



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

**Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning**

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**Lillian Weber**

**Elementary School M084**

**32 West 92 Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10025**

**Principal: Robin Sundick**

**Date of review: March 26, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Roxan Marks**

## The School Context

Lillian Weber is an elementary school with 524 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 14% Black, 44% Hispanic, 36% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.9%.

## 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>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>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>Celebration</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

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

There is a strong culture of accountability built on high expectations that are communicated to all stakeholders. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness and successfully partner with families to achieve success.

### Impact

The schools' culture of mutual accountability and professional learning results in students being supported and strong partnerships with families ensure student success.

### Supporting Evidence

- Curriculum night provides families with overviews on programs and expectations for learning in the school. The incoming orientation shares clear expectations for students, and the parent handbook outlines information for volunteering, attendance, and participation in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). A school calendar shares ongoing information regarding workshops and special events for families. Newsletters are distributed to families informing them of curriculum and the school leader shared that the expectations are that teachers continually reach out and foster positive relationships with parents.
- School leaders communicate expectations to all through a staff handbook, newsletters, and meetings. Additionally, school leaders use data from observations to develop professional learning for staff. Teachers College (TC) consultants support teachers as they partake in lab-sites and inter-visitations. TC calendar days were purchased and teachers participate in various groups to increase their pedagogical skills. The school also engages paraprofessionals in professional learning opportunities to ensure they have the skills needs to support students in classrooms. Teachers turnkey professional learning after they attend PD sessions. The Professional Development Share Sheet is used to communicate at least three concepts learned at the workshop or training attended.
- Publishing celebrations engage parents as partners in highlighting student writing and helps them to better understand the writing process and expectations based on Common Core Standards. To further increase the capacity of parents in understanding the new standards, parent workshops were developed to address needs of families and the school. For example, workshops were conducted on Common Core Learning Standards, the new testing format, and understanding the instructional shifts.
- Partnering with parents is evident through Parent Job Net, which is housed in the building and provides training for parents by supporting them with locating employment prospects. Parents have valuable opportunities to be involved in their children's learning. Regular and ongoing communication is provided to parents about the progress of their children toward goals. Guidelines are clearly developed for parents who wish to volunteer in the school. The School Messenger system enables massive communication to families on special events, cancellation due to increment weather, and other areas as needed.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

Teaching practices are aligned to school beliefs and the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Across most classrooms questioning and scaffolds consistently provide support for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs).

### Impact

Teaching practices afford most students opportunities to think deeply as they engage in higher levels of thinking and participation.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders shared that the school believes that students learn best when given high expectations and teachers ensure supports are in place and that students know and understand their learning needs. During the teacher team meetings teachers stated that students learn best through interactions, engaging with rigorous tasks, peer learning, and the use of technology. The school is focusing on early grade progress and embedding the shifts into lessons using the workshop model in all subject areas.
- In classroom observations, there was a focus on the instructional shifts in English language arts (ELA) as students look for answers in texts, text complexity, and academic vocabulary. During lessons teachers model and give clear directions to students. In a kindergarten lesson integrating science into ELA, students were learning about plants and the teacher read a book on roots. There was a check for understanding done early in the lesson, students engaged in turn-and-talk activities, and were using academic language and vocabulary related to parts of the plants.
- Across classrooms teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry point for ELLs and SWDs. In a grade 5 reading lesson students were engaged in test prep unit while using learning centers to deepen their knowledge. One group was sorting questions, another group was working on fluency using iPads and working on Reading A-Z application. The last group was working on main ideas using a text. There was a system in place to manage groups, student goals were on the desk, as well as prompts to help students if they are stuck on a word. The work in groups was differentiated based on needs and scaffolds built into the activities.
- In a grade 2/3 special education classroom students were exploring how technology changed NYC. The SMART board was used and the teacher asked many questions to students about the picture of an old subway car to help students make the comparison to trains of today. The use of visual images from the past helped anchor the learning. Students responded to questions posed by the teacher but high-level talk among students was limited. However, in some classrooms students helped each other and invited peers to assist them and student choice was optimized. In some classrooms talk was at a high level and discussions were taking place without the support of the teacher.

## Additional Findings

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

The school uses Common Core Learning Standards aligned curricula that integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are refined using student work and data.

### Impact

The schools' curricula build coherence by promoting cognitive challenge for all students, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs).

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and accessible to a variety of learners. The school uses Teachers' College units of study for reading and writing, and for math, Investigative Context for Learning has been integrated along with some school created components. The upper grades' pacing calendars are broken down in months and specify reading, writing, and content area units, for the year, in French, Spanish, and English. To support the Common Core Standards, the school uses Teaching Toward the Demands of the Common Core State Standards to address the additional standards added by New York State. This document also provides sample ways to word questions aligned to certain standards. Most units are labeled and include big ideas and essential questions, teaching point, and student activities. For example, a sample unit presented to demonstrate science instruction on air and weather contains teaching point, student activity, and modelling section.
- Social studies and science content is integrated into English language arts (ELA) units of study using New York City Scope and Sequence for Social Studies, New York State (NYS) Social Studies standards, and NYS Science standards. A science cluster teacher provides lab exposure and additional hands on support of science learning for students. For example, a review of the lesson plans for the science program shows appropriate focus on grade specific content and alignment to State and City requirements for topics. The roof top garden exposes students to real world gardening experiences in growing herbs, vegetables, and fruits, as well as composting and other aspects of gardening. The products grown are served in the school cafeteria and the learning links science applications to real word experiences.
- Based on the analysis of data, the principal shared that, as students were not effectively prepared for grade 3 they currently ensure that vocabulary and grammar are infused in the lower grades, including more non-fiction and close reading of texts. For math the focus is on increasing fluency, precision and open-ended word problems.
- Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills. Teachers work together in vertical and horizontal teams to develop tasks and use Depth of Knowledge for higher order skills. Metacognitive skills are measured through use of checklists, rubrics, and assessments. The school has done work to differentiate the homework provided to students reflecting at least three group levels. Articulation meetings held in the beginning of the year integrates teaching across all areas. As an example the music teacher met with the fourth grade teachers to discuss units of study and how the music program can support content areas instruction.

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

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies, aligned to curricula. Common assessments are used to determine student progress and make effective adjustments to units and lessons.

### **Impact**

The school uses ongoing assessments to analyze information on learning outcomes, to provide students with actionable feedback, and to use results to adjust curricula.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- There is a system in place for the collection of data and the school uses assessments to screen, determine interim measures, and monitor progress of students. Google docs are used to collect data in math, science, and social studies. Reading level data is managed through Teachers College Pro data tool. Benchmark data is administered in reading four times a year and reports are color coded to quickly identify those students scoring below State benchmarks. Reading benchmarks are done in native languages for students enrolled in French and Spanish dual language programs. Writing assessments are done and reports outline an overall score for the students as well as elements of writing including transitions, elaboration, craft, and organization. Math assessments include specific standards in the analysis of student responses and those students who fall below the cut score on these unit tests are identified.
- Teachers create and adjust rubrics in order to provide clear feedback specific to the task and content. Students use rubrics and checklists to assess their work and conference with teachers about ways to improve their work. During interviews, students shared that they set goals, use rubrics and checklists, and some indicated that they self-assess. Teachers work in teams to create common assessments in a variety of subject areas. The focus this year was on math in which the school created their own benchmarks assessments.
- Project-based learning in social studies is scored using rubrics. Data is used to have marathon days in math and teachers focus heavily on identifying instructional needs in students to inform strategic groups in classrooms. A similar process is done for ELA. Instructional plans are created for groups of students in a dual language class; however, this practice was not seen across all classrooms.

<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 participate in inquiry-based collaborative meetings across grades to continuously improve instruction. Teams use highly effective protocols to analyze classroom practice, examine students work products and data.

### **Impact**

The work of teacher teams has resulted in instructional coherence, improvement in pedagogy and mastery of goals.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and promoted the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Teachers work with grade level colleagues to ensure work is aligned to Common Core, looking at grade foci to ensure they are addressing targeted areas. Vertical team planning that occurs at the end of year helped a team realize that some of the investigations in math did not align the Common Core Learning Standards. During interviews with teachers, they reported that they work closely with the math coach to make curricular adjustments.
- Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work including classroom practice, assessment data, and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused. Teams look at various levels of student work products to determine the best way to support and improve performance on tasks and assessments. During the grade 4 teacher team observation, teachers were looking at work products and discussing responses made by students to see whether they addressed the prompts and whether responses were inferential to determine adjustments in future lessons.
- Student work products and data are at the forefront of the work of teams. Teams talk about the work to inform instruction and adjust their practice to create strategic plans for groups of students. The work of teacher teams informs unit and lesson development. Vertical teams make sure communication is ongoing with other grades leading to coherence across the school.