Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Eagle Academy for Young Men II
Middle – High School K644
1137 Herkimer Street
Brooklyn
NY 11233

Principal: Rashad Meade

Date of review: October 30, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Mauriciere de Govia
The School Context

Eagle Academy for Young Men II is a middle - high school with 554 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 87% Black, 10% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 100% of the students enrolled and girls account for 0%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 93.0%.

School Quality Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Culture</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide varied supports for the attainment of the expectations. All staff members effectively communicate and collaborate with families to help students meet expectations connected to college and careers.

Impact
There is an established culture of mutual accountability for learning that systematically communicates high expectations and facilitates home-school partnerships that support all students towards success in being prepared for their next level.

Supporting Evidence
- Every morning upon arrival Eagle scholars are greeted with a handshake and are given a copy of the EARS (Eagle Active Reading Summary) article of the day. These articles are current event write-ups that are designed to push scholars to be globally conscious and competitive. They also reinforce critical thinking and reading skills as scholars respond to prompts, take notes and answer questions. After the reading of the EARS article, scholars are welcomed to school by the principal who engages them in a Town Hall Meeting that is anchored in the “5 Pillars of Eagle Scholarship”; which are “Effort, Confidence, Resilience, Leadership”, and “Commitment to Excellence”. Students receive messages such as “Nothing is given, everything is earned” and, “Make sure you support yourself.” A student shared that these structures, “Give me direction and show me where I can get help”.

- There is a full-time college and career advisor who works one-to-one with scholars and families to support them with college applications. The advisor also holds workshops for families, to walk them through the application process. Furthermore, the school subscribes to Naviance, a resource that provides information about colleges and the process to apply for admission. During the parent and student meetings, both parents and students mentioned that they have access to this resource and have met with the advisor. Additionally, parents noted that there are progress reports, parent/teacher conferences, college and career informational sessions, and parent handbooks, all of which ensure ongoing communication of college and career readiness expectations to families.

- In support of career development and preparation of students for their next level, the school has several different vocational opportunities via curriculum, internships, and partnerships that connect scholars to life and career skills. Students are guided towards opportunities to intern and/or participate in the fields of construction and technology. In addition, scholars have access to career development experiences through hands on activities in a bicycle repair program, a barber program, and a mechanics program. Another highlight of the school’s commitment to career development is the culinary program in which students serve as chefs, preparing healthy meals that can be sampled during school community events. A student stated that, “I want to be a chef and I’m learning a lot about healthy cooking in this program.”
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
Across classrooms lessons consistently afford students a variety of entry points and opportunities for discourse between peers, and student work products demonstrate high levels of thinking and participation. However ownership of learning is not yet fully evident across grades.

Impact
Consistent infusion of multiple entry points and rigorous tasks in lessons foster high levels of student thinking and participation that result in high quality work products. There are missed opportunities to further accelerate student achievement by maximizing ownership of learning.

Supporting Evidence
- The administration noted that the school’s instructional focus is to create clear entry points for “accelerated, pushable”, and “critical” scholars. Evidence of this practice was observed in classrooms, including a “Critical Global” mixed grade class of ninth to twelfth grade students who were in need of the credits for that course. The students rotated in groups to various stations that positioned them to read text, answer questions, and interpret photographs and graphs about the Industrial Revolution, via discussions among themselves. Further, across content areas students were grouped in the categories (accelerated, pushable, critical) and teachers offered differentiated tasks for students to engage in the work. For instance, in a bridge class with sixth and seventh grade students with disabilities, some students worked independently with math manipulatives, others worked in pairs to discuss, “How do you express the fraction as a decimal?” and a few others received one to one assistance from the teacher and the paraprofessional, to identify fraction shading.

- In a sixth grade science class, students were constantly pushed to think critically as a small ball was thrown to a peer who was sharing ideas and answering the question, “How are kinetic energy and speed related?” Similarly, in an eighth grade English Language Arts class, students cited textual evidence to answer the question, “How do you see bullying taking place in The Chocolate Wars?” Additionally, in a twelfth grade Advance Placement Literature class, students used a writing template and rubric to respond to the questions, “What was Mary Shelley’s purpose when creating the nameless Creature in the text?” and “What trends did you notice regarding character development in both Frankenstein and his Creature?” The high level of ownership of learning noted in these classes was not evident in a few other classrooms visited, including an eighth grade English Language Arts class where students used graphic organizers to define words and answer writing prompts.

- The principal noted that all learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, are expected to produce high quality work products and engage in tasks via multiple entry points. This was evidenced in a mixed grade reading class with seventh to twelfth grade students, where two teachers and a paraprofessional worked with groups of students on word building and blending, sight word review via flash cards and researching and writing to create a PowerPoint presentation. The use of technology was also observed across content areas. For example, in a seventh grade math class, the students viewed a PowerPoint presentation and discussed visual images of math terms.
Additional Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
Across content areas, curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and academic tasks consistently emphasize higher order skills and cognitive engagement of all learners.

Impact
Across grades and subjects, decisions about curricula consistently provide all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, with access to rigorous and cognitively engaging content and tasks that foster college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence
- To increase rigor and alignment to Common Core Standards, a selected team of lead English educators designed the curriculum with a focus on the power standards in connection with the instructional shifts. This has enabled the school’s less experienced English Language Arts educators to focus on lesson execution and data analysis. The English Language Arts educators have revised their units to include more close readings and analysis of complex nonfiction texts. A review of lesson plans across the grades revealed several opportunities for students to annotate readings, analyze non-fiction texts and explore vocabulary development. Math lesson plans reflected emphasis on building fluency via drills, vocabulary development and spiraling of content for understanding and retention. Living Environment (science) lesson plans showed that teachers plan questions with Depth of Knowledge and Regents aligned expectations embedded in learning tasks.

- A unique feature of unit plans is that, in alignment to the school’s commitment of ensuring students’ readiness for college and careers, teachers have built in time for re-teaching lessons for improved student achievement. In addition, teachers and paraprofessionals monitor the achievement of learning objectives via the “Scholar Focus Group Tracker” – a tool designed to chart students’ performance and mastery of skill throughout the duration of a unit. Educators review the tracker to assess students’ misconceptions about Common Core Standards and lessons are then re-crafted to address the errors and/or misunderstandings. Teachers’ data analysis logs and supporting lesson plans illustrated consistent emphasis on re-teaching and re-grouping of students based on findings from student work and assessment data. For example, a 10th grade Global Studies tracker revealed which learning objectives students needed to be re-taught and cited the error linked to students’ misunderstanding.

- Lesson plans that support English Language Learners and students with disabilities are aligned to the Common Core Standards and incorporate the instructional shifts, as do the lessons for students in general education classes. These lesson plans also incorporate scaffolds such as technology specified for each child, graphic organizers, manipulatives such as flash cards, and flexible groups that position students to be “accelerated, pushable”, or “critical”. These students also have opportunities to be exposed to a supplemental reading curriculum taught and designed by two reading specialists who routinely track students for progress and then incorporate interventions into the curriculum to close learning gaps noted.
**Quality Indicator:** 2.2 Assessment  
**Rating:** Proficient

**Findings**
Teachers’ assessment practices across classrooms consistently mirror the use of rubrics, school-wide grading policies, and common assessments to generate and share feedback on student performance and inform adjustments to curriculum and instruction.

**Impact**
As a result of common assessment practices and a shared understanding of school-wide grading expectations, teachers and scholars access real-time feedback about student performance. Teachers’ adjustments to curricula and instruction result in students’ progress towards goals.

**Supporting Evidence**
- School leaders and teachers shared that there are interim assessments in all grades that are analyzed for scholar performance and next teaching steps. These assessments are given to students throughout the school year in preparation of the New York State English Language Arts, math and Regents exams, to accelerate credit accumulation among students in grades 9-12. In addition, all middle school scholars are assessed for math, reading, college and career readiness, with tests such as the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE) and the Elementary Spelling Inventory (ESI) being used to help determine which scholars need additional support. The literacy specialists provide groups of four or five scholars with targeted instruction in specific areas of need, including decoding, phonics, phonological awareness, nonfiction comprehension, and/or fluency. Over the past four years these practices have contributed to 53% of eighth grade students passing at least one Regents exam, and school data reports show that the average eighth grade Eagle scholar enters the ninth grade having earned 2.18 high school credits.

- The Faculty Handbook highlights data points for all content areas, college and career readiness data in regard to high school credit accumulation, data for “on track” seniors, Advanced Placement and College Now pass rates, scholar performance profiles by grade, and state exam breakdown of student performance by grade and standard. The latter yielded information for the school to identify the power standards that are embedded throughout the curriculum. The data is transferred and used via data management tools, including the “Eagle Focus Group Tracker”. Teachers shared that paraprofessionals use this tool to track five scholars identified by the teacher during the lesson, to see if each student is participating, achieving mastery of the standard being taught, or producing expected work products. Teachers also shared that data is implemented via the “Eagle Small Group Tracker” - one for English Language Arts and one for math. Based on the data, teachers adjust their groups for re-teaching of standards and skills, as part of individual and small group interventions.

- Teachers utilize the school-wide grading policy to assess student performance across content areas. Homework, classwork, participation, effort, and work quality, combined, are worth 40%, standards-based projects are worth 25%, examinations and extended writing tasks are worth 25%, and quizzes are worth 10% of a student’s grades. The school-wide passing grade for a course is 65%. Students shared that they are clear on how they are assessed. One stated that, “Teachers give us rubrics in our classes to help us know what to do.” Teachers, students, and parents also shared that they use Engrade, an online tool that operates as a grade book, task completion tracker, and feedback tool. It also provides a basis for parents and teachers to communicate in discussing a student’s performance across all content areas.
Finding
The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations and teacher teams regularly analyze assessment data and work for students whom they share.

Impact
Due to teacher team collaborations and ongoing analysis of student performance data, the instructional capacity of teachers is continuously improving and there is an increase in student progress across classrooms.

Supporting Evidence
- The administration revealed that teacher teams meet once per week and department teams meet either every week or every other week. Each grade team and department team has an assistant principal as a direct supervisor to guide the work and discussion. A review of the school schedule confirmed the meeting schedule of the team. Further, a review of team agendas and minutes revealed that teachers at the school dedicate most meetings to discussing the progress of students, based on analysis of data, examination of students’ work products - especially writing and math - and through the use of protocols. These documents also revealed that teachers re-write curriculum and re-group students based on data outputs. For example, data samples reviewed during team meetings illustrated re-grouping of students for whole group instruction, small group instruction, or individual instruction, based on their progress on prior assessments.

- The principal shared that, “Teacher teams review data, share practices they are trying in their classrooms, seek feedback for pedagogical problems, design units and lesson plans, discuss scholars in need of intervention, and brainstorm grade-wide policies.” An observation of the English language arts team meeting confirmed the principals’ expectations of teacher teamwork, as the team shared out findings about one scholar whose work they were proud of and then proceeded to have three teachers share their latest data, including changes in performance and trends for critical, pushable, and accelerated scholars.

- During a team meeting observed, teachers engaged in a collaborative review of student performance data. A facilitator distributed data sheets that assessed students’ ability to write an “excellent paragraph”, by examining their topic sentence, supporting details, transitions/organization, conclusion, sentence fluency and conventions, on a scale of 1-4. Presenting teachers shared details of instruction and the task that led to the latest performance, while supporting team members asked questions and discussed next steps based on the data presented. The whole team discussed implications for instruction across classrooms and for specific scholars, based on the team’s findings. From this process, the team concluded that annotating to understand text was an effective strategy towards students being able to write stronger paragraphs and that when writing, students needed to stick to the “Restate, Answer, Cite, Explain” (RACE) model and be especially focused on “Restating” to ensure understanding of what the prompt is asking them to do.