

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Eagle Academy For Young Men III

Middle School Q327

171-10 Linden Blvd

Queens

NY 11434

Principal: Kenyatte Reid

Dates of review: February 11 – 12, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Catherine M. Powis

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Eagle Academy for Young Men III is a middle school with 252 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 92% Black, 3% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes no English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 100% of the students enrolled and girls account for 0%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 95.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Instructional coherence across grades and subject areas is reflected in Common Core aligned curricula emphasizing citywide instructional shifts to promote career and college readiness. (1.1)
 - Due to the school's small size, each grade-level content teacher thoughtfully plans curriculum maps complemented by lesson plans that reflect alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Maps describe a year-long sequence of content learning and skill development with modifications. For example, one special education social studies teacher works with the English language arts team to develop detailed maps and modifications that address the specific needs of her special education students, such as frontloading unit vocabulary, writing prompts, and editing checklists. Department teams, in turn, develop CCLS-aligned performance tasks that assess the skills and content for each unit of study. Grade-level teams make cross-curricular connections for Science/math and English language arts/social studies. An organizational team of teacher leaders and administration manage the vertical alignment from grade to grade to ensure mastery of skills and content to achieve or exceed the CCLS and for future planning as the school grows to the 12th grade. Throughout these processes that ensure timely and efficient curriculum development, the school emphasizes writing using text-based evidence from multiple sources, and solving multi-step word problems and real world applications in math and science. To this end, the school promotes career and college readiness in all grades and subjects.
 - In response to the recent Progress Report performance and the citywide instructional shifts, the school deliberately uses the CCLS to define rigor in the planning and design of curricula. Cognitively engaging tasks and resulting student work are measured by the State standards-based rubric as an evaluative tool. For the most part, there are no textbooks since the school's philosophy is that research and access to multiple sources of information can be found on the internet, in magazines, in online websites, through teacher support and reference texts on specific topics. In one social studies unit plan, a mini-project asking students to extend their thinking by creating their own treasure map reinforces the use of multiple sources that emphasize rigorous habits. In science classrooms labs and equipment are an integral part of units of study that present challenging investigations for all learners. Since this is the first year that there are grade 8 students New York State Regents, accelerated coursework is now offered in science and history. Thus, all learners are exposed to learning activities that deepen their thinking and advance their learning.
- Effective school-wide assessment practices aligned to the curriculum ensure the analysis of student progress that leads to adjustments in teaching and learning and increased student progress. (2.2)
 - A variety of assessment practices provide snapshots of student progress in all core subjects. Unit assessments administered every 4 to 6 weeks determine students' skill, content and process deficits and/or mastery. Ongoing classroom formative assessments throughout each unit measure progress

toward unit goals. Citywide performance tasks administered in January and March, as well as Acuity benchmark exams, add to the repertoire that determines mastery of literacy-infused standards and math expectations in anticipation of shifts in the 2013 New York State assessments. An online grade book tracks progress, such as subject grades, homework, performance assessments and attendance. As a result, individual teachers and teams determine progress, make data-driven adjustments to curriculum and instruction, including decisions about academic interventions for individual students during the Monday to Friday intervention program from 4 to 5 PM.

- Across classrooms, teachers are consistent in frequently monitoring student understanding throughout daily classroom practice and redirecting students to ensure learning needs are met. In one grade 8 English language arts classroom, the teacher probes for understanding by asking student groups, “What clues from the image led you to make that interpretation?” In other classrooms, during group work teachers frequently facilitate each group by conferencing with them to explore their thinking. Students benefit from self-assessment checklists to facilitate revision of their work. Additionally, several teachers use exit cards to determine individual learning and necessary adjustments to the next day’s lesson. These ongoing checks for understanding result in consistent adjustments to instruction and improved student progress toward mastery of unit goals as evident in student work.
- Relationships among students, teachers and school leaders are respectful, resulting in an environment that is highly conducive to learning and effectively supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults. (1.4)
 - School leaders and faculty are unified in creating a safe and inclusive environment that fully supports both personal and academic progress and performance for all learners. As a visionary leader, the principal possesses a passionate commitment to address every child’s developmental needs by empowering all stakeholders in a collaborative atmosphere to perpetuate the mission of their partnership with The Eagle Academy Foundation. The school’s goals for this all boys school begins with all students attending school from 9am to 5pm and maintaining rituals such as school uniforms and a dress code for adults. Families appreciate the online grade book and automatic text alerts that provide them daily access to attendance, grades, homework and behavior. All students must participate in a workshop series with New York Police Department Community Affairs Officers on topics such as cyber safety, anti-bullying and gang awareness. Furthermore, promoting morals and values necessary to be positive members of their communities results in these young men volunteering on Thanksgiving Day at Allen African Methodist Episcopal Church and on Christmas Eve at the Queens Veterans Center to feed those less fortunate. This year the “House” Model has been launched that allows every student to attend a daily group of 12 to 15 grade-level peers called “House”. Students and teacher use House time to assist with homework, discuss relevant societal issues, teach values, build self-esteem through group activities and establish and reinforce a positive, fraternal bond and a sense of belonging. Students report that the respectful bond between teachers and students results in a trust that allows them to share personal concerns when necessary and have opportunities for student voice. For example, students expressed difficulty in studying for weekly unit assessments that were administered on the same day for all core subjects. As a result, each core subject is now assigned a designated test day so that only one assessment is administered per day. Additionally, teachers provide

extra tutoring and other intervention services that are appreciated by students. These various efforts have established positive peer relationships, an enhanced sense of belonging, and support systems for these young men to grow academically and personally. As a result, the most recent School Survey reveals very positive feedback from teachers, students and parents regarding all aspects of the school. Furthermore, the attendance rate is 95.5%, which is significantly high when compared to peers' and citywide averages.

- The principal promotes organizational decisions that strategically support instructional goals and action plans in a collaborative atmosphere that consistently improves teacher practice and student outcomes. (1.3)
 - Several configurations for structured professional collaborations are scheduled during weekly common planning time ranging from departmental to grade-level, cross-functional and organizational teams. For example, the sixth grade team's weekly "kid talk" sessions use classroom data to strategize individual student's precise next steps for continued academic and social-emotional growth. During one meeting observed, teachers worked diligently to understand the behavior of one particular student and its impact on his academic growth in the recent midterm exams. The teachers determined a plan of action to support this student with targeted goals and long range plans that include case-conferencing with both student and parent in order for him to make continued progress. This process occurs several times over the course of a marking period, and therefore informs the teams' work with all students. As a result, this cross-talk has focused teachers on deepening their analyses of student work and defining action plans that revise teacher practice and strategies to engage all students to produce meaning work.
 - A strategic, multi-step hiring process allows the school's hiring committee, consisting of various stakeholders, including students, to choose the best candidate that fits the Eagle model for academic and social-emotional growth of all learners. The principal plans class assignments purposefully matching teacher expertise with student needs, such as co-teaching teams that serve students with disabilities. Additionally, one teacher was hired with prior coaching experience with the intent to build future school capacity for a coach position. Furthermore, reduced class size allows teachers to provide more focused attention to individual students. Resources from Eagle Foundation grants provide funding to support the 9am to 5pm school day on Monday through Thursday for all learners. From 4pm to 5pm all students attend robust, weekly alternating academic intervention classes and a variety of clubs that serve as enrichment. During the week for academic intervention teachers hold themselves accountable to 12 to 15 homogeneously grouped students to target skill deficits. During club week students choose two of a variety of activities, such as violin, flag football, basketball, soccer, track, martial arts, Robotics and others. As a result of these organizational decisions, the school is making significant progress toward attaining its instructional goals that support the improvement of all students' academic achievement as evidenced in student progress on ongoing classroom formative assessments.

What the school needs to improve

- Promote greater consistency in rigorous teaching practices across classrooms that ensure multiple entry points into the curriculum so that all students, especially students with disabilities and low performers, make progress. (1.2)

- Pre-observation conversations with teachers and a review of lesson plans reveal that teachers diligently prepare lessons that provide scaffolding that addresses the needs of individual and groups of students. For example, following a short, motivational video accessed online through a SmartBoard students in one 12:1 special education class worked in data-driven groups to explore what artifacts found in King Tut's tomb reveal about daily life in ancient Egypt. Some higher level questioning, such as, "How can you tell which artifacts were important to King Tut?" prompted higher order thinking as demonstrated in students' work. However, in other classrooms questioning and undifferentiated tasks did not consistently encourage all learners to think deeply by reflecting on what they know and extending their thinking to reflect on what they do not know. As a result, student work is sometimes mechanical and/or incomplete, thus hampering higher levels of learning.
- Many classroom routines include independent practice or group work. In one science classroom students were experimenting with different substances to determine the contents of the "mystery mixture". In another math classroom students were using number lines to solve and graph one and two step inequalities. However, discussions among students are limited as teachers tend to dominate the lesson with prompts and clarifications of the work. In turn, students are not given time to explore, self-assess and arrive at their own understandings through thoughtful thinking and dialogue with each other. This prompts uneven levels of student engagement and work products do not always demonstrate sufficient depth of skill and content knowledge.
- Improve observation structures for teaching and subsequent support to teachers that promote professional growth, reflection, and result in improved instruction. (4.1)
 - The principal and assistant principal are very diligent in checking in with classrooms during daily walkthroughs. However, they do not consistently document feedback, nor does feedback articulate next steps to improve. Only formal observations are documented using an online vehicle for aligning observation data to Danielson's research-based framework. For example, formal reports include a lengthy online "cut and paste" description of domains, such as the classroom environment, planning and preparation, and instruction and the specific competencies that are being evaluated. Feedback entails very brief comments, such as, "Many questions are of the 'recitation' type, such as: 'What is the equation of a direct proportion...' You must plan and use open-ended high order questions that invite students to think." Teachers may be directed to review videos that pertain to an area for improvement. Consequently, suggested strategies lack specificity, thereby reducing the impact they can make to further improve pedagogy and build capacity for student growth, particularly in classrooms with a co-teaching model. Additionally, teachers are supported by the network and a partnership with a vendor, which has recently been terminated, to provide professional development in response to Citywide Instructional Expectations. However, an effective system that explicitly uses daily teacher observation data to design and facilitate ongoing, meaningful professional development is not yet in place. Furthermore, although teacher assignments are very often based on thoughtful and comprehensive hiring practices, the school is just beginning to build capacity through teacher teams, hence professional growth is limited.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Eagle Academy for Young Men III	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