



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**Yorkville East Middle School**

**02M177**

**1458 York Avenue  
Manhattan  
NY 10075**

**Principal: Christina Riggio**

**Date of review: March 18, 2015**

**Lead Reviewer: Bonnie Laboy**

## The School Context

Yorkville East Middle School is a middle school with 58 students in grade 6. The school population comprises 8% Black, 29% Hispanic, 43% White, and 10% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 97%.

## School Quality Criteria

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

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The school leaders utilize a wide array of strategies and provide effective supports that exemplify a culture of mutual accountability for the school's high expectations.

### Impact

High expectations communicated through verbal and written school-wide systems support an inclusive learning environment where accountability is shared among all members of the school community. Students are empowered and student voice is at the heart of the school's commitment to creating a positive learning environment for students.

### Supporting Evidence

- The staff highly values empowering their students to maintain ownership of their learning. Student led parent teacher conferences afford students the opportunity to evaluate their performance and set goals for improvement. Parents indicate the conferences provide a clear portrait of how much their child has learned and how they can support them.
- The school maintains ongoing, clear lines of verbal and written communication with the community through weekly newsletters, the school website and Jupiter Grades. They organize numerous activities and opportunities to partner with and engage families in learning in a culture connected to college and career readiness. Family Night workshops are well attended as are student led conferences, which have 100% parental attendance.
- Students and parents receive ongoing communication from the school about the children's progress through the use of web-based Jupiter Grades where teachers upload assignments, rubrics and homework as well as progress towards completion. Parents express that Jupiter's timely information creates a high level of transparency and accountability for their children and is an effective way to communicate with teachers.
- The advisory program has provided a platform to promote high expectations for students. In the daily advisory sessions, students meet every morning and participate in a variety of activities which include academic conferencing, vocabulary building exercises, and discussions of important social emotional topics for adolescents. Students expressed how academic conferences help them to stay focused and organized.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

Although teachers provide multiple entry points in the curricula for all learners, including relevant subgroups and higher-order thinking skills are evident in discussions and student work products, the level of discussions varied across classrooms.

### Impact

Across classrooms, teachers use a variety of strategies to provide means for all learners to complete meaningful work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, students work in differentiated groups. For example, in the math class, students were grouped by ability and learning objectives. Mathematical exercises were tiered by level of complexity and all were aligned to the same mathematical concept. For example, some student worked on finding the area of a polygon while others worked on find the area of multiple irregular polygons.
- In keeping with the school's belief of how students learn best, students engage in partner work, small group instruction, and independent practice. Active participation in cooperative group work, hands-on activities, and opportunities to demonstrate their thinking were evident across classrooms. For example, in physical education class, students maintained checklists and tracking sheets on each other's' performance and gave each other feedback for improvement.
- Some teachers use challenging questions to provide students with opportunities for rigorous engagement and to demonstrate higher order thinking. For example, "How do historians corroborate information?" However, in other classes discourse was procedural in nature such as organizing an essay in chronological order.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

The school aligns curriculum to the common core standards and adjusts instruction so that a diversity of learners have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged.

### Impact

The needs of the diverse population are targeted to create instructional coherence and college and career readiness across the grade and content areas.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school is approaching the teaching of mathematics through the lens of individual math development. Meaningful instructional tasks and targeted instructional strategies are incorporated into differentiated lesson plans. For example, the math class is organized using three-tiers of math activities ranging in complexity. Students are afforded the opportunity to move to a more rigorous task once they demonstrate mastery.
- Teachers approach curriculum design from a shared belief of how students learn best and focus on student needs. There is strategic and purposeful planning of units and daily lessons. The school has developed a unified lesson plan template that aligns lessons to the common core standards and incorporates the instructional shifts. All lesson plans include: student friendly objectives; common core standards; instructional shifts; student groups; scaffolds and extensions to support all learners including English language learners and students with disabilities. For example, in science students are provided with graphics that compliment complex data sets so that they may draw conclusions from both sources.
- Lesson plans and academic task include the integration of the instructional shifts across subject areas. For example, vocabulary lessons are infused into social studies, cerebral diversity activities, and advisory. Student work posted on bulletin boards reflects higher order tasks requiring problem solving, creativity and text-based writing products.

**Findings**

The school uses common assessments, rubrics and grading policies that are aligned to the school's curricula. Teachers across content areas use ongoing assessments to track student progress and make adjustment to curricula based on their findings.

**Impact**

The school's system that monitor progress by looking at student work, analyzing data and incorporating assessments during instruction inform adjustments in unit and lesson planning to meet the needs of all learners.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders use school wide, classroom level and individual student data to create grouping charts and prioritize skills and strategies to be taught. The data is also used to create remedial and advanced group activities which take place during Cerebral Diversity. For example, students in the "Mouthwatering Math" class created recipes using fraction and decimals. They then used the ingredients to produce the recipe for parties of 4, 8 and 12.
- To assess and track reading levels the school utilizes the online Renaissance Learning STARS Reading Assessments. The results of the assessment are used to inform small group and individualized instruction. For example, in science class students were given differentiated texts based on reading abilities to analyze weather patterns.
- The school uses writing rubrics for student self and peer evaluations. Students shared how they use the rubrics as feedback and to set goals for improvements in their writing. One student stated, "We use rubrics and Jupiter to set goals. Progress is a big thing at our school and they show us what we need to do to excel."

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

Teacher teams conduct inquiry-based meetings to analyze assessment data related to student achievement, examine student work to surface learning gaps and discuss instructional strategies.

### **Impact**

Professional collaborations strengthen teacher capacity and build school-wide coherence, which result in students progressing towards their goals.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The analysis of data generated from STARS reading assessment and the analysis of student writing using rubrics provides teacher teams with information about student comprehension, mastery of vocabulary and extended writing performance. Teachers then work together to ensure that reading strategies, vocabulary development and opportunities to write extended responses are employed throughout their units.
- Scheduling of common planning time ensures teachers have time to meet and collaborate. They also review data, discuss student performance using performance rubrics and class assessments, and develop lesson plans to promote student outcomes. Teachers stated, "We eat lunch daily together to check in on student progress to ensure all students flourish".
- Teacher teams have created and refined student rubrics and checklists to assess student work. Teachers work collaboratively, before, during and after school and support each other with lesson planning and feedback. Lesson plans, unit plans and curriculum maps are in a common Drop Box and Google Docs folders which allow for more regular feedback and streamlined communication among staff.