Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Emma Lazarus High School
High school 02M394
100 Hester Street
Manhattan NY
10002

Principal: Melody Kellogg

Dates of Review:
December 14, 2017 - December 15, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Lisa Reiter
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Celebration to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Focus to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as Additional Finding. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

Emma Lazarus High School serves students in grade 9 through grade 11. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<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 Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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 Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

A theory of action informs the school's approach to culture-building and social-emotional support. Structures, such as advisory, are in place so that all students are known well by at least one adult who helps personalize supports.

Impact

The school sustains a positive, inclusive culture, and meaningfully involves student voice in decision-making to guide school improvement. Guidance and advisement structures are in place that has an impact on student academic and personal behaviors and put them on a path to success.

Supporting Evidence

- Students have an active voice and role in the development of the school culture. Student government members led the formation and maintenance of a variety of clubs to meet the interests of the student body. They surveyed the student body to determine which clubs would be of interest to all students and analyzed the results. They then surveyed the staff to determine who was interested in facilitating the various clubs and presented the results of both surveys to school leaders for approval. Some examples of clubs include chess, basketball, baseball, and ping-pong. Student government is also responsible for ensuring new students feel comfortable when they begin school. One student government member reported that they make sure new students have someone to sit with at lunch. As a result of student government, students are initiating and leading efforts to ensure that all students feel welcomed and included at school.

- School leaders stated they believe students learn best if students are connected to and supported in the learning environment where everyone feels safe to take risks. One example of a risk that students are expected to take is speaking in English, not their native language, to ensure they are prepared for college and career. One parent shared that his child was very nervous about attending school and learning English; however, the supportive environment at the school made her feel comfortable and safe to learn to speak English. One student reported, and all present agreed, “Everyone is equal and supports each other here. I feel comfortable speaking English in class, even if I say the wrong word.” Thus, a safe and inclusive culture that supports students is embedded throughout the school.

- Students are assigned an advisor who meets with them weekly to support academic progress, as well as attendance and social-emotional needs. Advisors call home each day an advisee is absent or late and coordinates more in-depth attendance plans if needed. Advisors also support students’ academic and personal behaviors such as organization, motivation, and self-regulation through the development of individual goal-setting plans every six weeks. One student reported, and all present agreed, that they feel comfortable speaking with the advisor about any concern. Advisors often support students and families with concerns that fall outside the school day. Additionally, advisors, guidance counselors, and administration meet weekly to discuss any concerns regarding students’ social-emotional learning and attendance that may require a more intensive intervention. Therefore, the advisory structure ensures all students are known well by one adult who coordinates and personalizes supports that impact on student learning.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers and students use rubrics aligned with the school's curricula. Across classrooms, teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Teachers' use of rubrics provide actionable feedback; however, it is not yet providing meaningful feedback to students regarding their achievement. Checks for understanding are used to make effective adjustments to meet all students’ learning needs; however, students are not aware of their next learning steps beyond the language of the rubric.

Supporting Evidence

- Samples of student work products showed teacher written actionable feedback. Some examples of that feedback directed students to use synonyms, provide an explanation for their response, and to write in the future tense. Additionally, students are reminded to describe and analyze each section of a political cartoon. Feedback provided on math tasks includes praising students for following the steps to solve inequalities and reminding them to follow those steps on future exams. While rubrics were provided to students on all tasks, written feedback directing students to their next step was not evident on most tasks. In addition, written feedback was not always connected to the criteria of the task rubric. One such example praised students for their growth in problem-solving; however, the next step was to speak English in class more, which was not included in the rubric for the task.

- One student reported, and all agreed that teachers provide them with a rubric on tasks. This student spoke about an example from an English teacher. This teacher reminded the student to vary the dialogue in his narratives and encouraged him to use additional texts as models for this practice. The student spoke about how excited he was to read additional texts and identify dialogue to use a model. Another student spoke about using a checklist the teacher provided to complete a personal narrative. Thus, students are consistently provided with actionable feedback regarding their achievement.

- Teachers check for understanding in their classes, as well as have students conduct self- and peer-assessments. In an English class, the teacher circulated around the classroom to small groups and checked if students understood the difference between the vocabulary words, protagonist and antagonist. For one group, he reviewed the terms upon noticing that the students mixed up the two terms. Additionally, student grouping in this class is based on the previous lesson’s exit slip. In another English class and an algebra class, teachers used thumbs up or thumbs down to assess student understanding of the task and readiness to move on. In an art class, students held up dry-erase boards with answers to vocabulary questions. After each question, students held up the boards and the teacher asked if all agreed. If there was disagreement, he would ask a follow-up question, to specific groups. Therefore, checks for understanding are used to make effective adjustments. Additionally, students self-assess after completing thematic essays. In one example a student shared that she identified an area that she improved in as “accuracy and mistakes”, and an area for improvement as “developing the task.” In order to improve she indicated that she “needed to develop all aspects evenly.” While students engage in self-assessment, it has not yet lead to students’ awareness of their next learning steps.
### Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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#### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Curricula and tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

#### Impact

Curricula build coherence through the integration of the English Language Arts instructional shifts, and promote college and career readiness for all students. Faculty adjusts materials so that all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs), have access to the curricula.

#### Supporting Evidence

- Curricular documents across grades and content areas confirm consistent alignment with the Common Core and the integration of the English Language Arts (ELA) instructional shifts. For example, an English lesson plan includes a student discussion using evidence from the text to support their arguments. An English as a New Language (ENL) lesson plan contains a review of academic vocabulary, including the terms protagonist and antagonist, and a discussion about using text-based answers to support opinions about protagonists and antagonists in their texts. An ENL curriculum map titled *American Literature* includes academic vocabulary and texts that varied in complexity throughout the units. An American History unit plan includes a task that requires students to analyze different documents, including political cartoons to build their understanding of the Industrial Revolution. Thus, curricula are aligned to the Common Core, and the literacy instructional shifts are integrated across content areas and support ELLs.

- Curricular documents integrate the math instructional shifts. For example, an Algebra lesson plan includes a task that requires students to demonstrate their understanding of solving inequalities by explaining the process through the creation of a brochure, song, video, or story. A trigonometry lesson plan begins with a review of geometry vocabulary that was learned previously. Students are then guided through a hands-on activity to discover what a radian is and how many radians are in one circle. The lesson ends with students applying their learning by answering a series of questions and computations. A review of a geometry pacing calendar reveals that it is aligned to the EngageNY curriculum. Therefore, there is evidence that the math instructional shifts are integrated across all math courses.

- Curricula are planned and refined for ELLs to have access to tasks and are cognitively engaged. A global history lesson plan includes four different levels of handouts based on results from the New York as a Second Language Assessment Test (NYSESLAT). Students are placed in heterogeneous groups based on exit tickets, which enables students to support each other’s learning. Also, based on need, students are provided with targeted vocabulary lists. An economics lesson plan includes student groupings based on NYSESLAT data and leveled readings. In addition, all lesson plans include a language objective, such as students will be able to use phrases of analysis provided, to support ELLs. Thus, lessons and tasks include appropriate supports to ensure ELLs have access to rigorous tasks.
# Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs, such as embedding literacy strategies and engaging in discussions in all classes and are informed by the instructional shifts. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

**Impact**

Students produce meaningful work products and all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs), are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teaching practices reflect the belief that students learn best when provided with multiple opportunities for discussions. During an ENL level three class, after reviewing the purpose statement, students shared their responses to what it means to infer versus predict. One student stated inferring was wondering. Another student disagreed and stated it was similar to developing a hypothesis. Students then engaged in a discussion about the theme of a poem from the book, *Bronx Masquerade*. During an Earth Science class, students worked in pairs to identify a pattern based on the location of Polaris, the North Star. One student explained to his partner that they needed to track star trails to identify latitude of given locations. In an ENL level six class, students worked in different stations discussing elements of their argument essay. In one station, students stated their position and group members asked questions. For example, one student shared her position that racism exists. Another student asked, “Why do you have that position? What evidence do you have?” The first student stated her evidence. This level of discussion was evident in all seven stations. Therefore, student discussion has led to meaningful student work products, such as argumentative essays and analyzing star data.

- Teaching practices incorporate literacy skills across classrooms. During an art class comprised mostly of emerging ELLs, students reviewed vocabulary through a series of questions. Students also wrote and stated their answer aloud to the class. This strategy allowed students to practice speaking English, as well as learn content vocabulary. During a physical education class, after a student read the purpose statement, they identified the verb in the statement. Students were then asked to identify synonyms for the verb, evaluate. Some student responses included, test, grade, and check. In an advanced computer class, while the primary task was for students to recreate websites using Adobe Dreamweaver, they also provided tips and suggestions to each other via an online document. This strategy allowed students to practice their writing skills. Thus, literacy strategies are incorporated to support student learning.

- Multiple entry points enable all learners to access material. Teachers use student grouping, as one strategy, that supports ELLs engaging in challenging tasks, such as analyzing political cartoons from the Gilded Age, solving inequalities, and discussions centered on a text. Lessons include graphic organizers for all students. In an English class, students worked with a group to paraphrase an assigned section of the poem, “Bored.” Students were grouped heterogeneously to provide peer support, and students had access to a video of the poem for additional support. The graphic organizer also included a bonus section that asked students to identify a literary device and example from the poem. Therefore, students are consistently provided with support to access the curricula; however, extensions were not always provided to extend student thinking.
### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide training to the entire staff. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for students.

### Impact

Communication and professional development (PD) regarding high expectations result in a culture of mutual accountability. Students own their educational experience through planned learning experiences facilitated by teacher teams and staff and are college and career ready.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders consistently message the belief that teacher development is critical for student growth and support high expectations for improved teacher practice and achievement of school goals with extensive learning experiences. Communication and accountability are conveyed school-wide in the Comprehensive Education Plan, classroom observations, and professional learning experiences. The professional learning plan reflects alignment to prioritized components of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching: designing coherent instruction and engaging students in learning*. Two teachers, along with school leaders, serve as coaches. Coaches meet one on one with their teachers weekly. Coaching notes include next steps for the teacher and coach, which demonstrates mutual accountability. One such example includes, the coach finding a resource on grouping and the teacher developing writing expectations for students. Thus, a culture of support and mutual accountability is evident throughout the school.

- School leaders consistently message the expectation that every student has the ability to learn at a high cognitive level and every lesson should contain literacy strategies. School leaders stated, and teachers agreed that there is a culture of transparency. Teachers are expected to collaborate on various teams to ensure all students are academically engaged and college and career ready. Teams determine how often they meet and what work products are presented to school leaders. As an example, teachers self-select a problem of practice aligned to supporting ELLs and collaborate on teams to identify new strategies. One such example includes teachers identifying different strategies to try with the level two students. Therefore, high expectations are communicated and supported with professional learning and result in mutual accountability among staff.

- Teacher teams communicate and support the expectation that all students apply for college. High expectations are communicated to students through a norming week at the beginning of each semester. Topics normed during these sessions include: understanding expectations, graduation requirements, and reading strategies included in the student handbook. Additionally, teacher teams create student success plans for struggling students. Also, all students develop their own goals and action plans. One student identified improving in math as a goal and would attend lunch tutoring as one step toward meeting that goal. Additionally, fifty students have internships through the Learn to Work program. As a result of teacher team support, and student ownership, eighty-nine percent of June graduates applied to college.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating: Proficient</th>
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</table>

**Findings**

Teacher teams consistently analyze data and student work for students they share. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

**Impact**

Teacher teams conduct inquiry cycles that result in growth for English Language Learners (ELLs) and increased teacher capacity. Teachers have built leadership capacity through coaching positions, and have a voice in key decisions.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Students are grouped based on their language acquisition level from level one to level six. The teacher team focusing on a level one student group was observed. Prior to the meeting, the team analyzed student work for their students. While all level one students made progress toward language acquisition goals, the analysis revealed six students were close to reaching the goal of moving into level two. The team decided to focus on this group of students. Based on classroom observations and student work, the team further classified students by which modality, reading, writing, speaking, or listening, each student needed support in to move to level two. In addition, several common strategies were identified to use with all six students. Strategies included developing a writing checklist and using higher-leveled rubrics. During the observed meeting, one teacher decided to try a speaking checklist that another teacher had developed. Therefore, as a result of teacher teamwork, there is evidence of improved teacher practice.

- Teachers meet at least twice per week for a collaborative period to analyze student assessment data and plan strategies to use across content areas. During this time, the level six teacher team analyzed student work and determined that a group of students struggled to access the curriculum and, therefore, were not making progress. The team decided to try a questioning technique that would help students connect to the curriculum, thus providing an entry point into the task. As a result, eighty-two percent of the level six students demonstrated growth. Additionally, a teacher shared that during a level two meeting, they developed leveled tasks to use with students who had been identified as struggling in reading or writing. It is evident that teacher teams meet regularly to analyze assessment data and student work for students upon whom they are focused leading to progress for the identified groups of students.

- Teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning. Two teachers have coaching roles, in addition to their teaching responsibilities. In their role as coaches, they support their peers in improving instruction. One teacher shared that her instruction has improved as a result of working with her coach. Teachers also have the autonomy to design curriculum and request appropriate resources. Additionally, two teachers have informal leadership roles and support colleagues new to their respective departments. Therefore, teachers serve in both formal and informal leadership roles.