



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

William Wilcox

31R048

**1050 Targee Street
Staten Island
NY 10304**

Principal: Jacqueline Mammolito

Date of review: December 2, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Roxan Marks

The School Context

William Wilcox is an elementary/intermediate school with 889 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 7. The school population comprises 4% Black, 18% Hispanic, 60% White, 17% Asian students and 1% Multi-racial and Native American. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 17% 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%.

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	Well Developed
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	Proficient
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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

All teachers engage in inquiry-based team meetings at the grade level and across levels to continuously refine teaching and learning. Collaborative teams use highly effective protocols to analyze classroom practice, examine assessment data and assess student work.

Impact

The work of grade level and vertical teacher teams has led to the creation of Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) aligned curricula and the design of units and lessons that engage students resulting in increased student outcomes, uniformity in practices across the school, and shared improvement in teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade level and vertical teams continuously research, reflect and work together to review student work products. For example, during a grade 2 meeting after looking at writing samples the team made a decision to adjust the unit after analysis of data revealed extensive knowledge in students in developing the lead introduction paragraph in writing.
- The work of teacher teams informs unit and lesson development. Teachers are constantly upgrading their maps based on data and student work. An example with fourth grade curricular calendar shows a strategic change in the sequence of math units based on beginning of the year assessment data and students' need derived from analysis of work products.
- Teacher teams analyze data including spelling inventory, unit assessments, vocabulary and other forms of data in order to identify areas to re-teach or fill in the gaps uncovered during data analysis. Cross-grade teams make sure communication is ongoing with the grade below and above leading to coherence across the school.
- Teachers work together to plan higher order questions that are inserted in units and lesson plans. They develop editing checklists with graphics supports, rubrics aligned to tasks and discuss and share effective strategies to support English language learners and special education students resulting in mastery of goals.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across most classrooms teaching strategies consistently promote multiple entry points that adequately address the needs of English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs). However, strategic entry points in lessons and higher quality supports, extensions and discussions vary across subject areas and classrooms.

Impact

In most classrooms teaching strategies including questioning and scaffolds enable students to engage in challenging work that demonstrates their thinking and participation; however, supports and extensions for higher performing students were not systemically observed in all classrooms as well as high levels of student ownership of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- In all classrooms teachers used graphic organizers to assist students to make mental connections with the content and teachers were explicit in connecting new concepts with prior learning. In one classroom students were engaged in “Table Top Twitter” activity exploring the guiding question, “What motivates people to explore and colonize other territories?” Students used close reading strategies to annotate and analyze short text, complete a graphic organizer and make judgment about three European explorers.
- Fifth grade students were following along in their text as the teacher read aloud sections of the book The Giver in order to help students understand the society in which the story takes place and using text to draw inferences. Students were provided with a story element chart to aid with recall, and index cards to support those students with tracking issues and the teacher wrote the ‘stop and jot’ responses on the overhead.
- Teachers support discussions in classrooms by asking a range of low to high questions using Depth of Knowledge (DOK) to vary the level of cognitive challenge and provide wait time to ensure engagement of most students in talking about the content. However, student discussions do not reflect high levels of thinking and ownership across classrooms.
- In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classroom the higher level students worked together to solve an Exemplars problem demonstrating various math strategies that lead to the solution. In some classrooms teachers offer higher performing students with additional assignments that provides cognitive challenge tasks that is located in a “Done Early” folder for students. Most teachers plan enrichment homework assignments for students performing above grade level; however, not all lessons include adequate extensions to support higher achieving students.
- Across classrooms teaching practices consistently provide multiple entry points for learners, for example in an ELA lesson visual supports were provided and to ensure accessibility the teacher clarified vocabulary to promote connections for students. Students were working in triads using photographs and text excerpts to find out more about the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake. The teacher documents student observations of photographs using a KWL anchor chart enabling others to learn from one another and synthesize their thinking.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and integrate the instructional shifts. Academic tasks promote higher order thinking and emphasize rigorous habits for all learners including English language learners (ELLs) and Students with disabilities (SWDs).

Impact

The school makes purposeful choices in planning and implementing a CCLS aligned curricula and academic tasks foster high level thinking across subjects and grades.

Supporting Evidence

- The school curricula provides effective integration of core subject areas aligned to CCLS and includes the use of workshop model, time for students' independent reading and planning that incorporates Universal Design for Learning (UDL) techniques which are embedded in units and lesson plans.
- Unit plans and lessons are planned with engaging content and tasks that enable students to develop a deep understanding and tasks provide students an opportunity to think at high levels while relating ideas from prior learning. For example, in the previous lesson students read "Islands of New York City" and were placed in two groups to explore the focus question, "What makes the landscape of New York City unique?" The unit plan showed sequential learning expectations and tasks that require students to formulate and test hypothesis.
- Curriculum plans include critical thinking, problem solving and interdisciplinary connections to support 21st century skills. Units provide links to other subject areas with essential vocabulary and questions that promote thinking and encourage discussions. Variety of complex texts, graphic organizers, and connections to technology is evident including the use of Bloom's Taxonomy to ensure questions that foster critical thinking are included in the unit and lesson plans.
- Lesson plan templates ensure coherence across grades and subjects and entail key elements to make curricula and tasks accessible for all learners. Essential questions and teaching points link to prior learning to allow students to make connections across lessons and units. Modeling and using exemplar work products, think aloud strategies, active engagement, independent practice, incorporating UDL strategies and assessment of learning to inform next steps or revisions next day lessons all serve to deepen understanding of curricula tasks.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school uses and creates assessments, rubrics that are aligned to curricula and CCLS standards providing actionable feedback to parents, teachers and students. Frequent checks for understanding and ongoing formative assessments including student self-assessments are incorporated into lessons across classrooms.

Impact

The use of formative assessment data and ongoing analysis of student work products are diagnostic and result in creation of targeted plans, strategic grouping and adjustments that meet all students' learning needs. Assessment practices result in progress monitoring of student mastery enabling teachers to provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students so that they are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- The use of rubrics and checklists afford students the opportunity to receive clear guidance when working in groups or independently on assignments. Students self-assess and conference with peers to make improvements to work products. The high expectations for learning are evident in all classrooms and teacher feedback is specific and informs students how to improve their work. For example, during the small group meeting all students were able to articulate their next learning steps based on teacher feedback, rubrics and the use of checklists along with conferencing with the teacher which has helped them to be more reflective and know what is required to improve their work.
- Teachers use ongoing checks for understanding including orally, visually and in writing with whole groups and individual students to continually monitor understanding during lessons. In the vast majority of classrooms teachers used assessment rings that were color coded, thumbs up, students restate directions, turn and talk and exit tickets. These exit tickets are reviewed during preparation periods and adjustments are made to the lesson plans for the next day to further meet individual, group, or whole class needs.
- Across most classrooms data tracking sheets are used to guide the formation of student groups and to plan instruction during mini-lessons. This data analysis also informs instructional adjustments and additional scaffolding as well as tiered assignments based on skills or background knowledge to meet all students' learning needs.
- Grading policy is aligned with the school's Common Core curricula, thus promoting coherence in offering a clear portrait of student mastery across the school. Rubrics are utilized in all content areas. For instance, a mathematics rubric is used effectively to score students' work on problem solving, reasoning and proof, communication, connections and representation.
- Teachers use data from formative assessments, checks for understanding and exit tickets to plan for flexible instructional groups in classrooms and implement tasks that scaffolds learning making it more manageable as well as ensuring choice is provided to groups of students. During a math lesson in a fourth grade special education class a group of students worked on repeated patterns guided by the teacher, another group used more concrete tools to understand the task and students who demonstrated mastery were provided with a complex problem solving activity.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

There is a strong culture of accountability built on high expectations that are communicated to all constituents. Teacher teams and staff systematically create a culture of learning that conveys high expectations for all students that includes effective feedback and supports.

Impact

The school has embedded routines and practices that cultivate a culture of high expectations for staff, students and parents resulting in active partnerships with parents and support for students to achieve success.

Supporting Evidence

- Integrity and respect are core values embraced by the learning community and newly hired teachers attend orientation during the summer to ensure they are prepared and immersed in the culture of the school community. The staff and parent handbook provides clear expectations for all; the class code of conduct ensures that students are aware of what is required of them while attending the school. This code of conduct provides clear guidelines for student responsibility for the academic year including grading policy, rules and procedures, assignments and curricula expectations.
- The school partners with other schools in the community to provide visits to colleges for middle school students and the newly created law academy exposed students to Common Core curricula that mirror real world legal experiences. External partnerships with Fit for Life, Atlas Foundation and other local organizations support the development of students while promoting social awareness, fostering independence by continually accessing the interest and talents of their student population.
- Parents indicated that the school makes them feel like a family and staff always makes time to communicate with parents regarding student expectations and progress toward them. Teachers know the developmental, academic and social-emotional aspects of the children they serve as well as the unique characteristics each student embodies. Since the school has expanded to grade 7, parents voiced support for the school going to grade 12, citing the positive rapport and support the school provides for their children.
- The school provides ongoing communication and feedback to parents using online tools such as PupilPath that makes grades and assignments accessible to families. Parents shared that goals are established for their children, progress monitoring is ongoing, clear feedback and next steps for learning are provided on work products and invitation to school events such as publishing celebrations, open-school and workshops keep them informed and connected to their children.