



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Maurice Wollin

Elementary School R004

**200 Nedra Lane
Staten Island
NY 10312**

Principal: Suzanne Dimitri

**Date of review: May 6, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Anthony R. Lodico**

The School Context

Maurice Wollin is an elementary school with 800 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade five. The school population comprises 2% Black, 16% Hispanic, 75% White, 5% Asian and 2% other students. The student body includes 2% 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 93.5%.

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	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	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	Developing
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	Proficient
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	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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

The teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that promote the achievement of the school's goals and the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for target students.

Impact

Structured inquiry-based, professional collaborations have strengthened teacher practice and increased student achievement for all learners through the adjustment of curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Inquiry Teams meet with grade-level teams together and complete a protocol, as a grade, on a specific topic in English language arts (ELA). Upon completion of the protocol, each grade shares their findings. All staff members are present, including out-of-classroom personnel, to share the strengths, weaknesses and next steps for the particular content area. The teacher team shared the "Looking at Student Writing to Set Benchmarks for Each Grade" protocol. In this protocol, teachers across the school shared "What are students doing well?" and "What do students need to do better?"
- The Vertical Instructional Team meets every two weeks to assess the instructional needs, progress and pedagogical practices that support teachers to ensure student gains. Grade leaders on the Vertical Team shared their focus on creating writing lesson plans to impact student work products and their progression to a final piece. For example, in reviewing the unit 3 reading and writing plans, it was determined that they needed to include higher order thinking questions to encourage students to make their thinking visible and their writing more explicit. The *ReadyGen* performance based assessment (PBA) writing portion data, across the school year, demonstrates growth in the area of writing focus.
- School-level teacher facilitated workshops are offered to teams of teachers on reading methodologies such as guided reading. At the request of the staff, teacher leaders provided these trainings to support their ongoing work to increase student reading levels in ELA, specifically adjusting planning during the *ReadyGen* literacy block. Teachers review the data periodically to determine the reading growth rate. The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) data, over the course of the year, has demonstrated an increase in reading levels for the majority of students due to the integration of this practice.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies reflect inconsistencies in demonstrating the school's core beliefs on how students learn best as informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Levels of student work products and discussion are uneven.

Impact

The school is in the process of ensuring its core beliefs are reflected in the instructional practices across classrooms. School-wide work products and student responses have yet to enable critical thinking and high levels of engagement.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, instruction was primarily teacher directed and Depth of Knowledge (DoK) questions at levels 3 and 4 was evident in only some classes, and with some students. For example, in one fifth grade math class, the teaching objective was similar to the bulletin board posted in the classroom. Students were asked, "How many red apples compared to the green apples? How can we further simplify 4:8?" Responses to these questions were teacher-student-teacher. Although students were prompted to come up to the document reader to participate in the lesson, the expectation was to place the apples in the ratios based on teacher prompted questions.
- In a second grade ELA lesson, students were working in small groups throughout the classroom. One English language learner (ELL) student was working on using magnetic letters to copy the word wall beginning with the letter "A." Another group continued to randomly write in their journals and there were many pages of daily writing yet the level of writing demonstrated was limited to details and no revision. Students were not given an opportunity to share their writing with peers.
- In some classrooms, students' level of discussion reflected uneven opportunities for reasoning and thought. In a third grade ELA lesson, students were working in small groups to answer questions with their groups. The question posed was, "Why does the boy want to hear the story so many times?" Students' responses were recorded by the teacher on chart paper and mostly reflected low-level inference responses. The teacher wrote: *The boy wants to hear the story because he likes to hear it. He likes to feel like he's special. He likes to hear things repeated.*

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data so that a diversity of learners have access to them.

Impact

School-wide purposeful, data-based decisions on curricula and tasks promote cognitive engagement for student sub-groups, and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders shared the reading and writing units created collaboratively by each grade. Teams wrote curriculum to include sequenced skills, used the Common Core Learning Standards to align learning objectives, pre/post assessments, and developed data collection forms and rubrics. For example, in the grade four reading and writing unit three, students were given a task to answer text-based comprehension questions using a combination of notes taken from the a passage, and viewing a video.
- The school has adapted curricula to meet the needs of students by reviewing data at the end of each unit of study. Teachers reflect on the assessments used and student work. Student work is reviewed through a protocol and decisions to make curriculum changes are reflected on the revised maps. For instance, the teachers revealed that by looking at the student writing across all grades, it led them to determine that the kindergarten map needed to be revised. Teachers stated that students needed to cite text- based evidence in their verbal and written responses. During a grade-level meeting, teachers chose strategies to support their findings. For example, graphic organizers and accountable talk stems were incorporated.
- Curriculum maps have examples of a variety of graphic organizers for students to use depending on their level of understanding and needs. One writing unit had a 'paraphrasing chart' or an outline with introduction and main idea as a choice for students to gather their information before drafting their non-fiction writing. In a fourth grade reading and writing unit, the task asked students to gather research facts from a text, videos or internet sources. The students would choose the format in which to record their facts.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Assessments and grading policies are aligned to the school's curricula. Teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

School-wide assessments provide limited actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Across classrooms, consistent in-the-moment instructional adjustments have yet to be implemented and lead toward the improvement of student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders provided an assessment calendar with due dates and a chapter outline that included grade-level pre-assessments in ELA. The pre-assessments are used to gather data so that teachers can make decisions based on the assessment results. For example, a draft revised copy of a recent ELA unit included an area for the Common Core Learning Standards and whether those areas were met or not, foundational skills needed for chapter mastery and student groupings from their pre-assessment data.
- In some classrooms visited, teachers were observed conferring with students and noting their answers. For example, in a fifth grade 12:1:1 math class, while students were working in groups, the teacher circulated around the room to interact with students and note their responses. Next, the teacher brought nine of the students to the meeting area to re-teach the right angle lesson. The teacher re-grouped students based on the data gathered. This practice of adjusting instruction is yet to be implemented across all classrooms.
- In some classrooms, it was observed that students were using rubrics to guide their work, and receiving verbal and written feedback for their next steps. Most students could identify a skill or rubric trait they were trying to improve. However, some student responses indicated that they were not prescriptive in nature. Specifically one student stated that the teacher tells them that they are progressing. Another student indicated that they know they have some strong areas but was unable to indicate the strength. Lastly, students struggled to explain how they would progress to the next level. The feedback on student work posted in bulletin boards, provided during the student meeting, notebooks and portfolios viewed across the school was limited. For example on a writing piece posted on a Kindergarten bulletin board using the text, *The Snowy Day*, it stated, "Great illustration and use of speech bubbles. Next time use the word wall for descriptive words." On another student's writing, it stated, "Great story and illustration. I see you used some feeling words to describe the event."

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leadership has created structures and uses feedback to communicate high expectations to staff. The school consistently communicates expectations and offers feedback to families to help parents understand their child’s progress.

Impact

School wide systems of accountability and ongoing feedback to all constituents are leading to the improvement of student progress toward instructional expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) plan for their students. This formalized plan allows all stakeholders, including students, an accountable structure that clearly defines the expectations for how behaviors, including positive conduct, are handled throughout the school. School leaders shared that with the high number of students on the autistic spectrum, the plan allows for teachers to be creative in how they meet the needs of their individual students. The PBIS plan is shared with all teachers, parents and individual students with feedback given to parents through a two-way communication log/notebook.
- The school communicates their expectations using a variety of structures such as Parent University. The purpose of these series of workshops is to keep the parents informed on a variety of monthly topics aligned to college and career readiness. Topics are chosen by parental needs, scheduled based on parent request timeframes and are also facilitated using variety of modalities. For example, a series of workshops were given in the area of math and tackling the state tests. A tear-off provided data to the school about the topics needed to be addressed and the best times for the workshops to take place. The data gathered helps all constituents understand the areas that need to be targeted. Based on end of workshop surveys, data is collected from parents on their needs or learning requests as well as timing for sessions. For example, based on these surveys, parent workshops were given in the area of math. The staff utilized a variety of approaches and modalities to ensure parents could connect the expectations for learning and make home-school connections.
- A Professional Development (PD) Plan was created collaboratively with the PD Team. The PD Plan was an outgrowth of a teacher survey, administration’s observations and administrative mandated workshops. The plan included team meetings, school-wide initiatives aligned to the updated instructional focus on using text-based evidence to produce and support arguments in writing, and citing clearly to support conclusions when writing to sources. The plan outline gave dates, activities, participants’ objectives, the activities, evidence that the administration expected as an outcome and the role of the supervisors. The document was public for all stakeholders to view and it delineated everyone’s responsibilities.