

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**George E. Wibecan School**

**Elementary School 309**

**794 Monroe St.  
Brooklyn  
NY 11221**

**Principal: Nicole Perry**

**Dates of review: April 11-12, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Santiago**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

George E. Wibecan School is an elementary school with 316 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 70% Black, 25% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011- 2012 was 93.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school works as a unified team to create a culture of respect with positive interactions that support the social and academic growth of students. (1.4)
  - In response to concerns raised in last year's School Survey results regarding safety and respect, the school implemented the Playworks Program to promote teamwork and good sportsmanship. Components of the program include team building activities and celebrations at scheduled monthly Town Hall meetings where students receive awards for attendance, academic achievements and good citizenship. These meetings are partially led by student leaders who read the agendas and adjourn the meetings. The Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility also provides academic interventions for students performing at low levels, weekly professional development for teachers on holistic discipline and Cook-shop classes for parents to promote proper nutrition and good eating habits. Additionally, the Bedford Stuyvesant Health Center partners with the school to provide needed services such as optical examinations and blood pressure screenings to maintain a healthy regimen for the entire family. School guidance personnel provide counseling as needed and requested by students, staff and families. In one case where a student demonstrated extreme difficulty following instructions and adapting to school, support personnel worked with the student and his parents to assist the student in making the necessary adjustments to be successful. This led to the student being motivated to make friends and follow established school and classroom protocols that have resulted in the student making progress in his behavior and emotional development. Additionally, in efforts to give parents opportunities to learn more about the system-wide instructional initiatives, the school has implemented a series of workshops for parents that include educating them on the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). These strategies have led to parents expressing that they are kept well informed of the academic and social expectations of the school and are better able to help their children at home with classroom assignments. Teachers and students state that the school environment has improved significantly, resulting in a decrease in the number of incidents so far this year and greater student participation in learning activities to increase academic performance.
- The school makes organizational decisions that support school goals to increase student achievement. (1.3)
  - The school expressed that one of its goals for this school year is to increase the use of technology as an instructional tool and as a resource for learning. To that end, the school has provided computers in every classroom and has budgeted funds to purchase additional SMART Boards for every grade level and all self-contained special education classes. In classrooms that already have the Smart Boards, teachers and students have begun using the technology as a tool to illustrate concepts during lesson presentations. This has led to an increase in student motivation and use of technology to illustrate concepts and promote

greater engagement in lesson activities. In efforts to address the school's priority goal to improve instruction and increase student performance in literacy and math, the school allocated funds to maintain the English language arts and math teacher coach positions to facilitate improvement of teaching practices in these areas and raise student achievement. In addition, the school hired consultants for a total of fourteen hours to work with teachers to further refine instructional skills in English language arts and math. Analysis of formative assessments and student work indicates that students are making some gains in English language arts and math.

- The school leader has created a team of teachers and administrators who collaborate in the screening process and selection of candidates for vacant teacher positions at the school. The team conducts interviews and observations of prospective candidates based on criterion that encompasses the CCLS and the Danielson Framework. Assignments are determined based on the teachers' areas of expertise and interest and the school's identified needs. For example, the English as second language teacher is assigned to work with English language learners in small group settings based on the students' English language proficiency levels to provide additional instruction and language acquisition support and paraprofessionals are assigned to selected classes to provide additional one on one and small group support to students with disabilities. Additionally, in order to extend students' opportunities and experiences in the arts and note parents' requests for additional arts programs, the school created a music cluster position this year and reassigned a classroom teacher to the new class. As a result, teachers are beginning to feel they have input in the decision making process to improve pedagogy and student learning experiences to increase results on standardized assessments.
- Staff collaborates in teacher teams and participates in professional development activities to strengthen practices, promote leadership and improve student outcomes (4.2)
  - Teacher teams meet every week and focus on planning instructional tasks aligned to the CCLS. At the meetings teachers analyze data and student work to identify skills not yet mastered by students and use ARIS as a resource for information on instructional bundles to plan lessons that would enhance thinking and learning. During the planning sessions, teachers discuss possible strategies to effectively teach the lessons and meet the academic needs of all students. For example, after observing students and analyzing their work, the math teacher team discussed that several students with special needs require more visuals and manipulatives to fully grasp the concepts presented in a math problem. The teachers agreed that these would be included in future lessons to enhance understanding and learning. In addition, the team agreed that paraprofessionals assigned to the classrooms would provide individual assistance to the students during the lesson. The English language arts team analyzed student writing samples and found that students were having difficulty with introductions and transitions in their writing. The teachers planned lessons focused on these skills and planned visits to each other's classrooms to identify and share best practices. While the data indicates that not all students have yet made significant gains as measured by benchmark assessments, these interactions are developing

teacher dialogue and collaboration for improving instructional practices to ultimately increase student progress.

- In addition to having the lead teachers work with staff to improve instruction, the principal includes the literacy and math coaches and the arts coordinator as members of the instructional team and leadership cabinet. In this role they serve as advisors in their areas of expertise and collaborate with teachers and administrators to increase capacity and raise levels of student achievement. Further, the principal sends teachers to outside venues for workshops and, subsequently, they share the learning with their colleagues at team and staff meetings. These structures are promoting teacher leadership and decision-making capacity to improve classroom instruction and increase student learning.

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

- Further align the school's curriculum to the CCLS in order to promote rigorous instruction and academic achievement for all students. (1.1)
  - The school uses monthly units of study that follows the sequence of the school's Balanced Literacy Program and has begun to align the math program to the CCLS. The school has also identified key standards in English language arts and math that include finding text evidence to support a claim in literacy and solving problems that include multiple steps in math. Additionally, science instruction aligned to the curriculum is evident in several classroom environments and reflected in science projects on display for the Science Fair event. However, there is little evidence across classrooms that the school has begun to align the curricular scope and sequence in social studies and lessons in several classrooms did not reflect key standards or rigorous instructional activities. In these classrooms, lessons were mostly teacher dominated with few opportunities for peer learning. For example, in one classroom, student engagement consisted mostly of responding to teacher questions that did not require in-depth thinking and offered few opportunities for student-to-student interaction. In another classroom, students were asked to complete a task that minimally corresponded to the lesson presentation. This minimizes thoughtful discussion and analysis, thus hindering academic creativity and progress. In addition, in most classrooms there were few examples of tasks that generated higher order thinking for student sub-groups. This lessens opportunities for a diverse population of students, especially students with disabilities and English language learners, to learn at high levels to maximize academic achievement.
- Develop consistency in instructional tasks that promote thinking and learning at high levels and address the instructional needs of all students. (1.2)
  - The school's belief that children learn best through the use of the workshop model for lesson presentations and teacher modeling, especially in English language arts, was evidenced in most classrooms that had established meeting areas and displayed process charts for reading and writing. However, the use of the workshop model was not consistent throughout the school. In several classrooms, lessons, including lessons in reading and writing, did not include teacher modeling

of the objective, teaching point or expected outcome. Additionally, instructional activities were conducted mostly in whole group settings with little time for students to collaborate with their peers and few opportunities for student sub-groups or students performing at various levels to engage in-depth learning activities. This hinders the understanding and skill development needed to ensure academic achievement for all students.

- Classrooms across the school maintained classroom libraries organized by reading levels and genre and had meeting areas established for mini-lesson presentations. In addition, most classrooms had work folders in bins and samples of student work displayed on bulletin boards. However, in several classrooms, bulletin boards contained few samples of student work and student folders consisted mostly of worksheets that demonstrated insufficient evidence of learning. Teacher comments that indicated next steps for extending the learning were limited to only a few student work samples with teacher remarks written on post-it notes. This lack of rigor and feedback on student work products adversely affects students' ability to think critically and take ownership of their learning. Further, while there was peer interaction during lesson activities, in depth discussions among the students that generated high levels of thinking was minimal thus, negatively impacting the students' potential for academic progress and growth.
- Improve assessment analysis in all content areas to measure student progress toward goals and adjust instruction to meet the needs of all students. (2.2)
  - School leaders and teachers gather data that includes baseline assessments aligned to the State tests and use benchmark Acuity periodic assessments to measure progress over time. Teacher teams analyze student work and outcomes to assess achievement, then identify and address skills that require extra focus. Additionally, classroom teachers gather assessment information in data binders to analyze student progress and identify areas of need in English language arts and math. However, information to parents regarding their children's assessment results is general in scope with few specific comments regarding areas for growth and improvement. Student feedback is mostly in the form of checks and percentages with limited comments for next steps. This diminishes opportunities for parents and students to know the expectations for academic growth and make adjustments to remediate the gaps in progress. Also, the use of these results to measure progress toward goals and adjust curriculum and instruction in a systematic and consistent basis is not evident in all core content areas. Furthermore, there is little evidence that teachers use information gathered from the data to adjust curricula to meet the needs of English language learners and students with disabilities. Ultimately, this decreases opportunities to consistently provide suitable instruction and accelerate progress for all learners.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

George E. Wibecan Elementary School					UD	D	P	WD
<b>Overall QR Score</b>						X		
Instructional Core								
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>					UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?						X		
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?						X		
School Culture								
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>					UD	D	P	WD
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?							X	
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?						X		
Systems for Improvement								
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>					UD	D	P	WD
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?						X		
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?						X		
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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?						X		
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an <b>inquiry approach</b> that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?						X		
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?						X		
Quality Review Scoring Key								
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed	