



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# **Quality Review Report 2014-2015**

**Thomas Emanuel Early Childhood Center  
Early Childhood Center and Elementary School  
Q028**

**109-10 47th Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11368**

**Principal: Laura Pessutti**

**December 15, 2014  
Lead Reviewer: Dr. Joseph O'Brien**

## The School Context

The Thomas Emanuel Early Childhood Center is an early childhood center with 534 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 2. The school population comprises 2% Black, 93% Hispanic, 1% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 60% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 96.9%.

## 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>Additional Findings</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>Additional Findings</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>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

Across classrooms, teachers create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

### Impact

The school provides actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement and adjusts curricular and instructional decisions so that all students including English language learners and students with disabilities demonstrate increased mastery.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams analyze student progress through common assessments including GO Math! baseline, mid-year, year-end assessments, EasyCBM, teacher created chapter and unit assessments, math and English language arts (ELA) Measures of Student Learning (MoSL) assessments and Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) end of year assessments. Teachers adjust curricula and instruction based on student data.
- As CKLA assessments for this age group were often simply a happy or sad face, teachers designed new age-appropriate assessments, checklists, and rubrics on a four-point scale with visual cues. These new assessments enable teachers to identify specific student needs in particular tasks, thereby providing a clear picture of student skill growth toward mastery.
- Teacher teams formally share student and class level data at least once a week to make curricular adaptations and identify trends. Grade team leaders compile data analyses and meet with the principal twice per month. For example, kindergarten through grade 2 grade level data indicating student progress in CKLA, New York State English as a Second Language Assessment Test for English language learners (NYSESLAT) and MoSL assessments determined to be above level, approaching level and below level were provided.
- Teacher teams noticed that English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities were struggling in comprehension across grades and subjects. Teachers adapted assessments to better capture student data to track performance in classroom literacy and numeracy.
- Teacher teams analyze student data and identify class trends through item analysis. For example, teachers reviewed end of year math MoSL assessments and found that students struggle with word problems. Teachers identify problems from GO Math! and EngageNY each week based on class level data that would support student learning and improved outcomes. Teachers adapted word problems using visual cues as a scaffold to aid in student comprehension, and also used assessment data from “Problem Solving Fridays” to further adjust instruction in math.

## Area of Focus

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations that promote the achievement of the school's goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for whom they share or on whom they are focused.

### Impact

Structured professional teams have strengthened teachers' abilities, resulting in progress toward goals for groups of students, yet the lack of formalized teacher inquiry into the improvement of teacher pedagogy has resulted in missed opportunities to improve teacher practice.

### Supporting Evidence

- All teachers serve on teacher teams devoted to the analyses of data and adaptations that lead to curricular adjustments. Each team is devoted to a specific focus. For example, kindergarten teacher teams are adapting assessments, grades 1 and 2 are focusing on math problem solving, cluster teachers are adapting and revising their curriculum maps, and English as a second language (ESL) teachers adapt ELA curricula by modifying CKLA skills for ELLs.
- The professional development committee, consisting of members of the administration and teacher teams, meets to design and lead differentiated professional learning opportunities for groups of teachers. Professional learning topics so far this year include: CKLA, problem solving in math, best practices in math, interpreting results of baseline assessments, Dr. Hochman's *The Writing Revolution*, NYSELSAT preparation, and best practices for ESL instruction.
- Teacher teams developed a protocol for looking at student work to ensure student tasks were meeting the standards and new insights into student progress could be ascertained.
- Grade 2 ESL teachers created a screenplay adaptation of *The Hedgehog and the Hare* for students to practice then act out in class. ESL strategies including total physical response, clear speech and application of language in meaningful situations were seen.
- Structured professional teams have strengthened teachers' abilities to provide curricular adaptations and refinement, but a more formal approach to teacher inquiry into the improvement of instructional practice is currently missing.

## Additional Findings

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

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks.

### Impact

The school's purposeful decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet formally at least once a week to adapt units for students including ELLs and students with disabilities. The school adapts resources from GO Math! and CKLA curricula and provides scaffolds for ELLs and students with disabilities to use in instruction.
- Writing is embedded throughout curriculum maps and tasks consistently are rigorous, promoting college and career readiness. For example, in 1<sup>st</sup> grade ELA class, students must cite three age-appropriate examples of textual evidence to support a claim.
- Visual cues, which aid in language comprehension and acquisition, were seen in all classrooms.
- Rigorous habits and higher order skills including use of textual evidence, compare and contrast, numeracy, multi-step word problems and adaptations for ELLs and students with disabilities were noted in maps.
- Item skills analyses in ELA MoSL revealed that students struggled in writing. School leaders provided professional learning on the Hochman writing method, and subsequently teachers have applied the Hochman writing method in grade 1-2 classrooms. Adaptations have been made for grades 1-2 ELLs and students with disabilities in the form of Cloze sentence scaffolds and visuals on graphic organizers.

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

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training for those expectations. The school successfully emphasizes a culture connected to college and career readiness.

### **Impact**

The school's culture is one of mutual accountability and the school successfully partners with families to support student progress.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The principal sets high expectations through pre- and post-observations, grade and teacher level meetings and professional learning opportunities. School leaders and teachers collaboratively design professional learning opportunities and analyze teacher feedback to improve practice.
- Student celebrations including student of the month and monthly perfect attendance awards reinforce positive habits and celebrate student success. High expectations are also communicated to parents and families via school created progress reports distributed three times per year. High expectations are communicated to parents and families via report cards distributed during Parent-Teacher Conferences with a 93% parent attendance rate, Tuesday afternoon parent meetings to review student progress, teacher newsletters, parent workshops for CookShop, a federally funded cooking and nutrition program, swimming, technology and keyboarding.
- The school provides a federally funded cooking and nutrition program to aid families in learning to cook healthy and affordable meals at home.
- School leadership sets high expectations in written and oral communication to teachers, students and families. For example, the principal writes a monthly newsletter to staff. The newsletter notes key information including ongoing professional learning opportunities and strategies in critical thinking and designing effective instruction
- Best practices in instruction are shared through inter-visitations in-house and outside the school community to P.S. 123K and P.S. 106Q. In-house inter-visitations are documented through teacher reflection sheets. Outside inter-visitations arranged through the Children First Network include debriefing sessions between teachers of both schools following classroom visits.

**Findings**

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. Across classrooms, teaching strategies including questioning scaffolds, and routines strategically provide multiple entry points into the curricula for English language learners and students with disabilities.

**Impact**

All students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, have access to appropriately challenging tasks. Students demonstrate higher order thinking skills in student work products.

**Supporting Evidence**

- After reviewing NYSESLAT and easyCBM item analyses, teacher teams identified student reading comprehension and vocabulary in English and Spanish as areas of student need. The school's ESL teachers worked with teacher teams to adapt curricula, model ESL strategies, support teachers in the use of total physical response, clear speech, and use of flexible grouping strategies. All lessons and unit plans contain pre-made visual cues to aid in emergent and struggling readers' comprehension and recall. Visual cues were seen in 7 of 8 classes.
- In 7 of 8 classes, lessons were aligned to the Common Core and informed by the Danielson Framework. In a kindergarten class, students used whiteboards to create new words by changing consonants (e.g. wig to win) and learned the "j" sound. In a 1<sup>st</sup> grade Integrated Co-Teaching ELA class, students used graphic organizers to identify textual evidence from *The Hare and the Frog* to answer the question "Why are the frogs happy?" In 1st grade math, students in two groups used manipulatives to answer addition and subtraction word problems within 20.
- Writing instruction is coherent across grades and subjects. The school's emphasis on writing and use of the Hochman method at the developmental stage provides students with foundational scaffolds to aid in writing. This strategy utilizes outlines in writing and paragraph structure, keywords, phrases, abbreviations, sentence starters and graphic organizers to aid in student writing. Student use of strategic outlines and active voice transitional phrases were seen in 5 of 8 classrooms.
- During problem solving Fridays, students practice protocols and strategies for solving word and multi-step math problems. Students shared that they look forward to the math challenge each week.
- In 5 of 8 classes students worked on different assignments using different materials and resources.