



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**East Flatbush Community Research School**

**Middle School K581**

**905 Winthrop Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11203**

**Principal: Daveida Daniel**

**Date of review: March 1, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Michele Ashley**

## The School Context

East Flatbush Community Research School is a middle school with 130 students from grade 6 through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 2% Asian, 89% Black, 2% Hispanic, and 2% White students. The student body includes 10% English Language Learners and 25% students with disabilities. Boys account for 59% of the students enrolled and girls account for 41%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 92.3%.

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

## Area of Celebration

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

Teacher teams systematically analyze classroom practice and student work. Distributive leadership structures are embedded.

### Impact

Professional collaboration and effective teacher leadership result in improved teacher practice and mastery of learning goals for groups of students. Teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- Professional collaborations align to three school-wide professional learning cycles during the year: *Cycle 1 - Planning and Preparation*, *Cycle 2 - Implementation and Revising*, and *Cycle 3 - Evaluating and Sustaining*. A variety of teacher teams meet weekly within these cycles to analyze student and teacher data. Among these are the co-teacher planning, arts, special education, Response to Intervention, common grade planning, and department planning teams. Each team has a scheduled weekly day and time to meet. Teams maintain agendas and minutes for their meetings. All teams present to the entire faculty in each cycle. During the math department meeting, members planned their faculty presentation, which included presentation of team goals, successes, student needs, areas of struggle, and next instructional steps. The presentation also included sample student work and exemplar pieces that demonstrated student progress and the impact of their work.
- The math team determined that English Language Learners (ELLs) struggle with understanding word problems, identifying important information, marking text appropriately, and understanding academic vocabulary. Team members identified next steps for instruction, which included annotation of extended problems, teaching students a four-step problem-solving strategy, rewriting the question as part of the written response, frontloading vocabulary, and providing ELL students with sentence starters for written responses. Targeted students met team goals to demonstrate improvement on math performance tasks and Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) fall and winter assessments. For example, 56% of grade 6 was in quartile one (grade 4 or below) in the fall and only 22% were in quartile one on the winter assessment.
- Teachers hold positions as grade leaders and department leads, as well as hold leadership positions on the School Leadership Team. A teacher also serves as special education coordinator. Inquiry teams design faculty presentations of best practices that have been piloted by team members and share instructional learnings from inquiry work. Teachers have brought in key programs that have positively affected teaching and student learning. Teachers facilitate collaborations with the Hunter College Math Program, Donor's Choose, and Power My Learning. Through the Hunter College program, the math team participates in professional development and turnkeys research-based teaching strategies to their colleagues. Donors Choose supplied classrooms with needed texts which supports the school goal of increasing student independent reading time. The Power My Learning program provided 35 students and families with home computers and technology training.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies and academic tasks consistently provide multiple entry points into the curriculum. Although engagement levels are high, most tasks are teacher-directed.

### Impact

Students are engaged in challenging tasks and student work products and discussions reflect high levels of thinking and participation. However, all students do not yet fully own their learning experience, relying on teachers' direction during learning activities.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across grades and content areas, students demonstrate their thinking verbally and in written form. Teachers provide students with scaffolds to support their thinking and utilize real world examples. During a math lesson on calculating percentages, students calculated the selling price of a pair of sneakers with a "marked down rate of 20%." Students shared their methods for calculating the selling price and the teacher noted the steps taken on the board. The teacher also noted that two students utilized different methods from the class "strategy board" to solve the problem accurately.
- Students use a scaffold called the four-step method for math problem solving tasks. The four-step method requires students to identify the important facts in the problem, identify a method to solve, solve the problem, and explain their answer. Calculating percentage word problems, one student noted the price and markdown percentage as important facts, chose the "decimal method," completed the calculation, and wrote a description of the procedures used to solve the problem. Students in this classroom worked in small groups. One group worked with teacher support using wipe-off boards, a second group used a graphic organizer with sentence starters, and a third group completed tasks in their notebooks.
- Across classrooms, students had choice in the activities provided and participated in tasks requiring discussion. During a writing lesson, students worked from a variety of texts and were able to select from a list of provided writing prompts. Students worked in small groups to select a group prompt, discuss the response, and find text evidence to support their answer. In response to the prompt, "Why does Kari have to use her intelligence to complete her chores?" one group began to write, "Kari had to use her intelligence to complete her chores because her chores were hard for her to finish. In the text it says, 'So far each task had proved to be more difficult than it seemed at first.'" Students discussed their choices, each other's responses, and possible evidence before completing a chart with text citations. The level of ownership present in this classroom was not evident in some of the other classrooms visited. Although thinking and participation was high across classrooms, it was teacher-directed in many classrooms. In an English Language Arts classroom, student groups were invited to share out, however, the teacher had to support their sharing with continuous prompting, questioning, and paraphrasing. The teacher stated, "What \_\_\_ is saying is Mr. Marrero is her neighbor so she had to choose to be bad or support him."

## 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 instructional shifts. Curricula and tasks are planned and revised using student work and data.

### Impact

Purposeful decisions build curricular coherence and ensure that all students are cognitively engaged in tasks that promote college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty utilize *Teachers College Reading and Writing Project* for English Language Arts (ELA), *EngageNY* and *CMP3* for math, *Discovering Our Past* for social studies, and *e-Science* for science. The ELA and math curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the science and social studies curricula are aligned to the *New York City Scope and Sequence*. The school moved from *Code X* to the *Teachers College Reading and Writing Project* in response to a school-wide initiative to increase independent reading and enhance writing skills. Currently teachers are writing their own unit plans for ELA, math, science, and social studies using a common planning tool. The common unit planning template includes essential and guiding questions, Common Core Learning Standards taught and assessed, anchor texts, unit goals, academic and content vocabulary, real world application, weekly skills, strategies and tasks, performance tasks, and modifications for English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and the lowest third of students.
- Across content areas, unit and lesson plans incorporate the ELA instructional shifts focusing on academic vocabulary and text-based answers and the math shift for real world application of concepts. A reading unit plan includes the introduction of academic vocabulary: argument, debate, bias, nuance; and content vocabulary: claim, evidence, warrant, and counterclaim. A social studies unit plan requires students to “identify the assimilation factors the immigrants had to adopt for their new lives in America by reading and annotating the text.” A math unit requires students to “use coordinates and absolute values to determine distances between two points” using a map of East Flatbush.
- Across content areas, teachers have adjusted curricula based on the results of performance tasks. After performance data revealed that ELLs and students with disabilities were underperforming compared to their classmates, modifications were added to units. A social studies unit plan includes modifications for ELLs that include extended time, questions read aloud, picture cues, cause and effect graphic organizers, and peer and teacher support. A math unit plan includes modifications for students with disabilities and the lowest third including visual keywords, a number line graphic organizer, and connections to the real world. A math lesson plan also includes Cornell Notes, and differentiated graphic organizers for students assigned to groups based on performance task levels: group A (lowest third), group B (mid-level), and group C (high-level students). Group A receives Cornell Notes, visual cues, prompts, and sentence starters.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

Across classrooms, teachers use common assessments and create rubrics and assessments aligned to the schools curricula.

### **Impact**

Assessment data provides actionable feedback to teachers and students and is used to adjust curricula and instruction.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school administers interim assessments twice a year and unit performance tasks at the end of each unit in ELA, math, science, and social studies. In addition, a Degrees of Reading Power assessment is administered across the grades three times a year. In all content areas, teachers administer weekly instructional tasks that include components of the end-of-unit performance tasks for that subject.
- Students interviewed reported that they receive feedback on their work all or most of the time. Students were able to articulate next steps from feedback provided on their work. One student stated that he needs to use important details to support his claim and not use irrelevant details. He also added that he needs to organize his work and state his topic. Teachers provide feedback using a four-point rubric as well as “glows and grows” which highlight next steps. A “grow” on an order of operation project rubric states, “You continue to make exponent errors. Remember to expand the problem if you get stuck. Also the exponent goes at the top.”
- Unit and lesson plans consistently include weekly tasks and exit tickets as well as plans for additional supports for struggling students. Information gathered from assessment data is used to revise lessons to include re-teaching of specific learning objectives, skill practice in the form of the “Do Now” homework activities, and stations for reteach or small group work. A math lesson included plans for re-teaching and additional scaffolds for struggling students based on assessment. The plan stated, “Students will receive an additional guided model at the whiteboard. Students will refer to the ‘Types of Percent’ foldable to recall that a mark down must be subtracted from the original price.” A humanities lesson plan included revisions to group assignments. Grade 8 students were reassigned to groups a, b, c, and d based on student performance. Based on assignment, student groups would work independently, with prompts, or directly with the teacher to answer the question, “What factors led to the outbreak of war in Europe?”

<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 provide training and communicate high expectations to the entire staff. Teacher teams and staff systematically communicate expectations to students and provide guidance.

**Impact**

A unified set of high expectations results in a culture of mutual accountability and students are prepared for the next level of learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders communicate with the entire staff via Monday meetings, weekly newsletters, email, Google document sharing, instructional cabinet meetings, common planning time, and professional development sessions. Leaders provide staff with an updated professional development calendar aligned to the school’s instructional focus, the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, and the school’s *Three Cycles of Learning* professional development model. This year’s instructional focus is to incorporate daily reading, writing, and discussion in all content areas to engage students. The focus is aligned to an adaptation of the AVID (Achievement Via Individual Determination) college and career readiness program’s WICOR model (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading). Professional development follows three cycles: planning and preparation in the fall, implementation and revising in the winter, and evaluating and sustaining in the spring.
- School leaders hold teachers accountable for collaboration and shared learning by tracking professional development sessions and creating a schedule for team and individual turnkey presentations. Teachers hold each other accountable for team and grade level resources, as well as for planning of team presentations to the faculty. During the math team meeting, each member contributed to the development of a faculty presentation and shared student work and exemplars that demonstrated student progress. Math team members also attend Hunter College professional learning sessions and turnkey new strategies to the entire faculty.
- Students are taught note-taking to support their thinking and writing in all content areas within unit and lesson plans aligned to the WICOR college and career readiness model. Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 participate in student data days in which students own their current performance levels and set goals for improvement. Students identify their current performance levels in ELA and math, identify Common Core Learning Standards they need to work on, and create action plans. One current student’s plan stated, “I need to work on my reading and writing skills... I am working on expressions and equations. I need to do all of my homework and classwork and complete my assessments. The grade I am working on getting is an 85 and above because that is a passing grade in high school.”
- Grade 6, 7, and 8 students visit college campuses at least once per year. Grade 6 students visit a City University of New York (CUNY) campus, grade 7 visits a State University of New York (SUNY) campus, and grade 8 visits a private university campus. Grade 7 students begin planning for high school in grade 7 advisory classes. The school conducts grade 8 articulation meetings to support students in the high school application process. Grade 8 students also take the Algebra Regents examination. A grade 8 student shared “Teachers tell you what you should expect in high school. They give us high school level work and teach us to take notes, how to speak, and make presentations.”