

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Eagle Academy II

Middle-High School 644

**1137 Herkimer Street
Brooklyn
NY 11233**

Principal: Rashad Meade

Dates of review: January 17 - 18, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Claudette Essor

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Eagle Academy II is a middle-high school with 426 students from grade 6 through grade 10. The school population comprises 87% Black, 11% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 100% of the students enrolled. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 93.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Administrators effectively support teacher development via frequent observations that provide focused feedback, including next steps, linked to a research-based framework and well aligned to professional goals for teachers. (4.1)
 - The school's strategic implementation of its own 28-points Educator Expectations rubric to rate individual performance on teacher effectiveness domains such as management, planning, execution, and professionalism, in alignment with the Danielson framework, has created a unified schoolwide focus on ongoing teacher development. Teachers state that an administrator visits their room every day and they note that these short, frequent visits result in immediate feedback, including next steps, which promote ongoing reflection about strategies to improve their practice. All teachers collaborate with supervisors to set instructional goals, as part of an Educator Growth plan aligned to school goals and individual competencies determined via teacher evaluations across the 28-points rubric. School leaders continually analyze data from student work and observation cycles to assess teacher skill and impact on student outcomes and offer specific guidance via hand delivered observation reports, e-mails, Google-docs, and one-to-one conversations. All teachers, including new teachers, are also provided with targeted professional development via peer mentoring, low inference transcripts, intervisitations, video review of lessons, as well as in-class support and workshops by administrators, teacher leaders, coaches, and network personnel. Teacher surveys provide feedback that informs individualized plans of support for all teachers, so that content-area support is developed and professional development topics reflect individual teacher needs and goals. As a result, school leaders and teachers effectively facilitate ongoing exchanges of ideas and resources that improve teacher effectiveness and that contributes to a culture of ongoing professional growth that has resulted in a majority of students making 1.25 years of growth in independent reading levels in 2011-2012, and half year's growth from September to December 2012.
- The school is exemplary in personalizing learning in a collaborative culture characterized by a variety of structures that effectively support the academic, social, and emotional growth of students and adults. (1.4)
 - The school's academy structure that groups students into six separate houses, allows every student to be a member of a house with many adults who know him/her very well, and who are responsible for communicating regularly with both the student and his family about academic and social emotional learning needs. Teachers in each house collaborate with families, administrators, counselors, social workers, and other support staff, to provide guidance, develop individual attendance plans, and monitor social-emotional goals for students, especially those identified as "most at risk". A special team of Scholar Coordinators and male mentors from the community also work with administrators, teachers, and program advisors, to personalize learning for all students and connect them to male role models from the larger community. Partnerships with community-based organizations provide afterschool programs that offer

enrichment as well as interventions for academic and social emotional learning. Across grades, students share a common attachment to their particular house and several serve in leadership roles such as Lieutenant Colonel, Major, Captain, Co-captain, Lieutenant and Sergeant, for which they receive special training, resulting in accelerating social-emotional learning. Teachers are supported via professional development activities that expand their effectiveness in addressing the social-emotional needs of students and parents state that they are trained to be full partners in their children's education. They praise the school for its use of an online communication system that gives them timely access to student grades, homework, teacher comments, and daily attendance, at their convenience, and Saturday Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and other school events that provide an academic component for families. As a result, the principal has established an exceptionally supportive school culture that is positively impacting students' academic and personal development, as evidenced by a reduction in incidents of misconduct, improved attendance, and an increasingly larger number of students, including 71% of eighth grade students, taking Regents' exams and earning high school credits in 2011-2012.

- Administrators collaborate effectively with all staff to make well-informed and highly strategic decisions that support school goals and long-term plans, with emphasis on further improving student performance. (1.3)
 - Budgetary priorities include Smart boards and projectors to enhance classroom instruction, particularly for students who are visual learners, and an investment in Achieve 3000, an online computer-based learning program provides extensive support for the goal of improving student performance on content area assessments, by June 2013. In alignment with that, Engrade, an online server, was purchased to create an additional connection between students, parents and teachers, thus providing parents with information about daily homework, long-term assignments, or other data that they need to help make learning successful for their children. Robust partnerships with college oriented organizations, social services agencies, and other educational institutions, help enrich opportunities for both students and teachers to grow and meet learning needs. For example, a Culinary Arts program caters to students who opt for training in this career field and via collaborations with Brooklyn College, eighth grade students participate in an Early College, while ninth grade students receive College Prep enrichment activities. Careful attention is paid to teacher hiring and assignments, with school leaders and teachers interviewing prospective employees. Veteran Eagle educators are programmed with a reduced teaching load to allow them to support the professional development needs of new educators, several of whom are hired yearly to complete the school's growth from a grade 6 school in 2008, to one that will have grades 6 through 12 by September 2015. Additionally, on each grade, there is flexible programming that allows teachers to group students, including overage students, students with special needs, and English Language learners, for remedial or enrichment services with a decreased teacher-to-student ratio. The house structure allows teachers and support staff to share responsibility for a manageable number of students, collaboratively monitor their progress, and plan interventions that improve the quality of their work. Thus teachers' intense focus on attainment of

the school's instructional goals, along with holding themselves accountable for the progress of individual students, leads to students completing high quality work, as evidenced by class discussions and student work in portfolios.

- The principal's effective communication and multiple supports for staff, students, and families, enable them to attain high expectations and engage in collaborations that place students on a clear path to college and career readiness. (3.4)
 - The principal constantly articulates and holds the entire school community accountable for high expectations. through faculty conferences, a weekly newsletter, bulletins, individual and team discussions, a school handbook distributed to all members of the school community, daily town hall meetings with students, and the school's online communication and grading system, which all teachers, families and students are able to access daily. The Eagle Educator rubric used for evaluation of teacher performance explicitly delineates common high expectations centered around 28 items linked to instruction. An Eagle Educator Growth Plan used for quarterly evaluation of teacher mastery of individual goals, is equally detailed about individual teacher expectations. Through an Eagle Unit Planner Template and an Eagle Shared Lesson Plan design, teachers receive targeted support in and are held accountable for meeting those expectations. An Eagle Scholar Pledge, combined with a requirement of strict adherence to five Pillars of Eagle Scholarship, (effort, confidence, resilience, commitment to excellence, and leadership), and the naming of each of the six houses after an historic male, are all strategic in promoting a culture in which students are guided to meet high academic and social expectations. Students and families participate in creating learning goals that are aligned to students' individual needs and families sign and return the goals document to the school, holding themselves accountable for helping their children to attain the goals. Tools such as quarterly report cards, mid-term progress reports, class section sheets, morning scholarship reports, mandatory independent reading, daily homework periods, academic detentions, and athletic policies, also support and hold students and families accountable for progress in achieving high expectations. An advisory program, individual student College Readiness Action Plan, early college courses at Brooklyn College, College Now, SAT preparation, Regents' courses, honors classes, and a career and technical education program combine to allow students to participate in a range of activities focused on college and career readiness. As a result, a culture of shared responsibility for high expectations effectively supports students, as evidenced by an increase in the number of students expressing their intent to go to college and taking Regents level courses.

What the school needs to improve

- Persist in building a shared understanding of effective instructional practices, to ensure that all teachers consistently engage students in challenging tasks and discussions that promote high levels of thinking and learning. (1.2)
 - Currently, there is a school-wide focus on questioning and discussion, as a pathway for students to demonstrate cognitive reasoning and higher order thinking. Some teachers are succeeding in doing that, with students reading and annotating texts to inform interactive discussions, researching topics, and completing writing

tasks that promote reflection on learning. Student work products highlight some students' increasing ability to create arguments as well as use texts to defend their ideas and opinions. Most teachers use scaffolding techniques, including the use of graphic organizers and question stems as prompts to reinforce academic vocabulary. For example, in a math class, students were challenged, both in writing and orally, to demonstrate proof and rationale for problem solving, using academic vocabulary such as, "coefficient, variable", and "distributive property". Similar practices were observed in some literacy classes, as students assisted each other in peer editing of writing, using the Socratic seminar to discuss literature, or preparing oral presentations based on graphic organizers. However, some teachers demonstrated a lecture-oriented whole class instructional approach that did not illustrate multiple entry points referenced on their lesson plans. In addition, some tasks were of low demand with students taking notes, responding to questions asked in a teacher led discussion of an excerpt from the text, or filling in short responses on worksheets. As a result, all students are not yet consistently engaged in lessons that result in student work that reflects higher order thinking and high levels of participation in learning activities.

- Refine curricula to deepen alignment with key standards and instructional shifts and incorporate more complex tasks that deepen thinking and learning to ensure college and career readiness for all students. (1.1)
 - Individuals and teams of teachers design lessons, tasks, and units of study that reflect the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and instructional shifts related to the Chancellor's Instructional Expectations (CIE). There is a strong focus on college and career readiness skills in all grades, with units emphasizing tasks that require students to read and cite evidence from texts to support ideas and arguments, develop writing skills, annotate work across levels, offer explanations of inferences drawn from the text, and create objective summaries after reading. Teachers use a common template and shared lesson plan format to craft curriculum maps and lesson units, to insure consistent and uniform emphasis on developing vocabulary in content areas. The use of a "Skills and Me" construct fosters student reflections on and engagement in tasks that promote connections between experiences in the classroom and experiences in students' world outside of the school. However, although the school defines "rigor" as "pushing scholars to a deeper understanding of material in order to prepare them for the college or career of their choice", this tenet is not embedded coherently across grades and subjects, especially in classes for English language learners and students with disabilities. Further, some tasks show reliance on graphic organizers that do not require students to engage in in-depth work related to the subject matter. As a result, all students are not consistently challenged to complete tasks that engage them deeply and interactively in thinking and learning activities that ensure steady progress towards college and career readiness.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Eagle Academy II	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