



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**The Windsor Terrace School**

**Elementary School K154**

**1625 Eleventh Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11215**

**Principal: Eric Havlik**

**Dates of review: January 8, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Windsor Terrace School is an elementary school with 545 students from Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 4% Black, 21% Hispanic, 62% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 95.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school leader, in collaboration with his instructional teams, has instituted a strong Common Core Learning Standards curriculum, which has enhanced proven instructional practices and addressed data defined needs. (1.1)
  - After careful review of student data from the New York State Common Core aligned assessments, as well as student performance tasks from the previous year, the principal, in collaboration with his staff, decided to continue to utilize Teachers College (TC) units of study for English language arts. However, the units were reorganized in order to place more emphasis on non-fiction. Content units were then reviewed to ensure that the writing skills from English language arts were integrated into all areas of the curriculum including social studies and science. In addition, the school chose Go Math to support higher levels of student thinking at all grade levels, and supplemented this curriculum choice with the use of Exemplars, to deepen problem solving skills. This strong coherent approach to curriculum, amply enhanced with scaffolded supports, such as pacing revisions for students in need, has led to consistent expectations for student engagement and work products school-wide. These changes have resulted in increased student capacity to problem solve, which has already demonstrated growth in conceptual mathematical understanding on math unit tests and a deepening of student use of text based evidence across all content areas.
- Using a wide array of instructional, organizational and community resources, the principal judiciously ensures that programs and enrichment opportunities are available to all students and are well aligned to school goals. (1.3)
  - In direct alignment with the school's vision and goals, all resources target student social-emotional and academic growth. Technology is used to deepen student learning. Smart boards were purchased for classrooms at teacher request and iPads are being integrated into the school routines beginning in grade 5. Though the school lost its art room due to increased population, the program did not become a cart-driven push-in. Instead, the multi-purpose room was creatively re-scheduled so that both the drama teacher and the art teacher have access to the room at different times of the day. In addition, in order to ensure that the school's newly arrived non-English speaking students adapted well to their new environment, the school leader immediately formed a partnership with the Center for Family Life, providing social-emotional support and practical family outreach to these fragile kindergarten students. Parents are also seen as a high level resource, and actively support students by voluntarily offering enrichment activities aligned to units of study, as well as lunch time support. As a result the school nurtures all aspects of student life so that students develop the skills to dig deeply into content, producing meaningful interdisciplinary projects that are well aligned to the Common Core. Further, these resource allocations have provided the kindergarten English language learners (ELLs) with a nurturing environment, enabling them to focus on academic learning, so that students are already transitioning to English and demonstrating emergent literacy skills.

- Led by the school leader, the school staff sees itself as accountable for all of the students their grade services. Grade level placements are carefully determined by matching skills sets to student needs. In addition, teachers work collaboratively to support students, and in turn are supported by colleagues who have attended professional development at the Network or at Teacher's College, ensuring that all teachers have access to the same successful strategies learned in training to improve student achievement. Hiring practices at the school also reflect its collaborative culture. Though the school has historically maintained a low turnover rate, (6% in 2012-13), a series of recent retirements enabled the school to hire two new cluster teachers. A committee was formed to address this need, consisting of the principal, a teacher team and the parent coordinator. Teachers were interviewed by the committee and then conducted a demonstration lesson. Not only were the teachers canvassed to evaluate the lesson, but parents of students in the class were called to assess their child's reaction to the potential candidate. This further ensured that teachers had the skills and personalities needed to meet student needs. Consequently, the resulting hires quickly became part of the school's strong, committed staff and maintained its vision and collective spirit.
- A tireless commitment to creating a nurturing environment for all students that supports their academic, social-emotional and physical development is the foundation of the school's mission statement and the bedrock of its culture. (1.4)
  - The school overarching focus on the whole child is reflected in an extremely, supportive, nurturing and inclusive culture. Seeking to further develop these skills, the principal has elected to make the Caring School Community program a priority and a goal. Class meetings and scripted lessons address such issues as bullying and exclusion. Further, older students serve as "buddies" to younger students as classes school-wide are paired up and meet monthly to participate in buddy activities, sharing physical education and music assemblies. This concept is also enhanced by Buddy Family Fridays, where families of buddies get to meet and share activities. In addition, the school has initiated "fitness breaks" into the instructional flow of the day and community service projects such as recycling and a school gardening enrich student opportunities as well. Systems school-wide also reflect the school's focus on individualized supports as all students are well known by teachers and administrators. For example a new, dynamic guidance counselor provides targeted outreach as does the school psychologist and social worker, along with the Special Education Teacher Support Service teacher (SETSS). Pupil Personnel Committee meetings (PPC) focus on the analysis of strategies to sustain students at risk and provide successful options to teachers, rather than targeting referrals. As a result of this culture and these structures, attendance has risen and office referrals have declined significantly.
- The school has established a culture of high expectations for all members of the school community, ensuring that commitment, learning and college and career readiness are part of every lesson and every activity. (3.4)

- In alignment with its focus on the whole child, the school works tirelessly to guarantee that all students have the skills need for college and career readiness. Students are supported by teachers and administrators and parents with an “I believe in you attitude.” To quote the principal, “Our kids can’t be allowed to quit. They need to get used to working hard.” Parents routinely partner with the school to provide students with academic opportunities and enrichments even serving as “guest educators.” For example one parent conducts a unit for students on “sheep to shawl” teaching students how wool is collected, carded, woven and used to create articles of clothing. Other parents serve as reading partners to support at-risk students in developing fluency and comprehension skills, thus helping to ensure students have strong college and career readiness skills. The practical aspects of readiness are addressed as well. Preparation for articulation to middle school begins with parent information sessions in grade 3. Students acquire interview skills in mock interviews. Further, parents are supported throughout the middle school choice process by the assistant principal and the parent coordinator, helping to fill out applications and counseling parents on the best options for their children. Consequently, parents make well-informed decisions and student achievement at the middle school level indicates successful transitions and continuous growth in student outcomes.
  
- Everyone at the school is seen as a learner and a teacher. The principal often serves as a math coach, and has introduced and conducted a unit of study where students raise trout eggs and release them into the wild, an event that is then live streamed back to students at the school. Feedback is ongoing utilizing the TC writing continuum which defines next steps across grade levels and supports accelerated growth. In addition, all students routinely self-select writing topics within a genre, working with their peers as writing partners and editors. Further students develop topics of study for social studies and science projects and use teacher team developed end of unit checklists and rubrics that establish Common Core aligned expectations for student success and enable students to self-assess mastery in all content areas. These practices are then coupled with interdisciplinary explorations through extensive partnerships with cultural institutions, and ongoing school celebrations, and embed the high expectations for student success in all children, actively preparing students to face secondary and post-secondary levels of learning.

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

- Deepen the level of questioning school-wide to ensure that students routinely utilize critical thinking skills in class discussions across all content areas. (1.2)
  - The school consistently aligns instruction to the Common Core Learning Standards. Students are actively engaged and routines reflect the priorities of the Danielson Framework and school-wide goals. Teachers routinely use the workshop model and incorporate extensive opportunities for students to work in small groups. “Turn and talk” during whole class direct instruction is seen in all classrooms and across all content areas. In addition, rubrics and student work associated with the TC units of study are also highly evident, as are math portfolios aligned to the school’s chosen curriculum. However, though there is ongoing discussion in all

classrooms, teacher questioning is not consistently reflective of higher order levels of thinking, and sometimes includes rapid-fire, literal questions. For example, in one early childhood class, the teacher questions included, “Where does the number go? Where does the other number go? What is the answer?” Consequently, the opportunity for students to develop these critical thinking skills is limited, hindering opportunities for increased student growth.

- Individualized strategies are key components of the Reader’s and Writer’s workshop and are readily seen in all classrooms. In addition, the use of checklists enables students to complete assigned tasks. Further, teachers routinely conference with students and provide ongoing support for English language learners and special needs students in small groups, scaffolding learning through differentiated materials and teacher guidance. Nevertheless, students at the highest levels are not always challenged to go more deeply into a subject. While one class provided higher level work with decimals for stronger students, this level of challenge was not consistently seen in every class. As a result, student levels of understanding do not always reach their full potential.
- Expand the consistency of the use of checks for understanding to ensure that all students’ needs are identified and addressed in a timely manner. ( 2.2)
  - The school routinely uses common assessments at all grade levels to reflect on student progress. Teachers utilize the TC writing continuum rubric to analyze and identify areas of student strength and next steps for growth. Further, curriculum aligned pre and post assessments by grade in mathematics and social studies consistently measure student progress towards goals in units of study, ensuring that assessments are coherent school-wide. In addition, teacher conference notes, Fountas and Pinnell reading levels and rubric assessed on demand writing, as well as a school-wide grading policy ensure that data provides an accurate picture of student needs and strengths. However, while some teachers have developed and implemented ongoing checks for understanding, such as the teacher who used a hand movement to check for understanding, others simply listen to some of the student conversations as they circulate. Thus this protocol is not as yet fully embedded in teacher practice across the school. Accordingly, student learning is inconsistently measured on a daily basis during some classes, limiting levels of student comprehension and achievement.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The Windsor Terrace School	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