Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Lew Wallace School

23K284

213 Osborn Street
Brooklyn
NY 11212

Principal: Keva Pitts

Date of review: January 14, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Mauricière de Govia

The School Context

The Lew Wallace School is a Pre K-8 school with 577 students from grade Pre K through grade 8. The school population comprises 66% Black, 32% Hispanic, 1% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 28% 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 88%.

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	**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		
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	**Celebration**	**Proficient**

Area of Celebration

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

Findings
Teachers are engaged in structured inquiry-based professional collaborations to analyze assessment data, to promote implementation of CCLS and to look at student work in order to meet student achievement goals.

Impact
The teachers' professional collaboration results in curriculum that is based on the assessed specified needs of learners and yields progress towards students' achieving their academic goals.

Supporting Evidence

- School-wide teacher teams are scheduled to participate in inquiry cycles 1-2 times a week for the purpose of supporting student achievement. Throughout the school, teams follow a cycle that engages teachers in unpacking units of study for differentiation by incorporating Universal Design for Learning, the instructional shifts, considerations for students with disabilities, and meeting the needs of English Language Learners. There is evidence of this work in teachers' lesson plans, which were observed being drafted and revised during teacher meetings.

- A teacher team was observed using the "Tuning Protocol" to assess a student's work from a task from the Ready Gen curriculum. The presenting teacher provided a sample of a student's work for review. Her colleagues provided warm and cool feedback including, "I notice that the student uses temporal words…The student knows how to indent…There is clear paragraph usage…He understands dialogue and description…He spoke with feeling…He didn't introduce the characters…He needs to use more sensory details." The teachers then guided the conversation to next steps for instruction that included modeling a writing piece that was aligned to the rubric and conducting a conference with student to enhance the details of his writing.

- A teacher team was observed reviewing a student's math data to determine mainstreaming possibilities out of a full time self-contained Special Education class. Using the data as evidence, the teacher advocated for the student to be placed in a general education class for math with the use of supporting modifications. Additionally, the teacher team was observed reviewing previous mainstreaming practices that worked for other students to develop a plan of action which included conducting an assessment for the student, determining his current reading level, giving him a buddy student for the transition, and engaging his parents in a conversation about the classification shift.

- Both teacher teams were observed using a graphic organizer entitled "Teacher Team Meeting Log" that memorializes the meeting work of the team, staff in attendance, findings and outcomes, next steps and a timeframe for execution. This document is shared with the administrators as it provides guidance for the teams' next agenda, future lessons, assessments, and the next week's intervisitations among the teachers.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
There is consistent use of pedagogy that provides students with multiple entry points into the curricula so that students are engaged in challenging tasks and producing meaningful work products. High level thinking discussions and questioning techniques were inconsistently provided.

Impact
Across classrooms students engaged with differentiated tasks and varied opportunities for learning. However, they are inconsistently engaged in discussions and questioning techniques that yield higher order thinking and active participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers classrooms are print rich environments, equipped with technology and subject area specific tools where students are engaged in learning via multiple entry points. For example in a 2nd grade class, students were observed using math cubes to solve subtraction problems. In a science class, the teacher had the students watch a video, use differentiated graphic organizers on chart paper for group work, and provided level appropriate tasks to support the English Language Learners in the class.

- Across classrooms, teachers consistently use classroom management techniques to engage all learners. For example, it was observed in several classrooms that teachers use hand clapping, popsicle sticks with students' names, and call and response techniques such as "1, 2, 3 all eyes on me." "1, 2 all eyes on you." to gain students' attention. Students used signal cards of "I'm ready to share" or "I'm still thinking" to answer questions and share ideas, and student groups where given task cards as well as assigned roles to accomplish tasks.

- The Special Education classes provided rigorous opportunities for students to engage in learning and the expected tasks. In one class, the teacher employed the use of technology to play games to check for understanding. The students used the SMART board to play an algebraic expression game in teams where they had to collaborate to figure out the correct answer. Students used the word wall and talking stems provided. In a grade 2 Special Education class the teacher and the paraprofessional worked with differentiated groups to accomplish varied tasks that were anchored in writing with differentiated graphic organizers.

- Opportunities for discussion were inconsistent across classrooms. In a 2nd grade class, the teacher provided the opportunity for the students to turn and talk, but only 2 pairs of students actively engaged in the conversation. On the contrary, in a Kindergarten classroom students were given multiple opportunities to discuss the text with partners and the whole class. Students said, "You need to use your response card…I agree with Anthony…I think it's about animals and people in a pond." Also, the use of talking stems such as "I agree…" and "You should consider…" were posted on the desks of students in some classrooms, as were "accountable talk" signs. Teachers in a 5th grade class had students use a microphone when talking and sharing their observations about the place value of decimals, whereas in other classes students gave inaudible responses and the teachers either repeated it or moved on.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
School leaders and faculty aligned curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and made strategic decisions to emphasize key standards in the units so that all students are cognitively engaged.

Impact
Curriculum maps, units of study, and lesson plans are anchored in the Common Core State Standards and encompass the students' assessed needs as aligned to the instructional shifts resulting in tasks that are engaging.

Supporting Evidence

- Pre- K teachers use The Letter People as well as the Waterford curriculum to address learning needs in English Language Arts and math. Grades Kindergarten through 5th grade use the Ready Gen program for English Language Arts and the Go Math curriculum for mathematics instruction. Grades 6 through 8 use the Codex curriculum supplemented with the Prentice Hall curriculum for English Language Arts and CMP3 for mathematics instruction. In addition to these curricula, students and families have access to the MYON independent reading program and the Finish Line writing program. All of these programs are Common Core aligned and are used by the teachers as evidenced in their lesson plans and units of study.

- The curriculum mapping team guides the teachers and the lesson planning process in the school. They meet bi-monthly to discuss the scope and sequence of the curriculum and use the Rubicon Atlas program, which is an online curriculum management system that allows for storage, refinement, and sharing of individual lessons on a school-wide level to share and give feedback to the teachers. The school's administration is in the process of training teachers to use Rubicon as the principal envisions this process belonging to the teachers.

- Teachers use an "Unpacking a Unit" template to assist them in dissecting modules in the curriculum. While "unpacking," teachers must consider the essential questions, the standards, the key student learning objectives, the sequence key of learning activities, key texts to be used, and assessments. This school-wide practice influences all subject areas and all learners, including Special Education students and English Language learners.

- Teachers' lesson plans indicate collaboration among grade bands and subject area teams. In lesson plans, there is evidence of standards consideration, instructional shifts applied, Response to Intervention tiering of groups of students, guided practice, assessments and next steps. Teachers also use Depth of Knowledge consistently to prep questions for students and plan for activating prior knowledge and scaffolds for learners.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
Throughout the school, teachers' assessment practices measure student progress through the use of rubrics, conferences, and common assessments to adjust instruction and lead to increased achievement.

Impact
The school executes assessment practices that are aligned to meet the needs of all learners; including students with disabilities and English Language Learners resulting in differentiated instructional practices and in teacher feedback that is tailored to learning needs of students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders ensure that all assessments are Common Core aligned and are used school-wide to plan for the needs of all learners. To achieve this goal, the school uses a myriad of assessment data to track and determine students' learning successes and gaps. They use assessments from Schoolnet, Ready Gen, MYON, Waterford progress reports, teacher made assessments, and classroom assessments that check for students' understanding such as exit tickets, questions, turn and talks, think-pair-share, conferring, and listening for accountable talk.

- The school has a definitive process for analyzing data. First, the Data Analyst and the school's administrative team analyze the data by discussing findings and identifying learning trends. Then the Data Analyst facilitates teacher team meetings and once again analyzes the data with the teachers to look at trends and have discussions to determine next steps, which involve lesson planning, and grouping students for instruction.

- It was observed that students' tasks are defined by the use of task cards that list the task, standards, and circumstances of performance. Tasks are assessed using rubrics that assess students as "novice", "apprentice", "practitioner", and, "expert". Additionally, teacher feedback is given to each student and aligned to the rubric provided. A review of a 5th grader's work sample showed evidence of the task card, rubric, teacher feedback to the students indicating where the students achieved on the rubric stating, "Apprentice- Beginning has some context for storyline. Next time you should try to work within a paragraph structure, using a beginning, middle, and end." A first grader's work sample indicated feedback that stated, "Novice…your writing piece shows an attempt to write in complete sentences. Next steps: We will continue to work on organization." A 4th grader's work sample indicated, "3 (practitioner)- Details support the stated focus. Next Steps: Remember to use transition words to create a smooth flow."

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
School leaders embed high expectations in all aspects of school culture, focusing on college and career readiness, in alignment with the citywide expectations, to raise levels of success for all constituents.

Impact
High expectations are anchored throughout school structures and communication streams resulting in a unified understanding among stakeholders that student achievement is a path to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal defines high expectations as, "...being transparent with all school stakeholders. Students should know what is expected of them…parents should know how to help them…teachers should be clear about what they are teaching and how they are teaching the skill or concept." Parents shared that they receive progress reports and information about their students' performance from Skedula- a website that tracks information about student performance and progress. Parents also said that their children are able to do homework unassisted. Furthermore, they voiced appreciation for active teacher involvement and reporting via texting, phone calls, emails, and face-to-face appointments. Students echoed the parents' claims as they discussed using rubrics as, "A way to know what is expected of them." Teachers discussed having access to the administrative team as a way, "…to keep informed about what's expected and share what we discussed in our meetings so everyone is on the same page."

- At 23K284, communication streams are the conduits for high expectations. School policies are conveyed in the Faculty/Staff Handbook, which is given to all school members. The testing schedule is shared publically and lists the dates, population, type of test, and scoring dates for all school-wide assessments. The teaching schedule is shared with the staff and so are newsletters like the *Data Monthly,* which chronicles expectations around data acquisition, usage, and application. *The Tiger Times* is a monthly principal generated newsletter that informs members of expectations, events, and highlights for the upcoming month. Lastly, a school-wide calendar is shared with all stakeholders; including parents and students. The calendar captures important dates, events, reminders, notices, and faculty and staff members contact information. These communication streams evidently bridge teaching, student learning, and parental involvement. Teacher planning, teaming time, and feedback given to students show alignment between the communication streams' content and teacher and student work products. These outputs are then shared with parents utilizing the respective communication platforms keeping the principal's vision of transparency evident.

- Every child is well known by at least one adult in the school. Teachers employ conferring as an opportunity to build relationships with their students and discuss students' goals as a path to college and careers. Goals are placed on students' desks, are tracked for progress, and changed when accomplished. The commitment of getting students to college is evident as teachers have their alma maters posted on their doors and there are quotes of encouragement posted throughout the school. In classrooms, students engage in peer-to-peer feedback, use microphones when speaking publically, and engage in self-assessments using reflection sheets.