Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

William Floyd School of Professional Studies

Elementary School K059

211 Throop Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11206

Principal: Dawn Best

Date of review: March 16, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Steven Chernigoff

The School Context

William Floyd is an elementary school with 322 students from grade pre-k through grade 5. The school population comprises 49% Black, 48% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% American Indian or Alaskan native students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 89.7%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school…	**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	**Celebration**	**Well Developed**
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		
To what extent does the school…	**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	**Additional Findings**	**Proficient**
Systems for Improvement		
To what extent does the school…	**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:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings
The school's curricula are fully aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. School leaders and teachers utilize student work and data to plan and refine curricula and academic tasks to engage all students.

Impact
The school's curricula are coherent across grades and subject areas, and tasks consistently engage all students, including the lowest and highest-achieving, students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs).

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses the Ready Gen curriculum in English language arts in all grades (K-5), which is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. School leaders and teachers have strategically supplemented this curriculum with reading materials from ReadWorks.org, which allows them to fulfill the school's instructional focus of improving students' comprehension, and incorporate the instructional shift of reading more complex, non-fiction text. Read Works and other supplementary material allow teachers to differentiate reading assignments to students based on their reading level. The school has also created supplemental writing tasks matched to Ready Gen units to engage students and learn to write to sources. The school weaves into the curriculum social studies and science informational text in every grade. In math, the school uses Go Math and supplements it with Envision. Teachers focus on real-world problem-solving skills to improve students' math fluency and comprehension of word problems.

- Teachers use classroom data to group students into intervention groups that meet three times per week during the school-wide 50-minute intervention period at the end of the day. Every Friday during this period students are given short assessments in the reading and math content from that week which teachers use to plan intervention groups for the following week. Teachers use this data to adjust their curricula and lesson plans. In a first grade literacy lesson, the teacher planned which students would go into different centers, such as guided reading, reciprocal teaching, sentence building, computers or SMARTboard. Math intervention is on Monday, Reading is on Tuesday and Thursday is a flexible day based on what teachers feel their students need more help in. Teachers provide differentiated materials from Read Works, iReady and Reading A to Z, and math problem-solving from Envision. Teachers determine a skill of the week to focus on for both English language arts and math.

- Teachers refine their curricula and lesson plans to target high, medium and low-needs students each week and to meet those students' needs in English language arts (ELA) and math. A fourth grade teacher assigned students to different groups in a reading lesson, either for independent close reading, timed close reading or guided close reading. English language learners and students with disabilities are given supports as per their language or academic needs. In a fifth grade math lesson the teacher identified two students who would be allowed to use multiplication charts, given more time on task and who would be prompted to refer to process charts to help them monitor steps to complete the task.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
Across classes and grades, teachers engage students in activities that are aligned to the school's instructional focus of improving comprehension. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation but vary across classrooms.

Impact
Instructional practices allow students to access the curriculum, develop their language abilities and improve their comprehension skills.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers consistently incorporate practices that are tied to the school's instructional vision and aligned to the curriculum. Across subjects, teachers target students' comprehension skills. In a fourth grade ELA lesson, the students read a Read Works story and worked on finding the author's purpose. Students annotated the story as they read and answered questions. Students wrote "gist" in the margin next to the text and what they thought the gist of the text was. In a fifth grade math lesson, the teacher modeled and explained the steps of the problem and then asked students to rephrase what she said into their own words using math vocabulary. Students were able to reply, "The numerator is greater than the denominator" and "It's an improper fraction" and explain how to make it a mixed number. However, this practice is not consistent across the vast majority of classrooms. In a first grade discussion about a text, the teacher allowed a single student to give a lengthy answer, thus limiting opportunities for all students to discuss and improve their comprehension of the text.

- Across classrooms, students utilized the school-wide writing strategy of EAT (Echo the prompt, Answer the question and [provide] Text evidence). Teacher feedback in fourth and fifth grade classrooms and discussions with students indicated use of this practice. However these practices are not yet coherently integrated across the vast majority of classrooms.

- Across classrooms, in response to feedback around Danielson 3D, teachers engage students in Socratic discussions. In a fifth grade ELA lesson incorporating science content, students watched a video about different types of star clusters. Afterwards, the teacher asked, "What did we notice that is different between globular and open star clusters?" and told students to discuss it in groups. After a share out, the teacher asked the class to work in groups to formulate a theory to explain why these stars come together in the pattern they do. Students pulled from texts, the video, and discussions to support their theories. In a fourth grade math class, students worked on problems independently before explaining their thinking to their group. One student explained that three-fifths plus one-fifth equals four-fifths because he drew it and shaded in the boxes in his notebook. A young lady pointed out how the diagram in the book indicates that four-fifths of the shape is colored. However, in a third grade literacy lesson during Socratic discussions, while the students in a variety groups did echo the prompt and agreed or disagreed with their classmates, they mostly repeated what each other said and did not come up with their on ideas or specific responses. This continued when the teacher asked all the groups to share out. The teacher did not ask students to give responses in their own words or to vary their answers, thus limiting opportunities for deeper thinking and student ownership of their learning.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
The school uses common assessments to determine student progress and teachers consistently check for understanding in the classroom.

Impact
The school's assessment practices provide next steps so teachers can adjust curricula and instruction to meet students' needs, as well as consistently provide actionable feedback and opportunities for self-assessment to support student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses Ready Gen and Go Math baseline, unit and benchmark assessments to get a portrait of student skills and progress. Curricular units have pre- and post-assessments that allow teachers and administrators to track student progress and re-teach items that students need more time and instruction with. Teachers use TCIWP Running Records to obtain students' reading levels and check for improvement in September, November, January, March and June. Every teacher keeps this information in her data binder and monitors student progress throughout the year.

- The common Friday assessments give teachers frequent opportunities to assess students and adjust curricula and instruction for the following week. Teachers use that information to target student weaknesses during regular lessons as well as the school-wide intervention period. Teachers develop intervention plans and small group instruction assigned by levels of proficiency, including enrichment activities for higher-performing students. For example, in one fourth grade reading lesson, the teacher assigned a fifth grade passage to challenge the higher achieving students.

- Teachers use checks for understanding and student self-assessment in the classroom to determine students' learning and make effective adjustments to meet their needs. In a second grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math lesson, a teacher took two students that needed more help to the whiteboard at the front of the class to work with them on telling time to a quarter of an hour. The other teacher worked with a group of students on the rug and had them show her 7:30 on their clocks and then draw it on their paper. She asked the students, "Why did you do that?" and students explained their reasons. Later, the first teacher asked the whole class to give thumbs up or down if they got the right time on the Listen and Draw activity. While students discussed their answers with their partners, the first teacher went around to all the students and gave them different colored stickers on each one's hand, and then said that if you got a blue sticker you should join her on the rug. This group needed more help and the teacher worked with them. Finally, the class filled out an exit slip by drawing 6:15 on a clock and then writing it two other ways with words. In a fifth grade English language arts lesson, the teacher circulated throughout the room during Socratic discussions and took notes about student conversations. After that she said to the students, "We're going to justify our answers—what evidence did you use?" Additionally, posted student work around the school utilizes a rubric that asks students to assess their own work on the project at hand. Students in grades 3-5 gave thoughtful ideas about their own learning and progress toward goals.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff, who establish a culture for learning that gives all students an understanding of what is expected of them.

Impact
Good communication and high expectations have improved staff effectiveness and prepare students for college and career and the next level of schooling.

Supporting Evidence

- The staff handbook, signs around the building, memoranda, frequent reminders at meetings and feedback to teachers all serve to communicate high expectations to staff, which currently has a 97% attendance rate. Detailed feedback from administrators on Advance observation reports and in discussions have helped teachers improve their level of effectiveness from last year on individual components. Administrators give time-bound feedback and then expect to see teachers implement their suggestions the next time they visit, within 2-3 weeks, and reference whether or not they do. Additionally, professional development is provided to teachers based on observations and a menu of what teachers feel they themselves need to improve their practice. Currently, 20% of teachers have improved on the Advance ratings from last year.

- The school's focus on comprehension, as well as writing and speaking skills, prepare students for college and career and the next level of their education. Students keep portfolios of their work and bring them to their next grade each year, allowing them to see the continuum of education across grades and remember what they learn from year to year. Teachers expect students to bring those portfolios and to come prepared for their classes each September. In the spring, teachers take their class to visit a class in the next grade level, allowing students to learn the expectations for that grade even before they enter. This prepares students for the work required and the level of maturity they need to succeed.

- College trips for fifth grade students to the University of Delaware, University of Maryland and Howard University prepare students for college and career. The school's I Have a Dream Series brings guest speakers from different professions to the school to discuss what their profession entails and how to enter that career path. In the Quote of the Day, the school instills its six character pillars from the program Character Counts, which are posted throughout the school, to remind students of the kind of behavior the school expects them to engage in. After-school activities such as chess, Junior Journalists (taught by the principal), STEM Aware Robotics, support students socially and emotionally.

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

Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations, which have distributed leadership practices in place.

Impact
Professional collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and implementation of the instructional shifts, which give teachers a voice in school decision-making and strengthen teacher practice.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers participate in inquiry teams and grade-level teams. Two vertical inquiry teams meet every Monday during the afternoon 80-minute time. Grade-level teams meet every Tuesday during the after-school time and have common prep periods every day. Additionally, teachers on all teams remain in frequent, informal contact with each other throughout the week, by email and phone, to follow up with items and issues that they discussed at their meeting and which they hope to see in their classrooms. These professional collaborations focus on the school goals of improving students' comprehension and writing skills, as well as implementing the shifts of the common core learning standards.

- In teams, teachers review their curricular units and lesson plans and analyze student data to determine what adjustments they need to make. One inquiry team used the protocol looking at student work to determine whether students were citing textual evidence to support their answers and using transitions in their writing, as the team had previously discussed. The team decided that the students whose work they were reviewing needed a graphic organizer to help them structure their essays better. This team also came up with the EAT method (Echo the prompt, Answer the question and [provide] Text evidence) to improve student comprehension of text and improve their writing. Teachers throughout the school share their best practices with each other to improve student outcomes. Teams also set up intervisitations so that teachers observe each other's classrooms on a regular basis.

- Each inquiry team has a teacher leader and there are grade team leaders as well. These teacher leaders represent their teams on the instructional cabinet, disseminate information and materials and serve as the point person to administration. School administrators provide training to these teacher leaders throughout the year so that they feel comfortable and supported in their role. The majority of teachers reviewed all curricula before the school adopted them and discussed with administrators which one the school should use in English language arts and math. Teachers report being surveyed frequently for their opinion about various items in the school, such as which curricula to use and the type of professional development they feel they need.