

Quality Review Report

2009-2010

Emolior Academy

Middle School 383

**1330 Bristow Street
Bronx
NY 10459**

Principal: Derick Spaulding

Dates of review: January 11 – 12, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Myrna Rodriguez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Emolior Academy is a middle school with 157 students from grade 6 through grade 7. The school population comprises 39% Black and 61% Hispanic students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 26.0% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 91.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Emolior Academy opened its doors two years ago and has provided students with a safe and nurturing environment. The leadership and teachers know the children by name, grade and academic scores and this promotes high levels of trust and keeps levels of behavioral disturbances low, allowing teachers and students to concentrate on teaching and learning. Parents are enthusiastic in their appraisal of the leadership and teachers, emphasizing how much their children are learning because of the mutual respect and rigorous curricula provided by the school. Students are engaged in their unit-based projects or work in teams discovering, debating, or researching in different centers throughout the classrooms, promoting ownership of their learning. They share the school's vision and clear expectations in their motto of the "Three Rocks" which promotes academic, character (with an attendance component) and college readiness development. The use of various technologies is evident in all subjects allowing students to be engaged in extended lessons or providing additional support for individuals and small groups.

During the recent summer the leadership and teachers formulated clear, focused school goals and action plans starting with curricular development. The leadership and faculty share a coherent vision for the academic success of all students and this is evidenced in the rigorous and engaging curricula embedded in project-based learning in all subjects. The curricula, addresses the needs of higher-achieving students and supports all subgroups and lower-achieving students. Out of this work has come the realization that the school needs to develop more comprehensive, family-friendly progress reports that detail what students and families need to know about achieving goals by fully detailing next steps. This initiative also addresses the mission of the school, to provide instruction that will lead to college readiness.

Teachers are part of the decision-making processes and are empowered through the new teacher-led teams. Teams meet weekly to conduct collaborative inquiry, co-plan and share best practices. They set class and individual goals for all students, resulting in an increase in the use of different strategies to reach all students such as mini-lessons or using push-in staff to work directly with targeted groups. The leadership has structures in place, such as meetings with all teams every week instructional cabinet meetings and teacher team meetings to share data, evaluate and monitor findings, in order to adjust or modify organizational decisions. Data collection is ongoing and very comprehensive, but the administration has not yet developed all the tools to provide easily accessible information to the wider school community.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has a safe environment and inclusive culture that supports progress toward the school's academic and youth development goals leading to high levels of student engagement.
 - Each student is known by the principal and other adults who help to coordinate: youth development, academic achievement, celebration of successes, and other supports that are designed to have an impact on improving each student's academic progress and success.
 - Students are proud to say that they too are responsible for their safe and respectful environment because they are empowered by the leadership and teachers. They share and help make decisions. English language learners and special needs students are nurtured while being held to the same expectations as the general population. As a result, all students' work products, oral presentations and class scores demonstrate high levels of effort and achievement.
- The school has systems in place to measure achievement of short- and long-term goals and make revisions throughout the year.
 - The school has instructional team meetings to set benchmarks using summative and formative assessments which are analyzed every six weeks to revise goals. The leadership builds capacity by having teachers lead the teams.
 - The lead teachers meet periodically with the leadership to assess results and collaborate on revisions, identifying areas of improvements in plans. This collaboration leads to high levels of engagement and ownership by all teachers because their recommendations and suggestions are acknowledged in this process.
- School leaders and teachers use various State, City and school data, to develop a deeper understanding of the performance and progress of individuals, by group and subject, which informs instruction.
 - Teachers meet weekly with the English language arts coach and academic intervention service teachers, teacher leaders and administration to examine a wide range of summative and formative data including State, periodic, teacher assessments and student work to identify and discuss common trends. Teachers use this information to develop curriculum, lessons as well as instructional strategies
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers examine a wide range of classroom data to develop unit and benchmark assessments to pinpoint student needs and strengths in order to inform their teaching. Teachers collaborate well and push in to classes at various times to work with groups of students who have not achieved successfully on unit or benchmark assessments.

- Teachers, coaches and teacher leaders meet in professional learning communities and use data-informed processes to set measurable goals in all subjects across the grades for individual and groups of students.
 - Teacher teams meet regularly by grade and curriculum areas to identify students who need additional support and set differentiated goals for them. The school provides push-in support from the coach and academic intervention services teachers, and teachers have initiated a special morning study skills program to help students who need more time on task.
 - Teachers use established curriculum benchmarks, which they have developed in English language arts, math, science and social studies, to set group and individual student goals that are used to adjust class activities to maximize student achievement.
- Distributive leadership structures ensure that teachers are part of key decisions that affect student learning.
 - All teams are teacher led and are engaged in structured collaborative work using an inquiry approach, based on the examination of student data and work, to design curriculum, instructional strategies and lessons. The teams plan professional development and develop explicit strategies that can be shared within teams. The leadership is committed to promoting teacher leadership.
 - The leadership regularly meets with staff and aligns its leadership development to the school's goals through collaborative and reflective processes. Teacher goals are directly aligned to student learning and social-emotional needs, as well as developing their leadership skills. Teachers and staff commit their free time to developing their skills as instructional leaders and facilitators, which strengthens the school's leadership capacity.
- There is a short list of clear, focused school-level goals and action plans as well as annual and interim goals which drive efforts to accelerate student learning based on analysis of a good range of data.
 - There is a coherent vision and a great deal of support of school goals. These goals are grounded on the "Three Rocks" of development, which entail academic success, character development and college-bound readiness for all students. School goals and actions plans are developed collaboratively with the leadership, supported by good organizational and instructional decisions and structures.
 - School leaders effectively communicate with teachers, during school-level processes, encouraging participation, which has led to a broad base of support for the school's decisions. Thoughtfully designed action plans, calendars, newsletters, and similar documents are being used to leverage changes that explicitly link to accelerated student learning.
- School leaders and teacher teams have structures in place to regularly evaluate and adjust the use of organizational resources in response to student learning needs.

- The leadership organizes weekly professional learning communities for teachers and administrators to collaborate in studying and analyzing student data and develop strategies to improve student achievement. Teams monitor and recommend curricular, organizational, and instructional changes or revisions that allows for the leadership and teachers to focus on the attainment of school and class goals. Learning centers and the purposeful introduction of various technologies are used well to allow students extra time on task and for extending lessons.
- All teacher team leaders and coach and academic intervention services teachers regularly meet with the administration to discuss student-learning data. Such meetings have resulted in recommendations to expand professional development opportunities, make curricular changes and to further align school goals to student needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop tools to aggregate and organize data so that it is captured in an easily accessible format to facilitate sharing of information and better enable planning.
 - The school leader has a remarkable understanding and capability of sharing all the comprehensive data that the school collects and analyzes. This is possible because the school is small but there are not systems in place to share larger amounts of data as the school grows.
 - Although the leadership has the most relevant data readily available, not all pertinent data is aggregated in a systemic manner so that it is accessible to all. This is a top priority for this administration.
- Expand and promote involvement and leadership of families in important school activities and provide supports to enable a larger participation.
 - The school actively promotes parent involvement in class presentations and parents acknowledge how school activities and programs positively affect their children. However they express a desire for a wider range of leadership opportunities within the school and more information about curriculum.
 - The newly organized parent association members are not trained in using the ARIS Parent Link at school and at home which hinders the promotion of sharing of academic data to all parents.
- Expand systems for sharing performance data and information with families regarding explicit and clear next steps for students to achieve their goals.
 - Parents are very appreciative of the academic and personal success of their children, which is shared with them through grade and progress reports, parent meetings as well as through email, telephone calls and a new website which allows parents to see their student's class and homework scores. The school does not always make clear the specific steps students should take to meet individual goals in each subject. Families do not have comprehensive guidelines to work with their children to help them achieve their goals.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Emolior Academy	△	▶	✓	+
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>	△	▶	✓	+
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>	△	▶	✓	+
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