



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Eleanor Roosevelt Intermediate School

Middle School M143

**515 West 182nd Street
Manhattan
NY 10033**

Principal: La Kisha McDaniel Luke

**Date of review: February 5, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Cheryl McClendon**

The School Context

Eleanor Roosevelt Intermediate School is a middle school with 398 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 1% Black, 97% Hispanic, 2% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 45% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92%.

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	Developing
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	Developing
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	Additional Findings	Proficient
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	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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

The majority of teachers engage in structured professional collaborations that are focused on the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards instructional shifts and the attainment of school wide goals. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

On-going teacher team collaboration supports implementation of the Common Core and attainment of school goals. As distributed leadership structures involve teachers in decision-making, teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- During a grade 8 English language arts teacher team meeting, teachers shared that they receive on-going professional development to refine the structure of their meetings. The structure of the inquiry cycle is as follows: analyze curriculum, student work and data to identify curricular gaps, misconceptions or areas in need of improvement; identify supplemental instructional materials or strategies and academic intervention strategies and scaffolds; collaboratively plan curricular and instructional revisions. Teachers stated that the focus for the present inquiry cycle is to strengthen students' skills in supporting their claims and inferences with textual evidence.
- Teacher teams incorporate the *Collaborative Assessment Protocol* to look at student work. Teacher team members referred to a full-day professional learning session where the faculty used this protocol to analyze several samples of student writing. Teachers described the process, sharing that the presenting teacher shared the work sample, each participant analyzed the work, the facilitator elicited low-inference observations, and each participant was then encouraged to ask questions about the task and what skill areas the student was working on. In reflection, teachers stated that the use of this protocol has redirected the orientation of teacher team inquiry from a deficit-based perspective to a strengths-based perspective.
- Each teacher team meeting reflects the professional collaboration of a subject area coach, a peer instructional coach, and teachers. The school has assigned two peer instructional coaches. The peer instructional coach position is a teacher leadership role within the NYC Department of Education that is funded through a federal Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant. This grant is aimed at expanding the presence of teacher leadership within middle schools. During the teacher team meetings, teachers voiced their satisfaction with the guidance and assistance with analyzing data and planning that they receive from the peer instructional coaches.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula for English language learners and students with disabilities. Across classrooms, teachers inconsistently engage students in higher-order thinking in class discussions.

Impact

Inconsistent teaching strategies limit student engagement and limit the development of critical thinking skills. Across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of students thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- For the culminating project of a grade 7 science unit on earthquakes, students were engaged in collaborative groups discussing how to design and build a seismograph. One group shared that they had done research on the topic and they narrowed it down to two models. The teacher facilitated the learning by circulating from group to group to listen in and offer feedback. The teaching practices in this class elicited engagement, collaborative problem-solving, high-level discussion and demonstration of conceptual understanding. However, these practices were not evident across classrooms. A teacher-centered orientation reflecting a lack of or limited strategies for differentiation was observed in many of the classes that were visited. For example in one social studies class, the English as a second language teacher assisted English language learners with translation as the social studies teacher taught the history lesson. Two students were selected to read their answers to the questions that were posted on a chart in the front of the room. As the social studies teacher asked questions, none of the students responded. Even with subsequent translation, only two to three students were able to answer the questions. Other than translation, there was no evidence of differentiation to support student understanding. This also limited student engagement.
- Across classrooms teachers were observed asking high-level questions, such as: “What traits are essential for survival?” and “How will knowing about geology help you to become a better global citizen?” This practice reflects a focus on Danielson’s Framework for teaching component 3B which refers to using questioning and discussion techniques to support higher-order thinking.
- As observed in an integrated co-teaching class, a teacher provided scaffolds such as: anchor charts, writing prompts, character analysis graphic organizers, a Common Core writing rubric and student exemplars which groups of students analyzed using the rubric. The teacher also circulated to support students in revising their character analysis short responses to “Hatchet” by Gary Paulsen. In contrast, the teacher with the other group read the RAFT (Role, Audience, Format, and Tone) essay writing scaffold from the Smart board. This group was very teacher-directed and students did not have an opportunity to engage in higher-order thinking skills or student to student discussion.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty build coherent Common Core-aligned curricula with an integration of the instructional shifts through planning and refinement that is informed by the analysis of student work and data.

Impact

The use of Common Core-aligned curricula and the refinement of curricula through on-going data analysis promote access and college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- During the leadership meeting the principal stated that the faculty chose Connected Mathematics Project 3 (CMP3) because it contains scaffolds to build students conceptual understandings in math. This curricular focus on building conceptual understandings is a direct application of fourth Common Core instructional shift in math which refers to building deep understanding in math for students. The school uses the Georgia State English Language Arts curriculum. The literacy team used the Tri-State curriculum analysis rubric from Engage New York to vet this curriculum to ensure alignment with the Common Core standards. Teachers use the New York City scope and sequence to develop units of study and lesson plans in science and social studies.
- Teacher teams have modified and re-ordered units of study to promote curricular coherence and accommodate students' needs within and across grades. For example, based upon curricular analysis, teachers found the eighth grade English Language Arts anchor text, "Bad Boy" to be too complex for a great percentage of the eighth grade students. Teachers then substituted shorter texts for students to engage in the focal comprehension strategies of the unit. This modification allowed students greater access within the unit.
- The math team looked closely at the 2014 NYS assessment math item-skills analysis to identify deficit areas, and found that a large percentage of grade 7 students were performing below standard in executing basic operations with rational numbers. Analysis of the Connected Mathematics Project 3 (CMP3) curriculum illuminated that rational numbers are not taught until unit 2 of the grade 7 curriculum. Based upon this finding, teachers created and incorporated introductory lessons on rational numbers into the end-of-year grade 6 math curriculum.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The school is developing in their use of common assessments to measure student progress toward goals. Across classrooms, teachers inconsistently check for understanding and make effective instructional adjustments to meet student's needs.

Impact

The on-going development of the use of assessments supports the attainment of school wide goals. The inconsistent use of checks for understanding limits teachers' abilities to effectively modify instruction to meet students' needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers administer several common assessments such as Fountas and Pinnell running records, i-Ready Assessments, end of unit math assessments and performance based assessments in writing. Teacher teams are developing in their use of these assessments to measure student progress in alignment with school wide goal number 2 which is to develop a data-driven school culture that is based on student needs, assessments, and analysis, informing instruction and resulting in greater student achievement outcomes.
- The school's professional development committee has identified using data to drive instruction as a focal area of support for teachers this year.
- In one classroom students placed red, yellow or green traffic light symbols on their desks to indicate their level of understanding of tasks. As the teacher circulated the room, he purposefully stopped at the desks of students who had the yellow and red symbols on their desks to ask probing questions, provide feedback or one to one instruction. However, structures for checking for understanding were not observed in most of the classrooms that were visited. For example, in one class, although the teacher physically circulated among the various groups in her classroom, she focused more on management of the groups rather than on checking for understanding. As a result, students' misconceptions went unnoticed and unclarified.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the faculty and provide training to support teachers in meeting those expectations. School leaders and faculty convey and help families understand the college and career readiness expectations that they have for students.

Impact

Teachers are supported in meeting the expectations of school leaders through professional development. Parents feel well-informed about their child’s progress, and receive support in understanding the Common Core.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers participate in professional development cycles which they focus on topics such as engaging students in higher-order critical thinking, the effective use of questioning and discussion techniques, and conferring and providing feedback to students. Teachers use the CONFER APP program to enter their conference notes and school leaders monitor them regularly.
- Teachers receive professional learning support from the peer instructional coaches. In addition teachers engage in professional book study. Several teachers engaged in a collaborative reading of the book, *Teaching Empowerment and Resilience through Literature*. Participating teachers stated that reading this book has changed the way in which they teach persuasive writing.
- During the parent meeting, parents expressed that they receive on-going feedback about their children’s progress through the Jupiter online platform. In addition several parents come in to speak with teachers on Tuesday afternoons. Parents also stated that they have participated in Common Core presentations and test-prep workshops that the faculty has facilitated.