

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

The Eagle Academy for Young Men II

Middle – High School 644

**1137 Herkimer Street
Brooklyn
NY 11233**

Principal: Rashad Meade

Dates of review: November 16 – 17, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Kim S. Outerbridge

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Eagle Academy for Young Men II is a Middle-High School with 147 students in grades 6 and 7. The school population comprises of 88% Black, 11% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 100% of the students enrolled. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 94%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The Eagle Academy for Young Men II is in its second year of successful development towards becoming a grade 6 through 12 middle-high school. Following the mission and vision of the first Eagle Academy in the Bronx, the principal with a core team of professionals wrote the proposal, which is effectively implemented each day. Scholars meet every morning in the cafeteria for breakfast, where a reading selection is distributed to enhance summarizing and chunking skills. Adopting this practice as part of the morning “town hall” meeting sparks conversation and discussion with focus on global consciousness and global competitiveness. Scholars recite a chant and refer to each other as brothers. Consequently, a strong culture, student bonding, and academic expectations are consistently reinforced every day.

School-wide goals provide a clear “theory of action” and are articulated through teacher teams, groups, and individual students. Increasing reading levels by two years, implementation of the International Baccalaureate curriculum framework, and the advanced math program are embedded throughout the school in order to affect change in teaching practices. Strategically developed teacher teams meet regularly with focused agendas to improve student outcomes with proven impact. Because of the large number of collaborative teams, all staff members take part and demonstrate a strong commitment to the school, its students, and the community. School wide, the teachers focus on developing critical thinking skills as evidenced by consistent language used in classrooms. Systems and structures to share best practices amongst staff members are transitioning to a library of video snap shots. A department chairperson talked about the positive impact of the videos for him as a teacher leader as well as for his less experienced colleagues.

Scholars demonstrate real engagement in learning. They are eager to share their learning experiences, their social interactions with their brothers, and the ongoing support received in and outside of school. They openly speak about how they have changed because of their new school environment. Parents convey their support for the school and the open door policy that allows for communication on a regular basis. Progress reports, an online grading system, scheduled meetings and walk-in conversations are ongoing, but the school has only just started to provide parents with access to ARIS to involve them more actively in monitoring their child’s progress. Although scholars can speak to school-wide goals, and are successfully encouraged to be reflective about the learning process, they are far less certain about what they need to do to reach their targets.

Because the school has only been in existence for a short time, it is still deepening its approaches to evaluation in order to build coherence between what is taught, how it is taught, and how well it is taught, so that curricular and instructional adjustments target students’ learning needs effectively.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school creates a learning environment that effectively supports Eagle scholars in being academically challenged and socially balanced at the start of each instructional day.
 - A house model, incorporating the International Baccalaureate program, includes five key pillars of Eagle Scholarship: confidence, effort, resilience, commitment to excellence, and leadership. Through a system of distributive counseling, effective support is provided for scholars and educators. Young men are matched across grade levels followed by a house selection ceremony. Eagle scholars exhibit a strong sense of pride in themselves, their brothers, and their school and, consequently, relate to the school's mission, are highly interested and want to succeed.
 - Development of the Eagle Active Reading Summaries program (EARS) creates drive and ambition in young men who are globally conscious and competitive. Upon arrival every morning, scholars receive an EARS article, specifically selected to develop critical thinking skills. The program has directly affected proficiency levels in note taking and chunking skills. Measurable growth has also resulted because instructional and organizational decisions are precisely aligned to instructional goals.
- The curriculum challenges and engages individual and groups of students with emphasis on rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills.
 - Department chairs design and develop effective curriculum maps and unit assessments using the Understanding by Design model because of International Baccalaureate training and practice. Comprehensive maps include a unit focus, an essential question, listed skills or big ideas, and learning objectives related to student outcomes based on unit assessments. These are modified from the previous school year to address the overarching school-wide needs and goals. One adjustment, made and validated in the grade 6 math curriculum, is the "correct the error" handout. In classrooms, students eagerly participate, articulate their thinking, ask questions for clarifications, and assess their progress.
- School leaders and teacher teams collect and analyze multiple data sets, thus creating a clear image of the progress of individual and sub-groups.
 - There is wide-ranging analysis of standardized, baseline, diagnostic, and classroom level data to distinguish three target groups of students identified as critical, pushable, and accelerated. On Monday through Thursday from 2 - 5pm, three blocks are scheduled and students are organized for extended day programs based on their targeted identification in group instruction. Additionally, independent reading is scheduled for all scholars during the extended day block. Unit assessments and running record data confirm school-wide goals and action plans. In six to eight week cycles, running records and unit assessments results have shown improved student outcomes.

- Using pre-designed Google docs, teachers input student data, discuss trends, and revisit school goals during weekly common planning time. This structure enables them to make inclusive assessment and instructional decisions. Math teachers have examined classroom level data to track progress using the “correct the error” template. This error analysis is constructed to improve computational skills across strands. This enables teachers to identify inaccuracies within classrooms and across the grade. Interim assessments show that students demonstrate mastery over time.
- Teachers effectively work with all scholars within and across the grade levels and sub-groups in order to enable students to reflect on their own learning.
 - In a special education classroom, students were asked, “What strategies can we use to become independent learners?” This common language builds a “thinking” community and is heard in many of the classrooms. In other classrooms, teachers remind students to “activate your schema”. This further verifies coherence between building alignment and strategies used to develop self-reflective practices. In an English language arts class, accelerated students read adult level excerpts from the book “The Last of the Mohegans” while others read grade level material.
- The principal, department chairpersons, and faculty establish organizational and instructional routines, design interventions, and make adjustments that are directly linked to the school’s instructional goals and student learning.
 - Actions are centered on using the inquiry approach where teachers and school leaders regularly meet in multi-tiered teams. Each of the nine teams focuses on a specific content area or sub-group. One cohort monitors and assesses the Algebra I accelerated program established for high achieving math students in grade 7. A four-week summer program officially began this study. Level 3 and 4 students are required to participate during the summer and continue in a year-long, after-school program. Short term, students are expected to master 50% of the Algebra I Regents level content during this year. The school’s two-year goal is for students to master the content of Algebra I and pass the Regents exam at the end of grade 8.
- Professional development provides faculty with opportunities to sustain a safe and respectful environment that celebrates academic engagement and student success as well as models of teacher growth.
 - The principal provides differentiated support structures for teachers by means of informal walkthroughs, prepared and monitored by department chairs, and formal observations. Both are documented and used to compliment strengths and outline areas of growth for individual educators. An effective buddy system for new teachers includes documentation, the identification of specific next steps, and intervisitations. The newly designed Eagle shared practice study includes a videotape snapshot of in-house lessons. Archived using an online host, all videos allow for individual self-reflection and multiple learning opportunities for others.
- The school consistently communicates high expectations, including attendance and student progress, which ensures the commitment of both students and their families to the school’s goals.

- The school distributes progress reports before the end of each marking. There is an open door policy and parents are welcomed to the school for teacher and/or principal conferences. An online grading system allows parents to monitor progress on homework assignments, tests, quizzes, and projects. Open lines of communication enable parents to be informed about their child's progress and to support fully the schools' mission and vision.

What the school needs to improve

- Sharpen approaches to evaluation in order to build coherence between what is taught, how it is taught, and how well it is taught, so that curricular and instructional adjustments target students' learning needs.
 - Teacher teams use assessment data, which measures progress and impacts planning for next steps. However, those teaching practices worthy of sharing and replicating within the school are not emphasized which limits the school's efforts to build capacity through the collaborative process.
 - The school has yet to identify specific strategies that will lead to complete ownership of the goals set by the faculty so that school leaders and staff can precisely measure team growth and align this growth to student outcomes.
- Deepen practices designed to increase communication and accountability where students are encouraged to articulate next learning steps resulting multifaceted and parents are empowered to understand their child's performance and progress.
 - One school-wide goal is for every student to increase their Fountas and Pinnell independent reading level by two grades. In both large and small groups, students can speak to these goals and progress made toward their target. However, specific next steps towards mastery are not as clear. When scholars were asked how they plan to reach their independent reading level by the end of the school year, students' responses were vague.
 - Parents are aware of the ARIS parent link system, but do not yet have access to it or know how to use it. In order to enable parents to further collaborate with the school in support of student learning a newly designated community associate, who started September 2009, is just beginning the launch of the system.
- Complete the shared practice study so that the strategy of providing a wide range of differentiated support models to help teachers further improve their instruction to meet the needs of groups working at different levels is embedded.
 - Video snap shots of specific teaching strategies provide exemplars for new and experienced teachers. Eagle educators assess, reflect, modify, and share instructional practices as a result of viewing these. Because this process is at the beginning stages, school-wide results are unavailable and not all teachers show the same confidence in matching work to students' abilities.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: The Eagle Academy for Young Men II	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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