



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Eagle Academy Young Men of Harlem

Middle School M148

**6 Edgecombe Avenue
Manhattan
NY 10030**

Principal: Mahaliel H. Bethea II

**Date of review: January 30, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Roxan Marks**

The School Context

The Eagle Academy for Young Men is a middle school with 139 students from grade six through grade seven. The school population comprises 72% Black, 26% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 2% special education students. Boys account for 100% of the students enrolled and girls account for 00%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 89%.

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	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 and faculty partner with families and consistently provide high expectations related to college readiness. Teams of teachers provide ongoing feedback and guidance preparing students for the next level.

Impact

All stakeholders share a culture of mutual accountability for high expectations, and students understand their progress towards meeting those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Scholars meet daily in the gym prior to start of day and are greeted by school leaders in the Town Hall. During this time students hear announcements, house points and other celebratory news. Staff conducts a check to ensure students are dressed appropriately in the school uniform, and as scholars learn the school pledge they participate in a “tie” ceremony. The school utilizes a house model, and upon registration each scholar is placed in a house and remains a member until graduation. This supports collaboration, team building and shared expectations towards academic and social success. House structure creates shared responsibility using merit and demerit system. Advisory units and lessons provide college and career readiness, and students engage in activities to encourage confidence, attention to impact of body language, speaking, self-assurance and determination.
- Continuous feedback is offered to families through letters, emails and newsletters. Progress reports contain attendance percentage and detailed information on core subject areas. The progress reports include “Habit Targets” that provide feedback on organization of notebooks, workspace, book bags as well as participation, presentation and preparation of quality work directly linked to supporting college and career readiness. Teachers meet with scholars during “Mastery Conference” to set goals and reflect upon progress towards those expectations. School leaders shared that students use Jump rope to reflect on where there are and to identify focus areas based on analysis of data, which encourages students to take ownership of their learning.
- The school invested in a program called Noviance which is used by parents to track college options for students based on interest, skills and requirement of colleges. Parents commented that they appreciated this tool, and they noticed their children are more reflective, responsible and demonstrate leadership skills since enrolled in the school. As part of the seventh grade experience, students visit colleges in the Washington, DC area. Teachers shared that they focus more on critical thinking, designing projects, close reading, text based evidence, argument writing and real world connections to better prepare students for college and careers.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices inconsistently provide entry points resulting in uneven engagement during lesson. Student discussions reflected unequal level of participation and thinking.

Impact

In some classrooms instructional strategies allowed students to think and talk about the work in meaningful ways, however questioning, discussions and scaffolds were not consistent in classes limiting higher order thinking, student participation and ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- During a grade 7 science lesson, scholars were exploring plate tectonics and how it is used to explain gradual changes in the earth's surface. Teacher shared guiding questions such as, "What happens when plates collide?" "Where are the majority of boundaries located?" "Can we see the mid-ocean ridge above sea level?" Scholars viewed a short video on the smart board and the teacher invited students to take notes as they watched. The teacher facilitated the discussion after viewing the video, and student's responses build upon each other. Review of the lesson plan showed questions were planned resulting in the teacher's ability to target questions at various levels of cognition. This level of engagement and discourse was not seen in the majority of classrooms.
- In a grade 6 humanities lesson, scholars were copying from the smart board and upon completion were instructed to fold their hands. The Do Now activity lasted for three minutes and students were given two questions to explore, "What did you find surprising about the ending of the book, *Lightening Thief*?" and "What events did you predict will happen?" Some students quickly began to respond in their books while others were still copying the question. Most of the questions posed were literal thus preventing opportunities for students to build on other student responses. Students did not have the text to refer to while engaging in the activity limiting their ability to locate text based evidence.
- During a grade 7 English as a Second Language lesson, the teacher used various colors to create a box around some key words in the text posted on chart paper. Scholars were restating the claim and providing evidence from the text. The teacher provided physical actions to help support the English language learners to grasp the emotions of the character displayed in the photograph. The graphic organizer used provided a structure to support writing, and a sentence starter helped students to begin the writing process. The teacher modeled and reviewed a descriptive paragraph being careful to address issues that could impact comprehension. A chart in the room supported scholars reminding them to scan, underline, pay attention to highlighted words and look at the pictures. This level of scaffolds for students was not seen in the vast majority of classrooms.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. NYS assessment data is used to identify priority standards that are incorporated in the units of study. Academic tasks are planned and refined using data and student work.

Impact

The curriculum is engaging and demanding in all subject areas and provides access for a variety of learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The school identified three power standards by grade level based on the NYS assessment results in English language arts and mathematics. The use of a common unit plan template that includes alignment to standards and unit learning targets are developed in student-focused language using “I can” statements. The essential questions and relevance section which links content to previous units also outlines the key learning expected for the scholars. The section entitled accessibility provides differentiated instruction for students with disabilities, English language learners, and gifted and talented.
- Teacher teams continuously plan and refine curricula and academic tasks using student work products as demonstrated by the lesson plans showing tiered group activities. The use of the lesson plan template adds to coherence across the school and includes plans for the three focus groups identified through analysis of data. In a grade 7 class for English language learners, the lesson plan outlined sequential steps for modeling to students, presentation of content in chunks as well as visual and kinesthetic supports for students.
- The school uses Expeditionary Learning and CMP3 programs as the core curriculum options. Scholars are exposed to a balance of fiction and non-fiction texts that provide opportunities for students to engage in a variety of activities and projects. The school leader and teachers shared that, based on the low percentage of students attaining mastery on state assessments, their focus was on developing foundational skills in vocabulary, inquiry and writing. Teachers reported that they used backward planning to adjust the mathematics curricula and focus on specific areas that require more targeted support for students. Teacher shared that they work together over the summer to ensure that scaffolds were embedded in the maps.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and staff use and create assessments, rubrics and grading policy that are aligned to key standards. Common assessments are used to determine student progress and make adjustments to units and lessons.

Impact

The school uses ongoing assessments and grading practices to analyze information on learning outcomes, to provide scholars with actionable feedback and to use results to adjust the curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- New York State assessment data was analyzed and sorted in a variety of ways, including raw score, scale score and percent of scholars by grade and proficiency levels. To delve deeper, the school looked closely at the standards tested by grade and created charts that clearly identified the standards and percent of students mastering as well as comparison to city performance. The school uses strategic grouping based on a three-color coded system. Blue represents the support group; orange is the pushable group that is approaching or meeting the standard, and purple represents the challenge group for those students who meet or exceed the standard. These group labels were evident in the lesson plan template that the teachers utilize.
- The school created a Data Dive Action Template that is used school wide to look closely at student assessments in order to identify priority standards that require additional instruction. After each round of formative assessment, teachers participate in Data Dive activities and identify three focus standards and create the action plan for implementation. This document lists the skills needed to teach or reteach for mastery, strategies and resources that will be used by the teacher. The Data Dive Round form is used as an item analysis breakdown of student responses and provides miscue analysis for responses that many students incorrectly identified. The data is used to inform the strategic grouping for in class instruction and extended day grouping. During classroom observations most teachers did not use checks for understanding during the lessons.
- Educators communicate bi-weekly with scholars on the progress made towards the learning targets. The Conference Log is used to document teacher and student action steps and to set goals based on data. During the conference, students are asked to reflect on their understanding of the content as well as on which learning targets they are struggling with and which ones that they are doing well in. Students and parents both shared that they use the program Jumprope to review grades, and scholars stated that it helps them to keep track of their progress.

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured collaborations to support school goals and implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Distributed leadership structures are evident through various team structures and roles.

Impact

Through team meetings, teachers’ instructional capacity is fortified and teachers have voice in the decisions that impact students learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Common planning time allows for teachers and support staff for English language learners and students with disabilities to meet and plan lessons, to discuss assessment data, to examine student work and to share best strategies. Experienced educators provide support for new teachers and alignment of support is also provided for subject area specialists.
- The principal shared that his goal is to ensure that teachers have the skills needed to manage meetings, to communicate effectively within the team structure and to support teachers in building appropriate and manageable agendas. School leaders felt that empowering teacher leaders to be reflective by providing professional learning opportunities as well as focused feedback will help to develop their leadership and decision making skills. Structures are in place to afford teachers opportunities to share in school wide decisions. For example, the cabinet consists of grade team leaders, social worker, dean and programmer which meet on a weekly schedule to discuss instructional focus, compliance, safety and programming.
- During the interviews with teacher teams, many shared that they are listened to by the administration, and that school leadership follows through on ideas and suggestions. As a learning community they feel supported and involved in school decisions. Teachers shared that grade team leaders are a key support, and the principal is open to their opinions and feedback. For example, the creation of the foundational skills plan came from the teachers, and modifications were based on teacher input. To support the instructional focus, teachers had a voice in creating a document entitled Engagement the Eagle Way that is used school wide to outline expectations for teachers and students as they work with engaging students in learning.
- Teachers shared that their instructional capacity is developed through participation in teams and partnering with experienced and effective teachers. During the teacher team observation, teachers shared tips and strategies and talked about the growth in their repertoire from watching colleagues and collaborating on various teams.