



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Weeksville School

Elementary School K243

**1580 Dean Street
Brooklyn
NY 11213**

Principal: Karen Hambright-Glover

**Date of review: May 5, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Teresa Caccavale**

The School Context

The Weeksville School is an elementary school with 260 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 75% Black, 19% Hispanic, 0% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90.7%.

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	Additional Findings	Developing
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	Celebration	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	Focus	Developing

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Teachers use and create a variety of assessments and rubrics aligned with the school's curricula. Progress monitoring data informs the school of students' progress towards goals.

Impact

The school has systems to monitor progress through data analysis in order to provide feedback to students and guide adjustments in units and lessons to meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- i-Ready and Fountas & Pinnell interim assessments are used to track and monitor progress of student reading level growth, inform student groupings during guided reading in the lower grades and book clubs in the upper grades, and to monitor the effectiveness of i-Ready instructional programs in math and English language arts (ELA).
- The school has established the Weeksville Intervention Team (WIT) that targets individual students across grades and classes who are close to achieving proficient in ELA and/or math. Through the analysis of State exam data and baseline assessments, WIT protocols focus on an analysis of these students in order to make adjustments to instruction during a particular unit. Specifically, the school has incorporated web-based differentiated resources to provide individualized interventions and supports for all students, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.
- The WIT tracks student progress in relation to the Common Core Learning Standards, placing an emphasis on unit summative assessments in the ReadyGEN, GO Math!, and i-Ready curricula. This work is evidenced in tracking sheets and the impact of this work this year is seen in tiered student groupings based on summative assessment and reading level data, interventions in i-Ready ELA and math during cluster classes, scaffolded tasks for tiered groupings with differentiated support, and focus on questioning and discussion techniques across classrooms.
- During classroom visitations, teachers were observed using conference notes to monitor student understanding, thereby collecting formative assessment data. During the teacher team meeting teachers shared that they use their conference notes to assess trends within the class as well as hold students accountable for the substance of their conferences with their teacher.
- School staff is engaged in professional learning, centered on the assessment of rigor levels of performance tasks as measured by the Hess Cognitive Rigor Matrix, and making necessary adjustments to ensure that all students are engaged in rigorous tasks and higher-order thinking during units of study. The staff is also focusing on providing students with targeted feedback on Common Core Learning Standards-aligned summative assessments including next steps for student growth. Staff engaged in professional learning around strategies and identifiable features for targeted feedback based on rubric criteria, and the impact of this work is seen on performance task rubrics, which include sections for both teacher feedback based on rubric criteria and student self-assessment.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The majority of teachers engage in content area professional collaborations that promote the implementation of Common Core, instructional shifts and alignment of practice to the school's instructional goals. A distributive leadership is emerging.

Impact

Teacher team collaboration is working to define protocols for instructional coherence, allowing for the sharing of best practices and the promoting of curriculum alignment. Although the work of teacher teams has improved teacher capacity, it has not yet improved student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has embedded several teacher-team structures. These structures include weekly grade-level team meetings, monthly Core Team meetings, weekly meetings with coaches, and weekly meetings with school leaders. The use of an inquiry approach is developing across the teams as teachers are just starting to review students' data and work products to strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers and align teaching practices to the schools' goals and instructional shifts.
- The principal noted that teacher leadership is developing through the Principal's Core Team that consists of the two teachers from each grade band, a child study team, a special education teacher, an English as a second language teacher and an assistant principal. They meet monthly to develop a system of checkpoints to measure progress toward school-wide interim and long-term goals in order to adjust instruction and improve student performance. As a result, structures are developing to improve alignment of assessment practices, including ongoing checks for understanding, determining student progress towards goals, and providing effective feedback to students about their work.
- Grade band teams are divided into pre-kindergarten through 2nd grade, and third grade through 5th grade. Core Team members facilitate weekly professional development cycles: the first cycle focused on highly effective teaching strategies, resulting in classroom charts and the development of rigorous summative tasks; the second cycle focused on rigorous task design and sequencing scaffolded instruction leading up to the task, and the third cycle focused on task and instructional differentiation to provide further entry points and access for all students. Additionally, teacher teams are just beginning to analyze summative task assessment data to make pacing calendar adjustments, learning target adjustments, and adjust student tiered groupings thereby limiting progress of students.
- Teacher teams have placed an emphasis on the development and incorporation of exemplars and modeling in instruction in order to provide a common access point for all students and a clear understanding of the features of grade level work products. As this work is developing, teachers are just beginning to use summative task exemplars from curriculum to model instruction to students through a comparison of work samples, consequential providing limited feedback to students regarding their achievement.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations to staff and have a system of accountability for instructional expectations. School leaders also communicate high expectations to families that connect to a path of college and career readiness.

Impact

Systems of communication, feedback and accountability support the school's high expectations for all member of the learning community. Families receive ongoing information on student progress that helps them understand school-wide expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Non-negotiable instructional expectations are communicated to staff through their handbook and ongoing to parents through monthly meetings, school-based parent workshops, School Messenger, an online system that communication to parents through many different digital methods including voicemail, texting, e-mail, social media, and the school website. They also communicate through backpack letters, the school website and the school calendar. Additional structures for sharing high expectations include cabinet meetings, faculty conferences and grade level meetings, all of which align to the school focus areas for this year including the School Comprehensive Education Plan goals. Instructional expectations are tracked through interim reports and monthly school notes to parents.
- Frequent classroom observations, feedback from classroom visits, reviews of lesson plans, and regular staff newsletters reinforce school-wide professional expectations to all staff. Additionally, feedback from supervisors following classroom visits promotes accountability for the expectations of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, observation reports and lesson snapshots promote teacher accountability in fostering high levels of student performance, in alignment with the expectations of the Danielson Framework.
- The school has systems in place that clearly communicate high expectations for school culture, as evidenced by posters highlighting positive behavior in all school areas and special student events rewarding student achievement and improvement for academics, behavior, and attendance. The creation of the school store and "tickets" for special events provides students with real-world experience in economics and the impact of choices on their ability to participate in the rewards available. Students earn their rewards through a transparent system of high expectations for all members of the community.
- Last October the assistant principal facilitated a parent focus group to identify parent engagement strategies that would strengthen partnerships with families that support college and career readiness. The work of the focus group resulted in a school wide action plan focusing on positive parent outreach to ensure that all staff members contact families, noting mostly positive growth and accomplishments of all students, as evidenced in parent outreach binder logs.

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, including the instructional shifts and content standards, and make purposeful decisions to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

All students have access to Common Core-aligned curricula and tasks that consistently require them to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills and rigorous habits across grades and subjects, including English language learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty have structures in place to facilitate the full implementation of ReadyGEN, GO Math! and i-Ready Common Core-aligned curricula. A focal point of this implementation has been the pacing out of lessons in each unit, adjusting learning targets to ensure clarity of daily student outcomes and understandings, as well as the development and refinements of exemplars to clearly communicate expectations to students and to serve as models during instruction. Furthermore, unit plans reviewed illustrate multiple designs of academic tasks with numerous scaffolds and entry points for students including tiered academic vocabulary, multi-level problems in math, assorted graphic organizers and text-based responses.
- Teacher teams have made purposeful adjustments to the ReadyGEN curricula to emphasize writing development, specifically the use of mid-unit assessments as the primary summative task in a ReadyGEN unit of study, thereby building school wide coherence in pacing calendars, student work products on bulletin boards and student portfolios as well as summative assessment tracking sheets.
- In social studies and science, teachers have incorporated the Common Core and instructional shifts in reading and writing. This is evidenced in the text sets available in social studies and science classes, the incorporation of book clubs and research-based inquiry, and performance task design modeled after New York City Performance Assessments, which include text based research and argument writing, with a focus on drawing evidence from multiple sources. Furthermore, these text sets meet the needs of the various reading levels within in the class and students are provided with choice when reading about a particular topic. Teachers have made refinements to these tasks to provide all students with access to the Common Core, including leveraging student choice and emphasizing principles of effort and perseverance through all stages of the process.
- Pre-kindergarten teachers have focused work on incorporating thematic unit foci into classroom centers, in order to address the expectations of sustained effort and perseverance to child-centered play. Staff explained that each center is introduced at the beginning of each unit with specific activities connected to the theme modeled for students. Students are assessed and coached based on observations of their growth in both staying in centers for longer periods of time, as well as the degree to which they are able to engage in the activities.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classroom, instructional practices do not regularly incorporate effective questioning strategies and scaffolds to provide multiple entry points and student discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Inconsistent use of effective questioning, appropriate instructional scaffolds and discussion techniques limits student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- In some classrooms students participated in small group activities. For example, in one upper grade Integrated Co-Teaching class, during a social studies lesson exploring longitude and latitude students worked in partnerships to take turns reading and then worked with their partner answering low-level questions and activities while the teachers worked alongside the most struggling learners. However, these groups lacked rigor and did not meet the needs of the lowest- or highest-level learners. It was observed that as groups completed their tasks they waited for teacher direction before moving on, thereby being more compliant than engaged and limiting student independent work time.
- Across classrooms visited several of the lessons were teacher-centered and students responded to teacher-generated oral questions with dialogue being teacher-student-teacher during full-class discussions. In most classrooms, students were not engaged in peer-to-peer or full-class discussions, and students were not observed generating their own questions or responding directly to their peers. Furthermore, many questions were only at the recall level.
- In a few classrooms, students participated in group activities that were differentiated and included multiple levels of support from teachers and other school staff. For example, in a second grade Integrated Co-Teaching class students were observed working in three guided practice groups whereby one teacher facilitated a group of mid-level students reading a Magic Tree House fiction text and student were independently reading and writing chapter summaries. Another teacher worked with struggling students to identify nonfiction text feature definitions and engage in a scavenger hunt to find the features while the English as a second language teacher worked with a small group to review contractions. Similarly, in a third grade math class students were observed working in differentiated groups partitioning shapes into parts with equal areas while expressing the area as a unit fraction of the whole. The teacher was observed guiding students as students worked with pattern block manipulatives to determine the number of shapes with the total number of triangles that cover the original shape. Furthermore, several students were able to explain that you can write the “1” as a numerator and the total number of triangles as the denominator.