



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Quality Review
Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning
2013-2014

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

William H. Prescott

Elementary School K093

**31 New York Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11216**

Principal: Sandra Philip

Dates of review: February 26-27, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Barbara Freeman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

William H. Prescott is an elementary school with 338 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 78% Black, 4% Hispanic, 2% White, and 16% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 13% 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 89.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders effectively utilize school resources and student/staff schedules that are support school goals thus meeting student needs. (1.3)
 - The principal arranges the school's resources in order to support its core values and instructional focus on increasing student proficiency in English language arts and mathematics. All classrooms have been equipped with computers and SMARTboards in order to provide enriching technology support to instruction. On-site coaches are provided to support professional development for teachers with the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Furthermore, additional instructional supplies, such as informational text, have been purchased to ensure they are rigorous and address the instructional shifts. The principal also provides funding to support academic intervention services and after-school programming in order to provide additional time for students to master the more rigorous standards. These efforts to effectively allocate resources to support student growth are reflected in improved student work samples.
 - Teacher teams meet four times per week allowing them the opportunity to discuss curricula and instructional issues based on student work and grade/class data. Teams, including support personnel, discuss appropriate interventions and accommodations needed for targeted students both in and out of classroom. Academic intervention, after-school, and enrichment programs are aligned to teacher and student schedules. For example, the schedules for English as a second language, speech, and special education services are strategically programmed to deliver the maximum in-classroom supports as well as individual sessions enabling the school to provide more focused instruction that is engaging all students resulting in improved student work.
- Administration effectively communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families about student learning and provides supports that result in student growth. (3.4)
 - The principal utilizes newsletters, reminders, and feedback from informal and formal observations to continually communicate high expectations to students, staff, and families. Staff is provided with opportunities to attend off-site professional learning sessions while school leaders provide in-house support to elevate instructional practices school-wide. Professional development supports the Danielson framework focusing on lesson planning and preparation to strengthen curricular coherence across grades, as well as questioning, engagement, and assessment to build teacher capacity focused on the instructional core. School leaders participate in team meetings and frequent classroom visits in order to ascertain the impact of professional learning opportunities on student work and teachers' pedagogical practices providing additional supports when necessary. This approach has led to a clear understanding about

the expectations for teaching and learning and holds everyone mutually accountable for meeting those expectations.

- The school has focused on specific academic behaviors in order to prepare students for their next steps connected to college and career readiness preparation in the middle school. Utilizing the instructional shifts embedded CCLS, students been exposed to: using text-based evidence when writing; increased exposure to reading informational text; incorporating research methodology to complete reports; increase academic vocabulary; and developing organizational and time management behaviors in order to foster independence. Parents are kept informed of their child's growth through progress reports which are distributed three times per year, parent teacher conferences, newsletters, parent workshops based on class/grade data, text messaging and email. This has allowed the school to regularly communicate to families the next steps towards middle school and college/career preparedness as well as academic expectations for student performance on more demanding performance tasks.
- Through the use of frequent observation cycles, school leaders collect and analyze data and student work resulting in improved instructional practices. (4.1)
 - School leaders provide feedback on pedagogical practices through the use of frequent classroom observations. Using the Danielson framework, the school has focused on Domain 3, with the belief that increased teacher effectiveness in this area will have great impact on student performance. Professional development has been provided in order to improve the use of questioning and student discussions, engaging students in learning, and in group discussions and relevant activities and assignments which utilize a wealth of instructional materials and resources. On-site coaches are available to provide one-to-one support for teachers in areas such as close reading and evidentiary writing based on an analysis of observation data by school leaders. School leaders follow up on previous feedback in future class visits including a review of student work samples thus ensuring teachers are reflective and growing more effective in their practice.
 - Observation reports reveal that feedback is centered on the Danielson competencies in Domain 3. Several comments focus on the level of rigor in tasks and questioning, the use of assessment in making adjustments to lesson plans and class activities, and the use of probing questions to elicit deeper student discussion. When referring to next steps the principal stated, "Teachers are provided the opportunity to participate in further professional learning activities to address areas of concern and are solicited to support other staff members in areas in which they show strength." Next steps also include collaborative sessions that take place between school leaders and staff in order to norm their understanding of artifacts to support observations in order to strengthen evidence of a teachers' effectiveness. This has resulted in furthering teacher development and elevating instructional practices across grades.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop teachers' instructional practices, including student discussions aligned to the curricula in order for all students to produce meaningful work. (1.2)
 - The school believes in order to prepare students adequately on the path to college and career readiness, the school must provide an environment that fosters independence while providing supports for all students to be successful. The principal articulated that this is best achieved by: utilizing a workshop model for lesson presentations; students working in small groups; frequent check-in's to ascertain students' levels of understanding; the use of rubrics and effective teacher feedback; engaging student discussions. Across classrooms, students were engaged in a wide variety of activities. In a grade 5 class students were studying natural disasters and had to develop a logical argument to explain how hurricanes and earthquakes are dangerous forces of nature. Then they had to prove their arguments using text-based evidence to support their thinking. In a grade 2/3 self-contained class, students were working on understanding the problem-solving steps using a student-created chart to solve word problems. Students were provided guiding questions such as how to determine the most effective strategy using a word problem? Some students were provided with independent practice time while others worked with the teacher in small groups. However, in most classrooms there were no opportunities for students to engage in active discussions during the practice portion of lessons or for teachers to check for understanding illustrating inconsistent alignment to the school's belief system and teachers instructional practices informed by the Danielson framework resulting in a less effective delivery of instruction of demanding units of study based on a more rigorous curricula.
 - The school utilizes the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels in order to strengthening the quality of questions posed to students across classrooms. Teachers also have been asked to pose open-ended and probing questions to deepen the level of student discussion and create flexible groupings based on data in order to provide supports and access to the curricula for all students. Sample questions posed to students included: "Did everyone noticed how reading where milk comes from reminded you of something in your own life?"; "Do you know an instance where another book reminded you of your own life?"; "What strategy has been most helpful to you and why?" Students also participated in group work. However, not only did students rarely engage in deep discussions based on teacher-posed questions, but also teacher assistance did not enable struggling students to gain access to more demanding tasks, thus limiting the opportunities for all students to engage in challenging work. As a result, student work products do not always demonstrate higher-order thinking.
- Strengthen assessments and teachers' synthesis and analysis of data to determine the most effective modifications to instructional plans at the team and classroom levels. (2.2)
 - The school's Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) choices, baseline assessments, School Net interim data profiles, running records, DRA 2, and midterms comprise the academic composite to measure student

progress and to track the instructional goals to reduce the number of students scoring in Levels 1 and 2 based on State assessments in English language arts and math. Teacher teams are charged with analyzing the data, discussing student progress, and making the necessary adjustments to curricula and instructional practice in order to support students' acceleration of learning. The principal has the results of common assessments of performance tasks displayed prominently in the office as a visible representation of the movement towards the attainment of instructional goals and student progress. Curriculum maps include pre-, mid-, and end-of-unit assessments. Teachers have also designed on-demand assessments and quizzes to provide additional data. Assessments and student work samples are also used to determine how students are grouped for targeted assistance, lesson foci, and student conferences. The latest data revealed that students require additional support in developing academic vocabulary in order to understand what is being asked of them in tasks and to build a word repertoire to be used in their writing, strengthen students' comprehension skills in drawing conclusions and inference, and the use of pictures to support emerging readers in comprehension skills. Teachers are addressing these issues in a variety of ways including emphasizing small groups with additional student conferences, including oral summaries after reading large portions of text, and developing students' stamina when faced with lengthy text. However, assessment data and rubrics are not used consistently across classrooms, thus limiting the effectiveness of teacher feedback to students in order to advance their progress towards predetermined learning goals.

- Strengthen teacher teams in order to build teacher capacity in making adjustments to instructional and behavioral plans that support student learning. (4.2)
 - All teachers are engaged in inquiry work. Grade teams meet weekly to discuss coherence as they implement new curricula materials. Teachers are responsible and accountable for making the necessary adjustments to unit plans based on student work in progress throughout the lessons. Teachers discuss the use of assessment as they move toward a data-driven instructional model. During a grade 4 team meeting teachers discussed the literacy curriculum and the upcoming unit. However, teacher collaborations are more focused on structural issues such as pacing and components of units of study than on inquiry activities linked to full implementation of CCLS, curricular adjustments based on student work, student needs and grade/class data, thus hampering the escalation of teacher capacity.

School leaders participate in the school's inquiry work in order to determine how well teachers are using assessments to make modifications to lesson planning and their instructional practices such as student grouping. School leaders, through class visits, monitor instruction to see the alignment of team meeting discussions and classroom instruction. Leaders take this information to inform the professional learning opportunities provided to teachers. However, distributive leadership is not yet evident in teacher collaborations, thus limiting teacher's input decisions that have an impact on accelerating student learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

| School name: William H. Prescott | 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 |