



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Eagle School

Public School 140

**916 Eagle Avenue
Bronx
NY 10456**

Principal: Paul Cannon

Dates of review: October 30 - 31, 2006

Reviewer: Martyn Groucutt

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Eagle School has 527 enrolled students, from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. 85 (almost 17%) are special education students. There are 33 English language learners, whose home language is Spanish in most cases. Of the total student population, 42% are Black and 56.7% are Hispanic. Over the last year school attendance was at 91.1%, which is slightly below that for similar schools. The school is Title 1 eligible.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and assistant principals share a clear vision, focused on academic progress.
- Teachers demonstrate a clear commitment to school improvement.
- Data is collected throughout the year on every student and is used well to monitor progress.
- Academic intervention services effectively support the most vulnerable students, working with teachers to support differentiation.
- There are focused grade team meetings which monitor individual progress, well supported by the coaches.
- There is clear mutual respect between adults and students throughout the school.
- The school stresses a “can-do” atmosphere which fosters positive attitudes.
- The visually bright atmosphere boosts staff and student morale.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop data to show the relative performance of different groups of students.
- Develop a common system allowing the measurement of academic progress of students from admission until they leave.
- Make further developments in differentiated teaching to meet every individual's needs.
- Develop more effective use of technology across the whole curriculum.
- Improve the printed rubrics used on bulletin boards so they are more easily read.
- Increase the number of students performing at levels 3 and 4 in English language arts to match those obtained in mathematics.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

Eagle School has gone through a remarkable transformation since the arrival of the current principal. The effective use of data has contributed to a significant rise in student achievement. For example, in the school year 2005 through 2006, 3rd grade level 3 and 4 reading scores increased from 13% three years earlier to 42%. Over the same period, 5th grade mathematics performance at levels 3 and 4 increased from 8.2% to 53.6%. In social studies in 2005 through 2006, the school's 5th grade students turned in the highest-ranked scores in Region 2, showing a 30% increase in one year. Similar patterns of improvement can be seen across grades and subjects.

In large part this is due to the inspirational leadership of the principal, who has galvanized the whole school into a "can-do" philosophy based around academic improvement. The school is visually bright and there are constant reminders of the school's mission, vision and academic successes which do much to engender a very positive morale among both staff and students. This is reinforced with the successful use of data to track individual student progress. There is now an expectation of success among the whole school community.

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 makes very effective use of data to track the progress of individual students throughout the year. A range of data, both formal and informal, is used. Teachers are able to break down student performance into skills that have been mastered and performance levels. Supporting this data analysis is the maintenance of performance folders that go through the school with the student. The data analysis undertaken by teachers is used to differentiate group activities in class. Teachers give good support to groups, enabling students to learn effectively. However, at the moment there is still room for refining the use of data to develop individual differentiation and to take into account the differences in the performance and progress of different groups of students, such as boys and girls and the different ethnic groups.

As well as evidence from State and City test, the school generates its own data throughout the year. Progress is observed through monitoring the use of programs such as Voyager Passport, a kindergarten through 3rd grade intervention program, New Heights, which develops auditory skills and Foundations, which promotes phonemic awareness. Teachers then make use of their own assessments derived through, for example, conferencing and running records.

Through looking at its data the school has been able to identify that students who did not begin at school until 1st grade are not making the same progress as those who attended

pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. This is a good example of the way in which the school is reflective in its use of data and it is now in a position to use this information to try to impress on parents the value of education in the early years. The principal also compares the performance of Eagle School with that of similar and local schools.

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 school focuses strongly on the academic development of its students. Teachers meet together in effective grade teams to discuss their students’ progress and instruction. For example, in one meeting teachers were analyzing the ECLAS scores and one of the coaches was making suggestions for differentiated activities that might be developed from this. Throughout the school the academic intervention services team provides effective support in identifying and supporting the performance and progress of students in greatest need. Similarly, the whole child team, which includes the supporting professionals in the school, shows a real commitment to helping each student to maximize their potential.

The administration has high expectations of staff, but is also extremely supportive of them and their professional development. Teachers’ planning is monitored regularly by the assistant principals and there are clear expectations for what classrooms will look like. They are bright and display a range of posters, teacher-prepared materials and students’ work, together with the rubrics used to assess it. Similarly, teachers are expected to maintain up-to-date displays of students’ work on bulletin boards in the hallways. The good practice of always displaying the rubric for assessment with the work is sometimes rendered less effective by its being too small to be read easily. Thus a way of reinforcing good assessment and sharing with students what has to be done to make work better is not used to full advantage.

All teachers maintain a “Monitoring for Success” folder, which contains data on the development of every individual student’s skills in phonemic awareness and reading levels and individual breakdowns from the Princeton Review. In a simple format this provides them with an at-a-glance view of progress throughout the year. Individual conferencing is also used to very good effect. Or example, one teacher listened to a student reading to her, then discussed the text and from this the teacher was able to record performance on a range of skills that were set out on a monitoring form that will be maintained throughout the year. However, at the moment the school does not have a common system that would allow it to plot the progress and achievement of students from a baseline upon enrollment right through to the departure from the school.

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.

Instructional activity and school organization are very focused on promoting student achievement. This extends to a well publicized matrix which is prominently displayed around the school setting out areas of responsibility for a wide variety of school activities.

The main purpose of this is to release senior members of staff from being approached by teachers and students for tasks that could be undertaken by others, leaving them free to concentrate on their management tasks, based around raising the quality of teaching and learning.

Everyone is accountable for their actions. Assistant principals check on the schedules of teachers, while they themselves have to submit their daily schedule to the principal. The main aim is the promotion of accountability and effective use of time throughout the school.

The curriculum is chosen with care, engaging students from the start. For example, in kindergarten through 2nd grade the LEAP program promotes interactive learning, which includes a weekly visit from a consultant to support literacy development through arts infusion. Throughout the school, instructional programs engage students to the full and the clear enjoyment they show is a real incentive for promoting active learning.

Attendance is an issue for the school, exacerbated by the transient nature of many of the students. With the families of up to 25% of the school population living in temporary accommodation, many students move into the school, or leave, during the course of the school year. The principal now has positive contacts with social workers and as a result has minimized the disruption to learning that this causes. However, attendance remains a challenge and two family aides are used to good effect to contact parents who do not send their children regularly. The principal is aware of the relative performance and social development of girls and boys, and is trying to promote education as a positive process for males. He is trying to recruit males to work in the school and to involve fathers in being regular participants in their children's education.

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 staff of the school show a very positive commitment to the ideals of the principal and to the students that they teach. There is accountability for professional development and at the start of the year teachers agree goals and objectives for the year, which are checked at a progress meeting at Christmas and formally reviewed at the end of the year. A very good example of the commitment to the students is the lower grade teachers' willingness to remain after school every Friday for curriculum planning. This results in the quality of teaching being very good overall, enabling students to demonstrate good progress.

A system in which teachers loop through the school with their students from pre-kindergarten through 2nd grade, then from 3rd through 5th grades has been introduced. This is proving to be successful and enables teachers to build up strong relationships with students. In turn this promotes continuity of teaching and learning. Teachers themselves, when applying to join the school, are chosen carefully. They have to share the vision and be prepared to commit themselves to the culture that has been created. In interviews, candidates are questioned on their ability to use data to drive instruction as part of the process. The philosophy of the school is about promoting morale – there are high expectations of teachers, but also positive support. As an assistant principal put it, "there's no "gotcha" philosophy here, we're just creating a team where everyone is pulling the same way".

The coaches collect and analyze data for presentation to the cabinet, model lessons, act as mentors for newly qualifying or under-achieving teachers, present professional development in school and are the face of the school when attending outside training that they can bring back to school for others. It is a very full role that supports teachers in developing their skills, so that students benefit from enhanced instruction. They maintain logs of their work which they hand to the principal every two weeks so that he is aware of what they have achieved.

The principal and his two assistant principals monitor the work of teachers in their classes through both formal and informal observations. They provide feedback and support to promote better teaching. Similarly, teachers support each other professionally, for example, through weekly common preparation team meetings. Inter-visitation takes place, although the program could be developed further.

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 grade teams use data effectively to monitor individual student progress and to group students for differentiated learning. If evidence suggests that students are not getting what they need, their curriculum can be amended very quickly and this occurs throughout the year. However, the system has not yet developed effective promotion of individual differentiation, in part because there is still a limited use of technology, which is a powerful tool for promoting individualized learning.

Data such as the Princeton Review is used very effectively and the school encourages students to work on line to undertake exercises aimed at strengthening their skills. Students and teachers all have their own passwords to access the system, which also allows teachers to monitor which students are going on-line. A recent parent workshop run by the mathematics coach was aimed at helping parents to support their children in accessing Princeton materials.

The principal has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of his staff and has deployed them carefully to the grades where they are going to be most successful. He is also aware that English language arts are not as strong as mathematics within the school and has instituted a process that is promoting literacy through the whole curriculum, including physical education, which has its word wall in the gymnasium. This has a clear focus on raising standards. The use of their "Monitoring for Success" folders enables teachers to use the data they maintain on every student that they teach to show the progress they are making through the year.

Raising the standards of teaching and learning is at the heart of what the school is trying to achieve. There is a very clear focus that has transformed this school and energized all who work in it. One of the key skills of the principal has been the way in which he has won the hearts and minds of teachers and the local community from which the students come, so that there is now a commitment to success. The achievements over the last three years have been remarkable and there is no reason why they should not be sustained into the future.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Eagle School (PS 140)	∅	✓	+
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