



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Emma Lazarus School

Public School 268

**133 East 53rd Street
Brooklyn
NY 11203**

Principal: Ms. Mosezetta Overby

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Reviewer: John Francis

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Emma Lazarus School is a neighborhood elementary school of 669 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school has been in receipt of Title 1 funding for the past three years. The school population comprises 96% Black and 3% Hispanic students with a small number of White and Asian students. A relatively small proportion of the students are English language learners. The school has a below average number of special education students. The school's attendance rates are slightly below those of City and similar schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and assistant principals demonstrate strong and effective leadership with a commitment to continued improvement.
- The school's administration has a good understanding of the school's strengths and is clear where there is room for further development.
- The school is a purposeful place; students enjoy school and generally follow the high expectations for behavior and dress code.
- Good quality professional development is beginning to give teachers additional skills that improve planning, instruction and learning.
- Teachers feel supported by the administration and appreciate the quality of the feedback they receive.
- The school is very successful at identifying and supporting the needs of all students through well planned interventions for special education students and classes for high achievers.
- As a result of continuous improvements to curriculum planning and instruction, standards are rising year over year.
- The value the school places on students' work can be seen in the wide range of high quality displays that also provide good models for other students.
- Students like and respect the principal for her sense of fun and her high expectations.

What the school needs to improve

- Build the capacity of staff to use data effectively to differentiate planning and instruction based more closely on students' needs.
- Develop teachers' skills in using technology to manage student performance data in order to establish a system to set annual targets for all students and track their progress towards these over time.
- Investigate the reasons for the wide difference in achievement between male and female students and put strategies in place to narrow this gap.
- Break down available data to demonstrate how students perform against the expected levels or specific rubrics in English and mathematics.
- Create systems to enable the administration to evaluate the impact of the professional development undertaken and new strategies in the school.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

As a result of clear, direct leadership and a continuous drive for improvement, standards have risen steadily over the past five years. The proportion of students achieving higher grade levels is increasing, and there is a corresponding reduction in the number achieving at the lowest grades. The school is successfully developing systems that enable it to use data more effectively to improve students' achievement. Good professional development in analyzing and using data is also increasing teachers' understanding of how this can influence their planning and instruction. The principal is well respected by students, parents and staff, who consider her to 'set the bar high'. There is an active learning committee and a good range of professional development opportunities available to staff. The principal and others in the administration team spend much of their time in classrooms, observing teaching and learning. As a result, they know what is happening as well as where support is needed. Where good practice has been identified, they are able to use this to help others who have particular needs.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The administration makes good use of the available data to focus on meeting the needs of those students who require additional interventions to improve their achievement. As a result, the proportion of students at level 1 has fallen steadily over the last five years. Good use is made of both 'push-in' and extended day classes to further support these students' learning in English and mathematics. Well focused analysis has also been used to identify those students who are working well above their grade levels. To meet the needs of these students, the school has created special classes for these high achievers, which provide well-aligned instruction and challenge. Through these, the proportion of students achieving level 4 and beyond has also increased steadily over time. To recognize this continuing improvement, the school received a Performance Differential award in 2004 – 05.

Data is not yet well enough broken down to show how each class performs against the expected levels or against specific rubrics in English and mathematics. Recognizing the link between results and the quality of instruction, the school has put in place good professional development training in the analysis and use of data. Teachers are now beginning to use the technology available in school to access and review the data relating to their classes. This is bringing greater rigor in the use of grade and class-related data. The data shows that students of different abilities are making similar progress. However, there are unexplained differences between the achievement of male and female students, with females regularly achieving more highly than males.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school is clear in its expectations of its teachers and makes proficient use of all available data to plan for each student’s next learning step. The school has a pacing calendar and curriculum map that give clear direction and through the work of English and mathematics coaches, teachers see models of best practice. As a result of steady improvements to curriculum planning and instruction, standards have been rising each year.

The school has made good progress in developing the workshop model in classrooms. This enables teachers to adapt instruction to meet the needs of different groups. However, this practice is not yet consistent across all classes and grades. Further work is needed to build the capacity of staff to use data to differentiate their planning and instruction to align work more closely to their students’ needs.

The school uses data to identify whole school areas for improvement and is tackling weaknesses in both writing and problem solving in mathematics. In response to the identified needs in English, the literacy coach is currently introducing a new approach to integrating writing across all areas of the curriculum, particularly social studies. Common planning time spent grading students’ work is helping to deepen teachers’ understanding of levels within the grades and to improve their assessment skills.

Parents are encouraged to play an active role in the life of the school and in their children’s learning. They are quickly alerted to any concerns the school might have, but are equally quickly informed about their children’s successes. The parent coordinator, along with an active parent/teacher association is effective in involving parents and encouraging them to support their child in making the best use of their time in school. There is good attendance at parent/teacher association meetings and at the regular consultation meetings with teachers where they discuss their child’s progress.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

Through careful budgeting and use of funds, the principal has been able to provide the staff and students with a good range of literature to support the drive to raise achievement in English. The school also has good quality technology that motivates students’ learning, both in the computer suite and classrooms. Technology is also used for professional development. In grade level conferences, teachers access data for their classes and use it to analyze strengths and areas for development. However, not all staff are equally confident in how to make the best use of technology and this is an area for professional development that is being tackled through a scheduled program at all grade conferences. By using the available data, the principal is also able to match the deployment of staff to

the needs of the students, for example, allocating appropriately skilled staff to the high achieving classes.

The school has been effective in providing for those students most in need of support. Through the work of the academic intervention service and other planned interventions, students experience success and improvement. The school has also given careful thought to how it can enable its most gifted students to develop their skills and maximize learning. While there is a wide range of data to show students' performance, this is held in a number of places and there is no single system to record the progress of an individual student's progress through the grades and over time. As a result, the school cannot set annual targets for students based on previous performance, further raising expectations and increasing accountability.

The school's environment has a feeling of purpose. Throughout the school, students generally follow the high expectations that have been established for behavior and dress code. They help in maintaining the high quality of cleanliness seen around the school. Classrooms are busy and often exciting places for students who say that they enjoy their learning. There are many learning prompts and other subject information displayed around classroom walls, including test rubrics that give students helpful guidance. The value that the school places on students' work can be seen in the wide range of high quality displays in classrooms and public areas that showcase students' work and provide good models for others.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

This is an area in which the school is becoming increasingly successful. The principal is very well respected by staff, students and parents. Students also like, and have confidence in, the principal. One student described her as 'firm but good fun'.

The challenge of bringing a school in need for improvement to one in good standing in a very short time, and then maintaining this, has been achieved through high expectations and clear direction. With the good support of the assistant principals, increasingly effective professional development is being planned and delivered. Grade conferences that include a mixture of pedagogical discussion based on current research and practical tasks improve teachers' understanding of the best practice and how to analyze and use data. Through the evidence gained during regular learning walks, the administration and learning team know their staff well and understand the importance of improving the skills of all teachers and building capacity throughout the school.

Well-developed systems and common expectations for all aspects of school life are understood and followed by all staff. Through these, the school runs smoothly and little time is wasted. Common planning time enables teachers in the same grade to meet together to evaluate the impact of the curriculum on students' achievements and come to a common view on the evaluation of students' work. In addition to this, teachers take part in their own informal professional development and freely share ideas. Teachers are well supported by the coaches and assistant principals. Through regular classroom visits, observations and discussions, teachers feel supported by the administration and appreciate the quality of the feedback they receive. The principal 'sets the bar high'.

Good quality professional development gives teachers additional skills that improve planning, instruction and learning. There is an increasing emphasis on academic rigor and research-based approaches as key principles of effective learning.

The school's approach to professional development activities involves the administration and the literacy and mathematics coaches and, where appropriate, outside providers. Well planned programs are proving to be successful in improving students' achievement. However, there is at present no effective system for evaluating the impact of this and other strategies on teachers' instruction and students' learning over time.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school's Comprehensive Education Plan is a detailed document prepared in consultation with teaching staff, support staff and parents. Sections describe instructional programs, achievement trends and school goals. It is less detailed in setting clear, measurable targets or success criteria for groups of students. Without these it is more difficult to review the impact of the initiatives objectively and assess whether any change to the strategy or other mid-course correction is needed.

The principal and assistant principals demonstrate clear and effective leadership and a strong commitment to continued improvement. The agenda and discussions at meetings of the school's leadership team, the administration, faculty and grade meetings make regular reference to relevant data. As a result, the school's administration has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and where further development is needed. The information from these meetings is examined objectively and the knowledge gained is beginning to be used systematically to modify plans or redirect resources.

The principal has established effective systems that provide a safe and secure learning environment; this is appreciated by parents. Much work has also gone in to promoting good attendance and to communicate to students and parents the school's high expectations.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME Emma Lazarus School (PS 268)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students* 		X	
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 	X		
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X	

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.	X		
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.		X	
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.		X	
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	Ø	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.		X	
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	Ø	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.		X	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.		X	
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	Ø	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.	X		
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	