



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

East Flatbush Community Research School

Middle School K581

**905 Winthrop Street
Brooklyn
NY 11203**

Principal: Daveida Daniel

**Date of review: February 26, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Beverly A. Wilkins**

The School Context

East Flatbush Community Research School is a middle school with 176 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 88% Black, 3% Hispanic, 3% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 26% special education students. Boys account for 63% of the students enrolled and girls account for 37%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 93.0%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
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	Additional Findings	Proficient
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	Focus	Proficient
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	Additional Findings	Proficient
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Celebration	Well Developed
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations of teaching and learning via the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching to the entire staff that are supported by professional learning opportunities. Teachers consistently communicate high expectations to students connected to effective support services towards ownership of learning and next level preparation.

Impact

The school has structures to support a unified set of high expectations for staff, students, and conveys expectations to families, to ensure all are accountable for students' progress and for success at the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders consistently communicate to staff through the Staff Development Committee, and administrative and instructional cabinet meetings. In addition, memos, emails, agendas, and posted morning announcements are mediums that provide opportunities to reiterate and reinforce school wide expectations. For example, observed trends and patterns in pedagogy such as using formative assessment data to plan lessons or creating supportive classroom environments are shared in updates to staff. The practice of highlighting trends from grade-to-grade and classroom-to-classroom ensures necessary supports, if needed, for teachers and students.
- Teachers are trained in the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teachers commented they "get a lot of feedback on techniques" that support achieving expectations. Collectively, teachers along with administrators align departmental 'looks fors' to effective and highly effective teaching attributes outlined in the Framework, the Quality Review rubric, and the Chancellor's Four Pillars in the Framework for Great Schools, to embed best practices school wide. A school created rubric for use during collaborative walkthroughs ensures all teachers are on the same page and that professional interventions are in place that support achievement of the instructional core expectations.
- Teachers report that the focus on *what is taught and how it is taught* builds coherence in instructional expectations across the school. The expectations of teachers using a minimum of three check for understanding protocols for each lesson systemically results in a culture of understanding to support progress.
- Teachers communicate high expectations to students through ongoing feedback and consistent articulation of academic and personal behaviors. Teachers encourage demonstration of learning habits and skills essential to next level readiness via handwritten and electronic inserted comments on student work to foster ownership of learning. As one student expressed, "Teachers [also] push students who do not want to learn."
- The school-wide expectations of three annual visits to institutions of higher learning stimulate student goal setting and inspire aspirations toward college and career paths. Students visit Columbia University, Brooklyn College, and Howard University. The Positive Behavior Intervention System Team develops curriculum around College and Career Readiness behaviors. Students create individual action plans for the next level.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

In some classrooms, teaching practices aligned to the curricula provide multiple entry points for all learners. Teaching practices and student work products reflect the school's belief system on how students learn best. While these practices were present in classrooms, it was not yet present in a vast majority of classrooms.

Impact

All students, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs), engage in challenging tasks that are at their level and demonstrate higher order thinking skills in their work products. Critical thinking tasks were consistently present in lessons, but not strategically implemented across classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers plan lesson in keeping with the school's instructional focus of all students engaging in learning activities that promote cognitive rigor. Teachers follow the workshop model and structure, which includes a pre-lesson activity, mini-lesson, independent activity, exit tickets, and a summary of learning.
- Informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and instructional shifts, the school's belief on how students learn best includes strategies that employ the use of rubrics, annotation of text, three stop-and-jots per lesson, and the common use of group protocols for shared and individual responsibility for learning. The use of a video clip on a current issue reported in the newspaper provided an entry point for a diverse group of students to explore the features of news articles in a social studies classroom. The use of technology stimulated interest in an appropriately challenging task of understanding the structure of a news article and prompted connections between details in the video and key elements in the news story, thus engaging all learners.
- Tier I Response to Intervention strategies support productive struggle for students with performance tasks that require high-level thinking while working in small groups, ability groupings, and mixed ability partnerships. However, in three out of seven classrooms observed, students had limited opportunity to utilize high quality supports and extensions that scaffold further demonstration of skill and knowledge.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and Citywide instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills are embedded in curricula.

Impact

All students are engaged in challenging activities and performance tasks that promote higher order thinking skills as well as college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has adopted the standards-based core curricula and resources to support all grades and address the instructional shifts that build coherence school wide. Scholastic Code X and Connected Math Program 3 are supplemented with EngageNY performance tasks, literature circles, and a guided reading program specifically designed with high interest literature for middle and high school students, as well as, Glencoe Science curricula and Social Studies trade books to purposefully execute Common Core Learning Standards aligned curricula.
- In order to strengthen alignment in math to instructional shifts, students and teachers engage in blended learning activities using Math IXL to incorporate tasks that correlate with standards-based units of study for ELL students. Rigorous and demanding activities and lessons for English language learners and students with disabilities (SWDs) are also delivered via online adaptive instructional programs such as Achieve 3000, Scholastic Read 180, and LightSail.
- Unit plans are written using the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) design. At the end of each unit, students complete rigorous performance tasks. All students engage in close reads, focus on vocabulary development, and spend ample time writing in subject area classes to increase levels of proficiency.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teachers and school leaders use common assessments and samples of student work to measure and track student progress toward instructional goals.

Impact

School leaders provide actionable feedback to teachers about student outcomes. Teachers use common assessments to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Datacation is the platform that the school uses to track performance data using Data-Driven Classroom (DDC) forms. The DDC system captures student mastery as measured against rubrics aligned to ELA and math standards. At the end of each unit, school leaders and teachers analyze data and revise units of study to create pacing calendars for Expanded Day and Saturday Academy.
- The Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) assessment is administered three times a year to track reading levels. Reading levels inform the composition of instructional groupings for strategic intervention. Interventions include literature circles, Achieve 3000, Read 180, Wilson Just Words, LightSail, and guided reading. Each of the online programs has interim reports that track student progress between administrations.
- Teachers, individually and in teams, review students work and create a calendar for the re-teaching of one skill per week that posed the greatest challenge to the most students. Students have opportunities to deepen their understanding of expression and equation strands and organizational skills in essay writing. Teachers devote the second half of a 90-minute instructional block to spiral teaching.
- Students receive actionable feedback from teachers via *glows and grow* using rubric language. Students stated that teacher feedback helps them to know what they did well and how to improve regarding achievement.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based collaborations. Distributed leadership structures allow teachers to have a voice in key decisions across the school.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has strengthened teacher collaboration resulting in improvements to pedagogical practices and a stronger voice in key decisions affecting supports for student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- During teacher team meetings, teachers spoke about how they regularly meet in horizontal and vertical teams to shape units of study, identify resources to supplement core curricula and to create curricula to promote achievement of school goals. Teachers attest to being a "tight team" that learns from each other and that they are strengthening instructional capacity by "referring to each other" for professional support. An example of this would be a "shout out" from a colleague during a team meeting for an English language arts teacher for incorporating questioning techniques studied in the Professional Learning Community (PLC) collaboration during a lesson with eighth graders.
- Department teams use the PLC model to collaborate using an inquiry approach. Tailored professional development meets the professional learning needs of grade and content teams as well as individual teachers. Teachers engage in research and development around a problem of practice and of interest. Teacher-led teams explore Station Teaching; Questioning; and Integrating Technology-Blended Learning. Teachers spoke to how this work of learning one specific strategy to implement in classrooms was useful to building instructional capacity across grades and content.
- Teachers also explained how the school leaders have supported teachers in building leadership capacity and voice in key school decisions. The School Implementation Team meets to discuss and develop social-emotional services for students with individualized educational plans and for at-risk students. A Staff Development Committee (SDC) meets monthly to evaluate professional development needs. Teachers commented that they play a large role in establishing a culture for learning. Teachers conduct peer observations, co-teach, serve as mentors, and design and facilitate professional learning. Another example of teacher voice includes the development of a Positive Behavior Incentive System that supports the direction of the school and focuses on academic and personal behavior expectations as evidenced in class Dojo system to track student behavior and identify incentives, accordingly.