



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

William Paca

Elementary School M155

**319 East 117th Street
Manhattan
NY 10035**

Principal: Lillian Raimundi - Ortiz

**Date of review: May 6, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Alexandra Estrella**

The School Context

William Paca is an elementary school with 360 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 10% Black, 87% Hispanic, 0% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 37% English language learners and 30% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013 - 2014 was 94.0%.

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	Celebration	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	Additional Findings	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	Developing
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:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that the curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, integrate the instructional shifts and consistently emphasize rigorous habits.

Impact

Purposeful curricula decisions support coherence and promote college and career readiness so all students are provided rigorous tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- The school utilizes the Ready Gen and GOMath! curricula which are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and have been infusing them into the curricula for the past few years in the areas of English language arts (ELA) and math. They develop curriculum maps and unit calendars to reflect key standards, academic tasks that probe for deep understanding, application of learning, and contain rigorous learning objectives. These skills and instructional shifts can be seen in the “Understanding Fractions” and “Whole Number Operations” curriculum units of study which contain specific tasks requiring students to interpret data, and create models in math.
- School leaders and faculty are aligning curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards to integrate the new curriculum with focus areas to support the needs of students. The school is utilizing Foundations in combination with ReadyGEN for kindergarten through grade two. In grades three-five, the school implements Wilson Learning, and Expeditionary Learning, which are all aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. For math, the school is utilizing a combination of GOMath! for kindergarten through grade five and Math Counts for pre-kindergarten.
- Academic tasks outlined in lesson plans and curriculum maps reflect high-level Depth of Knowledge (DoK) questions and student learning outcomes. For example, in a grade three literacy lesson plan, the task asks students to read a book that is at or above their grade level and answer questions that progressively elevate on the DoK scale.

Area of Focus

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

The staff is loosely utilizing an inquiry approach to analyze student assessment data and work. Distributive leadership structures are in the process of development in providing teachers with a voice in key decision-making.

Impact

Teacher teams are beginning to analyze assessment data and target student work to improve teacher practice and student outcomes. Teacher decisions are in the process of being used to affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- During a team meeting, teachers were engaged in discussing student writing samples utilizing the “Wood Acres Writing Skill” checklist that was not aligned to grade-level Common Core Learning Standards. When asked how they engage in the inquiry process across the year and how the work has increased student outcomes, teachers were unable to articulate how they analyze target student work or data as a team on a consistent basis. Teachers stated they look at assessment data for the week and use the information to plan for next week’s lessons but did not know how the modifications increased student mastery of the content objectives and standards.
- In the fifth grade team meeting, the teachers used data from the “Wood Acres Writing Skills” checklist assessment to determine the key skills and highlighted target focus areas for students. For example, some students struggled with writing a topic sentence and infusing voice into their writing. Based on what they found, teachers stated that they would make modifications to their units of study and expressed this was a common practice within their school. However, a review of lesson plans demonstrates modifications across the year are not fully evident.
- Teachers are beginning to lead professional development meetings around assessment and checking for understanding. Various committees help support decision-making such as making modifications to the professional development plan and units of study. One modification made was focusing on cycles of professional development around questioning yet, school documents to reflect the impact on student learning were not evident.
- Teachers noted that the team meetings are beginning to drive their work in the planning and implementation of instructional practices. However, the principal indicated that although she even models instructional practices at times, further work is needed in order for teachers to complete units for all core content areas and incorporate the instructional shifts.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Teacher practices across classrooms were inconsistent in providing strategies as multiple entry points for challenging tasks. High-level student work products and discussions were uneven across classrooms.

Impact

Across classrooms, teaching strategies lead to missed opportunities in engaging all learners toward high-levels of thinking within tasks, student work products and discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- In a third grade social studies classroom, all students were provided the same task. Students were paired together to support each other in researching individual topics of interest and evaluating the source's credibility, accessibility and relevance. A student communicated that the topic they were working on was "Colonial Trade" but could not articulate the purpose or learning objective of the activity. Only some students were able to complete the task correctly but others were unable to communicate the learning objective and rationale for completing the task.
- In a fifth grade social studies class, students were purposely grouped together to explain and investigate what the Aztecs destroyed. During the lesson, students were expected to complete the same task of crafting a response to the question yet some students were unclear about the task. When asked what they were required to, students could not clearly articulate the purpose or explain the task clearly. English language learners (ELLs) were not provided additional strategies to support them, and the middle and upper-tiered students were not provided activities to challenge them further. There was only some evidence to reflect that students were provided scaffolds in writing and other resources to support their thinking.
- During classroom visits, there were some higher-order questions asked to initiate student discussion yet, in other classes, prompts reflected low Depth of Knowledge (DoK) levels. For example in one class, the teacher asked, "What did you find? What are your next steps? What was going on during the time of the Aztecs?" Students were engaged in discussion in the rug area during most mini-lessons, but were not prompted to learn from or challenge each other's thought process by the teacher.
- In a first grade math class, the teacher utilized math manipulative blocks and cut out numbers to support student individual learning needs. Some students worked in groups, and the teacher circulated the room to provide individualized support. However, students were not able complete tasks or explain what they were being asked to do.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments and rubrics aligned with the school's curricula. The school's faculty uses common assessments across subject areas to determine student progress toward goals.

Impact

Actionable feedback based on assessments result in teacher and student awareness of achievement. Data analysis of student progress across grades and subject areas is used to inform guided adjustments to units and lessons.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal uses a chart to actively monitor and assess how students are progressing in their reading levels throughout the school. The chart identifies and tracks students' progress over time and identifies areas of focus for skills that they need to master. Individual teachers and teacher teams gather data from running records, performance task assessments in math and ELA, exit slips, and unit tests to determine student achievement trends across the school. Teachers develop plans to adjust their instruction to meet the specific needs of the student sub-groups. For example, teachers record and analyze class reading levels to monitor growth across the grade.
- The principal states that at the onset of a unit, teachers give a pre-assessment and use this information to plan their day-to-day lessons and modify their units of study. Mid-way through the unit, teachers reassess students to determine overall areas of growth and at the end of the unit, they administer a post-assessment. The principal stated that she advises teachers that even if the unit has ended, if students have not mastered the work, they have to find ways to support students in the following unit within the target areas of improvement. Most teachers infuse these skills in daily lessons and units of study to help students to continuously develop their skills.
- Teachers utilize rubrics, checklists, post-Its with feedback or next steps, one-on-one conferences with notes, and exit tickets to monitor student progress and check for understanding during lessons. Students communicate that their teachers provide them with opportunities to make corrections on their tasks using the written and oral feedback provided. Students also stated, "My teachers confer with me to let me know what I did wrong so that I could do better on the next assignment."

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The school leader is beginning to communicate high expectations on professionalism, instruction, and the Danielson Framework for Teaching through whole staff professional development. School leaders and staff are beginning to establish feedback structures to communicate high expectations to both families and students.

Impact

The school's leadership is beginning to hold teachers accountable for pedagogy relative to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The school is starting to establish structures to support parents in becoming aware of their child's progress towards meeting grade-level standards.

Supporting Evidence

- The School Leadership Team (SLT), Parent Association and Career and Technical Education (CTE) Work-Based Learning Program personnel are the primary groups used to communicate expectations to parents, and aid in building the school culture. Advisors complete home visits in the summer before the school year begins and lead parents through community's expectations for students. Advisors are the main point of contact for families and facilitate parent-teacher conferences in November.
- The school provides verbal and written communication through parent meetings and conferences, workshops, emails, and notes backpacked home to keep them aware of their children's progress. Parents vocalized that teachers are accessible and communicate with them continuously during the designated Tuesday parent contact time. However, parents report that they feel the school needs a more standardized form of communication. Parents reported that the school does not have an ongoing way of communicating student performance. A portion of the parents stated that some classes offer progress reports and others do not. Parents and students are unclear about the school's grading policy, and how to use it with the academic transcript to determine their child's progress.
- The principal meets with each teacher to discuss their self-evaluation and set goals using the Danielson Framework for Teaching in the areas of: Domain 2 on classroom environment, Domain 3 on instruction, and specifically, in 3D, using assessment in instruction. In addition, the principal reported that she conducts observations on teachers as a means for holding the staff accountable for the expectations in these domains. Teachers expressed that they don't consistently receive timely feedback from the administrative team after observation.