

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Emolior Academy

Middle School 383

**1970 WEST FARMS ROAD
BRONX
NY,10460**

Principal: DERICK SPAULDING

Dates of review: May 29 - 30, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Myrna Rodriguez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Emolior Academy is a middle school with 244 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 33% Black, 65% Hispanic, and 2.0% Asian students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 90.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is Developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The leadership makes strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products.(1.3)
 - As part of the Talent pilot, the school has access to a coach who works with all teachers modeling classroom strategies and who works weekly with teacher teams to align teaching to the Danielson Framework. Additionally, as part of the middle school initiative project, it has strategically used Word Generation and Depth of Knowledge (DOK) to meet the Citywide Instructional Expectations and the Common Core Learning Standards with regards to academic vocabulary acquisition, higher order thinking skills, and the use of non-fiction texts to prepare students for college and careers.
 - The leadership ensures that all students, including English language learners (Ells), students with disabilities (SWD) and high achievers have co-curricula and extra-curricula activities that meet their academic and social needs. The school schedules the mandated extra 37½ minutes tutoring during the day, to ensure that all students receive targeted interventions in all subject areas and then enrichment courses or clubs are offered after school and on Saturdays. As a result of these organizational decisions student subgroups have opportunities to receive targeted assistance and/or enrichment that meet their academic needs.
- The school aligns its assessments to curricula using on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyzes information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels. (2.2)
 - The school's use of Fountas and Pinell and running records provides data on student reading levels for all subject teachers to use for grouping, conferencing, and setting individual and class goals. Additionally, common assessments and site-specific common rubrics developed in alignment to the CCLS provide students with actionable feedback. Students receive this data, self-assess, and reflect upon all written work. All end-of-unit assessments have a peer review component and students stated in various classes that the rubrics and frequent assessments with timely feedback helped them to improve their writing and content knowledge. All subject and grade teachers use the data from assessments, student feedback, peer reviews, and self-reflection, to determine progress towards goals and provide students and families with feedback and next learning steps to reach the next benchmark goals. Administration and faculty spend several periods with teachers throughout the week to ensure that these practices are followed through consistently. As a consequence, the data for several benchmark periods show a steady growth in student academic performance in unit exams, reading levels, and writing progression.
- The leadership and staff have established a coherent vision of school improvement with a list of clear, focused school level goals, and school leaders effectively involve and communicate with the school community. (3.1)
 - School leaders effectively involve the community in academic and social activities and it is evident in the tone and climate of the school that students, faculty, and staff share a vision of individual and school

improvement. The school maintains its focus on college and career readiness since its opening 5 years ago, by prioritizing writing throughout the disciplines. In addition, the school has developed goals that are driving efforts to accelerate student learning by targeting reading levels, academic vocabulary acquisition, and effective questioning, to elicit higher-order thinking across all grades. Professional development is structured to address the achievement of these instructional school goals. As a result, reading levels have improved and student writing that is tracked every month shows marked and steady improvements across all grades. Students and families are engaged in developing school and student goals and students accumulate a portfolio of their best writing pieces including a self-reflection about the writing process for each task. Thus, by reflecting in writing about their best work, students are learning critical skills in analysis, revision of writing, and deep thinking about the writing process that are skills needed for college and career readiness.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop curricula and units of study across all subjects and ensure that in all grades clear and consistent expectations are met so that all students, including Ells and SWDs are effectively supported and cognitively challenged. (1.1)
 - The leadership and faculty are working diligently to align the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) to their English language arts (ELA), math, social studies, and science and arts curricula. As a result students are engaged in reading purposeful non-fiction texts and writing tasks that demand the use of textual evidence across all subject areas, including the arts. In math, teachers work with ELA and science teams to incorporate academic content such as the use of the various measuring systems throughout history as compared to what is being used today. At this time, however, the school has not fully developed its curriculum units so that it is clearly delineated for all teachers what additional resources and instructional strategies are needed to engage and challenge Ells, SWDs, and high achievers so that they can academically achieve. Consequently, as a result of the school not yet aligning the use of resources with the demands of the CCLS, all students are not yet engaged in language acquisition to produce high levels of work.
 - The school uses Word Generation and Depth of Knowledge (DOK) to support its academic vocabulary acquisition and higher order thinking skills goals for students. There is evidence in the school's data that students' levels of reading are improving as a result of these interventions. As part of the Middle School Initiative (MSI) Word Generation provides the school with many curricula and professional development supports, but the school has not fully developed academic tasks, lesson planning, and targeted professional development, so that rigorous habits and higher-order skills are consistent across grades and all subjects for Ells and SWDs. As a result, in some classes students are more engaged in higher thinking discussions than in other classes. Furthermore, bilingual students and students with disabilities are not able to demonstrate a great degree of confidence in reading and writing as evidenced in class work and work products.

- Further develop teaching practices and strategies so that all students are engaged and needs of all learners are met so that they demonstrate success in higher order thinking through meaningful work products. (1.2)
 - Across classrooms teaching practices are becoming aligned to curricula and reflects a set of beliefs that students learn best when instructed using the workshop model, using DOK to develop higher-order questioning, and by acquiring high levels of academic vocabulary. There is a school wide emphasis for teachers to deepen their knowledge of the use of the workshop model as well as to deepen their questioning strategies. In some classes teachers used some high level questioning that prompted animated discussions, however it is inconsistently demonstrated in all classes, as many teachers' questions are limited to knowledge level questions. Consequently, students do not have the benefit of having high order questions to elevate their thinking and for them to produce higher levels of academic work.

- Further evaluate the quality of school decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase coherence of policies and practices with particular attention to what teachers need to learn to support student mastery of CCLS. (5.1)
 - The leadership organizes the school so that on a weekly basis teacher team leaders meet to evaluate and adjust curricular and instructional practices after analyzing class assessment data and student work products. However, there is still work to be done to evaluate the alignment and coherence between what is taught and how it is taught. Though there are systems in place to target ELLs, SWDs and high achievers through special classes such as using the 37 ½ minute tutoring period to target high achievers through diverse activities including clubs, instructional practices in subject classes do not consistently reflect differentiated strategies to address these subgroups during regular class time. Therefore teachers are not yet fully versed in adjusting their instructional strategies to sufficiently target all students so they achieve the standards.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Emolior Academy	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