

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

East Side Middle School

Middle School 114

**331 East 91 Street
New York
NY 10128**

Principal: David Getz

Dates of review: November 4 – 5, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Daria Rigney

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

East Side Middle School is a middle school with 434 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 3% Black, 10% Hispanic, 73% White, and 14% Asian students. The student body includes 0% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 44% of the students enrolled and girls account for 56%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 97.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and his staff co-construct a highly engaging, scholarly curriculum built on deep content knowledge and resulting in student projects that demonstrate critical thinking skills in all areas.
 - Curricular maps are designed with a heavy emphasis on students' ability to engage in evidence-based reading and writing. Assignments require students to consistently evaluate the saliency of their evidence and argue their positions using this knowledge.
 - The school has developed a 6th grade curricular unit on ancient Greece that goes beyond providing information on the topic. They use survey data and student work to generate questions that engage all students in making connections between contemporary and ancient times.
- Administrators and teachers are committed to the shared belief that students achieve and learn best when taught to be independent, critical and innovative thinkers.
 - The entire school community is committed to providing opportunities for students to nurture their curiosity and think creatively and independently. This school wide promise is apparent in all classes especially in their Math Congress where students are awarded a "patent" for demonstrating innovative solutions to math problems.
 - In a 7th grade science class on distinguishing chemical vs. physical changes, the lesson was strategically organized among three stations providing students opportunities to test their knowledge and engage in hands-on experiments. Such school-wide practices have resulted in improved scores on formative and summative assessments.
- The principal creatively marshals and generates resources to provide students with equal access to the rich, rigorous curriculum resulting in an outstanding level of student initiative and engagement.
 - The principal's clearly defined instructional priorities drive the use of resources. As a result of reconfiguring of teacher assignments and the diminution of teaching loads, students are provided with on-going feedback on their progress resulting in accelerated learning goals.
 - Teachers' strengths are utilized to provide a rich, meaningful repertory of courses for students. An English teacher with an avocation as a writer teaches creative writing resulting in improved writing in all genres.
- The principal's extensive knowledge of the teachers' professional needs generates a resilient system for building expertise among staff members resulting in a tightly knit community linked by common goals and values.
 - The principal maintains a complex web of support for all teachers and for new teachers in particular, meeting with them every other week. He

regularly reviews student work and lesson plans with teachers resulting in full integration of high level academic goals and an instructionally coherent school culture. .

- The principal's incisive assessment of his staff's professional development needs drives a rich repertoire of learning opportunities for teachers. These include studying with noted contemporary authors and experts as well as presenting at national conferences resulting in a sophisticated level of discourse among faculty and students.
- Data is culled from a constellation of sources to analyze the academic needs of all subgroups and create a detailed portrait of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
 - The principal develops his goals through a careful analysis of summative data. Data is analyzed to identify the lowest one-third of students to target students in sub-groups who have specific areas of mathematical misconceptions resulting in high acceptances to specialized high schools.
 - The principal has a weekly staff meeting during which a plethora of formative assessments are reviewed. These include student work, quizzes and portfolios specifically analyzed for information that refines theories of students' progress. This provides the impetus for the staff to make curricular or instructional revisions resulting in improved results.
- The staff maintains a strong home-school connection regarding both curricular and extra curricular activities resulting in a high level of parental involvement.
 - The principal, in partnership with the guidance counselor, meets personally with 8th grade students and families to discuss optimal high school choices. The principal welcomes both formal and informal contact with large numbers of parents as well as leading parent book club meetings and engaging in a high volume of email contact with families resulting in an alignment of expectations for students.
 - Families have broad access to all school activities including blood drives, pot luck dinners and celebrations of student work through consistent digital and telephone communication. Parents have a critical role as partners in decision making through a variety of teams, committees and study groups.
- Teachers have ongoing routines in place for evaluating the effectiveness of curricular decisions and making periodic adjustments to improve students' body of knowledge and critical literacy and math skills.
 - An 8th grade math team focused on meticulously reviewing the topics that required more in-depth coverage. They collaborated on analyzing a range of student work and error patterns in order to optimize students' understanding of complex algebraic problems leading to vertical changes in the curriculum and the pacing calendar.
 - Student work is the central focus of the staff's weekly meetings where teachers have done in-depth analysis of the relationship of the Common Core State Standards to the tasks and projects that are assigned

presently. Through these regular conversations, teachers are seamlessly weaving higher standards and more complex work into the daily instructional culture of the school creating an ecology of excellence across all subjects and grades.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop customized formative assessments that will enable teachers to capture student data on a daily basis revealing a constantly evolving picture of students' strengths and needs that will determine next teaching steps.
 - Although classroom teachers confer frequently with individual students and record their findings, there are presently few examples of useful assessment systems for collecting data on a daily basis. As a result of not having an up to the minute state of the class, teachers are unable to effectively target students or groups of students for daily intervention and enrichment.
 - While teacher teams routinely analyze both summative and formative assessments, there are few examples of teachers designing customized assessments tailored towards capturing specific information about students' understandings. This prevents teachers from exploring a detailed and nuanced picture of what students need to learn.
- Create tools for teachers to organize student performance data, including information on key sub-groups, to illuminate and address patterns in students' understanding and inform day-to-day teaching decisions.
 - Although teachers analyze a wealth of summative and formative data, currently there is no system for analyzing trends in student performance by subgroup. As a result, the school cannot determine specific achievement trends and patterns for all students.
 - Teacher teams use their extensive conferring notes to document assessment information that supports classroom decisions. However, at this time, this methodology does not provide information about sub-groups. Thus, they cannot plan next steps for student learning based on specific patterns and trends.
- Refine and improve systems for tracking and sharing student progress so that the entire school community understands and endorses curricular or instructional adjustments that improve student outcomes.
 - While the school has set ambitious data-based goals for all students, currently there is no system in place for sharing students' ongoing progress towards these goals with the school community at large. As a result, the school can not make optimal use of these data in deepening instructional coherence across all subject areas thus improving students' opportunities for the highest levels of achievement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: East Side Middle 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
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>	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
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>	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			
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>	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			
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>	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			
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X			
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Developing	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed