

Quality Review Report

2010-2011

The Emma Lazarus School

Elementary School K268

**133 East 53rd Street
Brooklyn
NY 11203**

Principal: Vangela Kirton

Dates of review: May 25 - 26, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Shermila Bharat

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Emma Lazarus School is an elementary school with 558 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 95% Black and 3% Hispanic students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 93.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders make strategic organizational decisions that align with the school's instructional goals to increase student achievement.
 - Teacher and coaching assignments support student needs and promote accountable collaboration among faculty. Teaching assignments are adjusted based on demonstrated performance and teachers work together on grade level teams to plan. Coaches in math and English language arts (ELA), along with consultants, assist with the delivery of instruction in reading, writing and math to ensure alignment of instruction with school goals to close the achievement gap.
 - The school is piloting instructional resources as a result of consultations between the math coach and teachers after data analysis of the State exams revealed a need to attack particular skills. Additionally, the school has created alternating weeks of double periods in ELA and math along with common planning time for grade teams to meet and analyze student work resulting in higher than anticipated scores on the predictive exams for many students.
- The school effectively collects and analyzes data to identify trends in student achievement to make purposeful instructional decisions.
 - School leaders and faculty have looked at a range of data from State assessment results, the Progress Report, teacher conference notes, and observations to create a clear picture of student's strengths and areas for growth. From this data analysis, school wide goals and individual student goals were set and monitored over time.
 - Student subgroups, identified based on using the analysis of various data sources, has led to inquiry teams targeting the lowest third and tracking their progress as interventions are put in place. The school's pupil personnel team meets weekly to discuss individual students and to initiate action steps to ensure that individualized plans to meet the needs of the students identified as at risk are effectuated.
- The school community provides parents with information about their children's learning needs and progress resulting in improved parent involvement.
 - The parent coordinator and coaches provide numerous workshops throughout the year that include how to access the various online tools, such as ARIS Parent Link and the Learning Environment Survey, available to parents. Parents are provided support in understanding how to track their child's progress and increase understanding and engagement in student progress.
 - Parents are active partners in the school and have taken part in learning walks using a common classroom visitation tool, as well as serve as parent volunteers in classrooms and during morning line up. They also receive regular progress reports and are invited to meet with teachers to set goals

for their child, all of which leads to greater parent involvement in the school and continual involvement in academic progress.

- A shared vision for accelerating data based student achievement is effectively communicated and supported by the entire school community.
 - The faculty supports the coherent school culture established through goals that provide a common instructional focus which is centered on targeting the 4th grade by embedding literacy skills, particularly writing within all subject areas, so that learning is maximized. School leaders provide teachers with opportunities to learn how to write SMART goals for individual students that are benchmarked three times a year linking students in class assessments, standardized assessments and the school's goals. From this practice, a clear path for understanding students' areas for growth and progress has been created.
- The school has a transparent and collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long range goals resulting in greater understanding of student learning needs.
 - School leaders and faculty looked at last year's goals and data and recognized a need to change their primary focus from ELA to math given the results of the State assessments. The school uses Every Day Math and students are given unit exams, mid year exams and end of the year exams. This has resulted in students' predictive scores being at least 8-10 points higher than the goals set at the beginning of the year.
 - Teachers meet weekly in grade level teams and track student progress based on select groups of target students. The student's work is discussed as well as strategies to enhance understanding of the curricula. Each student has individual goals that are set with an action plan that include a variety of supports, such as an AIS (academic intervention service) teacher, push in/pull out services, after school programs, teacher target or extended day support. Time frames for meeting the goals are set for the necessary support procedures, resulting in clarity of information and purpose of the teams.

What the school needs to improve

- Enrich and align the curricula with key standards across all subject areas to embed rigor and develop higher order thinking skills.
 - Although each grade follows a course of study that aligns with State standards, the school does not have a fully articulated curriculum that is being implemented across classrooms that emphasizes academic rigor or higher order thinking skills. As a result, the instruction inconsistency aligns to key standards and lacks opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills thereby limiting high levels of student performance.
- Further develop differentiated instruction in classrooms so that all students are actively engaged and challenged to produce high quality work products.
 - Some teachers effectively use data and student learning styles to provide instruction that engages students. However, the practice of engaging all

learners in instruction and flexible heterogeneous grouping is uneven across classrooms. The level of work products shows little variation of how instructional practices challenge all students appropriately. Consequently, opportunities for multiple entry points based on student's level of readiness are missed which limits opportunities for students to learn at their highest potential.

- Consistently utilize assessments that measure student progress and pedagogy so that adjustments can be made to the curriculum and instructional practices to increase student achievement.
 - While the school uses programs linked to the standards that provide embedded assessments, across classrooms assessments have not been consistently differentiated. Teachers have created common assessments, but curriculum based assessments that provide data on instructional practices and progress for sub-groups are irregularly used. Without these informative assessments in practice, the scope of what students can do, how they are able to access the curricula and where pedagogical practices require modifications, struggle to be identified and addressed, thus limiting the progress of students.
- Adjust the observation tool to collaboratively develop teachers' goals and benchmarks that align with the school-wide focus and best practices to enhance professional growth.
 - Teachers meet to discuss practice and are regularly observed, however there is little rigor in the recommendation section of the observation reports and very few next steps. As a result teachers have very little formal guidance for enhancing their craft. Consequently, teacher growth is not maximized to positively affect student learning.
 - The administration recognizes the importance of goals which has led to school wide goals, students' goals and the principal's performance goals. However, there are no professional goals set with teachers based on their need for growth as they develop their craft as educators. In the absence of this practice, the benchmarking of teacher effectiveness is ambiguous and hinders the professional growth of teachers.
- Modify the school's professional development plan so that it is linked to goal setting and accountability processes to increase pedagogical capacities.
 - School leaders and coaches provide professional development opportunities for teachers to hone their pedagogical skills. However, a cohesive professional development plan that links with the school's vision and needs of teachers is not in place. As a result, the school struggles to effectively address teachers' professional development needs to increase instructional practices.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: The Emma Lazarus School	UD	D	P	WD
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, 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	

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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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				
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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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				
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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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					
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed