



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

George L. Egbert

Middle School R002

**333 Midland Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10306**

Principal: Adrienne Stallone

**Date of review: January 12, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Anthony R. Lodico**

The School Context

George L. Egbert is a middle school with 818 students from grade six through grade nine. The school population comprises 6% Black, 30% Hispanic, 54% White, 9% Asian and 1% other students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.3%.

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	Developing
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	Proficient
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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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

Teachers are engaged in inquiry based collaborations which allow the development of teacher leadership and support collaborative decision making.

Impact

Shared leadership structures build capacity to improve student learning and promotes a school-wide instructional coherence.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders shared that common planning was a focus this year. Teachers have been able to meet, plan and have peer inter-visitations. During the common planning time, teachers take on leadership roles by facilitating the conversations around analyzing student work using protocols. Teachers meet collaboratively to look at trends across grades the school. Building and sharing 'best-practices' is a core belief of the teacher teams.
- A Professional Development Team which consists of teachers, paraprofessionals, grade leader liaisons and supervisors meet to discuss the teacher/para professional development needs of the staff. The Team creates opportunities that are targeted training to meet the needs of the adult learners. Teachers shared that there is a culture of professional development and that their needs are assessed. An example that was voiced was that there was a necessity for more professional development on close reading. The Professional Development Team created workshops to address this need.
- Building and sharing 'best-practices' is a core belief of the teacher teams. These teacher teams meet to discuss, investigate and share their findings to the other team members. The items are then turn-keyed to staff members that wish to learn more about that specific topic. For example, the school recently delved into the work of the 'Socratic Method.'" This 'best-practice' instructional strategy was brought to the school by some of the teachers and administration. The opportunity to visit other schools, study through articles and begin implementing was a goal this year. Professional development workshops were given to staff members.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

While pedagogy across classrooms reflects a school-wide set of beliefs about how student learn best and reflects the incorporation of the instructional shifts, in some classrooms, high levels of student thinking, engagement, and student ownership of learning varied.

Impact

Across classrooms, the school is aligning teaching practices to the instructional shifts. However, academic tasks and student work products inconsistently engaged all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners, in high levels of thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leader has prioritized student engagement and questioning. However, it was found that teachers need to strengthen their questioning and discussion techniques. For example, the school's current focus is on the "Socratic Method" of discussion. It was observed in a sixth grade science class, that the students were in group discussions but scaffolding supports were not in place for English language learners (ELL) nor in the teacher's plans. For example, when the teacher was asked about how she would be grading the ELLs, participation she responded that they were only expected to listen to their peers. The school administration is in the process of deepening the professional development, monitoring the results and giving actionable feedback.
- It was evident that in some classrooms, student work products reflected uneven levels of student thinking and participation. In a sixth grade social studies class, the students were engaged in a Socratic Seminar activity in which the objective was, "Students will analyze historical and modern evidence to determine the cause of the death of King Tutankhamun." Students were posed the question, "Did you solve the mystery?" A student responded at the end of the seminar, "No, we do not have enough information."
- Across classrooms, instruction was primarily teacher directed and higher order thinking evident in only some classes, with some students. For example, in an eighth grade math classroom students were given few opportunities to further their mathematical thinking. Students copied problems into their notebooks. Questions posed were: What is an equation? What is an expression?

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school's curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, and systems in place ensure academic task refinement and revision is based on data and student work review.

Impact

The school's curricular decisions support rigorous student learning, fosters critical thinking and promotes college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school identified the need for curriculum writing support based on classroom assessment, Degrees of Reading Power (DRP), and state exam data. Teachers quickly shared their belief that the writing curriculum was limited and wanted something to aid students. Specifically, using the Hochman method to explicitly teach complex sentences, grammar, and paragraph structure and word choice.
- Teacher teams noted that students were struggling in English language arts (ELA) based on their DRP scores. It was decided to refine and revise the ELA curriculum and create opportunities for students to achieve their targeted benchmarks. For example, teachers shared that through student conferencing and integrating targeted skills based curricula the students showed progress.
- Big ideas and concepts are embedded throughout the schools' curricula. Curriculum maps are refined to promote higher order thinking skills. The maps contain Universal Design for Learning (UDL) components to address all learners in the 'why, what and how' of learning. In a sixth grade ELA self-contained class, students were engaged in a close reading that involved understanding the "what" portion of the UDL process.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The school use of rubrics and assessments in all subject areas, tracks student progress and consistently checks for understanding is limited.

Impact

Teachers and students are able to gauge some next steps. However teachers provide inconsistent feedback and make limited adjustments to instructional practices to meet the learning needs of students in each grade.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders shared that they in the process of creating a uniform document to track and provide actionable student feedback. School leaders purchase eChalk as means to monitor student progress for the individual students and as a school. Teacher teams have begun to discuss possible ways of unifying and having the same 'voice' in the feedback to students.
- Across classrooms students use rubrics to guide their work, and received supportive verbal and written feedback for their next steps was inconsistent. Most students could identify an area of weakness but could not share their next steps. This inconsistency was evident while reviewing the feedback on student work. For example, a sixth grade student shared her feedback an example of feedback being, "Read your essay over to check for errors in spelling."
- Across classrooms teachers inconsistently checked for understanding and adjusted their instruction accordingly. Lessons lacked differentiation activities based on the students understanding of the concept. For example, in a sixth grade science lesson with two teachers, students were all given the same task and they were unclear of the how the task was expected to be completed. A rubric was not provided nor did the teacher state the assessment criteria.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently convey high expectations to faculty, students and families focused on the advancement of student learning and best teaching practices.

Impact

Across the school community, systems of accountability are resulting in a collaborative community and professional learning are preparing students for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has progress reports in place to inform parents of their child’s current grade status. The progress reports are in addition to the regular report cards that are expected throughout the year. Teachers regularly call parents to share updates on their students’ academic and social progress. The parent of a sixth grader shared that when she calls about her child the school always call her right back with the information she is seeking.
- Collaboratively teachers and administration inter-visit colleagues. These visits are grounded in the Danielson Framework. Colleagues sharing ‘best practice’ as a snapshot of instructional practice. The timely debrief allows teachers to celebrate performance that can be replicated. It also allows the observed teacher an opportunity to improve their own practice with constructive, collegial and actionable feedback.
- Parents shared that the school has a system of clearly communicating about their children. The school has a parent handbook, website, pamphlets, School Messenger and Pupil Path. These forms of communication allow the parents to know how their child is improving and strengthens the home-school connection. School Messenger also provides reminders and updates on school functions and activities.