



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Thomas Warren Field School**

**Elementary School K299**

**88 Woodbine Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11221**

**Principal: Wilma Kirk**

**Date of review: January 30, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Jo Ann Benoit**

## The School Context

The Thomas Warren Field School is an elementary school with 349 students from grade Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 50% Black, 48% Hispanic, and 2% White students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90.0%.

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

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula and tasks are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the shifts. Students are engaged in rigorous curricula and tasks that are planned and refined using their work products and other data.

### Impact

There is instructional coherence across the grades and subject areas and, higher order skills are emphasized allowing all students to demonstrate their thinking and college and career readiness. Moreover, individual and groups of students have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school has adopted the curricular resources aligned to the Common Core and the instructional shifts suggested by the City which engage students in rigorous grade level work. Using student data and work products, and understanding that some students need certain scaffolds to fully be cognitively engaged, administrators and teachers have adapted these resources and developed tasks and activities that infuse close reading, phonics (where necessary) and multiple entry points throughout the grades and subject areas as well as have eliminated some lessons they've felt were not appropriate or necessary. These adjustments are based on information received from tracking sheets in English language arts (ELA) and/or exit slips, mostly used in math.
- Based on student work, teachers identify grade-level targets which are further developed by each classroom teacher. At the third grade level for example, one of the grade's foci is to describe characters. Teachers, then, plan accordingly to meet the needs of their students through planning and preparation done for tiered/group work which are listed and explained in lesson plans. This practice fosters coherence across the grades.
- Teachers plan for supports for students who struggle academically and those who need extensions including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs). Part of the scaffolds planned for are Myon Reading which provides English and Spanish versions of the same books and allow students to listen to text when needed and Destination Reading. Students are also given additional questions and texts to use when they are done with tasks in the classroom. One example is giving choice to one of the accelerated groups in a 4<sup>th</sup> grade class where students who have done the work that the class is engaged in can make inferences about a character either if she listens to advice given to her or how her daily life might change as a result of moving (using textual evidence).
- There is evidence of students' thinking and participation in the plans reviewed. Upper classmen have the opportunity to support the development of questions for their classes, especially for tier 1 tasks. Students participated in the writing of questions for a unit on the Boston Tea Party. These are examples of questions they contributed: "Do you think it was fair for Elizabeth Harrison and the women to take Thomas Boylston's keys and coffee? Why or why not?" and "Do you think it was right for Thomas Boylston to raise the price of coffee and lie about doing it to help his family? Why or why not?"

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

### Findings

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

### Impact

Consequently, students are engaged in Common Core aligned work and are able to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in their work products. However, in some lessons, some students were unevenly challenged or given tools to aid learning, thus leading to inconsistent levels of ownership of the content and concepts.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers plan and implement grade level work and expect students to complete the tasks and activities using academic language and appropriate vocabulary in writing and verbally. For example, in one math classroom, a student was answering a fraction related question with whole numbers. The teacher stopped him and said “we are counting in fractions” which prompted the student to correct his answer and say “ $1/8^{\text{th}}$ ,  $2/8^{\text{th}}$ ” etc. In that same classroom, students who found the answer using different processes were able to share their answers and the ways they got to them with the class. Allowing for the sharing of multiple perspectives and the use of mathematical language and modeling. In an English classroom, the teacher asked a group of students “what might you infer?” one of the students started to answer “They might get tired”, then corrected himself and said “I can infer that they might get sleepy”.
- Across classrooms, students were engaged in Common Core aligned work with appropriate supports. In some classrooms, students were supported by teachers, in others by peers and/or tools that assisted them in completing tasks. In one classroom with many ELLs, there were strategies and tools on the desks to support students as they were working: some checklists were taped on the desks such as “checking my work” and “writing” checklists as well as two-dimensional magnifying glasses to remind and support students with close-reading. In a self-contained class, the teacher asked the group of students she was working with to fold their paper in order to focus on one of the questions on the graphic organizer. In that same classroom, some students were using fractional pieces as a support and others were not. Across classrooms, students were engaged in tiered activities and knew which groups they belonged to and why.
- Although students were engaged and working with supports, in some classrooms, they were not appropriately challenged or supported. In two of the classrooms visited, students were engaged in work however they were not completely clear about the teacher’s expectations for the activity. In one of the classrooms, the students were asked to tell the difference between a pond and other bodies of water. Some students were able to answer the teacher’s questions with prompting but most of the students did not have an opportunity to share. The teacher spent over 15 minutes in that whole group configuration. In another classroom, the students were given differentiated graphic organizers (with a picture box and 7, 2 or 1 line to write). Three of the students with the 7 lines did not draw or write one word while we were in the classroom, prompting us to ask whether or not the graphic organizers were appropriately distributed.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

The school uses common assessments to determine student progress towards goals and students have numerous opportunities to self-assess.

### Impact

Consequently, teachers are able to effectively adjust curricula and instruction to meet the different needs of learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school uses a variety of tests to assess students' progress. In addition to the summative data teachers use such as the state exams, Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) and beginning and end of unit tests, they use Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and Reading 3D on a regular basis as well as exit slips and student self-assessment during instruction to determine what adjustments need to be made to a unit or lesson. Using an *Assessment Tracking Sheet and Instructional Plan* document, teachers analyze student work products and answer prompts such as "Analysis of why students did not learn standard" and they list the possible reasons, and "What techniques will you use to address these standards?" and they also list ways they will support students which can vary from offering a template to re-teaching a lesson.
- During the student meeting, students mentioned they had goals but were only able to share their reading goals. Most wanted to reach level W in reading! Nonetheless, students mentioned the tools that are given to them when needed such as checklists and their reading levels posted on the desks. Students mentioned that assessment cards allowed them to let the teachers know whether or not they needed assistance during the lesson and tiered work.
- Across classrooms, there was evidence of teachers checking for understanding either using the students' assessment cards, by moving from one group to another or by asking questions. However, in one classroom, a group of students who were struggling with finding the correct evidence from a text shared that one of the teachers only works with a particular group of students. One girl explained "she always works with that group. She doesn't come to us". The student felt it was keeping her group from fully understanding and continuing their work.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

School leaders communicate high expectations to the entire staff which in turn consistently establishes a culture for learning and communicates expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness for all students to families.

### **Impact**

Paired with communicating high expectations to all, are trainings and feedback given to school stakeholders to help meet these expectations. School leaders ensure families are aware of student progress towards expectations and offer detailed feedback and guidance that support students as they prepare for the next level.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders share their expectations with teachers and provide support to meet those expectations through a variety of ways. Meeting notes submitted by teachers are reviewed by the administration. The expectation is that administrators will observe the new learning or reinforced learning mentioned in those notes during the formal and informal classroom visits. Intervisitations are scheduled for teachers who need them. Administrators also support teachers with training in and outside of the school to help meet these expectations.
- The school communicates with families in many ways: calls, emails, letters sent home, parent monthly calendar, parent workshops on various topics (for example, bullying, Common Core, fire safety), parent handbook, online program, progress reports, reading and writing celebrations, grandparent celebration, assemblies, concerts among other ways. Teachers shared sample of their parent engagement logs which show why they were reaching out to the parents and what supports they offered. The parents interviewed said that the school had an open door policy. Yet, many of them were not able to share how they work with the school to understand and support their children's academic progress.
- Teachers and staff foster a culture of learning in the school. Teachers consistently communicate high expectations for all students, whether in written or verbal academic work (with expectations on how to speak and work in class) or social-emotional work. In addition to being a positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) school and thus reinforcing positive behaviors in students, students also recite the school motto "I believe I can score a level 3 or 4, like an eagle I will soar" and the school code "be present, be prompt, be prepared, be polite, be productive" every morning to help instill college and career readiness skills in them. Furthermore, each grade has selected a college that they research and depending on the grade, will be visiting.

<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, analyze key elements of teacher and student work and play an integral part in key decisions.

### **Impact**

As a result, teachers contribute to school wide instructional coherence that promote the implementation of Common Core aligned curricula, improved teacher practice and increased achievement for students. Distributive leadership structures are embedded so that there is effective teacher leadership in the school.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- All teachers participate in teacher teams at least twice a week in addition to other professional collaborations. The vertical planning teams ensure coherence in the work at the school by keeping the focus on close reading and promoting at every grade multiple entry points for students. Moreover, tiered work is determined once the different standards at the grade levels are looked at collaboratively in order to ensure these tasks build on one another as students move up the grades.
- Teachers lead teacher teams, they facilitate professional development sessions, model lessons for one another. Teachers have a voice and a choice in the professional development they attend with approval from the administrators. Teachers fill out surveys to inform the administration of their interest in different types of professional learning opportunities. Part of those professional development opportunities includes visiting a colleague at the request of the teachers or their supervisors. Thus, teachers analyze teacher practice collaboratively to help improve each other's pedagogy.
- One teacher shared "the principal trusts what we do in the teacher teams will move students" when asked about the opportunities they have to make decisions that affect students. Teachers are able to re-group students and make recommendations if the students have individual education plans (IEPs). They are able to use their professional judgment to help mainstream students for particular content areas. Mainstreaming is a staple at the school.
- Grade leaders play an integral role between teachers and administrators but the group is not static. Other teachers have the opportunity to contribute to the work of teacher leaders as team or professional development facilitators. On Fridays, the 4<sup>th</sup> grade team meets to share instructional best practices: teachers bring tasks and receive support revising or modifying the tasks. Any teacher can do this and thus receives support to strengthen his/her pedagogy and/or plans. Because of these opportunities to make professional decisions, student achievement has increased especially in grades 3 in ELA and math and in grade 5 in math.