

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

Final Report



BEDS Code	32090011231
School Name	Eagle Academy for Young Men
School Address	4143 Third Avenue, Bronx, NY 10457
District Name	NYCDOE CSD 9
Principal	Hector Velazquez
Dates of Visit	February 12 – 14, 2019



Purpose Of The Visit

This school was identified as needing additional support by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Because of this identification, NYSED arranged for an Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) to visit the school. The visit is intended to help the school identify areas of need that are making long-term success a challenge and provide several visible Quick Wins that can be accomplished and demonstrate the school’s commitment to improvement.

The report provides a critical lens to help the school best focus its efforts.

School Performance

New York State uses multiple indicators to determine the identification status of schools across the state. For each of these indicators, schools receive a number of 1 (lowest), 2, 3, or 4 (highest) that corresponds with how the school performed in relation to either other schools and/or performance targets. More information about how these levels are determined can be found at: <http://www.nysed.gov/accountability/essa-accountability-designation-materials>

The most recent results for the “All Students” group at the school are as follows:

Elementary/Middle School Performance Indicators

Composite Performance Achievement Level	Student Growth Level	Combined Composite and Student Growth Level	English Language Proficiency Level	Average ELA and Math Academic Progress Level	Chronic Absenteeism Level
1	1	1		1	2

High School Performance Indicators

4 Yr Grad. Rate <67%	Composite Performance Achievement Level	Average of 4-, 5-, and 6-year Graduation Rate Levels	Combined Composite Performance Achievement and Graduation Rate Level	English Language Proficiency Level	Average ELA and Math Academic Progress Level	Chronic Absenteeism Level	College, Career, Civic, Readiness (CCCR) Level
No	2	2	2		1	1	2

Eagle Academy for Young Men serves 528 students in grades six to twelve.

Information About The Visit

- The visit was led by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from NYSED. The team also included a district representative, and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The team visited a total of 40 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited 13 classrooms with the principal during the visit.
- Team members conducted interviews with students, staff, and parents.
- Team members examined documents provided by the school, including lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- In advance of the visit, the school provided results of a student survey that 286 students (58 percent) completed.
- In advance of the visit, the school provided results of a staff survey that 28 staff members (74 percent) completed.
- In advance of the visit, the school provided results of a parent survey that 98 parents (21 percent) completed.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. The school has a Peer Forward program that was begun several years ago where grade eleven and twelve students train to work with grade nine and ten students as peer mentors regarding thinking about and planning for college and career. During the current year, these Peer Forward mentors have begun to work with students in the middle school grades, as well to support them in thinking about the courses that they need to take and the credits they need to earn to be prepared for college and career choices.
2. The principal moved the high school guidance counselor to the middle school this year to help support students in thinking and planning for high school. During the current year, the principal also reorganized office assignments so that the middle school guidance counselor, middle school assistant principal (AP), and middle school Scholar Life Coordinator /Dean are all housed on the same floor. School staff indicated that this has helped with management and referral of students so that students who need time out from the classroom and/or to see the guidance counselor or the Scholar Life Coordinator can do so almost immediately. As a result, students are receiving services that they need quickly, returning to their classrooms, and are missing less classroom instructional time.
3. All current grade eight students took the high school Common Core Algebra I Regents. Sixty-five percent of the Eagle grade eight students passed the exam and earned a high school mathematics credit. The school is working to improve the passing rate even further in the 2018-19 school year.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **Teachers need to give students detailed, specific, and actionable feedback in all classrooms.** A review of student work demonstrated to the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that written teacher feedback mainly consists of general statements such as “good work” or “check your spelling” without enough specific guidance about what students could do to achieve higher standards and get better grades. In the Participation and Government class, students reported that they submit their work to their teacher on Google Docs and that the teacher provides quick and actionable feedback and gives students the option to address the feedback and resubmit their work product; however, this is not typical across the school. In the future, the principal needs to ensure that teachers provide students in all classes with specific and actionable feedback to support them in improving their work products.
- **Student work and evidence of student progress should be showcased and celebrated throughout the school.** The principal indicated that one of his priorities this year was to create a school environment that visually celebrates the achievements of its Eagle Scholars. The IIT noted that many classrooms did not include bulletin boards where student work was displayed with teacher comments. In a number of classrooms, the work that was displayed was dated December 2018. Much of the work displayed around the school, there was no evidence of feedback. In the future, the principal needs to ensure that the student work that is displayed is current and includes meaningful teacher comments and grades. Wherever possible, the grading rubric should also be displayed.
- **Teachers will need to be trained to analyze and use data to make informed decisions that impact student learning.** The team found that teachers have begun to use Data Wise protocols to guide discussions about data in grade level and department team meetings. While the principal and some teachers indicated that a select group of teachers had participated in an on-line training program using Data Wise, no teachers to date have been engaged in face-to-face professional learning in the use of this program. Teachers indicated to the IIT that they were using Data Wise protocols and Meeting Wise agendas in their team meetings to look at and talk about data, but they needed to systematically use these results to plan instructional strategies or to group students to meet their identified needs. The IIT observed small group instruction, but the tasks in which students were engaged in were differentiated based on data in only a few classes. In the future, the principal needs to ensure that teachers receive appropriate support in how to use the data that they are analyzing in order to make informed decisions about which instructional strategies to use to address the individual learning needs of students.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **School leaders should monitor programs and initiatives to ensure they are being implemented with fidelity and producing the expected outcomes.** Teachers shared with the IIT that new initiatives, many of which they believed to be useful, were begun for a period of time, but then not followed through with to ensure that all teachers had mastered them and were using them, nor were these initiatives monitored to assess quality and impact. The principal acknowledged that more follow-through and monitoring needed to happen. Teachers cited as an example the focus on rigor and the collaborative development of rigorous grade level tasks begun

during the past academic year. Teachers shared with the IIT that this year, more time and attention was needed to extend the work around developing rigorous tasks and they pointed out that teachers who were new to the school this year needed focused support regarding of this information.

- **School leaders will need to build on the internal capacity among staff to develop lead teachers and model classrooms.** The IIT visited classrooms in both the middle school and the high school where students were collaborating to support one another and where student discussions about content were deep and meaningful; however, this was not typical throughout the school. Developing these teachers as lead teachers could provide other teachers with models for how to improve their pedagogy and management of student behavior so that students take more responsibility for their own learning and that of their peers. Further, the development of lead teachers and model classrooms could support the school leader's priority of collective efficacy and cultural habits to promote student ownership and achievement. In the future, the principal should identify model teachers and classrooms and develop a formal inter-visitation schedule so that all teachers have the opportunity to visit and learn from their colleagues.

Learning at the School

- **Teachers should provide students with opportunities to discuss content together in groups in order to deepen their understanding and develop mastery.** Although there were accountable talk stems posted in almost all classrooms, the IIT observed only a few lessons where accountable talk was used in an engaging way. In one Humanities class, students used accountable talk without teacher prompting and one student stated he wanted to piggyback on what another student was saying; however, this was not typical across classrooms.
- **Teachers will need to use data to inform the creation of student groups and to plan lessons that engage students and meet their specific needs.** The IIT did not observe classes where data were regularly being used to adjust student groups accordingly and to subsequently provide targeted work to address identified needs. While there was little evidence of differentiated tasks in the classes visited by the IIT, there were some scaffolds provided for students in a few instances. In one humanities class, English language learner (ELL) students were offered a translated text, and in a living environment class, students were offered additional vocabulary to assist them with their reading. In other classes, graphic organizers were provided for note-taking or to answer questions, but no variation of organizers or text levels based on student needs was provided.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Students expressed the desire for more enrichment and cultural activities.** Students indicated that trips outside of school were almost always focused on college tours. While all students saw the value of these trips, and two seniors who had already received admission and had chosen colleges indicated that they made their decisions as a result of these trips, these students and others requested additional trips and opportunities outside of school that focused on museums, cultural experiences, and fun.
- **Some parents voiced a concern that the school focuses exclusively on preparing students for college and does not make students aware of other possibilities that exist after high school in careers and trades.** Parents

all indicated that they chose to send their children to Eagle Academy because of the many opportunities offered, including a focus on brotherhood, resilience, high expectations, and advance placement (AP) courses. However, some parents, particularly those who had more than one child presently attending or attended the school, indicated that they wanted more information and resources on career choices that did not require a college education.

- **Teachers stated that while the principal is focusing on instructional improvement, which they agree is important, they are concerned that it's being done at the expense of the focus on brotherhood and a supportive, nurturing culture, which is foundational to the philosophy of Eagle Academy schools.** Almost all teachers were supportive of the principal's focus on academic rigor and teachers working collaboratively to develop rigorous tasks for students, as well as developing Eagle Scholar literacy skills. However, a number of teachers indicated that this has led to certain social emotional activities not receiving as much emphasis, including a reduction in the frequency of assemblies to celebrate scholars' achievement and growth. Parents also indicated that they believed that in the past few years, the principal had not been as focused on the mission of the school regarding supporting students' sense of belonging and social emotional development as in previous years. In the future, the principal needs to ensure that a balance is maintained between the focus on developing the instructional capacity of staff and addressing the social emotional needs of the students.
- **The school does not have an advisory program for students.** Teachers and students stated that although there is currently no advisory program, having one would be beneficial for students to support both academic and social emotional growth. Teachers indicated that they saw this as a way to support students' social-emotional learning needs by building on the community and character-building practices of the school and supporting the need for students to regulate their emotions and build conflict resolution strategies. Staff also suggested that the Peer Forward mentors could work with teacher advisors to develop this program.
- **Teachers indicated that the many initiatives begun in the school often seem disjointed.** Teachers stated they wanted to better understand the connection between initiatives and how they fit together as part of a coherent effort to address the school's goals. For example, some teachers said that the school had introduced multiple programs to address student behavior and students' social emotional learning needs, such as restorative justice, professional development (PD) regarding behavior management in the classroom, and the transition room. While they could see the value in each of these initiatives, teachers stated that school leaders had never explained to staff the way in which these programs were to be integrated and utilized throughout the school.