



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

**Emma Lazarus High School for
English Language Scholars**

02M394

**100 Hester Street
Manhattan
NY 10002**

Principal: Melody Kellogg

Date of review: December 16, 2014

Reviewer: Eva Ostrum

The School Context

Emma Lazarus is a high school with 221 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 8.10% Black, 21.30% Hispanic, 6.80% White, and 63.80% Asian students. The student body includes 87.80% English language learners and 0.00% special education students. Boys account for 53.80% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46.20%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 92.90%.

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	Well Developed
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	Additional Findings	Well Developed
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	Focus	Well Developed
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	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	Celebration	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that are aligned with the school's goals and promote the implementation of Common Core learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Teacher teams consistently analyze classroom practice, assessment data and student work across grade levels and content areas.

Impact

These collaborations promote the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts, improve teacher practice, and lead to student mastery for students, including sub-groups.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet twice weekly for a collaborative period, during which they work together both within and across license areas. In a teacher meeting observed, interdisciplinary groups of teachers were using a CCLS-aligned rubric and protocol to analyze student work. Teachers across subject areas spoke about using what they learn through analyzing student work to revise and refine the curricula and academic tasks that they use in their own classrooms. For example, through this collaborative work, teachers concluded that advanced English language learners were still having trouble supporting claims with evidence, as demonstrated in writing samples from a College Writing class. Teachers introduced scaffolded activities on supporting claims with evidence in beginning and intermediate English as a Second Language courses in order to prepare students for the more independent activities that they will experience in the College Writing course. Teachers have subsequently seen an improvement in students' use of evidence-based claims in their written assignments.
- All teachers participate in instructional rounds and engage in inter-visitations and peer feedback about their teaching practices. Teacher teams follow a lesson study protocol as part of their school-wide professional development plan, and have visited other high schools to observe promising practices. In a teacher team meeting, one participant stated that these opportunities to analyze elements of their own and of colleagues' teaching pushed her teaching forward.
- Teachers work with colleagues as part of an inquiry team of two to four teachers to analyze key elements of teacher work, such as classroom practice, unit plans, and lesson plans. The team uses the analysis of these elements to define an essential question for a collaborative action research study. Each inquiry team follows a one-semester inquiry cycle around this essential question that culminates in a strategy supported by data. The team then pilots this strategy in their classrooms for the second half of the school year, tracking student progress to mastery.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use rubrics to provide meaningful and actionable feedback to students. Common assessments across the school create a clear picture of student progress that enables teachers to make curricular and instructional adjustments to meet the needs of all learners.

Impact

Data from student assessment informs teacher practice. Feedback to students supports their acquisition of fluency in English, as well as ongoing improvement in their academic performance.

Supporting Evidence

- The school makes use of rubrics in ways that consistently support students in understanding what they need to do and how they will get there. In the vast majority of classrooms visited, the academic task had an accompanying rubric that enabled students to know exactly what they had to do and how to evaluate their own work. For example, in a social studies class, the rubric specified that to earn the highest grade, the final product would need to show strong connections between documents. In a science class, the rubric for the class activity guided students to state advantages and disadvantages, and to defend their reasoning. Rubrics in classes serving beginning English language learners included scaffolds, such as reminding students to use the sentence frame, "I think _because_." While use of rubrics was strong across the vast majority of classrooms, a rubric used in one classroom directed English language learners to use only English and not make use of their native language, limiting opportunities for the students to use their native language as a scaffold while they improve their English skills.
- The school approaches actionable feedback from a research-based perspective based on *The Power of Feedback* by J. Hattie and H. Timperley. A poster on the wall in classrooms across the school reads, "Where am I now in my learning? Where am I going? How do I get there?" Rubrics containing teacher feedback provide students with detailed suggestions about how to improve their work. For example, one typical comment read, "Develop your idea about external conflict in the *Crucible* for full connections as you did for setting and symbolism".
- The school administers common English as a second language (ESL) assessments that teachers use to track student progress, refine curricula and instruction as needed, and develop supports for individual students. The ESL department creates its own diagnostic writing assessment modeled on the New York State English as a Second Language Test (NYSESLAT) that it uses in combination with Achieve 3000 to collect data on student performance three times per year (beginning of year, end of first semester, and end of year). Teachers collaborate on the development of a shared understanding of the grading expectations in the school-created grading rubric, and the rubric is used to assess student performance results and determine next learning steps.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Teachers engage in ongoing refinement and revision of their curricula and academic tasks through analyzing student work and data, generating rigorous tasks while simultaneously ensuring access for English language learner (ELL) students at all levels of English proficiency.

Impact

Students across the school demonstrate cognitive engagement and higher-order thinking through their participation in rigorous, curricula and academic tasks that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. All students have access to this rigor and are cognitively engaged, regardless of their level of English proficiency.

Supporting Evidence

- In literacy-based academic classes, students engage with complex texts, both fiction and non-fiction. For example, in an English as a second language (ESL) 6 class, students used textual evidence to support their ideas as they discussed the text *Fahrenheit 451*. In U.S. history, students worked with primary source documents, such as *The Black Code of St. Landry's Parish (Louisiana), 1865*; a speech by Frederick Douglass; and a former slave's account of sharecropping.
- In math classes, lesson plans focused on embedded Common Core Learning Standards. For example, in a geometry class, the lesson plan expected students to apply geometric shapes to solve design problems, and use geometric shapes, their measures, and their properties to describe objects. In an algebra class, the lesson plan included the task of representing data with plots on the real number line (dot plots, histograms), and the use of statistics appropriate to the shape of the data distribution to compare center (median, mean) and spread (interquartile range, standard deviation) of two or more sets.
- Inquiry teams focus on improving the academic performance of the students performing in the lowest third. Teams engage in action research projects in which they focus on student assessment data and student work. This ongoing refinement strategy for curricula and academic tasks based on looking at student data and work is evidenced in universal access and cognitive engagement across classrooms.

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching strategies include provide multiple entry points as well as extensions to support all learners. Student discussion and work products across the vast majority of classrooms reflect high levels of student thinking participation and ownership.

Impact

Teaching strategies that include graduated scaffolding incrementally and effectively release responsibility for learning, lead to a high level of student ownership, and ensure that all students demonstrate higher-order thinking in discussions and work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Scaffolds allow students to access complex texts effectively in a way that reflects their understanding. For example, in an English as a second language classroom visited, the teacher supported English language learners in reading a complex text by assigning a separate role to each student in a group. Each student used a scaffolded set of questions to guide his/her analysis of the text. Samples of student work collected after the class provided evidence of 100% student participation, with students recording complex thoughts supported by textual evidence. In a social studies classroom visited, students had begun preparing for a Document Based Question (DBQ) essay by interpreting a single primary source document on the previous day. Students then compared two to four primary source documents. On the following lesson, students made connections across numerous documents, and illustrated those connections in a poster. These posters were to be used as a scaffold for writing a Document Based Questions (DBQ) essay. Student discussions in the class reflected a high level of comprehension of the complex texts with which they were working.
- Scaffolds allow students to engage in scientific classification, using academic vocabulary. For example, in an earth science class, the teacher used the Do Now to review academic vocabulary and concepts that the students had learned in the previous class. This activity served as a scaffold to dig more deeply into the topic on which that day's activity was focusing. In a biology class, the teacher had students create a T chart of the major characteristics of the two types of reproduction, before leading a class discussion on the topic. The T chart helped students in an English as a second language class warm up for using English to discuss a topic that integrated academic vocabulary.
- Across all classrooms visited, student work products and discussions reflected high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership. For example, in a math class observed, a student demonstrated how to solve a problem, while another student obtained a slightly different answer. The two students debated their approaches to the problem, with all other members of the class actively listening. Other class members then gave their opinions on which solution was correct, and used evidence to justify their responses. The class then came to the conclusion that the originally proposed solution was correct. In a second math class observed, student groups worked on calculating probabilities from throwing two dice. They recorded their data and graphed their results in bar charts. All students in the room participated and could explain their thinking.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations about pedagogy through the implementation of ongoing professional development aligned to Danielson's Framework for Teaching. A coaching model provides ongoing training to all teachers.

Impact

Teachers engage in ongoing professional development that directly moves their practice to new levels of skill and accomplishment, and teacher teams and staff provide feedback and guidance supports to prepare students for college and career readiness. This extends to the experience of students, whose cognitive engagement and higher level thinking provide evidence of the effectiveness of this model.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal and leadership team drafted a professional development plan for the year that aligns activities to Danielson's Framework for Teaching, the Quality Review rubric, and best practices in teaching English language learners. The professional development topics align to the school's ongoing initiatives, such as aligning units and activities to the Common Core Learning Standards, building capacity through instructional rounds, and identifying effective interventions. Teachers cited the school's professional development, including the planning that goes into it, as something that unites the staff around shared goals and objectives for their own professional growth and for the academic growth of their students.
- The school leadership team has implemented a coaching system that teachers describe as "amazing." Every teacher in the school has a coaching relationship with a member of the administrative team. Through that coaching relationship, the teacher receives ongoing detailed feedback that supports professional growth. Multiple teachers described the school as offering a lot of coaching and support for teachers. During debriefs after classroom observations, administrators regularly noted that the teacher observed had effectively implemented a strategy that had been recommended through the coaching model.
- The school has a Learn to Work (LTW) program that is implemented through the New York City Mission Society. Through this collaboration, the school offers advisory twice weekly. Advisory includes a two-month segment on college readiness for every student. Many of the core topics are revisited each year through an increasingly sophisticated Depth of Knowledge (DOK) lens. For English language learners, an online resource called Career Cruising supplements the college readiness focus in advisory. Students confirmed that the focus on college readiness begins early, and cited that the help they are getting from Career Cruising prepares them for the next level.