



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**George E. Wibecan Preparatory Academy**

**Elementary School 309**

**794 Monroe St.  
Brooklyn  
NY 11221**

**Principal: Nicole Perry**

**Date of review: November 3, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Santiago**

## School Context

George E. Wibecan Preparatory Academy is an elementary school with 288 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 72% Black, 25% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 28% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92%.

## 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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</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>Developing</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>Developing</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>Celebration</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>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

3.4 High  
Expectations

Rating:

Proficient

### Findings

The school consistently communicates high expectations to staff, and aligns a variety of professional development activities to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. School-wide communications and frequent student performance updates keep families informed of their child's progress towards college and career readiness.

### Impact

The school's implementation of communication structures and systems of support result in staff and families working towards a clear path of increased student achievement and college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders use the Danielson Framework for Teaching to inform expectations of classroom practices through professional development workshops and individual teacher conferences. One of the training sessions conducted this year included an overview of all the Domains in the Danielson Framework for Teaching as well as a focus on Domain 3 (questioning and discussion). Timely and meaningful feedback from formal and informal observations and daily classroom walkthroughs hold staff accountable for meeting professional and instructional expectations. For example, the principal observed a lesson where the teacher asked low level questions throughout the presentation. Feedback to the teacher included reference to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, with targeted suggestions on higher order questioning to deepen students' thinking.
- The school offers a menu of parent workshops such as *Working With Fathers*, and *Understanding Expectations of English Language Arts (ELA) and Math*, as well as school-wide parent-teacher meetings that provide ongoing information on the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). In addition, the school sends home a monthly calendar that includes the units of study for the month by grade level and in all content areas, reinforcing school-wide instructional expectations.
- Parents stated that school leaders, teachers and staff are highly caring of students. They shared that teachers and staff continually give of their personal time to work with students to help support their learning. Additionally, families are informed of their child's progress through monthly progress reports, phone calls, as well as one-to-one conversations.

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

### Findings

While the school is beginning to align pedagogical expectations with the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and teachers provide some instructional supports, there is inconsistency in the emphasis on higher order thinking skills and the use of instructional scaffolds and multiple entry points that would promote in-depth analysis, deep student engagement, and rich class discussion.

### Impact

Across classrooms, teachers are beginning to implement academic supports to yield meaningful student work products, yet there are missed opportunities for all learners, including English language learners and special education students, to engage in high level discussions and create meaningful work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- One of the school's beliefs regarding how students learn best, informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, includes scaffolded questioning. However, this practice was not implemented consistently across classrooms. For example, in one classroom, a teacher directed students to close the books they were reading and transition to a different topic, limiting opportunities for discourse. In another classroom, a teacher directed students to put away the worksheets they were completing and start a new lesson without offering students time to reflect or share with peers. Across lessons observed, class discussions frequently consisted of students responding to teacher generated questions, with some teachers accepting one word responses from students and few teachers providing students with opportunities for peer interaction in class discussions.
- Across classrooms, students were observed working in groups with support from teachers and paraprofessionals. However, lessons did not consistently include scaffolded levels of questioning, demonstrations of expected outcomes, and learning tasks that provided appropriate challenge. For example, during a math lesson observed, many learners, (including English language learners (ELLs) and special education students), did not fully grasp the lesson concepts and were not able to articulate the steps for completing the problem.
- Although bulletin board displays contained many samples of student writing and learning in all content areas, and students' reading notebooks included reflections of stories read, student folders in most classrooms consisted of worksheet exercises that did not reflect high levels of participation and thinking.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

While the school has aligned curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards, there is inconsistency in the use of data analysis and teacher planning rigorous tasks for all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and special education students.

### Impact

Although the school's curricular planning is beginning to promote coherence to ensure that all students are college and career ready, tasks across grade and content areas do not consistently emphasize higher order thinking for all students, hindering a high level of cognitive engagement for all learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- Unit plans integrate the Common Core and instructional shifts in English language arts and math. Teachers are in the process of refining the school's curricula maps in all subject areas to include standards from the New York City Scope and Sequence in science and social studies to support the school's goal of college and career readiness.
- Planned key instructional strategies include argumentative writing, using text evidence to support a position and student led discussions. However, rigorous tasks that promote thinking and in depth discussions were not evident across classrooms. For example, in one classroom, the teacher read aloud from the text, providing limited opportunities for student reflection and discussion that might have reinforced the learning.
- Although lesson plans reflect Common Core based curricula topics, teacher planning for the use of scaffolds that might support the learning for ELLs and Students with Disabilities (SWDs) was inconsistent across the school. Some plans included only the task such as, "Write a story that shows friendship between the birds and Stellaluna from when they first met and later on in the story."
- Teachers work in teams and meet weekly to plan units of study in ELA and math using summative and formative data to inform curricula decisions. However, there was inconsistent use of information contained in students' Individualized Instructional Plans (IEPs) to ensure access to the curricula and lesson tasks.

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

Teachers meet regularly in inquiry-based professional collaborations and consistently analyze assessment outcomes during team meetings. School leaders provide opportunities that promote teacher leadership and input on key instructional decisions.

### **Impact**

Inquiry-based teacher team work has built teacher capacity and has led to increased student performance. Distributive leadership structures support staff collaboration and enhance pedagogical skills to improve student learning.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams meet weekly by grade level, and analyze results from State tests, school-wide assessments, and student work to plan lessons. In these meetings, teachers share practice, adjust instruction, and plan peer visitation. For example, a teacher who was new to the grade requested additional help with teaching the phonics program used by her colleagues. The teacher visited a peer's classroom, and observed phonics instruction, resulting in growth in teacher practice. Following the analysis of student work products, a teacher team planned to support writing mastery through an increase in the volume of writing and time on task. In a teacher team meeting observed, teachers shared ideas that included providing students with additional exemplars, and using class time to work with students on a writing sample as a whole group during the guided practice portion of literacy lessons. Teachers agreed to share the impact of the suggested strategies on student learning at their next meeting.
- The assistant principal and the literacy and math coaches meet with teachers during team time to support teacher practice in sharing strategies and building improved practice. For example, teachers are using the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) rubric to guide higher order questioning and deepen levels of thinking and discussion.
- Instructional coaches and teacher leaders meet with the administrative team to develop and plan professional development based on identified staff needs, and to track growth towards improved pedagogical practice aligned with the expectations of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, one of the workshops included discussions and strategies to increase volume in students' writing.

**Findings**

The school is beginning to use common assessments and classroom checks for understanding to track student progress towards goals, gauge student understanding, and inform curricula and instructional adjustment.

**Impact**

Although the school has implemented structures to measure learning progress through data analysis and during instruction, these practices do not consistently inform adjustments that meet students' academic needs, hindering student mastery of learning objectives.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school uses a range of common assessments that include State tests, end of unit tests in ELA and math, running records and "Assessment Pro". The analysis of assessment results have led to the development of instructional goals for teaching, and reinforcement of skills in ELA and math. However, the school has not yet gathered targeted information from these assessments to track student progress towards goals in all content areas for all learners.
- While some teachers gather data that includes formative assessments, rubrics, information from baseline Measures of Student Learning (MOSL), and student work to ascertain levels of student learning, the use of data to inform and adjust instruction in all content areas is not consistent across classrooms, and classroom checks for understanding do not always lead to instructional adjustments that support all learners.
- In some classrooms, student goals are developed through the analysis of assessment results as well as conversations between students and teachers. The ongoing analysis of student work has led several teachers to focus on increasing volume in argumentative writing in order to have students elaborate on their thinking and fully support their positions. However, the analysis of formative and summative student data across classrooms and content areas does not consistently include information on student subgroups.