

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

The George L. Egbert School

Middle School 002

333 Midland Avenue

Staten Island

NY 10306

Principal: Adrienne Stallone

Dates of review: May 21 - 22, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Sheila S.-Gorski

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The George L. Egbert School is a middle school with 970 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 7% Black, 28% Hispanic, 55% White, 9% Asian students and 1% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 93.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

DRAFT

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Leadership assures key staff and student time is organized to support instructional goals, thus improving instruction and engaging students in challenging academic work. (1.3)
 - Leadership has developed strong partnerships with the network and outside resources, thus enabling on-going instructional support. School leadership coordinates regular staff development for instructional leads with the network achievement coach who provides ongoing training and support in the use of student data analyses to make instructional adjustments. For example, the achievement coach provides training to build facilitator skills of the school's teacher leaders to assist in improving staffs' questioning and discussion techniques, build common core aligned units, and strengthen the work of inquiry teams relative to looking at student work and identifying strategies to meet student needs. Additionally, via a grant the school has been awarded an NYCDOE math pilot program entitled, "School of One". Specialized coaches work to develop this new initiative created by "New Classrooms" and provide ongoing support to math teachers and the math supervisor so they understand how to use student performance data to plan targeted instruction and make informed adjustments. Moreover, network support in partnership with the program, Math Metamorphosis, provides external training for teachers on best practices. Teachers then gather by department and grade level to review data and look at student work to make curricula adjustments. These tactical decisions support instructional goals resulting in improved student work products as displayed on bulletin boards and discussed during student meetings.
 - The school's weekly program structure includes a six-day schedule to afford parallel teaching for general education and special education classes, thus encouraging and allowing for teachers to plan together, share successful classroom strategies, design lessons, and monitor and adjust progress of target groups. Additionally, this scheduled period allows teacher teams to meet daily, thus affording teachers time to embed challenging tasks in the curricula and design questioning strategies to facilitate student learning that has also become part of teacher toolkits as evidenced in the NYCDOE Achievement Reporting and Innovation System(ARIS) logs and data binders.
- The school works collaboratively to support social-emotional learning that promotes a safe environment conducive to meeting student needs. (1.4)
 - Families are in support of the school's mission to cultivate a safe and happy, collaborative learning environment contextualizing it as, "The school's mission is to educate our children ensuring their well-being, safety, and high quality education, and a school they are happy to be in and prepares them for the next level." Furthermore, teachers glean from time provided by leadership for them to work together, improving instructional practices, and meeting with their supervisors to further their learning around the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and other school initiatives. Students share that their voices are valued as demonstrated by activities planned for students. For example, a group called, "Peer Leaders" was designed for

students to join in on assisting with different tasks around the school, such as, fundraisers. Moreover, a group called, “Voices”, hosted by the school support team, is designed to provide social-emotional support through journal writing where students are free to express their feelings in written form. Journals are confidential and kept secured so that students are able to trust that their voices and privacy matter, resulting in adults and students engaged in respectful relationships.

- Families and students share that an, “open door” policy permeates the school. School leadership, school dean, and School Based Support Team (SBST) are available on a daily basis for families and all students. Students articulate that anyone they go to is helpful. According to students, teachers give up their lunch hour to meet if they are experiencing academic and/or personal challenges. In addition, the school dean hosts a mediation program to ensure there are services around resolving personal and behavioral conflicts. During student meetings students expressed that peer mediation allows them time to discuss problems with each other and work things out before matters get out of control. Students believe this approach prevents violence and helps them to learn how to talk things out. The school guidance counselors and support team collaboratively help students and their families in attaining materials lost during Hurricane Sandy. Families express gratitude for school support, especially during this difficult time. Families also state that the parent coordinator works closely with them to keep them abreast of services, local programs, and available agencies. For example, the Staten Island Mental Health partnered with the school to provide services for the school community and continues to service families affected by Super storm Sandy. The guidance team offers ongoing counseling services to ensure student well-being and has assisted in encouraging student attendance, so that even during home displacement caused by the storm, loss of instructional time was minimized, as evidenced by greater than 88% of the students in attendance during the storm, now sustained by 93% student attendance.
- Leadership and faculty articulate high expectations for students and share student progress with families fostering a culture for learning that supports student preparation for the next level. (3.4)
 - The school consistently shares high expectations regarding student progress in a myriad of ways that include one-to-one meetings, progress reports, emails, backpack leaflets, and telephone calls. In addition to the scheduled parent-teacher conferences and report card distribution periods, families enjoy diversified communicative modalities and express that no matter where they are they know the school is able to easily reach them. Students and families say that the school hosts periodic sessions to prepare both students and their families for future academic endeavors linked to college and career readiness. For example, parents recall, High School Articulation Night, an event designed for families to meet representatives of numerous high schools, each showcasing their school attributes as the best fit for their children. Students are given high school books with information about prospective schools of interest and are supported with questions and concerns about high school requirements. Furthermore, the school guidance and teacher teams collaborate to ensure that high school applications are up to date and that, no student misses the application window, thus increasing opportunities for suitable review by schools, families, and students. Teacher teams examine student work and create supplementary aids to the

instruction. For example, teacher teams explained that, the School of One curricula is based on the philosophy of virtual instruction and independent practice using grade level learning tasks adaptive to student needs. Teachers then go beyond the instruction to ensure students understand the work providing “Live Investigation” which is more of the traditional method of instruction. This allows teachers to use data trends and learning gaps noticed to develop interventions aligned to student needs. Teachers explain that they engage in one-on-one interventions to provide a humanistic approach as yet another opportunity to foster student success by adding in a personal connection that encourages a culture of high expectations. During a student meeting referring to teachers, one student shared, “They proved to me and my parents that they care!” Families and students indicate that they are collaboratively working with leadership, staff, and teachers to understand the school’s high expectations and the demands of the Common Core learning standards to meet those expectations and support student preparation for their next academic level.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure Common Core aligned curricula and instructional shifts in all subjects support all learners to close learning gaps and encourage college and career readiness (1.1)
 - The school has adapted curricula to include key standards in units of study in all content areas. Pacing calendars, portfolios and curriculum maps nestle lessons that include an essential question, content knowledge-based activities, and questioning techniques. Efforts to heighten the units include new classroom collections of informational texts to ground students in reading, writing, and discourse in evidence from the text. Moreover, the school is one of two schools on Staten Island to be awarded a grant for the math program, “School of One”, a NYCDOE Math Pilot Program. “School of One” coaches offer ongoing support to math teachers and the assistant principal who supervises math, in the use of student performance data to plan targeted instruction. Even with this support, instructional plans are broad and do not yet include embedded academic tasks that highlight consistent rigor to deepen student thinking for all learners including English language learners and students with disabilities. Extensions to engage accelerated learners are also not yet included in plans, resulting in missed opportunities to challenge all students into deeper thinking, close learning gaps and encourage college and career readiness.
- Build upon the established set of beliefs about how students learn best to include teaching practices that afford students multiple access points and provoke higher-order thinking skills. (1.2)
 - Leadership and faculty uniformly affirm that all students can learn, just not in the same way. Guided by the Danielson Framework teachers are shifting instructional practices toward engaging students in lessons based on interest levels and cognitively demanding activities so that students have opportunities to access curricula and deepen their thinking. In a sixth grade class student groups working on a Biomes Project were required to research biotic and abiotic factors of a chosen biome. The project asked students to provide information regarding the biome’s place on earth, attractions, weather, warnings, or threats to the biome, and analysis/evaluation

responding to the question, “Why is this biome globally important?” Students assume different roles assuring accountability for work from each member of the group. The culminating activity called for each group to create an advertisement poster and presentation that would attract visitors to the biome presented. In contrast, however, lessons across the school inconsistently include scaffolds and questioning techniques that deepen student thinking. Moreover, student interest activities and specific techniques, such as, models, representations of concepts, known as realia, were sporadically seen during classroom visitations. Embedded scaffolds and multiple points of access such as, electronic highlighters to cue important content and vocabulary and visual prompts were unevenly implemented in lessons, hindering accessibility for all students, and impacting comprehension of lessons supportive of student progress and performance of higher-order thinking, especially for English language learners and students with disabilities.

- Increase the consistency of the school’s use of common assessments across subject areas so teachers make data-informed instructional adjustments and increase student achievement. (2.2)
 - The school is a part of the Middle School Quality Initiative (MSQI) and is targeting grade 6 students in English language arts. Using the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) as a measure to monitor reading comprehension, informs the school’s plan to provide early intervention and close learning gaps at grade-six entry level. The school uses Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) to monitor math progress. The School of One math curricula also affords teachers daily real-time data, so teachers and students see the effectiveness of the lesson and learned skills. Additionally, teachers use student conferences, rubrics, and portfolios to share conversations for next steps. In spite of these efforts, teachers articulate deep concern about data analyses for which they are not invested, hindering their interest and a clear picture of student needs and progress. They express minimal input in student data analyses, or making group adjustments. Teachers also state that they do not understand the school trajectory toward academic progress. Students assigned to math classes and class compositions often vary throughout the semester, not providing time for teachers to develop relationships with the students to make supports that meet student needs. Furthermore, during classroom visits content-specific student portfolios varied. Some classrooms maintain portfolios with student work in content areas dated and progressive, thus development clearly noted and assessments include actionable feedback. However, in many classes student work was minimal, without dates and feedback, was not specific with clear next steps, or strategy of how to reach the next academic level. Student conversations confirm that feedback is often ambiguous and not particular to the needs of individual students. While the school has many assessments in place, student data outcomes are not yet consistently used to make effective curricula and instructional adjustments thus, limiting student achievement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: The George Egbert 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