

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

East New York Family Academy

Middle School – High School 409

**2057 Linden Boulevard
Brooklyn
NY 11207**

Principal: Sheila Richards

Dates of review: May 20 – 21, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Michael L. Schurek

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

East New York Family Academy is a middle school-high school with 448 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 62% Black, 35% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 0% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 44% of the students enrolled and girls account for 56%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 91.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

East New York Family Academy has achieved its namesake by developing a family atmosphere with impressive levels of trust and respect among staff and students, as evidenced by one student's comment, "Teachers are like an extended part of your family." Numerous partnerships provide extensive social emotional support to students and their families, guiding their personal and academic development and enabling them to excel. The school accelerates learning for students in its middle and high schools by exposing students to next level courses in each content area as soon as they are able, thereby establishing high expectations as students participate in rigorous coursework designed to prepare them for and gain acceptance into college.

The principal has strategically established a data computer room to support the use of data to drive instruction and has arranged for all teachers to participate in collaborative teams, thereby empowering them to be decision makers and establishing a true learning community in alignment with school goals. The work of these teams drives professional development activities that enable teachers to lead workshop presentations, self-reflect and involve all staff in the practice of visiting each other's room's to observe best practices. The school's robust use of data and strong internal communication enables them to understand students' strengths and weaknesses that are used to adjust instructional practices and make organizational changes to increase student outcomes.

An extensive tutorial program provides students in need of additional support with learning goals in English language arts and math that are tracked by teachers; however, this practice has not yet been established in other content area subjects. Rubrics are widely used in all subjects, but are inconsistently utilized to communicate next learning steps to students to improve the quality of their work.

Parents describe the school as family-oriented and praise the school's increased communication with them through phone calls, phone messages, emails, newsletters, training workshops and special ceremonies and shows that strengthen community involvement. The school has designed a school goal to expand the numbers of teachers practicing differentiation that will eventually encompass all subjects and teachers; however, at this time some classes are conducted without utilizing differentiation techniques to meet the varying needs of students. In addition, school, teacher team, and class action plans do not contain interim benchmark targets to monitor progress along the way and revise practices as needed for maximum impact.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Leaders make informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support improvements in learning.
 - The principal has aligned school resources to school goals by creating a data computer room for teachers to support their efforts to use data to differentiate instruction. In addition, numerous site licenses and software applications have been purchased that enable students to recover credits and prepare for Regents exams, resulting in increased numbers of advanced Regents diplomas earned and higher graduation rates.
 - Teacher schedules have been modified and combined with extended day time to create an extensive tutorial program for students in need, helping to close the achievement gap. In addition, the school has markedly increased the number of teachers that meet to collaborate, share best practices, support each other, and conduct inquiry to improve instruction, thereby motivating teachers to develop strategies that enhance learning.
- The school is a safe place where students are engaged in learning and they appreciate the good level of support they receive for their personal and academic development.
 - Learning Environment Survey results have prompted the school to increase communication through increased newsletters, phone messages, emails and special parent workshops. The entire staff, including custodial personnel, is accessible to the students ensuring that they are supported and listened to, thereby creating an extended family for students at the school.
 - Teachers have been trained to address disciplinary matters in a positive and non-confrontational manner through “Capturing Kids Hearts” workshops. In addition, boys and girls meet regularly in student support groups to ensure that student social and emotional needs are met.
- Staff convey high expectations to students and parents thus impacting positively on student achievement.
 - High expectations are communicated to every student. Through effective orientations during camp experiences, and reinforcement throughout students’ years at the school via retreats, town hall meetings, and participation in numerous accelerated courses, college level electives, and senior thesis papers, there have been robust gains in college entrance acceptances.
 - The parent coordinator, administrators, and teachers, regularly conduct parent-training events, such as the ARIS Parent Link workshop, to train parents in helping their children meet rigorous school goals, resulting in strong community commitment.

- School leaders and staff work together to evaluate instructional and organizational decisions and make adjustments to improve student outcomes.
 - Administrators work in tandem with teachers to design new curriculum that meets student needs yet aligns with school goals. This year a 'Science Investigation Class' has been established for grade 10 students who had already passed English language arts, American history, and math Regents. This course teaches skills utilizing all the different sciences so that the students can select the science of their choice the following year, supporting school differentiation goals and empowering students to select areas of interest.
 - The principal and her cabinet use observation tools and feedback from teacher teams to make organizational decisions that accelerate student learning. For example, a particular mix of high school students presented behavioral challenges. Administrators worked with teachers and the teams involved and decided to split this class into two, thereby lowering the student-teacher ratio, resulting in a much more positive environment.
- The school provides extensive individualized professional development and support to teachers to learn effective teaching methods and encourages them to self-evaluate and revise their instructional approaches when suitable.
 - Teachers regularly reflect on their practice, evaluate their progress and set goals aligned with school instructional beliefs. Professional development activities are selected as a result of these goals and teacher surveys. Staff conduct professional development during teacher team meetings and professional development days, thereby building capacity.
 - Administrators and teachers meet together on a weekly basis to share best practice and study student and teacher work to develop practices that improve instruction. These meetings are frequently used to conduct walkthroughs of classes using a checklist aligned with school instructional practices, resulting in increased school wide coherence.
- Administrators and teachers intentionally use a wide range of assessment data to monitor school level needs, student progress, plan instruction, and create intervention or extension strategies when needed.
 - School leaders use data from varied sources to analyze trends, such as low scoring grade 8 students who end up behind in credits earned while in high school. To meet the needs of identified subgroups, additional time in the form of "skills periods" have been added to Regents' preparation courses to allow for individualized attention, resulting in higher pass rates.
 - Math and English language arts teachers use Acuity predictive assessment results to determine which students are ready to take the Regents exams with a high degree of accuracy. In addition, they create their own classroom assessments to supplement this data and differentiate instruction to meet student needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand the practice of responding to student work with guiding comments based on rubrics and related exemplars, to convey clear next steps to students and families across all grades and subjects.
 - Rubrics are displayed and used in all subjects and grades. An English language arts display demonstrated explicit suggestions to students using Microsoft word track changes on student work submitted electronically. However, rubrics and genre exemplars are inconsistently utilized throughout the school to rate student projects, and to suggest explicit improvements necessary to raise work quality. It is also not established practice for students to use rubrics to reflect and self-assess the quality of their work.

- Extend the routine of using data to set differentiated learning goals to all subjects for student subgroups and students in need of additional support to specifically target their needs, track their progress, and raise outcomes.
 - Staff is scheduled to provide tutoring services to students and use data to develop goals in the areas of English language arts and math for students. However, goal setting has not yet progressed to other content area subjects making it difficult for teachers and teams to ensure that student subgroups are on a path to mastery of all learning standards. This lack of practice also makes it more difficult to adjust classroom practices in social studies and science to accelerate learning.

- Refine action planning by linking interim goals to targeted benchmarks at specific intervals so that school, team, and teacher action plans, can be monitored to expedite revisions and maximize impact.
 - School action plans use percentage-based targets as the annual goal in the area of differentiated instruction. Benchmarks measuring progress towards these goals at specific intervals during the school year are not indicated. Teacher team and class action plans currently do not contain these systems for targeted students. The lack of these structures hampers the school's ability to determine the effectiveness of their actions along the way to allow for contingencies and make timely adjustments that improve outcomes. It also limits the school's ability to align year-to-year planning.

- Broaden differentiation practices to continually increase the percentages of teachers using these techniques to engage all levels of students in all subjects and establish deep-seated instructional coherence.
 - The principal has strategically designed school goals that increase the percentages of teachers practicing differentiation each year while gradually expanding this practice to all content areas and is making nice progress in this regard. Unfortunately, at this time some classes offering undifferentiated access to the curriculum do not provide the support and extensions students need to ensure high levels of student engagement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: East New York Family Academy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?				X
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				X
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?				X
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?				X
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?				X
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X				
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X				
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X				
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?				X			
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?				X			
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				X			
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?				X			
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?			X				
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed