principal greets parents, students, and staff in the hallways and in front of the school. Interviewed teachers reported that the principal has created an environment where the feelings and opinions of teachers are respected and welcomed.

## Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

### Systems for Improvement

- **The school should develop a comprehensive system to ensure that the social-emotional needs of all students are being met.** The school does not currently have a system to identify students needing additional social-emotional supports nor to evaluate the effectiveness of social-emotional interventions. Although the school has adopted the Sanford Harmony curriculum for social-emotional learning, it is currently only being implemented in grade four classes while the school awaits the delivery of additional materials. Teachers and parents reported that classes are sometimes disrupted by students who struggle to maintain appropriate behavior. The principal reported that the 2018-19 out-of-school suspension rate has increased 85 percent as compared to 2017-18, primarily due to the behaviors of a small number of students whose social-emotional needs are not being met in their current program. Currently, the principal spearheads efforts to address students in crises, but agrees that a crisis management plan would be a more effective approach.

### Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The principal should consider delegating responsibility for addressing student behavioral concerns.** The school has a social worker and a school psychologist whose time is devoted to providing mandated services to students with disabilities. When students commit disciplinary infractions, the principal assumes sole responsibility for resolving these incidents. The principal acknowledged that she devotes a significant amount of time addressing behavioral issues, and as a result, she does not always have time to conduct classroom observations or attend teacher meetings. The principal reported that she visits classrooms every day but doesn't always have time to observe a substantial portion of the lesson.

## Learning at the School

- **Teachers should plan and deliver lessons that demonstrate high levels of academic rigor.** During class visits, the IIT observed that some learning activities lacked rigor, such as worksheets that included recall questions and fill in the blank activities. In some classes, students were asked questions that required only a yes/no or recall answer. The IIT did not see evidence of higher-order questions included in lesson plans or asked during instruction. The principal agreed that more rigorous assignments would improve the quality of the instructional program.
- **Teachers need to plan and deliver learning activities that are matched to the learning needs of their most advanced learners.** Interviewed teachers stated that they had not received any guidance on providing extension activities for students who complete their work before others. Interviewed students stated that the work is only challenging when they are learning something new. Some students reported that when they finish their work early, teachers allow them to use the computer or ask them to read a book.
- **Student use of technology during lessons should be aligned with the lesson objective.** During class visits, the IIT observed students working in centers, often using computer programs to supplement their learning. Students were permitted to select the program and lesson to complete. While the computer programs were district-approved, the IIT noted that the programs and activities were not always aligned with the specific learning objective for the lesson. The principal agreed that student use of computers during class time needs to be better aligned to the lesson objective in order to maximize the educational impact of technology on student achievement.

## Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Students want the school's library collection to include books that are better matched to their interests.** For example, two students noted that they love to read about cars, but the library only has three books related to that subject.
- **Teachers would like more support in dealing with difficult student behaviors while teaching lessons.** Teachers reported that instructional time is lost when they are called on to address negative student behavior in class.
- **The process for morning drop-off needs improvement.** Parents reported that the current process for morning drop-off often results in cars being jammed and stuck in the parking lot. When dropping students off in the morning, parents must park in a small parking lot and walk their child approximately 50 meters to the entrance. Due to limited parking spaces, parents often park in the aisles of the lot, preventing the passage of other cars. Some parents reported that they intentionally bring their child to school late to avoid being stuck in the parking lot.