



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

East New York Family Academy

Middle School/High School 409

**2057 Linden Boulevard
Brooklyn
NY 11207**

Principal: Sheila Richards

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Reviewer: Keith Edwards

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

East New York Family Academy is a grade 6 through 12 Middle/High School with 428 students enrolled. The school is over-subscribed. Black students (64%) and Hispanic students (32%) make up the vast majority of the school population. Almost 70% of the students are Title 1 eligible which is above the City average. The school has 31 special education students. Less than 1% of students are English Language Learners. In the last academic year, attendance levels were comparable with similar schools but below the City average. Although the school has welcomed several staff into the middle school in the last academic year, teacher mobility is low. This is particularly evident at principal and assistant principal level as this group has worked together as a team for many years.

Since September 2006, East New York Family Academy has been an Empowerment School. Empowerment Schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment Schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and her senior staff provide outstanding leadership.
- The principal is very supportive of her colleagues and has established an excellent management structure that values their individual professional attributes.
- Senior leaders take the trouble to work out how to get the best out of each member of staff and how to enable each student to succeed.
- The staff respect the students as individuals and have an excellent understanding of their academic, social and emotional needs.
- Programs of work are carefully designed to meet the individual needs of the students.
- Data on the students' performance is used very well in decision making to guide improvement.
- The students are highly motivated and thoroughly enjoy their time at school.
- The school runs a comprehensive program of extra-curricular activities.
- The school provides a very safe environment and student behavior is excellent.
- The school has an outstanding reputation in the neighborhood and those parents who do become involved are very supportive.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to strengthen the links with parents.
- Continue to seek ways to improve attendance.
- Ensure that teachers make more consistent use of data when planning and differentiating work for students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

East New York Family Academy is an excellent school that has high expectations of all of its students. The principal and her dedicated team of assistant principals, who are all gifted educators, have established a climate in school where the students feel safe and secure. Through their careful nurturing, this well-established team has ensured that all students are valued and respected. This has boosted the students' self-awareness and self-esteem and provides an excellent incentive for high achievement. The students respond very well to the climate for learning and are highly motivated to reach college. However, the attendance of a small minority of students remains a challenge.

There are examples of outstanding practice in both the middle and high school. The students speak warmly of the commitment of their teachers. As one Grade 11 student commented, "We work off the energy of our teachers". Staff at all levels use data very well to monitor and analyze the students' progress and, consequently, test results have been rising year-on-year. The school utilizes the designated periodic assessment materials to generate data but finds that the information gathered adds little to the school's existing knowledge of each individual student's areas of strength and weakness. Formative and summative assessments are used effectively in most classes but there remains scope for the more consistent use of data when planning work for different groups of students within the same class. The school is very creative in its scheduling arrangements so that students have the benefit of small tutorial classes to deepen their understanding. Although the parents are warmly encouraged to become active partners in their children's education, not enough parents are actively involved in supporting the school's work.

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 well developed.

The school has very effective systems for collecting data of all kinds relating to the performance and progress of students. From the outset in grade 6, tests are administered to gauge the students' starting points and potential. This information is used successfully to ensure that each class has a spread of ability and also to inform other grouping arrangements, particularly in English language arts and mathematics. The students also maintain their own portfolios of work as they progress through the school so they too have a good understanding of the progress they are making.

The school monitors very carefully the progress of different groups of students as they progress through the school. They compare the progress of students in each subject, class by class and grade by grade, to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is equally effective for all students. This information, discussed at regular departmental and cabinet meetings, is used to identify students at risk of falling behind and those who, with extra support and challenge, could increase their scores and move up a level. Furthermore, the senior staff pay particular attention to those groups of students who join

the school at high school level to ensure that their progress meets expectations. A fundamental principle underpinning the work of the school is the emphasis on enabling all groups of students to successfully pass key examinations ahead of time so that many students are set to graduate before the end of grade 12.

The school maintains comprehensive data to compare its performance against similar school and the City schools in general. This has particularly been evident since the school was judged to be in need of corrective action in 2004. The school is very proud of the fact that it is now consistently in the top 10 % when compared with other schools in the city.

The school utilizes the designated periodic assessment materials to generate data but finds that the information gathered adds little to the school's existing knowledge of each individual student's areas of strength and weakness.

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 well developed.

Staff meet together regularly to plan work and set goals for the next steps for each student, subject and grade and contribute to whole school goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan. Teachers have very good knowledge of their students' personal and academic development, and are driven by the desire to raise the achievement of every student. The staff use continuous assessment alongside their excellent understanding of the students' social and emotional circumstances to provide the most appropriate learning context. Most of the teachers have a detailed knowledge of the skills that students require to fulfill their assignments and these are shared with students. Much time is spent in discussion with individual students to boost their performance. Classroom displays provide further guidance on the skills that the students will need to succeed with particular assignments. Students receive helpful feedback and their work is graded carefully by staff. They are also involved in peer editing to enable them to appreciate the strengths and areas for improvement in each other's work and to develop their own expertise in critical analysis. In addition, faculty adopts a very flexible approach to scheduling to ensure that tutorials can be used to optimum effect to assist the progress of individual and small groups of students in greatest need of improvement.

Most students rise to the school's high expectations and take full advantage of the additional opportunities afforded to them at the end of each school day to improve their understanding in different subjects. Furthermore, their parents are happy for their children to avail themselves of these additional, optional classes. They fully appreciate that the teachers "go the extra mile" to ensure that their children reach challenging goals. However, only a small number are actively involved in the life of the school. Some parents remain hard to reach in spite of the fact that the school has established good lines of communication with the home.

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 well developed.

The school's curriculum is securely based on high expectations of students and the regular review of their progress. Assessment information is used effectively to determine programs of work and intervention strategies to supplement the core curriculum to ensure that the students maintain good progress. All of the staff are involved in curriculum development through their regular departmental meetings to ensure the alignment of instruction with the necessary skills and concepts in all subject areas. Remedial action is taken when necessary to support those students who are having difficulty at any stage of their academic development. The special education students have well defined individual education plans which are monitored carefully to ensure that their learning is broken down into measurable steps. Information technology is used to good effect for the older students to provide an on-line dialogue between staff and their students to monitor and assist their progress. Because the school runs a nine period school day there is the flexibility to organize extra classes to meet the learning needs of individual students. .

The teachers are held accountable for their students' progress. There are regular departmental meetings as well as grade meetings where the progress of groups and individual students are discussed. These meetings are informed by a close scrutiny of assessment data. Although teachers are very aware of their students' achievement, some teachers are less adept at differentiating work for students to match the level of challenge accurately to what students need to do next.

The analysis and use of data is central to decision making in the school. Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are all firmly based on documented student needs. The principal is shrewd in her use of budget, particularly in terms of securing the services of key staff to raise achievement. She has an excellent understanding of the strengths of her staff and uses these to great effect when assigning them.

Most students arrive at school punctually and are keen to stay as long as the school remains open. The school has very good systems for checking on the whereabouts of the students when they are absent but has not yet discovered a strategy to raise attendance levels to the desired level. The attendance of a small minority of students remains a challenge. Standards of behavior are very good. In spite of the constraints imposed by the limitations of the building, the students conduct themselves with great credit and much respect for each other. Students have good attitudes to learning. They concentrate in class, pay very good attention to their teachers and work at a good pace.

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 well developed.

The principal is highly respected. She is very supportive of her colleagues and has established an excellent management structure that values their individual professional attributes. All of the staff are held to account in making effective use of data, but they are also trusted to exercise their professional judgment on a day-to-day basis. The school is successful in recruiting and retaining good teachers and this has been a significant factor in the school's outstanding record of achievement in grade test results.

Although many of the staff have been colleagues for a number of years, complacency is nowhere evident. Initiatives abound and the staff are eager to develop their skills and effectiveness. Professional development is firmly based on the school's ongoing drive to improve student achievement. Within a supportive climate, there is a very keen competitive edge. Much of the best professional development comes from within the

school. There is a program of regular classroom monitoring, including inter-visitations, to assess learning styles and regular staff discussions to evaluate the outcomes and implications of observations. These discussions in teams, with supportive and challenging input from the coaches and assistant principals, focus extensively both on effective learning styles and the use of assessment data to guide instruction. These meetings also provide a forum for planning interventions and revising support programs. The principal and her team of assistants regularly observe teaching and give constructive feedback. Newly qualified and recently appointed staff testify to the strength of the support.

The school runs very smoothly. It provides a warm and welcoming atmosphere to all who have a commitment to education. The school has built a reputation based on high expectations, academic achievement and inclusion. The school works very closely with a neighborhood special education school and is successful in integrating students back into mainstream education.

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 well developed.

The key to the school's success is the deep knowledge that the principal and her senior colleagues have of the strengths and weaknesses of each member of the school community. They take the trouble to work out how to get the best out of each member of staff and how to enable each student to succeed. The school is also persistent and will pursue different strategies to engage students who may become disaffected. They also understand how to challenge those students who are drawing to the close of their school careers and to prepare them fully for college.

The school has a long term strategy for continuing school improvement which involves regular review of its plans in relation to goals achieved or work in progress. It uses a regular program of staff retreats to focus on particular issues and to determine policy. The current Comprehensive Education Plan is very clear in its priorities and is very firmly anchored to statistical data. There is also inbuilt flexibility to ensure that adjustments can be made when new information becomes available and this is an underlying strength. Furthermore, each member of staff has a vested interest in the overall plan and is a willing contributor to its goals.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: East New York Family Academy (IS/HS 409)	∅	✓	+
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.	∅	✓	+
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.	∅	✓	+
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.	∅	✓	+
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