



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

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2015-2016**

**P.S. 284 Lew Wallace**

**Elementary-Middle School K284**

**213 Osborn Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11212**

**Principal: Keva Pitts**

**Date of review: March 10, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio**

## The School Context

P.S. 284 Lew Wallace is an elementary-middle school with 539 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 0% Asian, 68% Black, 31% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 9% English Language Learners and 24% students with disabilities. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 89.4%.

## 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 <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , 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>Developing</b>

## Area of Celebration

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

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff and provide training towards them. Staff communicates high expectations to families and provides ongoing feedback to parents on their child's progress.

### Impact

Systems of accountability are in place that foster high expectations among staff. Parents are aware of their child's progress towards college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school provides monthly newsletters from the principal on the non-negotiables for reading instruction to remind staff of their instructional foci. Each principal newsletter contains all six reading instruction requirements including student choices for independent reading, participation in book talks with peers, maintenance of stamina charts and book baggies for use in school and at home. Assistant principals provide newsletters with instructional and other ongoing reminders for teachers. These items include ideas to implement techniques aligned with the instructional focus on engaging the students in discussion such as the four corners post discussion questions to be posted in the room, using accountable talk stems, small group choice of questions and utilizing turn and talk methods.
- Feedback to teachers based on the instructional foci are provided on newsletters and debrief sessions between school leaders and staff. In one newsletter, the principal provides suggestions to improve student engagement based on school-wide observations such as using data to form groups and planning activities that offer choices and opportunities for students to work together. After conducting teacher-specific observations, school leaders have suggested techniques to further engage students such as using the cold call strategy and having students use prompts such as "I agree..." and "I disagree..."
- Parents reported that the school has "Meet the Teacher" afternoons where they have an open door policy for all families. During this time, parents can speak with teachers about concerns regarding their child's progress. Several parents find this opportunity helpful. Progress reports are provided four times a year which contain information about their child's progress between report card distributions. Additionally, parent workshops are offered throughout the year on testing requirements, math strategies including new methods and teachers provide websites which all parents have found useful in enhancing their learning process at home. Furthermore, parents shared a high interest in the Partnership with Children organization which provides them with extra resources for helping their child with reading and offers mentoring opportunities for the students.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Teacher practices are inconsistent in the use of scaffolds and strategies for multiple entry points to engage students in challenging curricula. Discussions and work products reflect uneven levels of student thinking.

### Impact

Teacher pedagogy is in the process of enabling students to demonstrate higher-order thinking in discussions and work products across classrooms.

### Supporting Evidence

- In a grade 4 social studies lesson with students with disabilities, the teacher formulated groups where each participant was expected to work with others to identify the type of land using pictures. Students identified features such as water, mountain and desert. However, when asked what the benefits of living by the water are, only two of the four groups had some students who provided a clear explanation that answered the question. Some responses include, “Go fishing or sailing” and “Water helps us survive and is good for you.” Other groups responded with recall or identification of facts.
- In a grade 2 ELA class, students were asked to determine the details that support the main idea of a story. The lesson consisted primarily of teacher-to-student questions and answers allowing four students to give verbal responses and underline answers on the instructional chart displaying an excerpt from the story. Several students did not raise their hands to participate nor did their graphic organizers reflect accurate or completed responses.
- During the mini lesson in a kindergarten writing class, students were asked to turn and discuss with a partner what could happen to a person if he does not use a helmet on his head when playing soccer. When prompted to discuss, only three partnerships focused on the task. The teacher asked students to create a warning they could add to their whole class how-to book on making peanut butter sandwiches. Some students discussed the prompt and were more engaged, yet other students did not provide clear responses to answer the questions or conduct a discussion with their partner.

## Additional Findings

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

The school's curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards or content standards, integrate the instructional shifts and emphasize rigorous learning habits in tasks.

### Impact

The curricula reflect rigorous tasks which incorporate higher-order thinking, promote college and career readiness across grades and subject areas for all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders and staff decided to utilize *GO Math!* for all grades this year to help build coherence in math across the school. Another decision which started this year was to implement the *Teachers College Reading and Writing Project* (TCRWP) kindergarten through grade 8 units in writing. This decision allowed for more support from TCRWP coaches and an additional literacy coach to engage teachers and their teams in curriculum planning for writing. For reading, the school uses *ReadyGen* for kindergarten through grade 5 and the *Code X* program supplemented with *EngageNY* tasks in grades 6 to 8. Teacher-created unit plans in social studies and science align with the New York City scope and sequence as well as the content standards for the grade.
- Unit and lesson plans reflect an emphasis on opinion writing focused on stating claims and providing evidence for them as well as the use of academic vocabulary. In a grade 4 social studies lesson plan, the task requires students to refer to details and examples when explaining what the text says and convey ideas and information in writing clearly. In a grade 6 science lesson plan, the task incorporates several Tier 3 vocabulary words and integrates the ELA shift on building knowledge across disciplines to describe the phases of matter and the behavior of particles per phase after conducting an experiment.
- The teachers are asked to use the *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) matrix as a tool to plan challenging questions for unit and lesson plans. In a grade 4 unit plan, essential questions were included such as: "How can you model multiplication comparisons?" and "How can you use place value and partial products to multiply a multi-digit number by a 1-digit number?" In a grade 5 ELA lesson plan for an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, shared reading questions for students reflect an alignment to DOK level 3. These questions included: "What problems did African-American men experience when they served in World War II?"; "How were African-American soldiers treated in France and England and how was it different than the way they were treated in the United States?"

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

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics, grading policies and other assessments that are aligned to the curricula to determine student proficiency. Checks for understanding and self-assessment are in the process of being used to gauge in-the-moment student understanding during lessons.

### Impact

Actionable feedback regarding student achievement and making effective adjustments following teacher assessment practices are beginning to meet student learning needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school uses multiple sources to assess students' level of proficiency in ELA and math including *ReadyGen* and *GO Math!* tasks. *Measures of Student Learning* (MOSL) performance tasks are used three times a year across subject areas. Rubrics are aligned to the grading policy and curriculum to provide teachers with information on student performance. However, some written feedback across classrooms reflected limited responses from teachers to students. In some classrooms, although the rubric was posted with the task, the feedback or at times the grade did not align with it. In one class, a student was given a Level 2 for neatness and Level 4 on the rest of the rubric. The feedback provided was to complete the responses in full sentences. This did not align with the quality of the student work as the response was missing an explanation, yet received a Level 4 in this area.
- During a meeting, students were able to identify how to use their rubrics to determine their grade on a task. Students discussed that they are focusing on improving their reading goals this year. However, when reviewing their work, some students were unclear on how to use their feedback as a next step to improve the quality of their work. One student stated that her feedback asked her to use the five-step process. When asked what the process was, the student was unable to articulate what the term meant. Additionally, another student stated that her feedback meant she needed to do her homework. However, when reviewing the work product, the feedback asked her to work independently.
- In a grade 7 math class, students were grouped based on their performance in previous assessments. Tiered groups engaged in tasks based on their ability levels. The teacher used questioning to check for student understanding and assisted several students through one-to-one re-teaching of operation concepts with inequalities. Students were able to complete the task independently after receiving support. Although in some classes, teachers were observed checking for understanding, effective adjustments were not as prevalent. In addition, evidence of student self-assessment checklists or peer assessment was evident in some classes on student work products for ELA. Across other subject areas, work products containing self or peer-assessment was not evident in student folders.

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in professional collaborations where inquiry-based work is in the process of developing consistent structures for monitoring student progress and teacher practice toward school goals and the Common Core Learning Standards.

### Impact

The work in teacher teams does not yet result in improved teacher capacity and progress toward goals for target groups of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly to work on unpacking standards and formulating units of study. Based on a review of teacher team notes across grades, teachers are creating essential questions, targeting standards, focusing on key objectives and their sequence, and determining texts, materials and assessments to align with the curricula. In some of the notes, teachers use the tuning protocol to analyze student work to determine trends across the grade and provide warm and cool feedback toward next steps. In grade 4, teachers reviewed trends from a chapter two test in math. Some of the findings included that the students struggled with multiplication of two- and three-digit numbers because they do not remember their tables and have comprehension issues with word problems. Next steps included re-teaching of multiplication strategies and comprehension strategies such as close reading and rereading. However, detailed descriptions of how these strategies would be utilized and monitored across lessons by the team were not stated in their notes. Similarly, this limited descriptive evidence of inquiry work was reflected across grades in teacher team notes.
- During a grade 4 team meeting, a teacher provided information on a student with a disability to the group along with some of his previous tests to examine the work and determine whether his services could be decreased in math. The teacher provided details regarding the student's current level of performance, information on services received and behavior with adults and other peers. Teachers used the tuning protocol to provide warm feedback stating that the child has grown in math across the year based on the tests and would be willing to add him to their general education roster for two days a week as a trial basis. They discussed providing him with a class buddy to ease the transition and stated their next step would be to contact his parents. Although the teachers used a protocol to discuss student work, evidence to demonstrate how they would monitor the progress of this student or how they have monitored others as a team was not shared. In addition, teachers did not discuss any teaching strategies to build grade-level capacity.
- During a teacher meeting, some teachers were able to discuss how they have used student work to make curricular and instructional changes. In grade 8, after noticing students had difficulty solving certain types of equations, the teachers decided to re-teach some of the grade 7 skills instead of assuming that they were already acquired. In grade 3, a teacher stated that her team reviewed student work to determine gaps in writing and noticed that students needed more work on using transition words and crafting a strong conclusion. The team decided to revisit the skills via small group instruction. Although, some teams are using protocols to analyze gaps in understanding their target students' work, evidence on how this work has built capacity and improved teacher practices was not prevalent.