

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Lew Wallace School  
Elementary-Middle School 284  
213 Osborn Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11212

Principal: Shenean Lindsay

Dates of review: January 11 - 12, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Ainslie Cumberbatch

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Lew Wallace School is an elementary-middle school with 536 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 72% Black, 25% Hispanic, 1% White, and less than 1% Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native students. The student body includes less than 7% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 89.6%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders use an effective system to elevate and adjust teaching practice that provides strategic support toward the improvement of learning outcomes. (4.1)
  - Snapshots from frequent classroom visits, inter-visitations, formal and informal observations, teacher professional goals and periodic review of student work products, all address the school's annual and short-term goals. School leaders focus on priorities such as the implementation of the new Common Core Standards, through comprehensive pre-and post-classroom observation protocols to guide teacher planning. As a result, the school provides differentiated support to teachers that elevate teaching practice towards meeting the needs of students.
  - Teachers' completion of a survey at the start of the school year informs the school's plan for professional development and tailors support that coaches and network staff provide to identified teachers. Administrators conference with teachers frequently to assess progress in meeting school goals, using student data as an indicator of success. Teachers gauge their progress by looking at student outcomes and seek out appropriate supports such as intervisitations, study groups, and instructional rounds, to improve teaching and learning. As a result, examination of interim data reveals that students continue to make incremental progress.
- The principal and staff create a calm, respectful and nurturing environment that is conducive to learning and supports the growth of students and adults. (1.4)
  - The school distributes surveys to parents, students, and teachers, two times a year and uses the feedback to steer their work in building an inclusive atmosphere that includes monthly breakfast sessions with the principal, study groups with teachers, and open lines of communication with students during the principal's daily walkthroughs of the building. As a result, attendance at monthly parents' association meetings ranges between thirty to forty members who actively share their views and volunteer their services. In addition, teachers describe the school as transparent and administrators as supportive, while students appear disciplined and readily seek out support services.
  - Students share openly that everyone at the school cares about them and wants them to do well. They report that they have at least one adult to support their academic and individual growth and acclaim with pride, "Teachers use their own time to help you out." Consequently, students show zeal to learn, develop strong ties with staff at the school, and report a strong sense of belonging.
- The school's highly developed communication systems keeps parents and students fully informed of each individual's academic and behavioral progress. (2.4)

- Parents applaud the school's informative website that provides them access to curriculum maps and school priorities. They also acknowledge the importance of progress reports and report cards distributed three times a year to ensure they remain informed of their children's academic progress, attendance, and discipline concerns. Students in the upper grades and their parents value the progress updates available through the online reporting system and the accessibility of teachers to engage in dialogue related to daily assignments and student progress. As a result, parents report that they are well informed, "Teachers contact you early if there's a problem. Everyday you can get a progress report on your child at dismissal", and add, "It's like a family school." Students state that they feel the school is "just right" because they get the help they need.
- School leaders and staff offer students and parents training on the use of online resources to enable them to monitor individual student progress. The school provides workshops for parents to review school goals, Citywide expectations, student attendance, class work, homework, and assessment results, and their relationship to student learning goals. Parents also receive guidance on interpreting curriculum outlines to assist them in understanding expected student growth and to inform their dialogue with teachers. Consequently, parents report a strong feeling of support in a family-like setting and that they are able to chart improvements in their children's performance.
- Students are highly motivated to learn through a rigorous and engaging curriculum that reinforces critical thinking skills and is aligned to State standards. (1.1)
  - Monthly, curriculum maps in English language arts, math, science, social studies, and Spanish, developed for the year by teachers, include State standards, essential questions, goals, and suitable assessments for the units. Teachers use the curricula to create daily lesson plans that serve as a roadmap for effective instruction, and result in engaging students in a rigorous academic environment. These plans promote clear and cogent expectations between what students need to know, the delivery of instruction, teacher's assessment of learning, and student progress.
  - Administrators and teachers engage in weekly progress monitoring of student performance. This practice leads to meaningful discussions about revisions that may need to be made in the curriculum and lesson delivery, based on student work, teacher observation and other formative assessments to build on individual student's strengths and learning styles to help maximize learning outcomes.
- Teaching strategies and classroom routines are differentiated and reflect purposeful groupings and assignments that match student needs. (1.2)
  - Professional development on learning styles, the review of recent data from formative assessments exhibiting more vivid writing by students, and an examination of student work products, help teachers develop a shared belief that individualization is an effective approach to use to instruct students. Consequently, students across the school are able to articulate their learning styles and engage in activities that complement their needs, thus promoting success.

- Instructional resources and activities across the school reflect the individual needs of students, as evidenced in a grade 5 English language arts class where students completed a tiered assignment around identifying a culture based on clues in literature. Students provided a visual representation, a narrative account and performed skits to respond to the question. Use of a variety of instructional strategies and resources, such as Smartboards and technology programs has resulted in students making consistent progress as noted on interim assessments.
- The school makes effective organizational decisions aligned closely to school goals to support teaching and learning. (1.3)
  - Technology-based intervention programs bolster the school's resources geared to improve student outcomes. In literacy, an online computer program in grades 5 through 8 offers individualized resources and assessments in non-fiction reading comprehension. In math, a web-based program for special needs students offers support in essential math concepts. These programs align well with the needs of students and the high-engagement approach of the school. Online reports for both programs show that the majority of students are making progress.
  - Based on a review of the latest third and sixth grade English language arts and math scores on New York State exams, the principal revised prior teacher assignments to ensure greater alignment between teacher expertise and student needs. Data from periodic assessments and classroom observations indicate that this strategy is supporting students in making consistent progress towards achieving their learning goals.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Revise the process of data analysis to establish a systematic and disaggregated review of student performance to further support targeted instruction. (2.2)
  - The school uses benchmark assessments, intervention reports, unit exams, progress reports, and report cards, to determine student performance and progress towards meeting State standards. However, data linked to subgroups by grade retention or age is not systematically gathered and disaggregated. Therefore, teachers do not pay sufficient attention to non-traditional subgroup needs and adjust classroom practice as needed to accelerate their learning.
  - Teacher teams collaborate to develop coherence between classroom instruction and assessment and alignment to State standards. School leaders also encourage the use of rubrics in charting student progress. However, not all teachers use rubrics with the same meticulousness to examine student work to highlight next steps for students, while simultaneously reflecting on their teaching practice and its impact on student learning. Thus, there are missed opportunities to make suitable adjustments to ensure students are fully aware of their next learning steps.

- Ensure that classroom teachers and teams utilize data to set short and long-term learning goals that are measurable and time-based. (3.2)
  - Teachers review benchmark assessment results with students periodically and ask them to set learning goals. However, in some classes students primarily set performance or general goals such as, “I want to pick up my grades in science” or “I want to work on my homework.” Since these are not targeted learning goals, they do not focus on needed skills to improve learning outcomes for students. Consequently, this impedes the acceleration of learning and not all students make appropriate progress.
  - Teacher teams utilize school-wide assessment data to set goals for groups of students who score in the lowest third on classroom and predictive assessments in English language arts and math. Teams also look at student work to identify underlying reasons for error. However, currently, teacher capacity in the setting of differentiated interim-goals and benchmarks for students is uneven, thus impacting student performance across all content areas.
- Expand the level of inquiry-based collaboration to deepen the work of teacher teams within the school. (4.2)
  - Teachers identify strategies that successfully impact learning for targeted groups of students. However, the execution of refinements, such as enhanced questioning techniques, does not always take hold school wide in a timely manner, and as a result, not all students benefit from the improvements that have resulted from the work of teacher teams.
  - Some teachers assume key roles within teacher teams. However, not all members have received leadership training to enable them to confidently step up to the plate. Although the school is working on strengthening this feature of their work, currently not all teachers participate in key decision-making with the same intensity.
- Improve action planning to include interim- and long-term goals that focus on student achievement of State standards. (5.3)
  - School annual goals are prioritized in the Comprehensive Educational Plan. Long-range plans that reflect the principal’s vision beyond annual goals, such as doubling the number of Regents’ exams offered to students, are yet to become solidified with action planning to allow this to occur. As a result, there is a lack of tangible guidance for staff related to the enhancement of instructional programs, thus missing opportunities to strengthen school curricula.
  - The school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan directs school plans for student success. It promotes the development of student work through the lens of the Common Core Standards and requires the alignment of assessments to unit plans. At present, a formal process for monitoring and assessing the impact of school-wide plans exists. However, this practice of progress monitoring to identify school growth focuses around the administrative team and is not yet fully transparent. As a result, this restricts the school’s ability to share the effect of all of its actions.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The Lew Wallace School	UD	D	P	WD
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			X	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			X	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			X	
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?			X	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?		X		
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?				X
<b>Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X	
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?		X		
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			X	

<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?				<b>X</b>			
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?		<b>X</b>					
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			<b>X</b>				
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, guidance/advisement support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?			<b>X</b>				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?		<b>X</b>					
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?		<b>X</b>					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>