Quality Review Report

2018-2019

Williamsburg Preparatory School
High school 14K561
257 North 6 Street
Brooklyn
NY 11211

Principal: Michael Shadrick

Dates of Review:
November 1, 2018 - November 2, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Edward Hazen
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Celebration to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Focus to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as Additional Finding. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

Williamsburg Preparatory School serves students in grade 9 through grade 12. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Culture</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td><strong>Area</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rating</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Systems for Improvement</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td><strong>Area</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rating</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

The school leaders and faculty consistently communicate high expectations to families. A culture of maintaining high expectations for all students is communicated across the school community.

Impact

Systems of accountability for students and partnerships with families and Community Based Organizations ensure that all students, including high need subgroups, take ownership of their learning and monitor their progress toward graduation and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff implement effective strategies for communicating high expectations to students about college and career readiness and partner with families to ensure that all students meet or exceed those expectations. The school leaders partner with the College Bound to create a college readiness program that includes college ready workshops for students and parents, onsite college visits, and SAT and ACT exam preparation. Individualized coaching and support from advisors engage students and their families in discussions about curricula, pedagogy, and what it means to be college and career ready. Students are expected to be college and career ready as measured by the College Readiness Index (CRI) and the number of students receiving advanced Regents credits. As a result of this expectation, the percentage of students identified as college ready rose from 63 percent in 2017 to 74 percent in 2018, which is 13 percent higher than comparable schools.

- The school’s leadership team and faculty are committed to not only communicating high expectations to students but also building partnerships with families to provide the ongoing support for students to meet those expectations while promoting ownership of their academic work. The staff has clear, systemic structures, such as guidance, college preparatory advisement, and college counseling, that ensure that students are aware of progress toward their college and career goals. All students reported that ongoing college advisement and guidance interaction result in an awareness of the high expectations the school leaders and faculty have set, and they feel they are being adequately prepared for college level classes. Students also noted that the school’s partnership with College Now allows juniors and seniors to take college classes at The City University of New York (CUNY), further preparing them for college. Students expressed that the college office allows them to meet frequently with their guidance counselors and/or college advisors to ensure they are on track to graduate college ready for the next level.

- Students and parents reported that they are aware of the school’s expectations to prepare all students for college. The majority of students and their parents reported weekly use of the school’s online grading system, which allows students to monitor their progress in class on a regular basis, including monitoring their credit accumulation to ensure that they are on track to graduate. Moreover, students and parents expressed appreciation that they can access information about upcoming events and workshops via the school’s website in addition to traditional means. Senior level students at the high school level further reported that the support students receive through guidance and advisement was helpful in preparing them to apply for colleges of their choice. Further, the school has a partnership with Upward Bound, which provides additional supports such as assistance with finding financial aid for students from low income families and tutoring for those performing significantly below grade level. As a result, the graduation rate for students performing in the lower third increased from 5 percent in 2015 to 26 percent in 2017, 13 percent higher than comparable schools.
Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Findings**
Feedback to students based on curricula-aligned assessments results in actionable next steps for improvement. Across classes, teacher monitoring of student understanding during lessons results in instructional changes.

**Impact**
Meaningful feedback on student work products is not evident across the vast majority of classes, which limits opportunities for students to improve the quality of their work products in some subjects. Across grades and disciplines, teachers’ use of ongoing checks for understanding results in adjustments to instruction so that students can demonstrate their learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across grades and departments, teachers use common assessments and rubrics aligned to grade level curricula, the Common Core Learning Standards, and content standards. In Regents-bearing classes, teachers align rubrics to those from Regents assessments. To build consistency across disciplines, rubrics are used to assess student writing. For example, the math and science departments use rubrics to assess students’ ability to annotate texts and explain their rationales for using a strategy when solving a word problem. Students stated that the use of exemplars in conjunction with teacher and peer feedback has helped improve their writing in English Language Arts (ELA) and social studies, and, consequently, they feel more prepared for the constructed responses on the Regents exams. In addition, students shared examples of how teacher feedback about citing sufficient textual evidence to develop a counterclaim has resulted in their becoming more mindful of identifying strong evidence when writing argumentative essays.

- A review of student work revealed that the quality of actionable feedback that students received from teachers and peers varied across grades and classes. Students reported that the level of meaningful feedback is dependent upon the class they are in. Most students could articulate why they scored at a specific level on the ELA rubric and could explain how the feedback from teachers led them to improve their writing. However, some students were not sure if the rubrics they used in other classes aligned to the Regents exam rubrics or could not identify specific next steps to that would lead to mastery levels in their work products.

- Across classrooms, teachers use ongoing checks for understanding to make effective adjustments to instruction to meet the needs of all students. In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math class, the teachers used a do now entry ticket activity to determine students’ levels of understanding of how to use polynomial operations and factoring to solve a math problem. Based on their responses, students were placed in ability-based groups to work on specific skills. Similarly, in an algebra ICT class, teachers used exit slips from the previous day’s lesson to check students' understanding, helping determine student groups and target students who had not mastered the skill for additional instruction. Some students received support from their peers while others received small group instruction from the teachers. However, this practice was not observed across the vast majority of classes. In a Spanish class, the teacher had students complete five questions for a do now activity, then reviewed the answers with the whole class. The teacher checked students’ levels of understanding by having them raise their hands to show who had answered all five questions correctly, who had answered four out of five, and who had gotten three or less correct. Despite some students signifying that they had answered three or more of the questions incorrectly, the teacher transitioned to the next activity while indicating that she would be checking in with them later during their peer collaborative work.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Findings**

School leaders and staff have a process in place to ensure alignment of the curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and include rigorous academic tasks that are accessible for a variety of learners.

**Impact**

The curricula reflect integration of the instructional shifts, including rigorous academic tasks that build coherence across departments and grades and support college and career readiness for all learners. Teacher teams use structured common planning time to design lessons that ensure that all learners, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs), access lessons and are cognitively engaged.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders and faculty have developed a system and structure to ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core and content standards, integrate the instructional shifts, and make purposeful decisions to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. Teacher teams are assigned to a cohort with a school leader who works with teachers to review pacing guides, unit plans, and common assessments after each academic quarter. Across disciplines, teachers are expected to require students to make claims, counterclaims, and cite text-based evidence to support their arguments. When planning academic tasks, department teams are expected to include rigorous tasks to cognitively challenge students along with scaffolds to support the diversity of learning styles in their classrooms. Likewise, teachers are encouraged to include assessments of learning in their lesson plans, such as exit tickets, to determine the level of student learning that will inform the planning of subsequent lesson plans and units of study.

- A review of curriculum documents across grades and subjects indicates evidence of the integration of the instructional shifts in English Language Arts (ELA), math, social studies, and science. Across content areas and grade levels, teachers are expected to embed common rigorous and high engagement teaching protocols and tasks into units of study and lesson plans to promote student discussion and debate. In lesson plans, teachers include activities such as Socratic seminars, do nows, and on demand writing assignments to engage students in academic discourse. This further promotes coherence in creating student-centered lessons across grades and disciplines and ensures that students are becoming adequately prepared for college and careers.

- Staff members meet weekly during common planning periods to review and revise curriculum documents and lesson plans to ensure accessibility for all students. Based on the analysis of student work samples and assessment data, including formative classroom assessments, exit tickets, common teacher-created Design Your Own (DYO) assessments, and Regents exam results, teachers adjust lesson plans and curricula to include supports such as scaffolds and differentiated tasks. A review of meeting minutes and agendas indicates that most grade level and departmental team meetings focus on creating lessons that encourage student-centered tasks and provide students with group and individualized supports to allow multiple access points into the lesson through differentiation of assignments and leveled student grouping. School leaders confer regularly with department leaders to ensure that lessons foster high levels of student discourse and include higher order questioning to promote purposeful discussion and debate, with supports to ensure that students with disabilities and ELLs have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged.
### Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Findings

Teaching strategies provide varied entry points into lessons through the use of scaffolds, allowing all learners to participate in academic tasks and discussion.

#### Impact

Teaching practices result in multiple entry points into lessons for all learners. Most students engage in high levels of thinking and discussion, leading to the development of meaningful work products across grades and departments.

#### Supporting Evidence

- Across classes, academic tasks and supports such as graphic organizers, accountable talk stems and conversation starters afford students the opportunity to engage in challenging discourse, including students with disabilities, ELLs, struggling students, and higher performing students. In an Advanced Placement science class, students used a gallery walk protocol to travel in collaborative groups to multiple stations that represented different stages of the carbon cycle, so they could make observations about carbon atoms as they moved through the cycle. Students were provided with a packet of materials that included note catchers, graphic organizers, and guided questions to support them in asking higher order questions and make effective observations. Consequently, groups of students were heard making mid and high inference statements about why an atom could get stuck in a station, or stage, of the cycle, such as, “I think it’s possible that through the process of photosynthesis, the plant uses the carbon as a nutrient where the atom ‘sticks,’ but the oxygen is released back into the atmosphere.”

- In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) ELA classroom, students were required to close read passages from the play *Fences* to identify relevant quotes that would strengthen their arguments in their essays. The teachers modeled how to determine the context of a quote and make an informed decision on the strength of the quote in building a strong argument to support their claims. Students then engaged in an activity with a partner in which they were given multiple pieces of evidence and had to determine which ones were the strongest to support their arguments. Teachers grouped the students by ability in high and low pairs and provided them with written and verbal prompts and graphic organizers. All students were given time for peer feedback and were provided with sentence strips and sentence frames to ensure that they were citing sufficient evidence to participate in a meaningful conversation with their partners.

- In most classrooms, lessons and teaching documents demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of students’ learning needs, resulting in academic tasks and activities that are relevant and engaging. Most lessons include an “aim” or objective that aligns to the essential questions of the unit of study and a do now activity to engage students in an academic task as soon as they enter the classroom. In a living environment class, students were required to work in cooperative learning groups to determine how parts of a cell work together as a system to answer the essential question for the lesson, “What is the function of your specialized cell in the human body?” Students were required to cite evidence to support their interpretations and then share their findings with this evidence. The teacher revisited the lesson objective toward the end of the period by having students share their findings with the whole class. All groups engaged in the activity and were eager to participate.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders support the professional growth of teachers using cycles of observations. Feedback addresses strengths and challenges while including next steps for improvement.

Impact

School leaders have an effective system to observe teachers and support their practice through follow-up professional learning opportunities, resulting in the adoption of common instructional practices that promote professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leadership team has an effective observation cycle in place to support the professional development of teachers and provide actionable feedback on instructional practices. Additionally, the school participated in the Learning Partners Program (LPP) from 2015 through 2018, in which the school served as a host for other schools to share best instructional practices through informal peer-to-peer collaborations, classroom observations, and collegial feedback. Teachers report that participation in the LPP, along with meaningful feedback on formal observation by school leaders, has resulted in strengthened pedagogical practices in domain three of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. This is reflected in Advance data ratings from the 2017-2018 school year in which the school scored higher than the citywide average in all three subcomponents of this domain which focuses solely on classroom instruction, an indication that the school leaders’ observation cycle is having a positive impact on classroom instruction.

- The school’s instructional goals are clearly articulated in the school’s Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) and are shared with staff at the beginning of the school year. These include providing rigorous instruction with multiple entry points and appropriate scaffolds to ensure that all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, demonstrate increased mastery on the Regents exams. Additionally, teacher teams have identified schoolwide best practices as well as areas of need for growth which are communicated regularly to school leaders to support the planning of professional learning cycles for staff. Areas of need include the use of questioning techniques and scaffolds to provide multiple entry points into the lessons. Trends and patterns in instruction are also shared with teachers during professional collaboration time. In addition, teachers have the opportunity to meet bi-weekly with school leaders to discuss their progress toward meeting their individual professional goals, including what additional supports each teacher might need. A review of teacher observation feedback indicates comments to teachers that clearly articulate next steps for improvement and identify supports to improve their practice. For example, the next step from an observation of a math lesson was for the teacher to include scaffolds such as manipulatives and a part-part-total organizer to support student mastery of the learning objective.

- School leaders have established professional learning cycles which serve to support teachers in meeting the articulated instructional foci of the school. Within each cycle, teachers, in conjunction with school leaders, identify specific learning objectives that will strengthen their ability to engage students in the close analysis of text, promote high levels of student discourse, and have students write purposefully across grades and content areas. School leaders actively engage teachers in team work to analyze trends in instruction, student achievement data, and student work products to inform changes to pedagogy and curricula that are required in order to achieve the schoolwide goals. For instance, all lessons now begin with a do now activity to maximize learning time and promote student engagement.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based collaborations that align to the school goals and promote coherence in pedagogy and implementation of the Common Core and instructional shifts across disciplines.

Impact

Across grades and departments, teacher teams’ use of a structured protocol to systematically analyze assessment data and student work products has resulted in strengthened teacher instructional capacity, leading to improved student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- The vast majority of teachers are involved in collaborative inquiry teams that use a structured protocol to review student work and analyze assessment data to make curricular and lesson plan changes that align to the schoolwide goal of creating student-centered lessons. Teachers collaborate to create rigorous lessons that have students engage in purposeful academic tasks and authentic discourse, emphasizing high levels of thinking to promote college and career readiness. The departmental teams engage in inquiry work to examine the impact of specific instructional strategies on student achievement. After revisions are made to curriculum documents and lesson plans, identified strategies are implemented in classroom practice and the teams reconvene to assess which strategies had an impact on student learning. Teaching practices identified as effective in addressing a gap in achievement are emulated across grades and content areas, resulting in schoolwide instructional coherence. For instance, the common instructional practice of ending lessons with exit tickets or student problem sets allows teachers to understand the depth of understanding in their classes and make further adjustments to upcoming tasks, lessons, and assessments.

- Teachers reported that as a result of common collaboration time, there has been a positive impact on their professional practice and student learning as they have time to share and discuss specific pedagogical strategies and practices that can improve student engagement. Teachers reported analyzing formal as well as informal assessments, such as exit tickets and benchmark assessments, to determine how high levels of classroom discussion informed students’ stances on a topic of debate, impacting their ability to back their claims with sufficient supporting textual evidence. Teachers further noted that as teacher teams added supports such as guided notes and tiered tasks for students and pushed them to use academic vocabulary and accountable talk, the students responded by engaging in meaningful scholarly discussion, thereby strengthening their progress toward the goal of increasing high levels of student discourse in all classrooms.

- Teacher teams meet during common planning time to analyze assessment data from a variety of sources, including exit tickets, class participation notes, and formal and mock New York State Regents exams. School leaders and teachers also administer DYO common assessments in each content area to provide teachers and teacher teams with baseline data to inform changes to curricula and instruction and to plan supports for students they are focused on to close the achievement gap. Likewise, the data is used to create instructional groups and provide targeted interventions for struggling students. These practices have resulted in an increase in the graduation rate from 90 percent in 2016 to 95 percent in 2017.