



# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Vince Lombardi School**

**Elementary School K204**

**8101 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11228**

**Principal: Nancy Tomasuolo**

**Date of review: April 17 , 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Karina Costantino**

## The School Context

Vince Lombardi School is an elementary school with 1,181 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 0% Black, 18% Hispanic, 37% White, and 44% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 15% 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 96.0%.

## 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>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers design and use assessments, rubrics and grading policies aligned with the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress towards goals across grades and subjects, track progress, and adjust curricular and instructional decisions.

### Impact

School assessments provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement across grades and subjects. The school strategically makes adjustments to meet all students' learning needs, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities to ensure there is a clear portrait of student mastery.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school created an additional literacy assessment that calls on students to apply what they have learned in ReadyGEN to outside applications. Teachers in grades 3-5 create two assessments for each ReadyGEN unit. One assessment uses the ReadyGEN text they read while the second assessment uses an unfamiliar text requiring students to answer text-dependent questions applying the skills taught in the unit. Using these assessments, teachers gather and analyze data related to students' abilities to closely read high-level texts and answer text-dependent questions. Student self-assessments were seen on bulletin boards both inside and outside of the classroom in the hallways. In writing, students use a rubric and/or checklist to self-assess by indicating a "glow" and a "grow" what they did well and what they need to improve upon, respectively. In math, students self-assess the efficiency of the self-selected strategy and accuracy to solve the problem.
- School practice in developing Common Core-aligned assessments, rubrics, checklists, protocols and grading policies are consistent and cohesive across grades and subjects. Rubrics and tasks are written in student-friendly language that is easy to understand, color-coded or adorned with visuals based on difficulty level and purpose. In grade 2, red, yellow and green stickers indicate tasks growing in difficulty and provide students with the ability to choose the appropriate challenge level. These assessments were seen in the majority of classrooms. In a math classroom, a third grader shared that the perimeter academic checklist chart was his "favorite" and stated that he uses it "every day."
- Teachers meet at least once per week to look at student work and to gauge the effectiveness of reading, writing and math instruction. As a result, instruction and assessments are realigned on an ongoing basis to meet students' needs and promote student ownership of learning and growth. Teachers meet to discuss Item Skills Analysis and to identify ways to modify instruction to support students in identified areas of weakness. A review of data revealed that students with disabilities were struggling with supporting claims and refuting counterclaims using textual evidence. Teachers created units of study which emphasized mini-lessons on counterclaim, designed additional graphic organizers to support the identification of textual evidence and provided counterargument sentence starters to augment the curriculum. Data from Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) assessments reveal an uptick in students with disability performance in using textual evidence and writing counterarguments in grades 3-5 and note that students are employing the strategies in non-English language arts class essays.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks for all students.

### Impact

The school's use of engaging and rigorous curricula for all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, results in consistent instruction, where students demonstrate their thinking across grades and subject areas while promoting college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school's curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. It uses GoMath! and a blended model of ReadyGEN in general education and Integrated Co-teaching (ICT) classes. The school uses GoMath, Spire and "Good Habits Great Readers" in 12:1:1 classes for students with special needs. The principal directed grade k-2 teachers to spend less time teaching ReadyGEN-style lessons and more time teaching using a "Reading Workshop" model incorporating a daily skill-by-strategy mini lesson followed by guided or independent reading. Preliminary English language arts (ELA) data shows an uptick in student performance on Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) assessments.
- In an effort to adequately address the unique, skill levels and instructional needs of the schools 12:1:1 student population who are typically performing two or more years below grade level, teachers use Spire, a multisensory decoding and encoding program designed to remediate reading difficulties through fundamental phonics skills. Additionally, the school uses "Good Habits Great Readers", a balanced literacy approach to reading and writing that includes skill-by-strategy instruction, shared reading, guided reading, and process writing.
- Adapted tasks and scaffolds for ELLs and students with disabilities were seen in the majority of lessons that plan for activities to include visual cues, total physical response, teacher-created graphic organizers and strategies to pre-teach vocabulary. ELLs and students with disabilities receive supports and scaffolds to bolster their thinking. Graphic organizers, picture cues, specific challenging vocabulary words and notes for flexible groupings were seen in most lesson and unit plans.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

School leaders consistently emphasize a culture of learning that communicates high expectations, provide training. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness.

### Impact

High expectations result in a culture of mutual accountability, collaboration, and buy-in on the part of teachers, leaders, and families, thus creating an atmosphere conducive to the developmental needs of all students. School leaders successively partner with families to support student independence, progress of learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school's instructional focus is assessment in instruction. Advance data revealed that teachers struggled with checks for understanding and the school responded by creating a professional learning committee consisting of administrators and teachers to design and lead professional learning opportunities on both formative and summative assessments. Ongoing professional learning for teachers by teachers and school leaders in these areas and feedback via surveys occur at least once per week resulting in a culture of mutual accountability. As a result, current Advance data shows that 83% of teachers are scoring effective or highly effective in component "3d: Assessment in Instruction" and 79% of teachers are scoring effective or highly effective in component "3c: Engaging Students in Learning".
- The Professional Development team is comprised of administration, coaches and teacher leaders and meets weekly to discuss professional learning opportunities for staff. Measures of Teaching Practice (MOTP) scores from Advance and data from teacher surveys are used to design individual teacher professional learning goals which serve as a catalyst for professional growth. For example, after providing professional development about how to use formative assessments to drive instructional adjustments, teachers reviewed lesson plans and identified places where they could implement assessment techniques. Once the cycle is completed, teachers make instructional and professional development adjustments based on need.
- Teacher class web pages and the school's eChalk website keeps families informed of curriculum, tasks and unit projects. Important events, student celebrations, key readings/problems, and homework assignments were found on the school's website and are used to enhance family knowledge of the school's ethos. Additionally, text messages are sent to the school community to apprise families of important information swiftly. By keeping families informed, the school has prepared families to extend the learning at home and leverage families to become grounded stakeholders and partners in student learning.

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

Teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points.

### **Impact**

Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. Students, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- In grade 5, students use an interactive notebook in which they review each ReadyGEN lesson, determine the focus by narrowing it down to a single skill and strategy, and then plan an “input” of notes. Students are provided with choice in deciding how to organize or represent the input, visually using color and graphic representations. Students are then assigned an “output” where they complete a task using various graphic organizers or writing a response to text-dependent questions. Due to the inclusion of choice and the increase of time spent framing the input, students take ownership of their task through their unique choices. Curricular tasks for specific groups were seen in the majority of classrooms as were additional supports including graphic organizers, SMARTboards and calculators.
- In the majority of classrooms, students were placed in pre-selected groups for Guided Reading and skill-based teams known as “Strategy Groups” or flexible groups. Students in flexible groups worked on tiered activities with unique scaffolds and resources including graphic organizers thus providing multiple entry points in the majority of classes visited. For example, in a grade 4 English language arts class, students in one of three tiered groups read one of three non-fiction articles and cited textual evidence using unique graphic organizers. In a grade 3 math class, students worked on multi-step word problems in triads, with tiered tasks by difficulty. Similarly in a grade 2 class, students were pulled to a small group setting to engage in guided reading.
- Teachers in the fifth grade used the questions students answered incorrectly on their pre-assessment as an exit slip at the end of each lesson to determine growth. For the exit slip in a fifth grade math class, students solved word problems involving addition and subtraction of fractions referring to the same whole, including cases of unlike denominators.

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

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based structured professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and promote the achievement of the school's goals and the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams systematically analyze assessment data and student work to adjust curricula and instruction.

### Impact

Structured professional collaborations result in school-wide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners. Teacher teamwork results in shared improvements in teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers serve on teacher teams devoted to inquiry and the analysis of data that lead to adaptations and refinement to curricula to foster improvements in instructional practice. Teams meet at least two times per week to engage in six-week inquiry cycles, adapt curricular resources, including tasks and rubrics, and engage in student data analysis. For example, student assessment data including on-demand writing prompts illuminated that students struggled in foundational writing across grades and subjects. Due to this data analysis, English language arts teachers aligned their lesson plans to incorporate mini-lessons that focus on counterclaims in an argumentative essay, and supports student with counter-argument sentence starters and outline templates/graphic organizers that compare claims and counterclaims.
- Teacher teams create assessments, tasks, rubrics, protocols and curricular adaptations and extensions for all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities. Teams share resources online via a Google Drive online platform to share ideas, resources and student data so that all teachers may make informed decisions on curricular and pedagogical adaptations.
- Grades 3-5 have redesigned the writing program revising the writing lessons using a backward design approach. To that end, teachers review the performance based assessments and determine what lessons need to be taught to prepare students to successfully complete the task. They connect those lessons with Teacher's College-type instruction that includes teaching skills-by-strategies and taking students through the writing process. Preliminary performance data in writing on MOSL assessments increased by 15% for students with disabilities.
- Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of instruction and note implications and revise curricula to better meet the needs of all students including those with disabilities and ELLs. For example, fifth grade teams noted that subgroups struggled with academic vocabulary. Teachers created vocabulary based activities including in writing. For example, data showed that second grade students were having difficulty with keeping their audience in mind when writing. So they created additional units of study that focused on author's voice and point of view and now preliminary data on classroom assessments show student with disability progress toward mastery. Additionally, by using trait-based rubrics, teachers are able to take note of the specific writing traits in which students struggled so that they can specifically hone in on those areas in the next unit.