



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

East Flatbush Community Research School

Middle School 581

905 Winthrop Street

Brooklyn

NY 11203

Principal: David Manning

Dates of review: January 25 - 26, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Veronica Yurcik

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

East Flatbush Community Research School is a middle school with 259 students from grade six through grade eight. The school population comprises 94% Black, 4% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 63% of the students enrolled and girls account for 37%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 89.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Trust in school leadership coupled with a strong, shared commitment to instructional, professional and organizational modifications sustains a calm and safe learning environment for students and adults alike.
 - Large-scale staff buy-in for numerous system changes have resulted in a peaceful school focused on both student and adult learning. Students clearly voice trust in adults and describe how teachers' on-going attention has made them more accountable to their academic work. Due to staff members' consistent discipline and follow-up, the school is a safe learning environment, characterized by respectful teacher and student interactions. One student put it succinctly: "This year, we are more responsible...because teachers help us and influence us to stay on the right path."
 - The institution of daily student advisory periods ensures that every student has an adult point person to keep an eye on his/her academic and emotional needs. Students express appreciation for the support offered and for the opportunities advisory provide to ask questions, express needs and catch up on school work.
- Frequent observation of classroom instruction promotes on-going reflection supporting shared expectations for pedagogical excellence.
 - The principal has quadrupled his teaching observations this past year and is developing new feedback systems in collaboration with teachers during weekly walkthroughs. He has re-designed formal observations to align with the four domains of Charlotte Danielson's' Framework for Teaching. As a result, more comprehensive and concise information is now being used to inform performance evaluations, retention and tenure decisions.
 - A majority of teachers demonstrate support for a new school instructional platform that focuses on students' assuming more responsibility for their own learning. As a result, lessons now include focused teaching and guided practice, collaborative and independent learning tasks.
- The principal makes strategic organizational decisions that maximize favorable conditions to support student learning.
 - Recently, the principal has made many effective tactical management decisions. He has created a student support team to monitor discipline and promote youth development, which has resulted in a much improved school environment. A parent coordinator was hired, improving parent volunteerism. Participation in the Teacher Effectiveness Pilot has completely re-tooled teacher evaluation and created a shared school-wide commitment to improving professional practice. The initiation of a common instructional platform provides a mutual lens for teachers to evaluate teaching and learning.

- Challenged by a high teacher turn-over rate, the principal addressed hiring and teacher assignments strategically using a new evaluation framework and assigning teachers to match grade level needs, better supporting students' instructional needs.
- Regular opportunities for professional learning and evaluation of practice strengthen classroom practices to improve student learning.
 - Frequent professional learning meetings, related to differentiated and guided instruction, are linked to school goals and current State standards, promoting self-reflection as a shared value.
 - Lead teachers who are instructional cabinet members run frequent grade and department professional development, enabling teacher leadership for ongoing support to colleagues in evaluating practice.
- The school emphasizes youth development as an important component in creating conditions that accelerate learning and support student well-being.
 - Action plans and tracking systems, developed by the new assistant principal working closely with staff, have resulted in a reduction of negative incidents and a calm school learning environment. Teachers credit the use of new anecdotal recording tools in helping them to collaborate in designing interventions that support students' improved behavior and focus on academic goals. In addition, guidance counselors are developing lessons in bullying prevention, time management and goal setting, enabling students to become more self aware and accountable. Student community research projects are personally meaningful to students and result in improved commitment to their own learning.
 - Teachers received contracted professional development during the inauguration of student advisories to develop intervention strategies supporting students' social-emotional needs. As a result, teachers report improved skills in analyzing student behavior and needs and working with students and families to affect positive student well-being through individualized action plans.

What the school needs to improve

- Align curricula to key State standards so that all students can consistently engage in higher order thinking tasks that support academic achievement.
 - The principal indicates that curriculum work is relatively new, with lead teachers now guiding alignment of curriculum to standards. Curriculum development had been an on-going process that was left to the discretion of individual teachers. The lack of consistent attention to and identification of key standards and texts inhibits the school's ability to provide every student with equitable opportunities for constancy and rigor needed to close the achievement gap.
 - Classroom tasks emphasize lower order knowledge and comprehension skills such as defining, matching and interpreting. Thus, academically challenged students do not have needed opportunities to develop essential higher-order thinking skills and more academically proficient students are not sufficiently challenged.

- Establish systems to measure progress toward clearly delineated benchmarks so that timely adjustments are made to improve student learning.
 - While the principal has aligned the Comprehensive Education Plan and the Principal's Performance Review goals to focus on identified academic needs this year, the school has not consistently analyzed data to identify and project needs astutely, in order to enable a strategic long-term plan of action to accelerate outcomes for all students.
 - The school does not have established systems to measure on-going academic progress, thereby limiting its ability to intervene effectively, resulting in performance declines in students meeting academic proficiency.
- Improve the alignment of teaching practices to curriculum focusing on opportunities for differentiation, so that all students are challenged.
 - Despite obvious support to the common instructional platform, known as Gradual Release of Responsibility, teachers' understanding of skills for effective questioning and collaborative learning are still developing, affecting precise implementation, thus limiting student progress.
 - The school has recognized the need for differentiation and has made this a focal point for professional study and implementation; however, most differentiation, at this time, is limited to providing choice within assignments. As a result, scaffolds and/or extensions necessary to challenge all levels of learners at their entry points are lacking.
- Revise school-wide data-based goals to make expected outcomes more explicit and rigorous so that coherent and transparent action plans leverage academic improvement.
 - The school has a short list of academic goals that define expected outcomes of "increased proficiency". Since these goals do not succinctly state measurable outcomes, they fail to steer coherent and collaborative targeted efforts to improve student academic achievement.
 - The school has not consistently involved its constituencies in its goal setting process, deterring the data-focused specificity needed to affect improved academic performance. While faculty, students and parents can voice school climate and culture goals, they are much less articulate regarding specific academic goals.
- Improve the development of standards-based performance tasks and assessments and the precision of their analyses so that trends are more visible to inform strategic instructional adjustments.
 - The lack of focused attention to standards and measurable indicators within tasks and assessments lessens credible evaluation for making concise instructional adjustments to improve student outcomes.
 - Teacher teams use Periodic assessment results to focus on strategy work for individual students, but do not identify trends within and across subgroups, resulting in insufficient information on subgroup needs for improving outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: East Flatbush Community Research 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