

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**Walter Francis Bishop**

**Elementary School Q160**

**109-59 Inwood Street  
Queens  
NY 11435**

**Principal: Tiffany Hicks**

**Dates of review: February 5 - 6, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Beverly Ffolkes-Bryant, Ed.D.**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Walter Francis Bishop is an elementary school with 676 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 60% Black, 18% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Multi-Racial, 8% American Indian/Alaskan Native and 12% Asian students. The student body includes 4% 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 92.1%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has created a learning community that is well focused on student outcomes with a vision to continue to accelerate learning. (3.1)
  - The principal revised initial Comprehensive Educational Plan goals when she saw that they did not address current school needs. She included a math goal due to the large percentage drop of grade 4 and 5 students on the state examinations. The goal is focused around building math literacy by incorporating pre-and post assessment data analysis to identify gaps in students understanding. A student attendance goal was added because of the percentage of chronically absent students, stating that they will establish and maintain contact with families and social service providers to reduce the number of chronically absent students by 10%. The literacy goal was also revised to address the drop in scores on the English language arts exam. As stated in the Comprehensive Educational Plan, "teachers will use Bloom's Taxonomy and Webb's Depth of Knowledge to plan for an array of questioning techniques to prompt low, mid and higher level cognitive processing for all students and select instructional strategies that match the content and cognitive complexity in the standards." These goals not only align with the data reflected on the Progress Report but are also influenced by the Citywide Instructional Expectations, the school's previous Quality Review and the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Part of the principal's theory on school improvement includes using data analysis to inform all levels of decisions in the school, from instructional decisions at team meetings to planning decisions regarding professional development and school improvement initiatives. The principal tracks these goals for progress through observations done in TeachBoost, teacher surveys, attendance reports, Pupil Path and Skedula, as well as during weekly cabinet meetings to ensure that student learning and social emotional growth is the primary focus of the instructional team. An example of this was seen as the principal initiated the use of Data Driven Classroom (DDC), a feature available through Skedula, which allows the teachers to collect data on assessments in a timely fashion. DDC allows for answer sheets to be scanned and the instructional team is provided with an item analysis of incorrectly scored questions. This provides the administrators and instructional coaches the opportunity to revise their action plans and provide targeted support to specific teachers. All stakeholders are informed of the principal's annual goals as seen in the monthly parent newsletters as well as her Dose of Data communiqué so that the entire school community takes ownership in the progression of whole school improvement initiatives.
  - To help teachers see how different school-improvement efforts are all overlapping and connected, the principal consistently reinforces the school goals utilizing the Red Thread Alignment. This provides a visual connection between the school's instructional focus and the Danielson framework, the Citywide Instructional Expectations and the Quality Review Rubric. For example, she highlighted how assessment-driven instruction is the focus of Danielson's 1E and 3D, the Quality Review

Indicator 2.2 and the Citywide Instructional Expectations around assessment. The principal also reinforces this alignment through the a Shutterfly website where all resources from the faculty and grade conferences are collected, the Teacher Handbook, the Principal's Weekly News as well as the Dose of Data newsletter. In addition to communicating openly with the teaching staff, the principal also communicates with the School Leadership Team, the Parent Teacher Association and the Student Council by way of monthly meetings, Coffee and Conversations, and newsletters, all of which highlight the importance of the school's expectations. These ongoing communiqués reinforce the school's high standards, thereby drawing attention to students' needs around knowledge and understanding in order to raise student achievement.

- School leaders explicitly communicate the expectations for implementing the standards-based curriculum and provide resources and supports that result in improvements in student performance. (1.1)
  - After analyzing the item analysis of State English language arts and math exams, the principal learned that students scored below 60% on 28 of the Common Core Learning Standards. She then wrote a memo mandating the use of the Mentoring Minds flipchart and “The Complete Common Core Standards Kit”. Teachers were expected to highlight these high leverage areas when they came across them in their ReadyGen or GoMath! units. These resources include kid-friendly language and help teachers to go deeper and use more targeted instruction when helping students meet these standards. The principal also distributes Corrective Action Plans that teacher teams use to identify students' misconceptions around a skill, identify sub skills and then develop a new instructional approach. After they try this, the team meets again to discuss what did or did not work. This results in focused instructional planning in order to support student mastery and ensure that the entire community is aware of what is being taught and how it connects to the CCLS.
  - When the principal did not see any scaffolding of lessons for English language learners and special education students in the previous year's curriculum maps, she created a study group with all the special education and English language learner teachers in September. The Instructional Support Specialist from the network facilitated professional development sessions and supported the planning of lessons with multiple entry points referencing the text *All Kinds of Minds* and developing ways to increase rigor and access higher order thinking in math for these students. The English language learner teacher and special education providers also push in to classrooms to observe students and offer feedback to the classroom teacher on suggested ways to allow students access to curricula and tasks. Additionally, the grades meet with the English language learner teacher, special education teacher and Special Education Teacher Support Service teacher to design instruction based on their most current data to meet the needs of these subgroups. As a result of this work, teachers modify instruction and use various strategies such as typing the tasks in their native language, using visual aids as well as thinking maps in their everyday lessons. Teachers were also observed using the Mentoring Minds charts and citing strategies from Universal Design for Learning to ensure that rigor is evident in the unit and lesson

plans. These opportunities ensure that all students are cognitively engaged and their academic needs are being met.

- The school maintains a supportive environment and has high expectations for learning and behavior that are clearly shared with parents and students, thereby helping them to develop personally and academically. (3.4)
  - Parents have various opportunities to be informed of the expectations of the school. They have access to Pupil Path, an online program where parents can see their child's assignments, assignment grades, attendance history, and it provides parents and teachers a feature through which they may email one another. Parents receive a monthly newsletter that informs them about what units are going to be taught, a Parent Handbook that lists all of the school's policies, a copy of the chancellor's policies regarding student attendance, as well as a monthly calendar that lists the various meetings, extended day and afterschool times, assembly programs and parent workshops. The principal also gives a monthly newsletter to parents that contains the principal's message, data updates, dates to remember and pictures taken at various parent workshops under the "In Case You Missed It" section in the hopes that it might encourage more parents attend future workshops. She also conducts monthly "Coffee and Conversation" sessions where parents have the opportunity to ask questions of school leaders. Finally, the principal has provided links to various websites such as Khan Academy and National Geographic where parents to find resources help their child's academic growth. Consequently, parents receive comprehensive and timely information that serves to enhance the home and school connection.
  - Teacher teams use the results of informal assessments, performance based assessments, writing on demand, math performance tasks, running records and measures of student learning to develop goals for groups of students that are reflected in their action plans and reviewed by the grade level supervisor who provides feedback four times a year. Teachers, along with the network achievement coaches and instructional support specialists, developed thinking cards for students to reflect upon what is happening in the classroom. These cards enable students to articulate what they are learning and why, and serve as a visual reminder on their desks to help them stay focused on their own learning. As a result, there is a shared commitment to the school's high expectations and targeted goals around improving student outcomes. This specifically addresses the principal's vision of students understanding the purpose of their learning in order for them to take ownership of it.
- The principal has established effective systems for monitoring teaching practice with a clear focus on improving instruction. (4.1)
  - The school uses TeachBoost and Advance to track observations and monitor trends using the Teacher Competency Matrix. The administrative cabinet then designs professional development that specifically targets the teacher competencies that received low ratings. Teachers receive feedback via email within 48 hours after an observation and once the observation is synced to the Department of Education's Advance system they receive a hard copy. Consequently, the principal is able to make

precise teacher performance evaluations, provide specific feedback that informs the quality of each teacher's work and suggest highly tailored next steps to help them improve professionally. An example of this was seen as the principal provided feedback to one teacher, stressing the importance of students understanding the "why" behind the work. She asked the teacher to have students answer the essential question at the end of each lesson as a check to determine if the teacher achieved her intended instructional outcome. She also suggested the use of exit tickets at the end of the math lesson in order for the teacher to make strategic decisions in grouping for the next day's lesson. During observations, administrators also take pictures of student work and have teachers bring examples of students work to ensure that the outcomes of the lesson were met.

- Based on the Teacher Competency Matrix, the principal noticed that in the majority of classrooms observed students were not provided with appropriately challenging tasks. Noticing that rigor was absent from instruction and student work samples it was determined that a shared understanding of what constituted rigor was missing. As a result, the principal revised the professional development schedule to address these needs. The Teacher Tool Box, a monthly series of professional development where each week is devoted to different aspects of enhancing teacher practice, was used to address this lack of rigor. During week 1, grade level conferences for teachers set the stage for the professional development cycle within that month, i.e. defining rigor. Week 2 was dedicated to unpacking the standards and aligning them to the current curriculum, i.e. GoMath! and ReadyGen. Week 3 was tied directly to the trends and patterns noticed in the Teacher Competency Matrix. Week 4 addressed the school's instructional goal of Data Driven Instruction. Professional development sessions during this week provided teachers with tools, such as the use of Data Driven Classroom, to obtain item level analysis of end of unit exams and formative assessments. The design of this professional development series allows administration to identify specific instructional needs as well as monitor a teacher's professional growth in an identified area. The principal used other techniques to address the fact that she found teachers too often giving students feedback that was low-level. She planned a professional development session where teachers used the Quality Review Rubric to assess where they were in regards to Indicator 2.2 and then develop a shared understanding of what actionable feedback is. The principal shared with the teachers examples she had collected of their own feedback to students and had them revise their work to be more effective. The Principal stated that both the Teacher Tool Box and other methods have allowed her to gain a better understanding of teachers' strengths and growth areas, which both helps her to improve their practice and informs her decisions regarding teacher assignment, tenure and retention.

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

- Deepen differentiation of instruction so that all lessons engage students and offer suitable challenge at their level, including effective questioning that elicits higher-order thinking and extends learning. (1.2)

- There is a shared belief school-wide that students “need to live the learning in order to take ownership of it.” It is the principal’s expectation to see student work in all content areas and student discussion relating to real-life experiences and higher-level questioning during classroom instruction. Teacher teams use the Mentoring Minds flipcharts to assess the levels of tasks and include key aspects of the Common Core Learning Standards to ensure that the tasks are rigorous and meet the standards. However, in classes observed, there were limited examples of teachers deepening the level of instruction to provide appropriate challenge, especially in implementing higher-level questioning. As a result, there are missed opportunities for teachers to facilitate higher-order thinking and extend learning experiences for all students.
- Individual teachers and teacher teams plan differentiated lessons using student data to guide their targeted adjustments. Although in virtually all classes observed there were students clustered for small group instruction, lessons did not consistently reflect differentiation of modalities or offer a wide range of learning opportunities, especially for higher functioning students. This hampers a student’s ability to fully participate in instruction, thereby reducing engagement and the opportunity for all students to produce meaningful work that demonstrate higher levels of thinking.
- Provide consistent feedback to students with detailed reasons for their success and clear next steps for improvement based on specific rubrics to help them set and achieve their goals. (2.2)
  - The school purchased the Data Driven Classroom attachment to their Pupil Path system, which allows teachers to submit their questions for various assessments and then align the assessment to a standard. Student answers are scanned and put into Pupil Path for data analysis. However, not all teachers or teacher teams had submitted the mid-year assessments the time of this review. As such, these common assessments cannot be used to consistently differentiate instructional strategies, thus hampering the school’s capacity to explicitly identify individual students’ strengths and areas of need.
  - It is the school’s policy for all teachers to use ongoing checks for understanding throughout all lessons. However, even though in one grade 1 class the teacher was using a checklist during a student “Turn and Talk” and one grade 5 class was using a student checklist for student reflection, there were few other examples of teachers using checks for understanding, and student self-reflection varied as well. This lack of thorough and regular analysis of student work limits teachers’ capacity to appropriately adjust instruction to meet the needs of their students.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Walter Francis Bishop	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			X				
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<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					
<b>School Culture</b>							
<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				
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<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				
<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>