



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

East Side Community High School

Intermediate / High School 450

**420 East 12th Street
New York
NY 10009**

Principal: Mark Federman

Dates of review: May 14 – 15, 2007

Reviewer: David Herbert

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well
What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

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

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

East Side Community High School has 553 students enrolled in grades 6 through 12. Sixty one percent of students are Hispanic, just over 26% are Black, nearly 8% are Asian and just fewer than 5% are White. Only 1.4% of students are recent immigrants, mainly from the Dominican Republic. This is lower than in similar or city schools.

Just over 26% of students have special education needs, and nearly 6% are English language learners. The school receives Title 1 eligibility for nearly 71% of students which is slightly lower than similar schools but higher than city schools overall.

The school has chosen to join an empowerment zone of similar small schools to further its development work. Empowerment schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their own school community.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school collects, analyzes and regularly evaluates a very extensive range of data on all aspects of students' learning and development.
- All teachers are centrally involved in using data collaboratively to set goals, evaluate the progress of plans and reflect on the effectiveness of their instruction.
- The principal provides visionary leadership which unites all staff and drives the school forward with a common purpose.
- The school successfully develops students academically, personally and socially through a carefully designed and monitored curriculum program.
- Goal setting and the review of progress towards outcomes is continuously monitored involving teachers, the students themselves and their parents.
- Students with particular needs are supported extremely well.
- Using data, teachers are empowered to identify school strengths and areas for further development and to plan creative strategies to address them.
- Different team structures enable teachers to plan for and monitor students' progress individually, across classes, grades, subjects and all other relevant groupings.
- The school has designed and embedded assessment systems which support its vision, regularly requiring students to present their work to different audiences.
- The staff constantly seeks to refine goals, plans and instructional practice based on the continuous analysis of data.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the differentiation of instruction.
- Further build the confidence and capacity of teachers to enable them to choose the most appropriate assessment tools for their purposes.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

In East Side Community High School data is one of the key energy sources that fuels instruction and learning. The principal has a relentless quest to ensure that data is used meaningfully to identify all relevant issues in students' work and development. His vision, shared by administration and faculty is to ask 'what can we learn from this?' and 'what are the implications for our instruction?' Teachers are wholeheartedly committed to self-evaluation and collaborative planning. This means that lessons learned from data analysis are converted into goals, action plans and implementation at all levels. The impact of these adaptations is consistently tracked and revisions made where necessary. One parent said that 'This school just keeps getting better and better'.

The constant reference to data to question, challenge, confirm and celebrate school practice extends beyond teachers to parents. Parents confirm that they feel fully engaged in their children's education and that the impact of these systems on students accelerates over time, saying 'the older they get the better the change you see in them'. Students themselves are involved, frequently completing self-evaluations and committing to goals for their own improvement.

In addition to formal exams the school uses a rigorous portfolio system for each student to collate work in each core class every year. Students are then required to present, explain and account for this work in a 'round table' performance based assessment with an audience that includes teachers, other students, family members and outside visitors. As well as generating key assessment information this challenging activity builds confidence in students and pride in their achievements. Students say that 'the teachers know you as an individual. They know your limits and push you beyond those limits because they know what you are capable of'.

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 administration and faculty collect extensive data continuously in order to evaluate all aspects of the students' learning, application, behavior and attitude. In addition to the ongoing, detailed work of individual teachers, coaches and administration, the whole faculty comes together on five 'data days' a year, which have significant impact across the school. On these days data for every student is collated and analyzed in one formalized data bank. It is evaluated by individual, class, grade, subject and relevant groups so that a complete picture of the school's performance is gained and shared. Teachers use this as an opportunity to test how effective they have been and to identify where they need to introduce further refinements into their curriculum and instructional practice.

In between these days, the advisory system ensures that one teacher knows each student's data intimately, studying trends and patterns in progress across the curriculum

and raising issues with the student, teachers, grade teams and parents. Other planning meetings across grades and subjects ensure that data is also analyzed vertically across the school. This leads to a comprehensive and collaborative use of quantitative and qualitative data to monitor student progress that is highly effective. In all meetings teachers are constructively challenged to identify how specific data sources can help them improve their instruction and to plan how they will subsequently adapt their work.

These data sources include systems designed by the school to track not only the academic progress of students but also their work behavior, effort and application. This data is also cross-referenced to their attendance records and to similar schools. These procedures have been developed and embedded over time, and lead to effective impact on individual students and groups. Teachers and administration are always looking for new ways to interrogate the data to learn different lessons from it, and seek new data sources to extend their knowledge of students' performance.

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.

The analysis of data is valued most by teachers where it leads directly to renewed goal setting for themselves as professionals, linked to their aspirations for their students' achievement. A teacher said 'if the expectations aren't met I evaluate myself as well as the students'. Another said 'every person in the school, from the grade 6 class to the principal practices goal setting based on data'. This sentiment is clearly evidenced across the school. Goal setting is self-managed and proactive.

The school leadership team and all faculty are integral to the creation of the Comprehensive Education Plan which has a core of highly focused 'power goals'. Teachers take personal accountability for delivering the desired improvements through their practice. Grade teams then use relevant data to set linked targets for individuals, classes, grades and groups. After each progress report the student is required to commit to new personal goals, which are recorded at the meeting, together with the parent and school commitment to support them in achieving these outcomes.

The school works very successfully to support students who are in particular need of improvement. Student intervention plans and mini individual education plans capture the key needs of students and the support committed so that all teachers have good access to the information. Extended strategies are used for individuals in the greatest need, even including after-school schedules to support students in extra-curricular activity and help parents organize time at home.

Teachers use consistent and creative methods to set high expectations and to motivate students to progress towards their goals. Anonymous performance data tells students how well their classes have achieved, whilst individually students receive multiple layers of feedback on their achievement and effort. By separating academic achievement and work habits teachers can see where certain students are struggling and set specific goals for improvement. The articulation of high expectations permeates every discussion, meeting and decision in the school. Teachers go to great lengths to ensure that students are always engaged in this process and therefore learn to be accountable for their own commitment and application.

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 strives successfully to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the students and prepares them well for their future career. It is built from elements from published frameworks and elements designed by the teachers for this specific school context. The curriculum also develops students as individuals, giving them confidence in their own abilities, teaching them to be responsible, independent thinkers. The combination of these two elements can be seen in the tailoring of specific curriculum activities to meet needs arising from data analysis. For example a weakness identified in the understanding of equations led to the design of an experiment in math where students filmed the flight of a ball in the air, mapped it onto a graph and then calculated the equation of the line. This sets their understanding in a real life context which motivated and engaged them. Student engagement is a priority in every lesson and is clearly successful. Students work well individually and in groups, and frequently present their work to their peers. Data is derived from all parts of the curriculum and feeds the constant evaluation of progress that takes place across the school.

The ongoing review of instructional strategies, student performance and goals means that teachers are continuously held to account. However, they welcome this as an essential part of their role, feeling valued and well supported. Differentiation of instruction through levels of intervention, adapted tasks, performance of work and varied expectations for individuals means that each student is challenged appropriately. Teachers are always refining ways of evaluating the impact that this differentiation has on student’s progress. They know that data is a valuable resource and that ‘having time to assess, compile and review this data in our grade teams is our strength’. At East Side, accountability means having a detailed exploration of the effectiveness of your own instructional techniques.

Over a long period the principal has used budgeting, staffing and scheduling opportunities to build these exceptional qualities in the school. The whole school focus on reading is well supported by very good book resources in classrooms and an excellent and well used library. The need for good attendance is developed as a core part of students’ accountability for themselves and is in line with similar and city schools.

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.

New teachers are very rigorously selected to ensure that they have both the skills, and the values necessary to fulfill the school’s aims. This includes the ability to analyze data effectively and the willingness to utilize the outcomes to improve personal practice. A commitment to high expectations for all students and across the breadth of personal and academic performance is an essential criterion and has not been compromised. Professional development is an integral element of the school’s practice. Teachers have weekly collaborative grade planning sessions, summer holiday planning sessions, data days and an annual retreat. Collaborative planning days at the end of each unit of work

enable teachers to evaluate against goals and learn from their experiences before the next unit. Research opportunities and national conferences are accessed when relevant. The focus of all professional development is derived from the school's goals, which in turn are defined by data analysis. Student portfolios that have been researched, trialed and refined successfully in math, in partnership with the Bank Street Leadership Program, are being extended across all subject areas in the coming year. Peer and self-evaluation are everyday experiences for teachers in this school with the result that they feel empowered to make decisions and take creative action to address issues they identify.

The principal provides visionary leadership and has an intimate knowledge of students, school performance and the quality of instruction, which he uses to build capacity and continuous improvement. He observes instruction frequently, and teaches lessons for other teachers to evaluate. Discussion about the impact of instruction is raised in almost every conversation in the school. With well defined and embedded procedures based on clear and consistent values the school runs smoothly with excellent relationships and a high level of self-discipline in students. There are extensive and meaningful partnerships with the New York University and a wide range of community organizations.

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 overwhelming attention to data analysis means that the evaluation of students' progress and their response to initiatives is a daily activity. Well structured and efficiently managed grade and vertical team meetings translate school goals into actions and monitor whether they are being successfully achieved. 'Comparison' underpins all evaluation, between the past and present, between the impact of different strategies and between students' performance in all groupings.

In this way the school's goals are turned into living organisms. They evolve and adapt continuously through frequent revision, without losing their original identity. They are owned and implemented by all teachers in their collaborative teams with sensitive guidance by the administration where it is needed. Students engage with their personal goals, supported by their parents and teachers, revising them regularly as they achieve them. Parents appreciate that some goals for their children refer to qualities of personal growth and development and that these also change over time to extend learning in different ways.

The outcomes of action plans, research and trials are used to continuously realign practice with school goals. This is demonstrated through the exceptional commitment of the whole faculty and embodies the vision that the school seeks to achieve with its students in their own learning.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: East Side Community High School IS/HS 450	∅	✓	+
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