

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Ebbets Field Middle School

K352

**46 MCKEEVER Place
Brooklyn
NY 11225**

Principal: Margie Baker

**Dates of review: November 13-14, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Dr. Buffie Simmons**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Ebbets Field Middle School is a/an Junior High-Intermediate-Middle School with 319 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 76% Black, 19% Hispanic, 3% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 90%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal makes deliberate organizational decisions and uses resources to support the school's instructional goals to improve student outcomes. (1.3)
 - In support of the school-wide goal of increasing students' literacy and math skills and the long-range plan of developing the skills required of 21st Century Learners, the principal purchased software and computers for the classrooms. This allows students to work with an online program while teachers work with group of students to provide targeted support. Additionally, she utilized her budget to purchase fiction and nonfiction leveled libraries. As a small school, the leadership and faculty make decisions on the use of resources that leverage student learning promoting positive student behaviors academically and socially in a highly organized and structured environment. The school analyzes student performance data outcomes to develop school, class and student goals and uses its resources strategically to support teachers, students and families to attain these goals. Some examples of these resources include various technologies including SMARTboards and computers. The leadership and staff use these resources, to engage and instruct students. Students and teachers are able to use this strategy in classes. For example, in a class English language learners use dictionaries, thesaurus and computers to assist with their comprehension. Teacher teams are able to meet during common planning time where staff views student work or assessment data. As a result, teachers are able to work together to make decisions as how their work translates to instructional practice. As such, teachers are developing resources to support all learners and improve pedagogical practices.
- The leadership and staff ensure a safe and nurturing environment for students that support social, emotional and academic development. (1.4)
 - “Helpful” is how one parent described the staff. Parents state that they are appreciative of the extra help and hands-on assistance that teachers provide to the students. Students are thankful for the support provided to resolve conflicts that interfere with their academic and social growth. There are informal support mechanism, beginning with the Family Worker, Physical Education teacher, Administrative interns and the Parent Coordinator to support the whole child. The principal has an open door policy to promote student learning and parental involvement. As a result, fewer students are suspended at school as evidenced by the online occurrence reports. Students state that they are encouraged and feel free to express their opinions. They feel comfortable meeting with teachers for guidance and academic support. Students voice that teachers help them to understand by ensuring that academic concepts are explained. In addition, they also value teachers’ supportive attitudes in programs and unofficial support offerings by individual subject teachers or Family Worker. The parent coordinator is well valued as the hub of information and support for parents regarding student discipline, academic concerns, school meetings and general information. Clear attendance procedures are established and personalized to ensure that outreach by school attendance personnel, including home visits, are conducted as needed guaranteeing that a high average of student attendance is maintained. The school’s attention to student learning needs has resulted in pupils becoming more responsible for their own learning behaviors. Additionally, this is evidenced in a decrease in student incidents and

suspensions as reflected in the school's On-line Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) data.

- The school has generated a short list of goals driven by school-wide data in order to improve overall student academic achievement. (3.1)
 - The school has clearly defined goals for improvement this academic year: two are to increase the student academic achievement in English language arts and math, and one focuses on establishing effective teacher teams. Action plans for each goal are detailed and encompass strategies like periodic assessments, real-life problem solving, and incentives for students and professional development for teachers. Teachers benefit from weekly structured opportunities for planning, analyzing student work and data review. Teachers receive professional development this year from the network whose support the school's focus on reading for comprehension. School goals are shared with the community. Students and families are well informed of the school's goals and state that their input in the roll out of these goals were well-received by both staff and administration. This year, goals aligned to student progress are used as a communication link between school and home. Additionally, workshops based on parents' needs and interests culled from feedback help parents gauge student performance. As a result, teachers, students, and families agree that there is collaboration to improve the school's tone and raise student academic achievement. These stakeholders are informed about school plans and have a share understanding regarding the processes for advancing overall student success. In addition, there is increased understanding of their contribution to meeting the school goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop the quality of academic tasks align to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to cognitively engage all students in learning that promote college and career readiness. (1.1)
 - Teams of teachers across departments are working on developing rigorous curriculum. However, the school has yet to make adequate progress in this work. While departments understand the instructional shifts, some teachers could not clearly explain intentionality of the pacing calendar's alignment to the CCLS, clear learning outcomes with matching assessments and knowledge of standards is also inconsistent across staff members. In an enrichment class, students answered questions pertaining to aviation from a literature textbook. At the teacher team meeting, the enrichment teacher expressed little knowledge of where the students are with the Social Studies content or in the pacing calendar and therefore lack authenticity of an interdisciplinary connection. These inconsistencies limit teacher effectiveness and, thus, student growth. Some classes offer higher-order tasks that challenge students, but this practice is not consistent across classes and student work observed in hallways and classrooms did not adequately push students' thinking. Even though the school's total population includes 24% special education students and 19% English language learners, the academic tasks observed in classrooms did not reflect a diversity of differentiated tasks for those students. For example, in a math class students were divided by groups but tasks were differentiated based on the amount of questions group members needed to answer. In a Science class, students were given trade books to assist in their exploration of the subject. However, the materials were low cognitive level and did not match the individual needs of the students. As such, these academic tasks do not give all students the access

to rigorous curriculum that can meet their academic needs while engaging in cognitive challenging tasks to promote college and career readiness, do not ensure that all students are engaged or that their needs are being met, this hampers students' ability to fully participate in the learning process and limits their potential for academic growth.

- Strengthen questioning and discussion techniques across classrooms so that all students have multiple entry points into challenging content and tasks, demonstrate high levels of thinking, and are cognitively engaged. (1.2)
 - In a grade 6 grade English language arts class, students engage in a standards-based lesson with text reading and discussion from the book, *The Lightning Thief*. Students work in small skills-based groups and review a previous instructional anchor chart and discuss the things that “Close Readers” do, make inferences, cite text-based evidence, and deepen their understanding regarding character analysis. However, across classrooms the questioning is generic and did not align with the school’s common teaching framework, nor is able to generate high level thinking and student discussion. However, while many of the common belief structures such as grouping, and differentiation, are in place in many classrooms, the deep analysis of text that promote active engagement, and high levels of participation through purposeful questioning is inconsistent. As a result, instructional practices do not yet accurately address the academic needs for all students and progress is not appropriately accelerated as evidenced in the lack of student movement in literacy and math in some special needs classrooms.
 - Teachers group students based on needs. In an English as a second language (ESL) class, students engage in teacher created learning centers that targeted each student’s entry points. The school also utilizes a computer-generated literacy program to support the individualized instructional needs of English language learners. In some classes, particularly content specific classes, students work in small groups, however there is no evidence that the activities in the groupings are differentiated to address their multiple entry points and enable the appropriate level of scaffolds and extensions at their specific instructional levels. While students were observed being engaged in student discussion in the English classroom where they were interpreting high-level texts, this was not the case in other classes observed. Also, assigned tasks in most classrooms visited did not include critical thinking to sufficiently produce higher-order work products across grades and department areas. Similarly, some student notebooks and work folders do not demonstrate sufficient evidence of tiered supports to ensure consistent progress for struggling learners. Consequently, there are uneven levels of student thinking and participation, resulting in missed opportunities for students to develop higher order thinking skills. Consequently, the lack of tasks aligned to the instructional needs of all students limit their cognitive ability to engage in appropriate level support for higher-order thinking skills in order to increase their academic achievement.
- Refine the use of common assessments to align to the school’s key standards so that teachers provide actionable feedback to students towards meeting goals and use data results to make instructional adjustments. (2.2)
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers gather and analyze summative data as well as formative assessments, such as of student work, lesson exit slips, i-Ready measures of comprehension, NYS English language arts and math results, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals, and New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) data to identify broad gaps in student learning across classrooms. Teachers use

common assessments to target general concepts and ideas but do not yet use data streams to identify specific skills and strategies for student subgroups in classrooms or for academic interventions. For example, teachers focus their lessons on comprehension skills but do not yet develop their lessons with enough supports and extensions to effectively meet the needs of subgroups. Books and other instructional tools are not always matched based on student needs, interests and abilities. Consequently, students are not performing to their maximum level as evidenced in student work products and standard test scores. Therefore, the percent of students passing core courses (88% English language arts and 85% math) is inconsistent in comparison to students attaining proficiency on State exams (5% English language arts and 3% math) as evidenced by the 2012-2013 Progress Report data.

- An analysis of baseline data leads to the identification of content area strands that have been mastered and those which have not been attained. However, there are no identifiable next steps to address the varying academic needs of students. Students use teacher-made rubrics to guide the development of tasks, teacher's comments and student reflection are not always used to grade work. In some classes student work had teacher evaluative comments posted but others did not. Furthermore, teachers do not consistently utilize baseline data to evaluate the impact of instructional resources and teaching practices on student outcomes. Student self-assessment is inconsistent across classrooms. There was minimal evidence that formative classroom data is used to support timely instructional modifications. As a result, students are not cognitively engaged which impedes with their progress and performance levels of achievement. In addition, there are missed opportunities to check for student understanding during lessons. Hence, teachers are not able to make adjustments in the curriculum to reteach concepts and skills that deepen student learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Ebbets Field Middle School	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score		X		

Instructional Core

To what extent does the school regularly...	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?		X		
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the 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

To what extent does the school...	UD	D	P	WD
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports 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 those expectations?		X		

Systems for Improvement

To what extent does the school...	UD	D	P	WD
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student 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 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?		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
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