



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

Esperanza Preparatory Academy

Secondary School M372

**240 East 109 Street
Manhattan
NY 10029**

Principal: Giulliano Quesada

**Date of review: March 24, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams**

The School Context

Esperanza Preparatory Academy is a secondary school with 575 students from grade 6 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 15% Black, 82% Hispanic, and 2% White students. The student body includes 28% English Language Learners and 26% students with disabilities. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 90.6%.

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	Developing
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	Proficient
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

The majority of teachers' work in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Teacher teams have strengthened the instructional capacity of teachers. Teachers are instrumental in making key decisions that impact student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The Spanish department provided documentation of a departmental meeting. The objective of the meeting was to discuss what instructional practices are working and which are not. One teacher documented that she had difficulty maintaining students' interest and engaging them with different proficiency levels. Team members recommended working on developing a new baseline to focus on proficiency levels rather than grade levels. Another teacher recommended that they should use the *Level edge Fundamentals* curriculum for students with interrupted formal education (SIFE). The notes of the meeting also reflect that the expanding/transitional students will use the *Level A Edge* curriculum to create a baseline to improve instruction on creating a narrative, argumentative writing and reading comprehension.
- Lead teachers worked together to create the professional development binder that addressed topics including the instructional focus of applying the gradual release of responsibility model and identifying instructional moves during guided learning. Heads of departments meet once a week on Fridays with the principal to focus on what is happening in the classroom, what the instructional focus is and to find ways to make improvements on teacher practices. For example teachers are increasing vocabulary skills in all core subject areas.
- Teachers have ongoing formal and informal communication within their departments to discuss instructional shifts, resources, and support for various programs and departments. During a math meeting, teachers presented student work from a grade 6/7 math lesson using a tuning protocol. Teachers gave feedback and asked supporting questions, such "which Instructional practices should be modified?" Follow ups for the next meeting included development of future units. The presenting teacher acknowledged the next steps for adjusting the instructional practices such as when to use using the data to comprise groups.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula, yet teaching practices such as using multiple entry points, the engagement of students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs) are inconsistent in classrooms.

Impact

Student engagement and the demonstration of higher-order thinking is uneven across classes and different subgroups including English Language Learners and student with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade 8 science class, the objective was “identify and apply Newtonian laws to everyday physics problems.” Students worked in stations lettered from a-c. In Station b, students were required to demonstrate the first laws of motion. Students were required to place an index card over a beaker and place a penny over the card and then flick the card with their finger and record the observations, however, most students did not successfully complete the task. Some students were observed using only some of the materials. For example one student was seen flipping a penny in the air without the index card, attempting to land the penny in the beaker. Students with disabilities and English Language Learners were not provided multiple entry points that would modify the lesson so that students would understand the directions clearly and have the lesson modeled.
- In an English as a New Language (ENL)/Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) class students were engaged in small group discussions. There were few examples of scaffolds and few modified instructional practices to address the different cognitive levels of the students in the class. Students used reference materials, such as vocabulary words however they did not respond to the teacher when they asked clarifying questions.
- In a grade 8 dual language class, the students were engaged in a Socratic circle approach to discuss global warming. There was evidence of scaffolding and referencing prior knowledge to further enhance the discussion. Student engagement was unbalanced, some students were involved in the whole group instruction others did not participate. However, with the same few students repeatedly responding and actively participating. Also, there were missed opportunities by the teacher to prompt other students to participate and redirect the class.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

School leaders and faculty are in the process of aligning curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards, content standards and the instructional shifts. In addition, curricula and academic inconsistently reflect planning that is informed by student data.

Impact

A diversity of learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, do not have access to curricula and tasks that are cognitively engaging across grades and subject areas.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers revise units using Common Core Learning Standards aligned curricula for English and math such as *EngageNY*, *Collections*, *Big Ideas*, *CMP3 Math*, and *I-Ready* for grades 6-12, however this is not done consistently across all grades and subject levels. In the kindergarten through grade 8 social studies document, there were references to building plans that show instructional shifts in English Language Arts/literacy such as balancing informational and literacy text and writing from sources.
- Grade 6 math lessons reflect extensions to English Language Arts as well as mini lessons, guided practice, and independent practice. In some classes, lesson plans include differentiated learning targets, social learning targets, and contingencies for misconceptions and common errors. However, a grade 6 English Language Arts lesson on argumentative writing, does not address grouping or scaffolding for students with disabilities.
- Lesson plans reviewed, show evidence of accountable talk and scaffolding, however there was no evidence provided to reflect revisions on the unit or the lesson to address the needs of all students.
- Grade 10 literacy plans demonstrated evidence of teachers incorporating multiple entry points. A lesson plan on independent and dependent variables provides differentiated learning targets, “Approaching: I can write equations using dependent and independent variables, Challenge: I can use, write and graph dependent and independent variables, and Reteach: I can identify dependent and independent variables.” However other curricular documents do not consistently distinguish the varying cognitive levels of students or illustrate modifications to meet the needs of the learners. For example, a living environment lesson plan shows group work but does not provide how those students are being supported or how they are grouped.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Curricula and classroom practices are adjusted based on assessment results in order to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Assessments occur across grades and subject areas, divided into three categories: benchmarks/baselines, formative and summative assessments. The assessments are Common Core aligned with the school curriculum on each grade level and subject area. The school uses *i-Ready* reading assessments, *NYC Measures of Student Learning*, *GO Math!*, as well as language arts curriculum collections assessments and the math curriculum, *Big Ideas*, in order to meet students at their level and to incorporate progress monitoring.
- The school uses *Class at a Glance*, an online spreadsheet that shows how students have made progress throughout the year. *Class at a Glance* allows teachers and teams to analyze data by subject and grade. The school uses baselines, benchmarks, unit tests, performance tasks and the outcomes of the state assessments, including Regents exams, to incorporate action plans and focus groups for the purpose of addressing the needs of all students.
- The school uses assessments to test what students know and how they are performing. For example, the data from mock Regents exams in grade 10 English and social studies was used to reveal areas of strength and weakness based on student performance, itemize the performances of different sub-groups and ultimately to develop suggested next steps. In particular, the analysis revealed that students struggled to understand the central ideas in the reading passages, and in response teachers in these subjects identified next steps that included integrating higher-level vocabulary into lessons, giving more attention to author's craft when reading fictional text and teach literary techniques such as tone and mood. The school also reviewed pre- and post-assessment data to analyze student performance in areas in science. They have also created a grade 6 assessment-based action plan that details student performance with multiple goals and next steps. As one teacher explained, as a result of assessment data that revealed students struggling to understand plot development, next steps modifying subsequent lessons "to challenging [students] with higher order questions so that they are exposed to these types of questions before the exam."

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

School leaders provide training and have a system of accountability for high expectations and offer ongoing feedback to help families understand student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- All staff members sign for a staff handbook that details expectations for staff instructionally and culturally. Expectations include: current work being posted; content specific materials to be used in all classrooms; and an essential question, do now and agenda should be evident in all classrooms. The principal's expectations also include the use of "P.R.I.D.E.", which stands for perseverance, responsibility, integrity, discipline, and enthusiasm as part of their core value belief system and incorporates it into their instructional practices. It was posted in all classrooms that were visited. The Principal stated expectations in the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). The Principal stated the following in an evaluation. "It is the expectation that you create a genuine discussion among students, providing adequate time for students to respond and stepping aside to when doing so is appropriate."
- Parents shared that the school does an exceptional job maintaining communication through use of email and "scholar-led conferences". These conferences allow students to inform their parents of their academic progress for each marking period. Parents have also stated that the school makes frequent phone calls home to discuss student progress. Parents feel that the principal has an open door policy. School personnel use their eChalk website to keep open lines of communication with parents with assignments projects and updates being posted weekly. Some parents expressed that they do not use this mode of communication and that they preferred phone contact or coming to the school in person. Parent/teacher conferences are done by advisory, but some parents have expressed concerns with this method, stating it does not give them access to all of their child's teachers. Teachers shared that parents can make follow up appointments to meet with individual teachers for further inquiry.
- The school has a college resource room that is available to parents and students. The guidance counselor is instrumental in working families to support college and career readiness. The State University of New York visited the school to discuss college and career goals with parent and students. The school also participated in a college road trip and a career day. Through the school's partnership with Union Settlement there will be an additional college fair in May with 50 colleges participating.