

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Waverly School of the Arts

Elementary School K156

**104 Sutter Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11212**

Principal: Beverly Logan

**Date of review: January 22, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Mauriciere de Govia**

The School Context

The Waverly School for the Arts, 23K156 is an elementary school with 784 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 78% Black, 20% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% other students. The student body includes 3% English Language Learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90.5%.

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	Additional Findings	Proficient
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	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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

Findings

Teachers are consistently engaged in structured professional collaborations focused on analyzing assessment data and students' work.

Impact

The schools' teacher teaming practices have strengthened the instructional capacity of the teachers in executing common core aligned lessons that are anchored in assessment data and students' work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal stated, "We have a very collaborative school...the teachers work together to make sure that instruction is aligned and coherent." A review of the schedules revealed that all teachers engage in weekly team meetings by grade and that group specific teams meet regularly including one dedicated to improving the instructional practices that impact Students with disabilities. There is also a study group that meets to discuss strategies to impact small group instruction. Common meeting time is planned into the master schedule to provide a structure for professional collaborations. Teacher leaders serve as liaisons sharing information between teachers and supervisors. Administrators also participate on teacher teams as members guiding the process. A review of agendas, minutes, and observations of the teacher teams confirmed the regularity of teachers meeting and their discussion about students' work. Minutes chronicle the focus of the meeting, the attendees, the agendas, review of the last minutes, meeting notes, and next steps. Lastly, teachers shared that they have many "...informal and unscheduled conversations during lunch and after work hours to discuss instruction, students, and assessments."
- A review of the minutes revealed that teachers consistently use protocols as a practice to review assessment data and students' work. The process observed with a grade teacher team was that a teacher shared a piece of student's writing along with the expectations of the lesson plan and then solicited feedback from the teacher team members about what the student is able to do and what are the needed areas of improvement. The teachers stated during the feedback portion that the student knows "...how to do an introduction...uses descriptive details...as a suggestion use a rubric and check list...have the student read aloud to check for errors."
- Another teacher team observed used a similar process described above via *The Teacher Reflection Sheet* that is a graphic organizer that captures "student seems to know/or able to do", "students seems to struggle with", "teaching implications", and "questions/concerns and/or next steps". The latter aspect indicated the impact on instruction for the sharing teacher's lesson plan as the teachers giving feedback suggestions included, "Give the students more planning time...use a graphic organizer...put the goal on the student's desks, in this case analyze text and cite evidence when constructing a written response." During this portion the teacher who shared the student's work took notes and confirmed how she would incorporate their feedback into the next lesson.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The classrooms reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best as informed by the Danielson Framework and provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

As a result of the school's beliefs about learning, all learners including English language learners and students with disabilities are engaged in differentiated groups and tasks to enable them to demonstrate higher order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal stated, "The school's instructional focus is for scholars in grades K-5 to receive differentiated, small group instruction, based on informal and formal data in order to improve academic performance and show growth in targeted English language arts areas that are defined by students' work products and assessments...we want to see 3d on the Danielson rubric improve." Furthermore, she believes, "All children can learn...questioning moves students to the next level...teachers need to be prepared with materials...technology needs to assist in the lesson...students have a voice and it should be counted...the classroom environment needs to be supportive and available to students at all times... paraprofessionals are a part of teaching and learning." This instructional focus and belief system was evident across classrooms. In a 2nd grade integrated collaborative teaching class, students were engaged in the learning objective "To understand how text and illustrations work together to describe a story setting." The teacher projected the book under a document reader and asked questions such as "What are the water buffalo to the Native Americans?" "Why were the people moving the California?" "Who disagrees?" These questions prompted turn and talks where the teachers held the students accountable to answer the questions by encouraging the use talking prompts such as "I agree with..." and "If you look at the picture..." In addition, a group of students used *MYON*, an online independent reading program, with the assistance of a paraprofessional.
- In a self-contained special education class the teacher provided anchor charts, math manipulatives, chart paper and markers while continuously assessing the students' learning via questioning, conferences, and a mid-lesson redirection. The paraprofessionals in this classroom were working with groups of students to accomplish the given task.
- In a small pullout group for English language arts instruction on big machines, the teacher used technology to show students the definition of words in action. The program used stated, "This is the job of a crane." Following this statement the video showed what the crane does. The teachers also provided opportunities for the students to work in pairs and groups that were comprised according to their needs. Students were encouraged to speak in their native language in order to make connections to English when they struggled to find the appropriate English words.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	------------------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

School leaders and staff consistently communicate high expectations to the parents and students that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

School leaders' high expectations result in staff awareness of school-wide instructional expectations. Parents receive information that helps them understand their children's academic progress and students receive supports that prepare them for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- There are numerous systems, structures, and opportunities for communication that share the expectation for college and career readiness to all stakeholders. *Waverly Connection* is a monthly newsletter for staff that provides inspirational quotes, instructional guidance such as lesson planning essentials and the importance of modeling, and suggestions on ways to monitor attendance. There is a monthly calendar of events such as *Come Read With Me*, a school created program in the early grades where parents have the opportunity to come and read to their child and/or child's class. Following this event, there are workshops where agendas showed opportunities for parents to learn about literacy assessments, state tests, and family development. *Tea with the Principal* is another way for parents to meet with the principal to share ideas, concerns, questions, and to deliver feedback about school events, expectations, and teaching and learning. Support materials such as *Parents Guide to Common Core Standards* and *Homework Tips and Test taking Strategies* and a Parent Handbook are shared. Additionally, the school uses *School Messenger*, a phone blast system, to alert families about school events, students' attendance, PTA meetings and students' participation in extra-curricular activities.
- The principal stated "It is expected that our students will become productive citizens of our world." In order to accomplish this goal, the school is in the process of becoming a Community School in partnership with the United Federation of Teachers. The principal views this as opportunity to "...teach the whole child and engage the community at large in school life...ensuring a path to college and career success." There is a Community Coordinator who along with school leadership, teachers, and parents has been building partnerships that to offer medical, mental health, academic support, parent and family support and community engagement programs for the school community.
- Parents confirmed that the school consistently communicates high expectations for their children as the counselor, teachers, and PTA make them aware of their child's progress and how to support their child's learning. A contracted organization provides professional development for teachers and works with students in the development of college and career skills. The school provides programs such as *Intensive Phonics/Beginning Reading Afterschool Program* for struggling readers. This program goal is to ensure students' preparedness for reading at expected levels prior to grade promotion. Also, 5th graders and their parents work with the guidance counselor through middle school selection including meeting middle school principals, reviewing the application, and school visits.

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

The curriculum is aligned to the Common Core State Standards, integrates the instructional shifts, and provides rigorous tasks that incorporate higher order thinking.

Impact

The curricula practices at the school promote college and career readiness by emphasizing rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all students including English language learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal stated that, “It’s important that students have similar experiences across classrooms... we implemented the Common Core Learning Standards through the adoption of ReadyGen (for English Language Arts instruction), Go Math, (for math instruction) and the creation of Common Core aligned lesson plans that emphasize the instructional shifts of annotating and citing evidence from text...our curriculum is the foundation for our students’ college and career readiness.” Further fostering aspects of instructional coherence is the evidence of school-wide scope and sequence in the units of study for English language arts, math, science, social studies, physical education and the visual arts and dance across the grades. A review of the math scope and sequence indicates that teachers describe the units, surface the standards that each covers, lists a time frame for teaching, and lists a percentage of how much of that unit is the entire curriculum. The latter impacts pacing and time dedicated to teaching that unit of study. In conjunction with the scope and sequence, teachers also have pacing guides that are modified during planning and updated as assessments provide new information.
- A review of lesson plans indicates that the teachers follow units of study from Ready Gen, Go Math, and supplemental materials to reinforce the Common Core State Standards in their teaching. Across the grades teachers also use the suggested lesson plan format from Ready Gen supplemented with their own notes about the lesson. The Ready Gen lesson format surfaces essential questions, the lesson objective, the reading objective, what occurs during the first, second, and third reading of the text, naming the guided reading teaching in small groups, and explaining the writing teaching. Furthermore, teachers plan vocabulary instruction and plan math drills indicating that they incorporate the instructional shifts into their planning.
- Lesson plans indicate a use of Depth of Knowledge. Teachers plan higher order thinking and open-ended questions such as “Tell me what you see in the picture. Describe the homes you see in the picture. How are they alike? How are they different?” Teachers also use Universal Design for Learning when planning modifications for students’ with disabilities and English language learners. For example, lesson plans indicated that teachers pair students who struggle with students who understand the concept and provide additional tools such as the use of technology, supplemental readers, and math manipulatives to aid students in accessing the lesson.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use common assessments, rubrics, and the school-wide grading policy to provide actionable feedback to parents and students.

Impact

As a result of the schools' assessment practices, teachers adjust curricula, instruction, and school-wide opportunities to impact students' progress and achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- The school-wide grading policy is evident and shared with teachers and families via the faculty and parent handbook. A review of progress reports indicated that teachers accurately employ the grading policy as it stipulated. Parents confirmed that their children receive homework, tests, feedback, and progress reports as a routine part of learning. These expectations are incorporated into the grading policy. Progress reports are sent to parents to update them in between report cards and track academic and behavioral skills, and reading levels, and offer teacher comments. Furthermore, a review of student work products revealed consistent use of student friendly rubrics that the students confirmed are a part of their assignments, especially in writing. The rubrics range from levels 1 to 4 with images that support each level along with bulleted characteristics such as "Well organized and sequential." "Good sentence variety and transitional word usage." And "Little to no details."
- The principal stated that, " Students are informally and formally assessed through various tools that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards." A review of assessments and students' data revealed that there are multiple sources of data available to school leaders and teachers to track students' performance. School-wide common assessments include Fountas and Pinnell to track reading levels. In grades K-2, DIBELS is used to track reading performance. Ready Gen performance based assessments is used across the grades to assess students' learning in units. Teachers use Go Math pre-, mid-, and post- assessments to determine students' performance in math units, and benchmark assessments for English language arts and math are applied along with performance series in grades 3-5 to track and prepare students for the state exams. Additionally, there was evidence of teacher made assessments across the content areas including an art portfolio, teacher made chapter tests in science and social studies, and authentic writing pieces.
- Data that is pulled from assessments is used to adjust flexible groups for small group instruction as well as to provide academic support via at risk SETTTS, extended day, Saturday school, morning programs and pull out groups with team leaders. An example of this is that DIBELS data created the *Intensive Program* afterschool for K-2 students who struggle with phonics. Another example is that the Fountas and Pinnell data influenced a new direction for more opportunities for independent reading in the schedule. Teachers extended the amount of time for independent reading in classrooms daily, and the school purchased more independent reading books to accommodate the reading levels of students in the school.