



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

George Washington Carver

Elementary School K040

**265 Ralph Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11233**

Principal: Leonie Hibbert

**Date of review: May 18, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Santiago**

The School Context

George Washington Carver is an elementary school with 314 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 77% Black, 18% Hispanic, 4% Asian, 1% White, and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91.0%.

School Quality Criteria

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

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school leader consistently communicates high expectations to staff and aligns professional development activities to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Numerous school-wide communications and frequent student performance updates keep families informed as partners in their child's development.

Impact

School leaders' high expectations have led to a culture of mutual accountability. 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 regularly to teachers and staff via professional development sessions, e-mail, notices and individual teacher conferences. In addition, network support staff and the talent coach engage in ongoing collaboration with the principal and teachers and have provided training on the implementation of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the Common Core Learning Standards. Professional development workshops have included focus on Domain 3, questioning and discussion, while other sessions emphasized instructional strategies to provide support for student subgroups including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.
- School leaders hold teachers accountable to the instructional expectations through formal and informal observations with personalized verbal and written feedback for continued professional growth. Feedback to one teacher included the use of high-level questioning to generate discussion and thinking among the students while, for another teacher, the feedback addressed the use of formative data to assess the level of understanding and learning of individual students during lesson presentations and student activities.
- In addition to providing ongoing curricula and student progress information during parent sessions on Tuesdays, the school hosts numerous workshops monthly where staff shares information on the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards and assessments with families.
- Parents expressed that the school staff is caring and does whatever is necessary to ensure the students learn. School leaders and teachers maintain ongoing communication with families through phone calls, one-to-one conversations, monthly newsletters and weekly progress reports that include next steps to keep families well informed of their child's progress in school. In addition, the partnership that the school has maintained with parents through the 'Learning Leaders Program' where parents work to support the school, staff and students, also extends the learning to the home.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The school aligns pedagogy to the curricula and to reflect an articulated belief about how students learn best. However, the use of multiple entry points to promote, deep student engagement, and rich class discussion for all students was not evident in a few classrooms.

Impact

Teachers align practices to the curricula and the Danielson Framework for Teaching to implement academic supports to ensure lesson mastery. However, there are missed opportunities for all learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and special education students, 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, include opportunities for questioning and discussion and explicit teacher demonstration of expected lesson outcomes that includes scaffolds for student subgroups. For example, in one second grade social studies class, the students discussed with their partners how people in different communities make decisions about money and shared their thinking with the class. During the lesson the English as a second language (ESL) teacher worked with a group of English language learners (ELLs) to scaffold the students' understanding and learning of the lesson objective.
- In most classrooms students were observed working in groups with support from teachers and paraprofessionals and lessons included demonstrations of expected outcomes with appropriate scaffolds that included visuals and models for student subgroups. However, in a few classrooms lessons were conducted whole group with few opportunities for students to interact, discuss and share the learning with their peers. For example, in one bridge fourth and fifth grade math class students responded to the teacher's questions, copied information from the board and were all asked to complete the same exercises in their workbooks even though some students had difficulty understanding and completing the assignment.
- Although bulletin board displays in the halls and classrooms contained abundant samples of student writing and learning in content areas, in a few classrooms, samples of student work products did not reveal high-levels of thinking and learning. For example, some math work samples in a few upper grade classes reflected a completed series of math exercises in isolation of application or problem-solving contexts.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school has aligned curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and teachers use student work and data to plan and refine tasks for all learners, to promote rigor.

Impact

Teachers build coherence, with an emphasis on higher-order thinking that leads to access to the curricula for all students and promote college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers collaborate to ensure alignment of curriculum via the development of curriculum maps that include Common Core Learning Standards in all subject areas and units of study in English language arts (ELA) and math. In addition, teachers are working to refine units of study to include 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.
- Based on analysis of student work, teachers have identified questioning, discussion and writing as focus areas and plan lessons to engage all students in rigorous tasks that promote thinking. For example, some tasks planned by the teachers included analyzing and discussing character traits using text-based evidence and using perimeter to find the length and width of rectangles to solve word problems.
- Teachers plan lessons and units of study in ELA and math using summative and formative assessment outcomes that include end-of-unit tests to inform curricula decisions and plan academic tasks that engage all learners. For example, for a fifth grade math lesson, the plan asked students to graph the relationship between two numerical patterns on a coordinate grid to generate thinking and discussion among all students.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas. Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

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 toward learning objectives and gains in ELA and math.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses a range 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. In addition, information from these assessments outcomes is used to monitor progress for all learners.
- Teachers review item analysis data from State assessments, gather benchmark data and regularly examine 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.
- Across the school there are ongoing checks for understanding such as questions and responses, individual student and group share-outs, and student written assignments. Teachers use this information to make instructional adjustments that support all learners including student subgroups. For example, in an ELA fourth grade class, to determine students' understanding of the lesson objective the teacher asked the students to cite and explain how the author used details to develop character traits in a text. In a second grade math class, the teacher checked students' workbook pages on number lines and problem solving exercises to assess learning of the lesson concept. Subsequently, the teacher adjusted instruction and sat with a group of students experiencing difficulty with the assignment, reteaching the concept through demonstration of additional examples of the lesson.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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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

Inquiry-based teacher teamwork results in improved teacher capacity leading to increased student progress. Distributive leadership structures support staff collaboration and decision-making and enhance pedagogical skills to increase student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly with a focus on the implementation of the curricula and analysis of student work to plan lessons and improve instructional practices. For example, after a review of writing samples on opinion essays, fourth grade teachers noted that students demonstrated difficulty with essay structure and including sufficient evidence to support their opinion. The team discussed and planned to support the students by using more modeling, exemplars, mentor texts and graphic organizers to reinforce the learning. The team stated that following the cycle they use for looking at student work, they review revised student samples at their next meeting to determine levels of learning and progress.
- Subject area specialists from the network support teachers via sharing of information on the Danielson Framework and effective strategies for engaging students in peer and group work. In addition, teachers have taken the initiative of engaging in inter-visitations within the school and participate in visits to network and neighboring schools. Next they turnkey the information to their colleagues. One teacher stated that she now takes more time to “reflect on her practice and has improved” her teaching.
- As one of several areas of distributed leadership, teacher leaders meet with the school leaders to plan professional development opportunities informed by assessment data, classroom visits, teacher input, and to discuss growth towards improved pedagogical practice aligned with the expectations of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, based on the need to promote thinking at high levels among students, higher-order questioning, student conversations, and collaborations are areas of focus for professional development.