



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**East Brooklyn Congregations – East New York
High School for Public Safety and Law**

**High School 645
1495 Herkimer Street
Brooklyn
NY 11233**

Principal: Beverly J. Faison

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Reviewer: Dr. Joan L. Johnston

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

East Brooklyn Congregations - East New York High School for Public Safety and Law, High School 645, is located in the eastern part of Brooklyn. The school has 504 students enrolled in grades 9 through 12. Fifty-seven percent of the students are Black, 43% are Hispanic, and 0.4% are Asian or other ethnicities. Approximately 12% are special education students and less than 1% are English language learners.

The school receives Title 1 funding and, with 66% of the students eligible, the school participates in a school-wide servicing model. This percentage is close to the average at similar schools and higher than the City-wide average. Student attendance, at 72%, is lower than average at similar and City schools,

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The small size of the high school learning community fosters a sense of belonging where all students are known by faculty and staff.
- The principal, during her three year tenure, has brought stability and focus to the school.
- Improving data collection measures are enabling the school administration to pinpoint areas in need of improvement and to monitor cohort performance more effectively.
- Leadership in the area of mathematics has led to increased professional development, greater curricular alignment, and improved instruction.

What the school needs to improve

- Instill a culture of high expectations among teachers, students and parents and engender greater parental cooperation in key areas to improve attendance, compliance with school policies, and support for academics.
- Introduce rigorous systems to monitor and evaluate the implementation of plans and initiatives in order to measure progress and make timely adjustments.
- Through strategic goal setting and a more comprehensive program, effectively address the needs of the large number of overage, under-credited students entering at grade 9.
- Expand and make better use of the school's resources to further differentiate instruction and engage students in their learning, particularly in science.
- Increase academic course offerings, career exploration, and teacher professional development on the stated school mission of public safety and law.
- Promote and co-ordinate extra-curricular offerings and external partnerships to engage high school students in the areas of clubs, sports, social activities and school-wide events.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is an undeveloped school.

The East Brooklyn Congregations-East New York High School for Public Safety and Law is a school faced with many challenges that is now on a path to improvement. The school operates in leased quarters within a former sewing factory. The school began in the mid-1990s in response to the City initiative to start small high schools with strong community partners. Over time, the partnership with East Brooklyn Congregations has diminished, as has the focus on the theme of public safety and law.

The neighborhood is commercial and industrial with numerous train and subway connections surrounding the building. Safety and family issues from the neighborhood spill over to the school requiring time and resources that take away from instruction. Taken together over time, these factors have led to a decline in student performance, student attendance, and parental involvement.

Three years ago, the current principal was appointed with a goal of stabilizing the school and turning it around in these areas. As a result of focused leadership, the school came off the State Schools Under Registration Review list, but still requires academic progress. Plans have been developed to improve attendance, to increase professional development, to track student progress through use of data, and to increase the graduation rate. School safety and parental outreach are vital goals. Progress is taking place, but there is still much to be done.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school gathers and uses a range of data reports on a regular basis and has developed plans that monitor performance and progress. Efforts are currently underway that focus on tracking individual student progress over time. Utilizing school data reports, there are measurable goals to improve the graduation rate, student attendance, and the passing rate on Regents exams. The current principal has been charged with implementing the redesign effort to improve the school.

In addition, the school has made strides in applying the results of reports such as those from Princeton Review, scholarship reports at the end of marking periods, and annual City-wide data reports. Teachers meet by department to review student progress and use that information to provide additional tutoring to students who do not meet required standards. Cohort data reports are now scrutinized for accuracy and to assess progress of individual students. However, analysis of this important report is still in the initial stages by individual classroom teachers.

A large percentage, 42%, of the 9th and 10th grade students are over-age and often under-credited for their grade level. The school staff looks at these students by specific status, such as special education or English language learner, to determine barriers to learning and to assure that mandated services are supplied. The school does not monitor specifically by ethnicity. In addition, an analysis of the school's low graduation rate was recently completed by the State Education Department. Root causes were identified and strategies identified to improve retention of students.

The school does not yet benchmark performance and progress with similar schools. A report of these schools, however, was recently received and will be reviewed. At this point, the school is focused on improving the performance of their own students in this high school. Since the school requires academic progress based on State accountability reporting, that is also a mandate.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is undeveloped.

Within the past few years, the school has developed more collaborative planning processes. Specific plans have been developed to improve daily attendance, assure school safety, and to improve the graduation rate, currently at 50%. The school has developed measurable goals in each of these areas. For example, this year there is a goal to improve the promotion rate for 9th and 10th grade students to 80%, to improve attendance by 4%, and to improve the graduation rate for this year's cohort by 10%.

The school has stated goals and plans to raise the performance of students in greatest need of improvement. However, there is limited commitment on the part of parents to support these efforts. Few are actively involved with the school, but of more concern is that many are not cooperative in complying with policies and regulations that would assure greater success for their children. For example, a large percentage of students who are identified do not attend summer school. Daily attendance is often less than 70%. While it is stated that a school uniform is required, very few students are in compliance, and parents stated it was optional.

Students note that a number of teachers do not have high expectations for them, saying that some "give up on kids" and others do not tell them that "you can do it." However, there are teachers "who do go the extra mile for kids." It is clear that all stakeholders are not yet working together to achieve the goals that are identified in the various plans that have been so carefully developed. A consistent culture of high expectations for all students is not yet in place. Teacher turnover has also contributed to a lack of consistency.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school's work is undeveloped.

As a public high school, the school has the mandated Regents curriculum in place. Departments have been working on better aligning the taught curriculum with the tested curriculum. Recently, faculty members completed an item analysis of student responses on the Regents exams to better determine areas that have not been mastered or have not been completely taught. Unit tests and mid-term examinations are now aligned with the format on State exams so that students will become more familiar with expectations and scoring. Administrative leadership in mathematics was added this year. As a result, there is greater curricular alignment, more professional development, and instruction is improving in this area.

The school now has double blocks of time in English language arts and mathematics for entering 9th grade students who score below State standards on 8th grade assessments. This allows teachers to differentiate instruction to different tracks of students at a grade level. There is some differentiation within individual classes as more teachers move away from whole class instruction. Teachers indicate that more professional development is needed to learn more effective grouping strategies and to increase student engagement.

Of concern is that the school does not appear to be well resourced at the classroom level. While there are school-wide storage areas for books and materials, many individual classrooms have a temporary feel to them with one or two bookshelves. For example, at this point at close to the end of the year, the chemistry room was not yet set up with lab tables or materials for laboratory experiments at the level that is expected for Regents science coursework. With only 33% passing the Living Environment Science Regents examination with a score of 65 or higher in June 2006, the school recognizes that a greater focus on science is necessary.

Class sizes are large, and that makes it challenging to engage students and to meet the significant learning needs of this student population. In addition to student attendance, teacher attendance is also a concern. There has been high teacher turnover for a number of years, and certain classes that relate to the stated mission of public safety and law are not taught this year. Academic course offerings have been reduced in some departments. As a result, student engagement is not consistently adequate across all classrooms. There is a plan to expand course offerings, in particular with a career exploration course for 9th grade students next year.

Due to the small size of the high school, students are known and feel a sense of belonging. They know who to see for help and appreciate the peer mediation, substance abuse and student assistance programs that are available. The school sends letters to parents related to attendance and absence, but teachers and students report that these are often ignored by families that are dealing with significant problems themselves. There is also a child daycare program available at the school for teen parents.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is undeveloped.

The principal selects staff members who seek to establish positive relationships with high school students that will in turn enhance their motivation to learn. She looks for those who are willing to go the extra mile to help students through additional tutoring, support, and belief in all students' ability to succeed. Unfortunately, teacher turnover has not allowed the development of a critical mass of teachers who share this belief system. At this point, the use of data is not a selection criterion, but training in its use is planned for the future as the new City-wide system is introduced.

Professional development days are planned to respond to identified needs. This fall a full day session on community building and managing student behavior took place. However, sustained, systemic professional development for all teachers within a specific content area does not take place. With low student performance and high teacher turnover, there is an identified need to improve instructional strategies and to enhance teacher content knowledge.

The principal has established herself as a change agent at the school. She is respected by all groups and has brought much needed stability to the school. She and her assistants are visible in classrooms and focus attention on teaching and learning. Teachers now work together by department to plan for instruction and review student progress. However, too much time is taken up with school management issues. The school, in a former factory, has numerous exit doors that make supervision difficult. The area surrounding the school is not considered a safe environment and the school has not adopted daily scanning with metal detectors. This is a topic of some debate and controversy at the high school with teachers asking for daily, not random, scanning to assure a safe environment.

The school offers an array of student support services that fall under various mandated planning structures for improvement. They are not well coordinated with one another or well attended. The school lists a number of community partnerships in their brochures, but there is minimal activity or presence at the school. Students wish there were more activities that traditional high schools offer such as additional clubs, sports and dances.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is undeveloped.

Over the years, the school has developed many annual plans to address areas of concern. These plans have specific goals, activities, and targets. The key problem is that structures to monitor implementation and adjust the plans where needed have not been adequate. For example, with the attendance plan parents of students who are re-entering after suspension often do not attend the required re-entry meeting.

Parental involvement and support is minimal. With 43% of the students with a Hispanic background, little translation takes place for parents that would provide for more responsive home-school communication. Coordination and planning activities are not

adequate to assure consistency across grade levels or to respond to building-wide needs. Academic support services that take place before school are not well attended. A late afternoon (PM) school for credit accumulation is not attracting the number of students who are under-credited and would benefit from the program. In short, the school is not flexibly adapting plans to meet its stated goals.

The school is currently working to build internal structures that assure that program requirements for each cohort are known and mandated academic support services are delivered. Progress has been made, but there is still a distance to go.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: EBC/ENY High School for Public Safety and Law (HS 645)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score	X		
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each student, classroom, grade level, 		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 		X	
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all other categories of interest to the school* 		X	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.	X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X	

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.	X		
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.	X		
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.	X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.	X		
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.	X		
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.	X		
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.	X		
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.		X	
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.	X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3	X		
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.	X		
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.	X		
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.	X		
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.		X	
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.	X		
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.	X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 4	X		
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.	X		
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.	X		
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.	X		
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.	X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5	X		