Quality Review Report

2019-2020

East Side Community School
Secondary School 01M450
420 East 12 Street
Manhattan
NY 10009

Principal: Mark Federman

Dates of Review:
December 4, 2019 - December 5, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Kevin Bradley
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

East Side Community 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>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to State standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by State standards and the 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>
</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>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>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate schoolwide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</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>
</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 State standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff and students and offer support. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students.

Impact

Communication and professional development (PD) around high expectations results in a culture of mutual accountability. A culture for learning through clear, focused, and effective feedback such as during student-led conferences is established so that all students are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade-level team teacher leaders and vertical content-area coach leaders create mutual accountability among teams by leading meetings with specific outcomes tied to all participants having responsibility for shared schoolwide goals for increasing student achievement to be implemented across classes. Mutual accountability is also evident in vertical team leaders and subject area teacher teams. For example, teachers provide training to colleagues as documented in the PD plan. School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for teaching and learning through regular PD training around best practices aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and observation feedback. These consistent communication structures supporting high expectations for the entire staff result in clarity for those expectations in a system of mutual accountability.

- Whole-grade, class, small-group, and personalized workshops and college counseling for all students are provided by a partnering organization. These include, annual workshops for all families and many targeted workshops for junior and senior parents. Junior parents and students have personal meetings with the director of college counseling, which continues throughout the senior year. The school hosts a college fair with over fifty colleges represented that all seventh to twelfth-grade students attend each year. College trips occur for every grade every year and all students visits several colleges each year as they approach and enter their senior year. Another partnering organization provides training and resources for advisory curriculum from sixth through twelfth grade. All students must complete and defend Performance Based Assessment Tasks (PBAT) and standards-based portfolios in each subject area as a graduation requirement and present their work in roundtables at the end of each semester.

- All grades are entered into an online grading system that is accessible to staff, students, and parents. The first semester includes two progress reports and a semester report card. The second semester includes a progress report and a semester report card. Furthermore, students lead student-led conferences four times a year. Student-support plans are developed, monitored, and revised by the advisor throughout the year. At the end of each progress period, students are provided with their academic status, which includes identifiers such as, high honors, 90 or above in all classes; honors, an 85 average and above 80 in all classes; general standing, 70 or above in all classes; orange flag, an average between 70 and 79 with one or more classes below 70; and red flag, an average below 70. In addition, students are provided the opportunity to take Advanced Placement (AP) classes and courses through the College Now program at Hunter College. Students’ opportunity to take a variety of college classes for credit during fall, spring, and summer semesters begins at the end of sophomore year. Several other classes are College Preparatory Course Certified and are modeled after college seminar classes aligned with expectations of post-secondary level classes students will take in college.
Findings
Teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the beliefs that students learn best in small groups that provide individualized support and focus on student-as-worker and teacher-as-coach. Across classrooms, students engaged in discussions.

Impact
Across classrooms, students produced meaningful work products. Although there were high levels of student thinking and teacher-to-student and student-to-student discourse across classrooms, high levels of student ownership were not apparent across the vast majority of classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- During an eighth-grade math class, the teacher explained a graph project with slopes, intercepts, and rules. Students were in groups and transitioned to discussing their work with each other. The teacher tracked specific information about specific students while ensuring that individualized supports were in place, including providing three students with bonus sheets of work and asking students questions while not giving away the answer. During a sixth-grade English class publishing party on short fiction stories, the writing process involved peer feedback as students silently rotated to an empty seat and wrote feedback for the author on a feedback form. Students who had signed up for open-mic time to share about their story, were not prepared to go in front of the room and there was some missed instructional time. During an eighth-grade science Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) lesson about genetics, the teacher explained the rolling of the dice and passed out a paper where students were to record the results of their dice rolls. After a few minutes, a student who was sitting alone was unable to explain what she was supposed to do.

- During a tenth-grade history ICT class, student groups were assigned a different text to read and were to answer questions. Teachers rotated through the room with opportunities to check in with each group. Students were annotating the texts by underlining and highlighting. Students were taking turns reading a portion to their group as other students followed along. Four of the groups were engaged in a discussion about the text and two of the groups seemed to be focused on answering the questions. During an Algebra 2 class, some students sat in groups. Students in their groups seemed to be working together and the teacher asked follow up questions and demonstrated on the smart board.

- During a sixth-grade science class, students were in groups, with pairs presenting their slide show presentations on science experiments about the effects of caffeine on reaction times. Groups were highly engaged as those not presenting at the time had comments and feedback sheets that they were actively using as they took notes, posed questions to the presenters, and rated the presentation. During an eighth-grade English class, a small group of students were engaged with accountable talk about *To Kill A Mockingbird* as students discussed with each other and used textual evidence to support their discussion. Students had come to class prepared to discuss with notes and annotations of the text. Students had a reflection and self-assessment sheet to fill out after they left the group. During a seventh-grade History ICT class, students in groups worked on gathering historical information. At one group of three, two students were working on answering questions. However, one of the students spent several minutes looking through his folders unable to find what he was looking for and was unable to demonstrate ownership for his learning. While there were examples across classrooms of high levels of student thinking and participation, some students did not demonstrate ownership during lessons.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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**Findings**

Curricula are strategically aligned to State standards. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are coherently embedded in academic tasks.

**Impact**

State standard aligned portfolios and exhibitions that spiral through grade levels result in coherence across grades and subject areas, promoting college and career readiness for all learners. Tasks require that all students demonstrate their thinking.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In addition to alignment to the State standards, school leaders and teachers produce curricular documents across content areas and grade levels that result in coherence as they build student skill sets through exhibitions designed to show a progression of skills across grades six through twelve. Middle school curricular documents reflect habits and skills that students will demonstrate during their learning. Habits are intended to be developed by students to promote academic success across classes. Skills are specific to content areas and demonstrate content knowledge. For example, a sixth-grade ELA unit plan about inferring while reading includes habits such as using reading toolkits and freewriting at the beginning of class and at home. Skills include students being able to infer about characters through their dialogue, actions, body language, and inner thinking. Coherence across content areas is evident in the spiraling of standards across grades as students build skills such as mathematical thinking outlined in science grade level portfolios across the curriculum in preparation for grade level portfolios. The science portfolio matrix connects eleventh and twelfth grade science and technical subjects to the PBAT.

- A review of curricular documents demonstrates academic tasks that emphasize higher-order skills for all students. A twelfth-grade mock congress exhibition from the Law and Justice in America class asks students to write a position paper from the viewpoint of their congress member that provides specific and detailed arguments and evidence to support their positions. An eighth-grade math unit plan on multiple representations asks students to show data represented in a variety of ways. A sixth-grade science lesson plan asks students to demonstrate their understanding of experimental design through peer-to-peer presentations outlining original research-based experiments. The sixth-grade science curriculum is built around six Enduring Understandings, all related to experimental design concepts that emphasize higher-order thinking skills to create a foundation of skills for students to rely on as they design experiments throughout their science classes year to year. All lesson plans include differentiation so students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are able to demonstrate their thinking according to the same high-level standards expected of all students.

- Lesson plans are emphasized to challenge students to utilize rigorous habits in the course of instruction. An eighth-grade ELA lesson plan exemplifies a learning objective statement, “Readers use text evidence and literary criticism to build on each other’s opinions and analysis of To Kill a Mockingbird.” Curricular documents consistently detail higher-level questions. Examples include a question included in a Public Service Announcement (PSA) exhibition guide that reads, “Since water is a social equity, environmental, and economic issue, how are we responsible for water as a sustainable resource?” A sixth-grade ELA reading unit asks, “How can readers identify external conflict and internal conflict as cause and effect in a story?” Additionally, an essential question included in an eleventh-grade US History unit plan asks, “What happens when varied definitions of American identity conflict with one another?”
Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. School leaders and teachers use common assessments such as performance-based assessment tasks (PBATs) to create a clear picture of student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

Impact

High quality assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers use students’ assessment data to adjust curricula and instruction so that all students demonstrate increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, samples of student work products show teacher-written actionable and meaningful feedback directing students to the steps they should take to strengthen their work. On a history PBAT draft assignment, feedback included, “Begin your historical context with a summary of the war in Vietnam BEFORE you start comparing the experiences of soldiers in Vietnam and WWII. The part highlighted in yellow should be a separate paragraph that comes first (i.e. after the introduction).” An eleventh-grade English PBAT assignment included, “Moving forward – in addition to what you have you could present an argument in regards to what impact the tyrannical behaviors and confrontation has on the relationships because you prove that in your essay.” Feedback from a sixth-grade science assignment included, “Can you give an example of sources of error that might occur in YOUR specific experiment?” Students spoke about the meaningful nature of the feedback they receive from their teachers. One student shared, “In coding, we wrote the code and she went over it with us. She would tell us how to fix the error so we could be on the right track to focus our learning on avoiding the same mistake in the next assignment.” Another student shared, “We get feedback all the time. We even get feedback on the spot, especially in the humanities class. They read what we write and get us to think about what conclusions can be drawn from this. This helps us to improve our writing.”

- Grades six-through-eight follow a dual-achievement and work-habits grading policy to reinforce content knowledge and work habits. Grades nine-through-twelve standardize on an 80 percent achievement and 20 percent homework completion, class participation grading policy. Gradebooks are composed of skills and content achievement categories to create a clear portrait of student mastery. All subject teachers use rubrics to evaluate student work: a dialogue and accountable talk rubric, an immigration congressional hearing exhibition rubric, a Claim Evidence Reasoning (CER) rubric, and the New York Performance Standards Consortium Performance Assessment Rubrics across subjects. Teachers and students also use rubrics as checklists, including an analysis of quotations-as-evidence checklist. A student reported during the student meeting, “The rubric gives out all the topics you need to be successful and I look at the higher column and answer those.”

- Teachers in all grades in each subject area along with their vertical teams design exhibitions, assessments and correlating rubrics that align to and prepare students for the PBATs. In addition to PBATs, students complete standards-based portfolios in each core content subject area as a graduation requirement and present their work in roundtables at the end of each semester. Students have demonstrated increased mastery through a seven percent increase overall of students scoring Level 3 or 4 on the NYS math exam during 2018-2019. This includes an increase of NYS math average proficiency from 2.47 to 2.54 for students with disabilities.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision  
Rating: Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and teacher peers support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with the strategic use of observation cycles and accurately capture effective feedback and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

Feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice, supports teacher development, and aligns with professional goals for teachers to elevate schoolwide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- The strategic use of frequent cycles of classroom observations is evident. The school’s Measure of Teaching Progress (MOTP) evaluation process involves sixty points that are divided into three parts. Twenty-five points go toward a Teacher Development Portfolio (TDP) that is maintained by each teacher throughout the year and documents Understanding by Design (UbD) unit plans, quality lesson plans, a school visit made to another school, peer visits, three self-observations with Danielson 8/East Side 10 Rubric, student surveys, self-evaluations at the end of each semester, providing roundtable feedback to peers, attending PD, and extra participation and contribution to the community. The school’s observation form includes the ES10: Evidence of student progress toward the objective section that compliments supporting teachers’ using assessment in instruction. This correlates with the lesson plan template section titled “Assessment: D3d & ES10 How will you know that students are making progress towards the objective?” require teachers to plan lessons with a focus on formative assessment. Observation practices implement strategies that promote professional growth for teachers.

- Thirty points come from the observations systems, which are built to support the development of teachers. For two to three observations completed by a school leader, teachers must complete self-observations using the same Danielson 8/East Side 10 Rubric and have a formal debrief. Additionally, when teachers are sent a written observation, they have the opportunity to reflect, respond and make suggestions to revise the school leader’s observation. Each rated item on observation reports includes specific language from the Danielson Framework for Teaching rubric, photographs and evidence from the classroom observation that supports the rating, as well as actionable next steps. The professional goals outlined by teachers during Initial Planning Conferences (IPC) at the beginning of the year are used to guide feedback from school leaders during the cycles of observations, including being referenced within the feedback of classroom observations and visits. For example, feedback from a teacher’s observation report included a customized professional goal, “This lesson supports a goal to address racism, discrimination and in particular structural racism.” Specific feedback from a noted area of improvement during the lesson included, “Use of time to have students debrief and engage in turn and talk more should be provided,” along with a reference to return at the end of the month to check on progress. As a result, feedback articulates clear expectations that align with professional goals for teachers.

- In addition to the required observations, school leaders and coaches provide verbal and written feedback and these visits are tracked in TDP. Throughout the year school leaders, coaches, and teachers look closely at observations, reflections, surveys, and other data to help teachers receive personalized PD and support and inform schoolwide PD. Vertical teacher teams also review their observations, data, and needs to come up with vertical team goals and plan PD. As a result, observation practices guide supports for teacher development.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations. Across the school, teacher teams meet on a consistent basis to analyze assessment data and student work products, as well as to share teaching strategies.

Impact

Professional collaborations have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and resulted in schoolwide instructional coherence. Systematic analysis of student data and work products, focused on students within three different levels of achievement, has resulted in mastery of goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- An observed sixth-grade ELA inquiry team included three rounds of looking at student work. One round focused on supports necessary in the current unit and looked at students who did not show adequate growth. The third round focused on possible extensions and differentiating up in current unit as they looked at higher-level students. Teachers spent time examining student work examples and recording their noticings of what the student did well and what the student needed to work on. One of the teachers shared specifics about the first student’s assignment from her class and then the teachers noted that the student needed additional proofreading. After discussing specifics about each student in round one, the teachers reviewed implications for instruction, which included additional time by revising scope and sequence for grade level, specific accountable talk with small group discussion focus questions built-in before students plan their essays, and identifying students who should start drafting. The vast majority of teachers are engaged in teacher teams like this one, resulting in schoolwide instructional coherence.

- All teachers on the same grade are provided with daily common planning periods where they co-plan, and look at student work, PBATs, portfolios, exhibitions, and common assessments and rubrics. Grade teams that teach the same students in different subject areas, meet five-to-six times a month to discuss students, examine data, and look at student work. This informs the support provided and instructional approaches with specific students and or groups as well as impacts other gradewide decisions and initiatives, including students’ programs. Grade teams also have literacy-team meetings throughout the year for them to look at students’ literacy data and work as a way to inform individual literacy instruction and support as well as coordinate gradewide literacy initiatives and instruction. Co-teaching teams plan curriculum together and look at student work during common planning to inform lessons and daily instruction. Vertical teams, by subject area, meet six to eight times a semester. These teams regularly look at student work and data across the grades to inform articulation of curriculum, portfolios, rubrics, and PBATs.

- Because of teacher teams’ systematic inquiry work in cycles, ninth-grade ELA whole-class grades on novel homework assignments went from an average of 39 percent in September and October to 100 percent during November and December after the team implemented a graphic organizer to support all students. Seven out of twelve eighth-grade students who were identified as having ended the previous school year in a with multiple deficiencies have improved by increasing their academic status by the first marking period in October 2019. A focus on literacy has resulted in an nine percent increase in middle school students who scored Level 3 or 4 in ELA. Improved teacher practice is evident in growth by 0.25 points up to 0.67 points, on a 1 to 4 point scale, on 11 of the 18 observation strands during the 2018-2019 school year.