

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

East Flatbush Community Research School

K581

**905 Winthrop Street
Brooklyn
NY 11203**

Principal: Daveida Daniel

Dates of review: March 19 - 20, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Beverly A. Wilkins

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

East Flatbush Community Research School is a middle school with 276 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 91% Black, 5% Hispanic, 1% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 92.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Explicit feedback from school leaders includes clear next steps to improve teacher practice and raise levels of teacher performance resulting in increased student outcomes. (4.1)
 - School leaders conduct formative and formal observations, lead instructional walkthroughs, engage teachers in data conversations linked to personal goals and professional competencies, and provide coaching feedback purposefully aligned to specific domains of the Danielson's teaching framework. These observations coupled with analysis of student work inform next step internal and external professional development for new and experienced teachers. Teachers receive detailed feedback and have immediate access to concrete recommendations using TeachBoost, an online observation tool. Teachers report the use of this system enables constant tracking of their growth, ability to upload evidence of forward movement toward improved practice as well as receive reciprocal feedback in short cycles. In addition, an instructional support coach and lead teachers support new and developing teachers in their areas of challenge, which hastens shifts in their practice such as use of data to drive instruction, planning for tiered activities, and effective management strategies that result in decreases in classroom level infractions. Follow-up observations linked to prior teacher reports, inclusive of student data, strengthen teacher pedagogy stimulating richer student engagement and improved academic performance.
 - Teachers participate in the Lead Teacher Program, Leaders in Education Apprenticeship Program, and New York City Leadership Academy, and take ownership for the development of colleagues as grade leaders. A succession plan of differentiated opportunities engenders a professional culture of highly motivated educators. In turn, the principal's supportive measures further the faculty's capacity to improve student outcomes. As a result there is a collegial community of professional growth and faculty members are encouraged and supported in their professional endeavors.
- The principal has established high expectations for learning, inclusive of students, teachers, and families, aimed toward closing achievement gaps. (3.4)
 - Parents expressed that the principal has taken the school in the right direction with clear expectations has led to eager involvement of parents and widespread parental commitment to the school and its goals. Parents speak fluently about college and career readiness expectations citing "assignments are more in-depth and teachers are on board this year with helping parents understand what students need to know". As a result of a variety of communication systems, including Engrade, an online reporting system, high expectations hold all families accountable for adequate achievement toward grade level standards as evidenced in progress reports, Global Connect messaging, flyers, letters, notices, and parent workshops. Parents commend tutoring, extended day, and the

Saturday Academy programs as major catalysts in their children's increased confidence, decreased skills deficits, and higher motivational levels. Therefore, parents convey the school is instrumental in students having high expectations and a will to succeed.

- Teachers consistently promote high expectations for students providing them with comments on their work products with next level steps, interim learning benchmarks, and goal setting. Teacher recognition of their efforts includes school-wide bulletin boards and monthly awards celebrating achievement. A student remarked, "Last year we were all over the place, but this year teachers push us to do more and get on track". As such, students report they focus on schoolwork and make gains to achieve expected learning goals as evidenced by a drop in the Violence and Disruptive Incident Report (VADIR) index compared to last year and increases in reading performance as measured by adaptive reading programs. Two guidance counselors, a community associate, and two community-based organizations facilitate high school articulation, mentorships for all students, an IVY Key Program initiated at seventh grade to prepare students for the Specialized High School exam, and recreational activities. Character building programs expose students to experiences that aid in the development of positive attributes and organizational skills narrowing gaps in learning. Because the school holds high expectations for the success of all students, diverse support toward healthy academic and social-emotional development leads to mutual adult and student accountability for next level preparedness.
- Implementation of rigorous, challenging performance tasks aligned to key Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) promote ongoing development of post-secondary skills across grades, programs, and content areas. (1.1)
 - According to student data analysis and Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE), a thorough re-examination of the school's curricula ensures CCLS, aligned to performance tasks and key priorities, energize and unify the faculty around planning for rigor. The school has developed curriculum maps in all content areas including art and physical education and implement performance tasks designed to engage students in units of study that advance applications of skills and deepen conceptual understanding. Writing permeates all aspects of instruction. Specifically, in literacy students take ownership of post-secondary skills building through argumentative writing, citing text-based evidence from two texts such as *Night John* and *Freedom Crossing*, deliberating the role of government in domestic policy matters. Similarly, in mathematics students use the properties of operations to create and solve real word equivalent expressions and equations. Additionally, instructional tasks embedded with assessments probe for understanding and application of learning. Consequently, the use of graphic organizers, teacher and student use of technology, guided prompts, and appropriately matched materials produce entry points and access to content and concepts as well as activate higher-order skills.
- Organizational decisions and use of budget well matched to the school's prioritized instructional goals support improvements in student learning. (1.3)

- The impact of technology integration has led to an increase in the number of laptops available for student use. Each grade level has a working laptop cart to assist instruction, which increases the number of laptops from eight in 2011 to sixty in 2012, school-wide. This investment provides teachers with access to current online resources and students with the ability to conduct research and gather relevant information. Technology advancement also supports intervention programs such as Reading Plus and Achieve 3000 for sixth and eighth graders. As a result of dedicated spending, students experience improved comprehension averages and gains in reading rates.
- Teacher group collaborations stimulate interdisciplinary planning by pedagogues who are licensed content specialists, a deliberate hiring practice this year to bolster achievement towards school goals. Teachers share in the planning of curriculum and the use of instructional strategies that best serve the needs of students. A Saturday Academy enrichment program for accelerated learners, an afterschool program for students performing at high level two, and an extended day program for students performing in the school's bottom third engender improved subgroup performance as evidenced in formative assessments.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen teacher capacity to expand their differentiation via purposeful questioning and facilitation of discussion in order to further opportunities for critical thinking and active student participation. (1.2)
 - Teacher practice aligned to CCLS and the school's belief that explicit modeling at the beginning of a lesson; whole class guided practice; the use of tiered activities based on data; and real life applications is how students learn best. However, questioning and teacher facilitation of discussions do not consistently include a range of levels and types of questions to promote high-level thinking and student extension of one another's ideas. A review of lesson plans revealed some teachers incorporate three questions into their planning using Webb's Depth of Knowledge Matrix in order to ensure advancing levels of engagement, others do not. Therefore, this uneven practice in teacher questioning results in missed opportunities to socialize learning. Consequently, not all groups of students are consistently required to activate critical thinking skills that lead to thought-provoking conversations and generate high levels of participation.
- Ensure teachers incorporate ongoing assessment for learning practices into daily instruction leading to reflective learning behaviors and timely adjustments to lessons in order to meet the needs of all students. (2.2)
 - Teams and individual teachers monitor a plethora of data to determine student progress towards goals, with special attention to males with disabilities and/or English Language learners. In conjunction with instructional and culminating tasks, departmentalized assessments every six weeks generate three week revised instructional plans to address deficits in skills and content knowledge. Homework, student writing products, do now activities, pre-assessments, use of rubrics and

feedback on student work result in actionable plans and adjustments to the delivery of instruction. However, across the school, use of checks for understanding while in the midst of instruction such as conferences, note-taking, exit slips, entrance tickets, journal entries, probes and clarifying questions are not yet entrenched practices. As a result of uneven use of effective checks for acquired understanding, student do not frequently engage in self-assessment of their own progress toward attaining mastery of topics and skills. This lack of ongoing self-reflective behavior and inconsistency in checks for understanding inhibits student progress and slows adjustments to lessons that readily meet the needs of all students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

| School name: Eastm Flatbush Community Research School | UD | D | P | WD | | | |
|---|----------------|---|------------|----|------------|----|----------------|
| Overall QR Score | | | X | | | | |
| Instructional Core | | | | | | | |
| <i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i> | UD | D | P | WD | | | |
| 1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products? | | X | | | | | |
| 2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels? | | | X | | | | |
| School Culture | | | | | | | |
| <i>To what extent does the school ...</i> | UD | D | P | WD | | | |
| 1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults? | | | X | | | | |
| 3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them? | | | | X | | | |
| Systems for Improvement | | | | | | | |
| <i>To what extent does the school ...</i> | UD | D | P | WD | | | |
| 1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products? | | | X | | | | |
| 3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community? | | | X | | | | |
| 4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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 | | | | |
| 5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS? | | | X | | | | |
| Quality Review Scoring Key | | | | | | | |
| UD | Underdeveloped | D | Developing | P | Proficient | WD | Well Developed |