

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Warren Prep Academy

K028

**1001 Herkimer Street
Brooklyn
NY 11233**

Principal: Sadie Silver

Dates of review: November 19-20, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Santiago

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Warren Prep Academy is an elementary school with 265 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 82% Black, 13% Hispanic, 2% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 91%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has aligned the curriculum to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in order to promote rigorous instruction and academic achievement for all students. 1.1
 - This year the school elected to adopt the citywide curriculum by purchasing ReadyGen for English language arts (ELA) and Go Math for math, which are aligned to the CCLS. The school identified writing, academic vocabulary and using text based evidence to support a position as key standards and has integrated the city wide instructional shifts in lesson planning. In one social studies class the lesson required that students search for information in their texts to show how European explorers affected the way of life in America. Students worked in groups and collaborated to cite text evidence to support their claims. In a math class, students worked in pairs to apply division operations to solve word problems and shared their work during whole class presentations. These interactions promote thinking and deepen the levels of discussions to maximize learning. To further support teachers with curricula implementation, the principal publishes a newsletter weekly, aptly named 'Keeping in Focus', which includes curricula expectations and strategies for rigorous instruction. One issue included '3, 2, 1, Go Discussion Technique' as a strategy to facilitate student conversations and discussions for teacher feedback on the learning. In addition, the school has partnered with the Brooklyn Museum of the Arts and Entertainers for Education Alliance to tap students' talents and extend the learning through the Arts. These experiences are generating greater student participation across content areas, which include students with disabilities and English language learners, and challenge all students with more rigorous and engaging activities to enrich their learning and accelerate achievement.

- Teachers use formative assessments and ongoing checks for understanding that provide data to identify student learning needs, adjust instruction and support improved student mastery. 2.2
 - The school developed an assessment calendar and captures summative and formative data using computer designed spreadsheets to measure student progress at a glance. Teachers use data binders to gather and evaluate a range of assessments that include baseline data to determine measures of student learning (MOSL), unit tests in English language arts and math, rubrics and teacher designed tests. This information is used to ascertain student progress at the team and classroom levels, in order to inform next steps and identify students in need of intervention. In addition, across several classrooms teachers interact with individual and groups of students to determine levels of student mastery of lesson objectives and provide verbal feedback for next steps. Teachers reconfigure groups and make instructional adjustments based on the outcomes of data collected. Teachers also use rubrics to analyze work products and establish the levels of student learning to inform their

planning and re-teaching. This was evidenced in one class where the teacher determined it was necessary to sit with selected students from various groups and offer guidance on applying math skills to solve a math problem. In most classrooms, teachers also check for understanding through questioning, explaining concepts and procedural processes during peer discussions, as well as group and class share outs. Students' use of rubrics to self-assess their task performance products enables students to recognize their achievement levels and generates ownership for continued learning. This has led to students being able to state their goals in conversation with their teachers, which results in adjustments to instruction that increases students' academic progress.

- The principal has made prioritized organizational decisions to support school-wide goals, in order to increase levels of student achievement. 1.3
 - In efforts to address the school's priority goal to improve instruction and increase student performance in literacy and math, the principal allocated funds to maintain the staff developer position, in order to support work with teachers to improve instructional practices and raise student achievement. Through funds received from the local council woman, the school purchased additional SMARTboards and laptops to increase the use of technology as a tool for learning. To facilitate professional collaborations, the principal allocated time for teachers to meet in teams to align curriculum, analyze assessments, student work products and plan instruction for targeted student populations, such as students performing at the bottom third of the school in English language arts and math. Teachers also use this time to share best practices and support their colleagues in improving instruction. In one team meeting a teacher discussed a student in her class who had been experiencing difficulty with writing, resulting in the student crying and becoming angry. The teacher shared that after she implemented suggested strategies that included using exemplars, the student began to seek help from his teacher and started to use more figurative language in his writing to convey his message. In another team, teachers shared instructional strategies to help students struggling in math, complete assigned tasks. These included using more math vocabulary to explain the concepts, clarify what the problem is asking students to do, access Engage NY to find additional strategies, use human models to better illustrate the concepts and maximize student engagement. These interactions are increasing teachers' repertoire of strategies to improve teaching and learning. Furthermore, in order to maintain high levels of rigor and consistency, the principal looped teachers with their classes this year and hired new teachers with middle school experience to teach upper grade students. Preliminary analysis of unit assessments indicates students are making gains in literacy and math.

- The school works collaboratively to create a safe and respectful learning environment that nurtures and supports students' social and academic growth. 1.4
 - The school has established and implemented various approaches to create a positive and respectful school culture. These include

participation from the Student Government that meets weekly with the guidance counselor and twice a month with the principal to discuss and offer input in decisions affecting the school community. For example, the Student Government asked that the school provide more opportunities for sports activities and in response, the school established a basketball team that competes with teams from other schools during the year. The Student Government also participates in the school's nutrition committee and influenced the decision to have a salad bar in the school cafeteria during lunch periods. This, along with the school's partnerships with Mighty Milers and NYC Wellness, which focuses on promoting overall health and physical fitness, has raised awareness among the students on the need for proper nutrition and exercise to maintain a healthy lifestyle, so that they can concentrate on their work in school and increase their levels of academic proficiency. In efforts to ensure that all students are successful, the principal has assigned at least one adult to every child to help coordinate resources and support for students' attendance, academic achievement and social and emotional growth. For example, phone calls are made to families of students who have patterns of absences. Guidance conferences are set up to provide interventions to families and students to support social and emotional growth. In addition, the school's mantra, "Positive Behavior Intervention Support" (PBIS), has formed the basis of the school's approach to promoting positive student behavior. The guidance counselor and staff work closely with the families of students having difficulty adjusting to school in order to facilitate smooth transitions between the home and school and maximize students' progress. These strategies have led to greater student engagement, an increase in overall student attendance so far this year and a decrease in the number of incidents and suspensions over last year. Consequently, students and parents express that they feel safe and respected in the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop greater consistency in instructional tasks that include multiple entry points at high levels to address the instructional needs of all students and support deep thinking in preparation for college and careers. 1.2
 - The school's belief that children learn best through teacher modeling of strategies of the skill to be learned, with scaffolded tasks that generate thinking and discussions at high levels. Strategies aligned to individual student needs using multiple entry points was evidenced in several classrooms, via lesson activities, questioning and student work products. However, these practices were not consistent throughout the school. For example, in some classrooms visited, the teaching strategies employed were conducted mostly in whole group settings and discussions consisted mainly of answering teacher directed questions that generated minimally thoughtful conversations and student interactions, with few opportunities for students, including student subgroups such as ELL's and accelerated students, to engage in rigorous learning tasks at their instructional levels. Additionally, classroom bulletin boards included few samples of student work that reflected deep thinking and student folders contained mostly worksheets that did not consistently address differentiated needs for all

students across all subject areas. Furthermore, across some classrooms there was evidence of uneven levels of student engagement in higher order tasks and meaningful discussions, thus limiting the understanding and skill development needed to support the academic growth for all students in preparation for college and careers.

- Implement systems across all content areas to evaluate school wide initiatives, teams, programs and policies in order to adjust practices and ensure student achievement. 5.1
 - School leaders meet with teachers regularly to review implementation of the curriculum and discuss classroom data. The school also analyzes assessment results from State assessments, unit tests in literacy and math and formative assessments aligned to the CCLS to determine progress at the classroom and school levels. The principal and assistant principal conduct observations and daily walkthroughs to monitor the quality of instructional practices, alignment of the CCLS and the use of Danielson Framework across the school. Teachers have begun to visit each other's classrooms and offer feedback to their colleagues on observed practices and areas for growth. Further, the principal and the assistant principal meet with teachers one on one to discuss identified areas for professional growth. As a result, school leaders have started to adjust curriculum and instruction in English language arts and math based on the outcomes. However, systems and structures for data analysis and evaluation of school wide instructional protocols in social studies and science are not yet fully implemented to maximize efficacy. In addition, although school leaders join inquiry team meetings occasionally, systems to evaluate the quality of teacher team work are not yet in place. While systems are in place to monitor ELA and math, the lack of structures across all subject areas to monitor students' progress decreases opportunities to adjust curricula, target resources and inform teachers' instructional practices to increase student achievement in all content areas.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Warren Prep Academy	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?			X				
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the 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 supports 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 those expectations?			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 student 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 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?			X				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach 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