Quality Review Report
2018-2019

Medgar Evers College Preparatory School
Secondary School 17K590
1186 Carroll Street
Brooklyn
NY 11225

Principal: Michael Wiltshire

Dates of Review:
November 14, 2018 - November 15, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio
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

Medgar Evers College Preparatory School serves students in grade 6 through grade 12. 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>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</th>
<th>Additional Finding</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td></td>
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<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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>Additional Finding</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>Area of Celebration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

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<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>
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<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>
</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>
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<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>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
School leaders and staff effectively and systematically communicate to students, and through parent partnerships, their unified expectations toward academic excellence connected to college readiness.

Impact
Clear, focused supports and feedback on post-secondary trajectories ensure that all students, especially high-need subgroups, own and are prepared for the next level to support their academic success.

Supporting Evidence

- In addition to their main partnership with Medgar Evers College, which offers college courses towards an associate degree for students and training for teachers, other partnerships with the College Board for Advanced Placement (AP) classes or honor distinctions, and Carnegie and Navy Yard internships, ensure that there is a wide range of choices for students. To begin this process, all students who enter the sixth and ninth grades are required to attend a summer academy where they begin with grade-level, Regents, or AP course work. Students attested to being provided with these experiences and continuously advocate via AP student forums and at guidance meetings with staff, thereby demonstrating entitlement and ownership of their academic studies. Additional supports are provided throughout the year via tutoring and a Saturday Academy, which help provide all students, including those who are struggling, with reinforcement of instruction, as needed. These supports ensure that they are able to meet and exceed grade or course-level expectations. Thus, as a whole, school faculty provides multiple opportunities for student exposure and awareness of what it means to be post-secondary ready.

- School leaders formulate structures to continuously obtain input and feedback from parents and the school community to improve student achievement. Participation in Bring Your Parents to School Day is required for all sixth-grade parents, where they are invited to spend a day shadowing their children in all of their classes. After observing what a typical day looks like for their child, school leaders conduct debrief interviews with parents who attended to obtain feedback about the coursework, types of classes, and how they feel their child is progressing. This is also an opportunity for parents to have one-to-one outreach directly with school leaders to obtain additional support or other opportunities for their children. During a debriefing and feedback session, parents shared their positive impressions of the day. The school leader offered additional opportunities for mentoring and extracurricular activities to support student progress.

- Other communication structures and events, including workshops, enable parents to learn about the school’s expectations and how to further support their children. To understand the importance of AP courses, there is an open house for parents and students. During this event, parents and students learn about the expectations for the multiple AP courses in order to guide their selection of options and help them to prepare for the high-level coursework. Additionally, parents shared that they learn about the college admissions process to help guide decisions for post-secondary readiness. Mandatory grade-level academic meetings occur each semester and include teachers, guidance counselors, school leaders, and parents. Parents collectively shared that the school makes a strong effort to ensure that they are able to reinforce these expectations at home. Parents agreed that the school’s focus on academic excellence is supported through the opportunities the school’s faculty offers to their children and home-school connections made throughout the year, which highlight how communication with families connects and reinforces high expectations of student progress and pathways toward graduation.
Area of Focus

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

Findings

Teachers consistently provide multiple entry points, but they are not always strategic and do not always include high-quality supports and extensions. Student work products and discussions do not always reflect student ownership.

Impact

In a few classes, students do not demonstrate high-levels of ownership of their learning. All students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-ordering thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- In most classes, students were provided with different strategies and tools to engage in rigorous tasks, which led to building their critical thinking skills. In a sixth-grade English Language Arts (ELA) class, a student posed questions to her peers to determine the meaning of a task’s prompts and directions using annotation skills. She asked her classmates to further define words or provide synonyms for unknown or difficult words. To aid her peers, the student asked questions such as “Instead of the word discuss, how else could you describe or define this action?”, and “What other words would you use?” One student defined the term sub-plot as a smaller story element related to the main plot of the novel that helps lead to the solution. Another student provided statements of agreement and disagreement to these definitions, reflecting the formulation of conclusions and synthesis in the class’ responses. Similarly, in a foreign language class, students worked with multiple tools to learn, such as a dictionary, and were provided with a video to learn Chinese and talk in class about the culture. However, in a few classes, supports were not as frequently provided or utilized, thus leading students to verbal or written responses focused more on skills and concepts.

- During an AP seminar class, students worked in research groups to prepare for their presentations, based on a topic of interest to develop research statements focused on a premise. Students worked together to develop their basis for each argument statement on topics such as revising the National Football League’s policies on preventing and treating brain injuries to become more ethical. However, high levels of this type of group engagement were not as prevalent in a few classes, where the lessons were mostly teacher-led, and student participation was limited. In a computer science class, teacher-to-student questions were reciprocal and mostly based on recall, thus limiting the level of student engagement and ownership in the class.

- In an AP physics class, the teacher posed increasingly difficult tasks, where students had to propose various equations for acceleration based on the net force and total mass represented in the diagrams. Student partners worked together to formulate possible equations and solve each diagram. In a dance class, all students worked together in pairs and groups to create new movements to express a story. However, in an algebra class, although some students were engaged with resolving word problems, presenting their solutions at the board, or even providing explanations in class, other students followed along without fully engaging with others in the class. Similarly, in an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) science class, teacher-led questions focused mainly on recall, leading to limited engagement by all students in the class.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
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<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 the curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards, integrate instructional shifts including vocabulary, and make purposeful decisions that consistently emphasize rigorous habits in tasks.

**Impact**

The curricula provide rigor across grades and subjects and build coherence that promotes college and career readiness for all students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- A review of curricula reflects teacher decision making to integrate vocabulary, an instructional shift, into different subject areas. In an ICT Living Environment plan, one task prompts students to understand and use content vocabulary such as molecules and cell membrane to describe characteristics common to living things and identify functions of organelles. In an Algebra II plan, the entry task focus question is centered on prompting for student understanding of math terms such as a solution set and rational expressions. In an ELA task, prompts are provided to have students use key terms in conversation about a text. Additionally, another task includes a prompt where students need to explain the meaning of the work within the context of a text.

- Other lesson tasks emphasize other instructional shifts that align with the standards. An ELA task focuses on developing a thesis with relevant supporting details in a unit on *The Power of Change*. In a Global History plan, the task requires students to conduct a document analysis to determine the most important cause of the French Revolution; ensuring students are writing using a variety of sources. In an AP physics unit, the focus standards and task prompt students to complete labs that require them to analyze experimental data and share results or conclusions using narrative, mathematical, and graphical representations. The curricula entail tasks that reflect the school’s efforts to build coherence towards college and career readiness.

- Across unit and lesson plans, tasks are planned to emphasize rigorous habits for a variety of students. An ICT Living Environment unit includes a set of focus questions on understanding and explaining concepts such as the exchange of gases and the concept of digestion and absorption across bodily systems to establish the importance of diffusion and osmosis. An AP seminar task asks students to construct a premise and design an argument to a social issue problem and evaluate whether there are implications or limitations through collaborative discussion. A Global History unit includes tasks that focus on revolutions and asks students to evaluate the political and social reforms of the National Assembly in France. Overall, most tasks emphasize higher-order thinking to provide access to rigor across subject areas.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
Across classrooms, teachers consistently use questioning to engage in ongoing checks for understanding and students self-assess using curricula-aligned rubrics. Teachers use or create other assessments and grading policies to gauge student understanding of previously taught concepts.

Impact
Actionable feedback and effective adjustments lead to teachers meeting all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classes, teachers used questioning to check for understanding and determine whether students were able to complete tasks with limited adjustments. In an AP physics class, the teacher asked students to post their equations and answers to a set of net force diagram tasks on an interactive white board to check whether they needed a reteach or other adjustments to assist in their understanding the task. As students proposed their responses, the teacher went to each pair of students as they worked with a partner and used questioning or resurfaced definitions and equations to support their learning needs. In an ELA class, the teacher used questioning and took assistance from other students to help reteach concepts such as main plot to student partners to help them understand how to complete a task.

- Student self-assessment is used in classes to support student learning. Students shared that they use rubrics to help them reflect and gauge whether they are meeting the requirement of a task, determine their next steps, and, if needed, request the support of a teacher or peer. Some students shared that they use rubrics or checklists when completing projects or other written assignments. Other students shared that final reviews are conducted prior to exams, which help surface their levels of understanding of a concept or skill and obtain assistance from their teacher.

- Curricula-aligned rubrics or assessments are developed based on content-level courses. Teachers shared that in class, they spend time explaining and reviewing rubrics to help students understand the grade-level expectations, and work to align verbal and written feedback to support students’ next steps. In ELA, rubrics are used for peer review to surface areas of strengths or for improvement. One student’s feedback from the teacher provided a strength area in descriptive language and asked the student to focus on building a stronger reflection in their conclusion. Similarly, another student’s feedback reflected strengths and areas for improvement where the teacher wrote that the student should focus on providing more examples or dialogue to support the writing and use more description in the response. Overall, student and teacher feedback provides clear next steps to help students improve their performance.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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Findings

School leaders support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with effective feedback using student data and work. Strengths and recommendations to improve student learning are shared through frequent cycles of observation based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

Effective feedback reinforces the schoolwide clear expectations for teacher practice, and supports their development to promote professional growth and self-reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct observations across the school year that integrate the use of student work or scholarship data as a lens to inform teacher observation feedback. To support a teacher’s capacity to build a rigorous classroom environment, feedback suggested increasing the questioning that promotes higher-order thinking and connects to the real world to further engage students in the task. Teachers report that the frequency of feedback supports their next steps and has helped to increase their capacity, which is also reflected in end of year Advance data averages in the planning domain and student engagement components.

- Feedback provides areas of strength, areas for improvement, and next steps. To support improved use of assessment in instruction, feedback suggested that the teacher include activities where students assess their own work and conduct conferences with the teacher. Similar feedback indicated that the teacher should consider the use of a do-now activity to help ensure that students are on task to gauge their understanding and maintain pre-established routines to assist in managing student behavior. A class participation rubric was also suggested to highlight positive behavior and the use of a protocol to deepen the quality of peer-to-peer feedback and use of content vocabulary in student responses.

- Across disciplines, increasing student engagement is a continued focus for teacher feedback. One suggestion in the foreign language department was to decrease the number of scaffolds used in a lesson to foster more independence with the new language and to build students’ fluency. Another recommendation suggested that the teacher should consider formulating student groups based on their abilities to help the teacher maximize the level of support and feedback to each group. In social studies, to support student engagement and use of assessment during a Socratic seminar, one suggestion was to have students reflect on the qualities of the lesson they thought were beneficial and those that needed to be altered to aid the teacher and to revise the lesson to better focus on the needs of the students. Thus, taken together, feedback focuses on professional reflection to support teacher growth in instructional capacity.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
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Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based content teams. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Teams promote the school’s student achievement goals in meeting and exceeding the standards, strengthen teacher and leadership capacity, and provide opportunities for teacher input on instructional decisions that affect student learning in the school.

Supporting Evidence

- During a team meeting, physics teachers reviewed their most recent assessment to determine areas where students demonstrated difficulty and required further support or other strategies to meet grade-level expectations connected to the school’s instructional goals. After reviewing student responses, the teachers shared that students needed further reteaching and support in foundational math skills, including basic algebra review of variables, graphing, and measuring skills with a ruler. The teachers discussed ways to integrate the skills into upcoming units of study using entry activities. They further emphasized that the use of close reading and annotation strategies would need to be reinforced to ensure students slow down as they read through scenarios or problems and understand what the task is asking. Overall, the review and discussion of data and student work is leading to methods and strategies that emphasize the alignment to instructional shifts within the standards.

- Teacher teams meet weekly to review data and student work and to discuss trends in areas of improvement. During a recent assessment, ELA teachers noticed that students needed further work on how to formulate explanations to provide more clarity in their writing. Teachers decided to collectively use mentor models and think-alouds to support students in this area, ensuring they had various former student exemplars as a means to support their writing. Other teachers used rubrics, non-exemplar pieces, and metacognition strategies to help students understand how to produce a stronger piece of writing by implementing similar strategies in their own work. Additionally, teachers discussed other ways to help students deepen their understanding of the task by analyzing questions, reflecting on each sentence, and determining what the task is requesting of the students. Thus, teacher reviews of student work and data during their team collaborations helps build teachers’ instructional bank of strategies to further achieve the school’s instructional goals.

- Teachers often provide insight to school leaders on instructional decisions in support of increasing student achievement. ELA teachers adjusted their pacing calendars with leadership’s support to integrate a weekly grammar review for students not meeting the standards for language and conventions, which is leading to more high-quality writing. Other teacher decisions supported by the school leaders included the integration of grammar in small increments throughout the units of study. The chemistry department determined that students were in need of more molecular models to understand organic chemistry, and their purchase and use resulted in increased student achievement data on end of marking period assessments.