



Quality Review Report

2015-2016

East New York Family Academy

Middle - High School K409

**2057 Linden Boulevard
Brooklyn
NY 11207**

Principal: Anthony Yard

**Date of review: November 24, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Claudette Essor**

The School Context

East New York Family Academy is a middle/high school with 491 students from grade 6 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 2% Asian, 65% Black, 30% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 3% English Language Learners and 18% students with disabilities. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 95.4%.

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 <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , 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	Celebration	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	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Administrators consistently communicate high expectations for learning to all families and school staff and implement support systems to help them work with students to meet the expectations. School leaders consistently hold all staff accountable for meeting high expectations for teaching and learning across the school.

Impact

Effective and consistent communication of and support for high expectations for all staff and students, along with collaborations with students' families, contribute to high levels of accountability for staff and student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of school documents and conversations with staff members indicates that school leaders constantly articulate high expectations for all members of the school community through discussions at faculty conferences and grade and department meetings. Bulletins, newsletters and memos specify expectations related to instruction, professional development and other areas of school operations. During the teacher team meetings, teachers stated that the principal also communicated the expectation of a schoolwide instructional focus on Common Core-aligned instruction for all students. School leaders hold teachers accountable for meeting expectations through observations of their practice and conversations that remind them to focus on targeted elements of instruction, such as effective questioning, assessment during instruction and high level student discussions.
- Using Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, administrators reinforce high expectations for instruction, with all teachers receiving professional development support in using data to drive instruction, as well as in improving questioning, differentiating tasks and scaffolding instruction. Teachers also participate in peer intervisitations focused on expectations for high levels of student engagement and infusion of literacy-based practices across the curricula. Documents submitted by the principal showed teachers visiting a peer in both a middle school and a high school class in October and using the Danielson rubric to evaluate the lesson. Some teachers receive specialized training to support their instruction, including training for teachers of Advanced Placement (AP) courses, training of staff in Common Core shifts and literacy practices, and training of teachers of students with disabilities in team teaching and Wilson Reading strategies.
- Parents who attended the meeting with families reported that staff members conference with them about their children's progress towards graduation requirements, career options, college admissions and application steps, AP courses, and College Now options open to their children. Transcripts, progress reports, telephone calls, emails, texts, parent-teacher conferences, parent outreach activities on Tuesdays, and the *PupilPath* online data system keep all families informed about their children's progress. Packets of information, observation of instruction in classes and workshops in areas such as literacy, math and technology provide families with an understanding of college and career readiness expectations for their children and connect them to resources for helping their children meet graduation requirements and college and career readiness goals.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Although some lessons allow for partner discussions, lessons do not typically facilitate peer-to-peer questioning and discussion, with all students demonstrating high levels of thinking. Across classrooms, lessons do not consistently include multiple entry points and questioning strategies that lead to high quality student work.

Impact

Students have limited opportunities to participate in peer-to-peer dialogue with student led questioning that deepens their learning across grades and content areas. Instructional practices do not consistently result in all students demonstrating higher order thinking in their work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Some lessons challenge students to use academic vocabulary and cite evidence from texts to justify their rationales for responses to critical thinking tasks. In an AP Literature class the teacher used an interactive whiteboard to present a lesson that required grade 12 students to cite evidence from an excerpt of text from the *Invisible Man* to respond to questions about how the author, Ralph Ellison, uses rhetorical devices to facilitate an understanding of theme. The teacher engaged students in reflecting on the term “invisible” and followed up with a read aloud of the passage, stopping at intervals to question students about vocabulary such as “anguish”, “profusely”, and “hysteria”. By contrast, in a grade 6 science class most students sat watching the teacher using an interactive whiteboard to present information about phases of matter and copied notes as the teacher posted them on the interactive whiteboard. A few gave brief responses to teacher-directed questions.
- Lessons in some classrooms offered students multiple points of entry to differentiated tasks. A Global Studies teacher facilitated small group work that required grade 9 students to use academic vocabulary while responding to questions about the growth and characteristics of the Shang Dynasty in China. Each group responded to a different question, using a textbook and handout to chart notes about different facets of the development of the Dynasty and how it exemplified characteristics of an advanced civilization. With support from a chart used to summarize lesson concepts and notes, students used their findings to compare features of that period of civilization to their lives today. In some of the other classrooms visited, all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, worked on the same task, with no variations for diverse learners.
- In a few classes of the classrooms visited, teachers provided prompts to evoke discussions about tasks done or texts read, and students took turns responding. In a grade 7 Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, the teacher engaged students in using a “Scan, Identify, Guess, Hear and Talk” (SIGHT) strategy to support partner discussions of historical information from a painting, Disney movie video clip and a reading selection. They analyzed the information to assess the role of Pocahontas in helping to create peace between the Powhatan Indians and Jamestown Colonists. Partners used post-its to flag details in the reading selection and recorded notes from all three sources in answering questions on a worksheet. They shared their work in a presentation to the class and the teacher invited peers to question them about their work. The practice of inviting students to comment on responses by peers as part of student-to-student discussion in this class was not evident across classrooms.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Staff members work collaboratively to further develop curricula across content areas, in alignment to Common Core and content standards. Using student work and data, teachers refine curricula and tasks for diverse learners across all grades and content areas.

Impact

All students have access to curricula and tasks designed to cognitively engage them in learning across grades levels and content areas. Curricula, aligned to relevant content standards and instructional shifts, contribute to college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- A schoolwide focus on literacy-based activities across the curriculum drives the design of tasks that are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts and expose students to college and career readiness skills. Content and skills from *GO Math!* drive instruction in middle school math and *EngageNY* curricula supplement math instruction across all grades, including units of instruction for Common Core algebra and geometry, Integrated Algebra Regents and AP Statistics. New York State scope and sequence curricula are infused in units of instruction in middle school science and social studies and supplement units of instruction for high school courses such as AP United States History, Global History and AP Environmental Science. Curricula also include courses for AP English Language and Composition, and AP Literature and Composition.
- Unit plans show topics to be covered, targeted standards, skills, texts, essential questions, assessments, and Common Core-aligned tasks. Course descriptions also show a focus on tasks that incorporate the applicable standards and shifts. A task for students in a grade 12 lesson involved students analyzing a Supreme Court case and citing evidence from the case to illustrate the principles and ideas embedded in the term “democracy”, as well as “connections between free enterprise and democracy”. Student portfolios show responses to similar argumentative and informational writing tasks, including explanations of problem solving steps in math and narrative descriptions of processes in science and other courses. Students also have access to Common Core-aligned tasks via online resources such as *Think-Central*, *Castle Learning*, *Brain Pop* and *Delta Math*.
- School leaders and teachers stated that teams of teachers meet weekly to examine student work in order to constantly refine instruction and curricula. Additionally, team meeting notes include annotations that show revisions of units, along with planned modifications of lessons to meet the needs of students at varied proficiency levels. A revised unit plan for AP Literature shows infusion of additional extended response tasks linked to complex texts to support writing activities aligned to Common Core and Regents’ Standards. In addition, teachers are now integrating content for a new robotics program and a new computer science program into units that offer students access to additional tasks that promote college and career readiness.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Checks for understanding during instruction, with immediate follow up to address students' learning needs, are evident in some lessons. Teachers' assessment tools and practices across classrooms do not consistently reflect actionable feedback to students on their performance.

Impact

Although assessment practices are beginning to strengthen teacher and student capacity to make adjustments for improving learning, across classrooms students do not consistently receive feedback with clear and actionable next steps that effectively target their individual needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Using *Ed Performance*, an interactive online assessment system that identifies skill areas mastered or not yet mastered by students across assessment tasks, teachers gathered data about students' reading levels. Teachers also administered *Schoolnet* baseline assessments in math, English Language Arts (ELA) and literature. They used the data to establish instructional groupings and set learning goals for students. In addition, class level assessments, including mock Regents exams, and ongoing unit assessments across content areas and grades, continue to add data that teachers use to determine areas of proficiency as well as gaps in student learning.
- Teachers use a schoolwide grading policy, aligned to curricula, to provide feedback to students on their performance in all disciplines. Teachers also use a variety of rubrics, including task specific rubrics, to assess students' proficiency and content knowledge related to specific performance tasks across grades and disciplines. However, some feedback seen on student work on bulletin boards and in student folders consisted of the teacher only circling portions of the rubric, with no additional feedback to explicitly identify actionable next steps for the student to improve the work. In one classroom, feedback emerged as "Cool", "Great", and/or "Bravo" on the samples of work posted on a bulletin board. In addition, some students interviewed during the meeting with students were not able to clearly state what they needed to do to improve the work, based on the feedback on the work that they displayed.
- During the meeting with students some students stated that they use rubrics to peer- and self-assess regularly. Anecdotal records from some teachers and team meeting notes illustrate attention to the needs of specific students, especially students with disabilities. Some teachers were observed using questions to check for understanding or conferring with students individually in small groups and making notes. In a Global Studies class the teacher re-stated concepts and questions repeatedly, conferred with students as they worked in groups, invited peers to comment on group presentations and used a graphic organizer to summarize lesson concepts for the entire class. Similar checks for understanding and immediate follow up on findings from checks for understanding during instruction were not noted in several of the classrooms visited.

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

All staff members participate in structured professional collaborations that are focused on schoolwide goals, including ongoing implementation of Common Core-aligned instruction in all content areas and grades. Distributed leadership structures support the development of teacher leadership and teachers have a voice in decisions that affect learning across the school.

Impact

The inclusion of all staff in a variety of teams empowers teachers to work collaboratively towards the attainment of school-wide goals, including implementation of Common Core-aligned instruction for all students. Distributed leadership practices promote teacher leadership and result in staff members having a voice in high level decisions about teaching and learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- All staff members participate in regularly scheduled team meetings across grades and departments. Minutes of team meetings show a variety of professional development activities that occur weekly, including common planning activities that allow teachers to collaborate on lesson and unit planning and content-specific strategies to improve instruction. The principal noted that these activities continue to improve teacher practice, as measured by Advance data now showing 87% of all teachers as effective or highly effective in engaging students in learning, compared to 85% in 2014. Team activities also contribute to improvement in student achievement, as measured by an increased percentage of middle school students scoring at 80% or more on the 2015 Integrated Algebra Regents exam, compared to the prior year when most passing scores were between 65% and 74%.
- During the inquiry team meeting observed, science teachers discussed strategies for helping students improve the quality of their reports. One participant shared her use of a checklist to guide students in specifying elements of experimental design, including the hypothesis, research question, and results of an experiment. Another presenter engaged the team in an analysis of the effectiveness of using the Cornell Note-taking method to guide students in making notes from class presentations of content or reading of texts. The teachers shared noticings as they examined strengths and weaknesses in three students' work samples. They pondered how to get students to use the method to improve the quality of reports by distinguishing between significant and insignificant details when taking notes. One teacher added that ideas from the meeting would yield benefits across classrooms by creating a uniform approach to note-taking.
- Teachers identified for high levels of expertise or recognized as instructional leaders by peers serve as grade leaders, peer mentors, and/or members of schoolwide teams such as the Measures of Student Learning (MOSL), school leadership, and professional learning team. With positions for a dean, several guidance counselors, program coordinators, and members of the Department of Education's Teacher Leadership program, there are additional opportunities for staff participation in shared leadership across the school. In these roles teacher leaders collaborate with administrators regularly to develop and implement academic priorities, such as the selection of instructional resources for all grades and content areas. They also work directly with other teachers in developing professional development plans aligned to the school's goals, including setting up schedules for intervisitations and facilitating specialized training for staff, including paraprofessionals.