



**Department of  
Education**

*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**The Warren Prep Academy**

**Elementary School K028**

**1001 Herkimer Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11233**

**Principal: Judith James**

**Date of review: May 11, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Santiago**

## The School Context

The Warren Prep Academy is an elementary school with 219 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises of 79% Black, 14% Hispanic, 4% Asian, 2% white and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Teachers meet in professional collaborations and analyze assessment results and student work to share best practices that lead to achievement of goals for all students. The school leader promotes teacher leadership and encourages teacher input on key instructional decisions.

### Impact

Teacher team work is building teacher capacity leading to increased student progress. Distributive leadership structures support staff collaboration and enhance pedagogical skills to increase student learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet weekly in teams that include classroom teachers and support personnel including the English as a second language teacher and subject area cluster teachers with a focus on the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and looking at student work to plan lessons and improve classroom practices. For example, in one team, teachers discussed student essays that included the use of metaphors and similes to compare and contrast scenery from texts. Teachers agreed that there was a need for students to link ideas in their writing. Strategies for re-teaching included exposure to more exemplars and use of transitional words. Teachers agreed to share the impact of the suggested strategies on student learning at future meetings.
- In addition to teachers sharing strategies and best practices at team meetings, teacher leaders organize inter-visitations among the staff that include demonstration lessons to highlight exemplars of effective instructional practices.
- The school's staff developer, network specialists and teacher leaders regularly meet with the school leader to plan professional development opportunities and to discuss growth towards improved pedagogical practices aligned with the expectations of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, based on the need to promote higher level thinking among students, questioning, use of academic vocabulary and text based evidence to support a position became areas of focus and professional growth.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

While the school uses the Danielson Framework for Teaching to align pedagogy and provides instructional supports for students, the emphasis on higher order thinking skills and the use of multiple entry points to promote in-depth analysis, deep student engagement and rich class discussion, are inconsistent.

### Impact

Teachers are beginning to implement curricula and academic supports to yield meaningful student work products, yet there are missed opportunities for all learners including student subgroups, to engage in high-level discussions and create meaningful work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school's beliefs of how students learn best, informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, includes teacher modeling, questioning, student conversations and student reflections. However, these practices were not implemented consistently across classrooms. For example, in one math class observed, the lesson consisted largely of students completing worksheet exercises thus, limiting student discourse and learning. In another classroom, the lesson was teacher dominated that consisted mostly of teacher lecture and student responses to teacher questions with few opportunities for student collaboration.
- Although in one classroom the English as a second language (ESL) teacher worked with a group of English language learners and in a few classrooms students were observed working in small groups with support from teachers and paraprofessionals, in several classrooms lessons did not consistently include supports that provided appropriate scaffolds and challenge for subgroups. In these classrooms, lesson activities were mainly whole group with few occasions for students to interact and share their learning with their peers.
- While bulletin board displays in the halls contained samples of student writing and learning in content areas and students' folders included some work in English language arts and math, in most classrooms student work products consisted primarily of worksheets that did not reflect high levels of thinking. For example, some math work samples reflected a completed series of math exercises in isolation of application or problem solving contexts.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

While the school has aligned curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards, there is inconsistency in planning rigorous tasks for all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and special education students.

### Impact

Although the school's curricular planning is beginning to promote coherence to ensure that all students are college and career ready, tasks across the school do not consistently emphasize higher order thinking for all students, hindering a high level of cognitive engagement for all learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers work in teams to discuss and align the curriculum with the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts in English language arts (ELA) and math. In addition, teachers use curricula standards from the New York City Scope and Sequence in science and social studies to support the school's goal of college and career readiness. However, tasks that promote in depth thinking were not evident in several classrooms visited. In one class, the teacher read aloud from text displayed on a Smart board and had students answer low level questions thus, lessening opportunities for students to deepen understanding of the lesson content.
- Although lesson plans reflected Common Core based curricula topics, teacher planning for the use of scaffolds that might support the learning for ELLs and students with disabilities (SWDs) was inconsistent across the school. Some plans included only the tasks with little evidence of entry points to meet the diverse needs of all learners.
- Teachers meet weekly in teams to plan lessons and units of study in ELA and math using assessment outcomes to inform curricula decisions. However, the use of language development data for ELLs and information contained in students' Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) to ensure access to the curricula for all students is not consistent.

**Findings**

The use of data to plan academic tasks that emphasize higher order thinking, results in access for all learners to cognitive engaged tasks.

**Impact**

The school has implemented structures to measure learning progress through data analysis and during instruction; these practices inform adjustments that meet students' academic needs, resulting in student progress in ELA and math.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school uses a variety of summative and formative assessments that includes results from state tests, Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) and unit tests in content areas. The analysis of assessment results has informed goals for teaching and the targeting of skills for instructional interventions with an emphasis in ELA and math. For example, this year the school identified the use of text evidence to support a position and writing in ELA and problem solving in math as areas in need of improvement for a majority of students. In addition, information from these assessments outcomes is used to measure progress for all learners.
- Teacher teams examine item analysis data from state tests and regularly look at student work in ELA and math to determine levels of student learning, identify areas of need, and adjust instruction to ensure mastery of targeted skills. For example, in response to review of student work in math, teachers determined that they would increase the use of manipulatives in math to deepen students' understanding of math concepts presented during a lesson.
- Across most classrooms there are checks for understanding such as questions, responses, share outs and student work products. Teachers make instructional adjustments based on the information to support all learners including student subgroups. For example, in one lower grade class the teacher sat with a group of students experiencing difficulty describing the similarities and differences in fabrics they were matching. The teacher guided the students to use the vocabulary words presented in the lesson such as "transparent" to describe the characteristics of the fabrics for comparison and completion of the task.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

The school leader communicates high expectations to staff and aligns professional development activities to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. School-wide communications and frequent student performance updates keep families informed of their child's development towards college and career readiness.

### **Impact**

The school's structures for communication and systems of support result in staff and families working towards a clear path of higher student achievement and college and career readiness.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The principal uses the Danielson Framework for Teaching to inform classroom instructional practices and communicates expectations to teachers and staff at professional development workshops and during individual teacher meetings. In addition, the school staff developer, along with network staff, collaborates with teachers and provides support on the expectations of the Danielson Framework for Teaching to improve classroom practices.
- The principal holds staff accountable via formal and informal observations and provides feedback through teacher observation reports and one to one conferences. Feedback to teachers included discussions on the alignment of lesson objectives to instructional activities that would ensure student learning of the lessons expected outcomes.
- In addition to parent engagement on Tuesdays, the school hosted a "Curriculum Night" event in the fall where teachers and staff shared information with families on the Common Core Learning Standards with a focus on literacy and writing across all subject areas. Furthermore, the school has established the "Parents as Learning Partners Program" to encourage reading at home.
- Parents expressed that the school staff is caring and nurturing and maintains communication with families that includes phone calls, school and grade level newsletters, one to one conferences and progress reports to keep them well informed of their child's progress in school.