



Quality Review Report

2014-2015

East Side Community

Middle - High School M450

**420 East 12th Street
Manhattan
NY 10009**

Principal: Mark Federman

**Date of review: May 26, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Vivian Orlen**

The School Context

East Side Community is a middle - high school with 650 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 21% Black, 56% Hispanic, 11% White, 8% Asian students, 2% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and 1% American Indian or Alaskan Native. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.0%.

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 | 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 | 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 | 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 | 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 | Well Developed |

Area of Celebration

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|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Well Developed |
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations regarding professionalism, instruction, communication, and other elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching to the entire staff, and have a system of training and accountability for those expectations.

Impact

The school's culture exemplifies mutual accountability for shared high expectations. Effective guidance and advisement supports ensure that all students own their educational experience, and are prepared for success in college.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has a very detailed professional development calendar that was collaboratively created with teacher leaders and is aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the school's instructional focus. The calendar incorporates full faculty, differentiated, department and grade team development. Topics include Understanding by Design curriculum planning, creating culminating interdisciplinary performance based tasks, and supporting teachers to be effective advisors.
- Parents described how teachers go "an extra mile" for all students. Parents reported that all children are "challenged, accepted, supported" and that extra-curricular activities offered help and promote a strong community across the school.
- A review of the collaboratively developed school's detailed Faculty Handbook clearly outlines professional responsibilities and expectations for all staff. The Handbook communicates the expectation that teachers work an extra 150 minutes per week to ensure collaborative planning time as part of the PROSE program. Also students reported, for example, that their advisors were active communicators with their families and advocates for them. This represents a critical responsibility of the advisor and is reflected in the Handbook.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. Teachers consistently utilize effective questioning and discussion techniques.

Impact

While teaching practices provide consistent opportunities for students to engage in learner-centered lessons and peer-peer discussions, discourse in some classes did not demonstrate a high level of student ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- Instructional strategies, determined by teacher teams and related to school wide areas of focus, were seen in all classrooms. For example, in one classroom visited students were using Accountable Talk during whole class and student-to-student discussions.
- When asked, the majority of students could articulate what they were learning and why it was important. In a 9th grade social studies class students were reading contemporary text and could make connections between the Enlightenment Era and current social unrest in Latin America. However, in a middle school integrated co-teaching (ICT) class, students engaged in a task on Romeo and Juliet, but several groups of students had limited ownership of the material and concepts because of difficulty accessing the presented content relying on the teacher for guidance and next steps.
- Across classrooms Performance Based Assessment Tasks (PBATs) uniformly demonstrate high levels of student thinking and engagement. In a 12th grade social studies class a student had to defend their analysis and argument about an upcoming Supreme Court decision related to same-sex marriage. The student cited past Supreme Court cases, judicial precedents, and the Constitution as evidence to support their position.

Additional Findings

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| Quality Indicator: | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: | Well Developed |
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula align to Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks and are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subject areas and for all learners.

Impact

Curricular coherence across grades and subjects areas promotes college and career readiness for all learners. Across all content areas, coursework aligns to college readiness expectations so that all learners, including students with disabilities, must demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- The English HS department reviewed and redesigned their portfolio rubrics to reflect and connect to the Common Core Learning Standards. The principal shared unit plans that demonstrated the literacy shifts across grade levels and content areas. For example, middle school English teachers revised their curriculum incorporating the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Curriculum that is aligned with the Common Core Reading and Writing Standards.
- The mathematics team has incorporated the Common Core instructional shifts focused on application of mathematical principals to solve problems across a range of content areas. This is designed to further strengthen students' ability to demonstrate their learning through Performance Based Assessment tasks and projects in math and other content areas.
- Learning Specialists meet with content area teams to give full input in curriculum creation, refinement and delivery so that all students, including Student With Disabilities and English Language Learners, are able to access the Common Core Learning Standards.

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| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessment | Rating: | Well Developed |
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. The school effectively uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

Impact

The school's coherent assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Effective curricular and instructional decisions ensure that all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities, demonstrate increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- Reviews of sample Performance Based Assessment Tasks (PBATs) from different content areas show a coherent use of rubrics that clearly highlight levels of student performance. Content teachers, students and outside evaluators all use these rubrics to assess and provide feedback on student oral presentations and written work.
- The school utilized their locally developed CER Rubric (Claim or Thesis, Evidence, Reasoning, Mechanics and Academic Language) across all classes and grades. This provides students with a coherent set of expectations across all grades and subject areas. It also provides staff with work samples across subjects and grades that they use during periodic whole-staff review of student work and data.
- Students consistently articulated next steps for improvement on tasks based on meaningful feedback. For example, they noted the need for citations from the text, improving transitioning from one idea to another, connecting one's opinions and feelings to text evidence and effectively organizing one's writing.

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

The principal ensures that the vast majority of teachers engage in inquiry based, structured grade level and content area professional collaborations that promote the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts, and that align practice to the school's instructional goals. An embedded distributed leadership structure enables effective teacher leadership.

Impact

Ongoing teacher collaborations strengthen teacher instructional practice, promote school-wide coherence, and ensure continued progress toward goals for all learners. Effective teacher leadership plays an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers spoke to how the principal meets regularly with all teacher teams to discuss student data and observations trends and to collaboratively plan professional development connected to those findings. Teachers shared how this regular practice of seeking teacher input has been instrumental in providing targeted professional development to staff across the school.
- Team meetings and teacher programs are coordinated to maximize the ability of the staff to share multiple perspectives on the same students in order to better meet their needs. For example, grade teams are comprised of teachers and advisors who all teach the same students in a particular grade. In addition to meeting every week, the team has monthly meetings, time at Professional Development sessions, special Data Days and common preps. During these times they look at student work, analyze data, collaboratively plan curriculum and meet with students and families.
- The school has a variety of formal and informal leadership roles as part of their distributive leadership system. In addition to school administrators, an instructional coach, the librarian and four model teachers meet twice a month to plan professional development, set and discuss instructional initiatives, and discuss teacher development. These lead teachers serve as department heads. In addition each grade team has a team leader who has a variety of team leadership roles and serve on the School Leadership Team.