



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Margaret Mead School

Public School 209

**2609 East 7th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11235**

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Margaret Mead School is a pre-kindergarten through grade 8 school with a population of 720 students from culturally diverse backgrounds. Of the student population 46% are White, 33% are Asian or Pacific Islanders, 13% are Hispanic and 8% are Black. The community is home to many students newly arrived in the country from Russia, the Middle East and Central America.

English language learners form about twenty percent of the student population and just less than 10% are special education students. The school receives Title 1 funding. Attendance at 96% is consistently above the figure for similar and City schools. The school benefits from an experienced and stable staff. It has a higher percentage than found in similar and other City schools, of teachers who have been teaching longer than 5 years and the percentage that remains teaching in the school for more than two years is also above average.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- There is effective use of the wealth of data gathered throughout the year, to track the progress of students and plan instructional programs.
- The school respects and values each student as an individual, fostering good relationships between students and an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- There are very good systems for reaching out to parents to involve them and support them in sharing in their children's education.
- High expectations of student engagement in their own learning and well established systems for checking absences, ensure consistently high attendance.
- All staff are committed to providing a safe, supportive and nurturing atmosphere where students can flourish both academically and personally.
- Displays of students' work help to create a lively environment that both captures the interest of the students and celebrates their achievements.
- Support staff are deployed well to ensure that all special education students and those who are English language learners make good progress.
- The principal is highly effective in empowering her staff to take responsibilities and play an equal part in the continued improvement of the school.
- The school, through the principal's good lead, fosters a strong culture of team work between staff, students and parents.

What the school needs to improve

- Consider more formal ways to analyze performance data by ethnic group and gender.
- Continue to develop student conferencing, so that staff set increasingly clear goals and students know even more precisely what they have to do to improve their work.
- Develop further, the teachers' skills in using technology, to better analyze the available performance data.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The principal, assistant principal and other administrators lead the school effectively. They know their students well and are committed to raising their achievement and to developing their skills for lifelong learning. Teaching is lively and purposeful and their lessons are fun and interesting. The students concentrate and behave very well in class. The school provides a nurturing culture whilst having high expectations for each student.

The school values each child as an individual, based on good relationships and mutual respect. Parents speak highly of the school, its caring culture and the efforts made to include them as fully as possible in their children's education. They are very satisfied with the school and pleased with the progress their children make.

Staff at all levels use data well to monitor and analyze students' progress and raise their achievements but do not analyze the performance of specific groups of students sufficiently. The staff are eager to develop their expertise further through an increased use of technology. Professional development takes place in a culture of support and collaboration with teachers engaged in a constant dialogue about students' achievement. Teachers have identified the need to refine and develop further the existing process of student conferencing to set even more precise goals.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school uses a wide range of assessments and portfolios to provide teachers with a full picture of each one of its students. The principal and school cabinet are concerned to track the standards that students reach each year and also to track the rate of progress over time, of individuals and groups. The principal ensures that other key staff have access to a comprehensive range of information and interpret the data accurately in order to make the right decisions when allocating resources and planning learning programs. This information is being shared increasingly with all teaching staff.

The school has been particularly successful in developing assessments for its special education students and English language learners. It evaluates regularly and effectively, the impact of its intervention programs to check the extent to which individual students benefit. There is a clear procedure for tracking every student throughout the year and timely contact is made with parents to address any concerns.

The school uses data well to compare its performance against similar schools. It understands where performance may have dipped and why. Overall, student achievement remains strong with significant numbers of students gaining places at sought after local schools. Whilst the school interprets and uses the data well, it knows it needs to develop

this further to include more probing analyses of the performance of ethnic and gender groups.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and St Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The various school teams work very closely to create an effective web of practical help for each student. Meetings are well led and make good use of data. This enables staff to focus on what is best for the student and agree points for action. Links between the work of the different teams and classroom teaching are very effective. They make a positive impact on the students’ progress. Students who are targeted for academic and pastoral support receive high quality, thoughtful interventions with clear goals by which to show improvement. This process is being extended and developed throughout the school. The existing system of student conferencing is being used and widened to ensure that all students are fully aware of what they need to do next in order to improve.

Administrators and teachers assiduously check the progress of those students in the greatest need of improvement. If one strategy does not work then changes are swiftly made and alternatives tried. The school believes that every child has the ability to succeed if he or she can be helped to find the key that opens the door to learning.

The school communicates clearly with parents and involves them right from the start in their child’s learning. The parents greatly appreciate the ready access they have to staff and the timeliness with which teachers let them know of any concerns. Considerable effort is made by the school to ensure that all parents feel equally welcomed as part of their children’s education. For example, those families where English is not the first language are provided with a translation service as well as opportunities to learn English.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The literacy and mathematics coaches play an extremely valuable role in ensuring that the school’s programs for mathematics and balanced literacy are fine-tuned in the light of available data. The recent expansion and development of the school’s libraries and reading programs is a direct response to a problem identified this way. Improvements were planned and resources assigned appropriately. Students in all classes benefit from the strong emphasis on the importance of literacy to promote better knowledge and skills in every subject.

Scheduling decisions are guided and modified by analysis of the data and students’ needs. This responsive approach reinforces the school’s commitment to meeting the students’ needs. For example, flexible organization enables students to move between classes, where it is judged this will help accelerate their learning. Assessment information is used well to assign students to heterogeneous classes and to identify where additional support can be targeted.

The teachers are reflective and thoughtful about their work and have a strong commitment to the success of their students. The students are confident that they have someone to turn to if they need help and they feel that they are treated with respect. The culture of collaborative working that exists between the staff and between staff and parents extends to the students. In class, students listen carefully to one another and are confident in sharing their own ideas. The school's collaborative culture and the encouragement of the teachers effectively reinforces the students' respect for one another's views.

Lessons are planned well, carefully structured, and follow agreed routines and rubrics to give the students a coherent and purposeful experience. The teachers have a good understanding of the ways in which they can help students to remain on task, learn successfully, behave very well and really enjoy their work. Displays around the classroom are used very effectively to support instruction as well as to celebrate students' work.

There are well-established procedures for promoting good attendance. Data is used to target intervention and improve the attendance of classes or individuals. Attendance is higher than the average for City schools and even higher than that for similar schools.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school hires staff with a view to balancing curriculum needs and teaching experience. Professional development is seen as the key in the school's drive to raise standards and is closely aligned to the school's goals and priorities for improvement. Opportunities are created for the teachers to work collaboratively and to learn from each other. The outcomes from good practice such as inter-visitations and joint planning, are regularly evaluated in terms of students' learning and used to further develop staff competence. The current focus is to extend teachers' understanding and skills at other grade levels.

The cabinet knows the capabilities of each individual staff member well. There is a comprehensive program of classroom observations followed by discussions of what was effective and where improvements could be made. As a result, administrators and teachers are able to check continuously the impact of instructional practice on learning outcomes for students. The two coaches work in close collaboration and their expertise in promoting the use of data to improve instruction has had a significant effect on raising standards and students' progress.

Where the school identifies the need for additional expertise it establishes well-considered partnerships with outside bodies to support and extend students' learning. The school runs smoothly because its procedures are continuously evaluated and the opinions of all members of staff are sought and valued.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school has a well-established team of experienced staff, which has developed further under the principal's effective leadership. They fully support her in striving for excellence and understand what she is aiming to achieve.

Reflection and self review are integral parts of the school's culture. Administrators and teachers work collaboratively, think critically and encourage their students to do the same. They are not afraid to admit that something is not working as intended or make mid-course adjustments in the light of objective evidence. Staff teams frequently use data to measure how successful plans have been in achieving their stated goals. The Comprehensive Education Plan provides a sharp analysis of where improvements have been made and which groups of students need to be targeted to accelerate progress. It has clear and measurable goals for future school improvement.

The use of data underpins decision making on a day-to-day basis and the school cabinet constantly evaluates the data to link cause and effect. A strong emphasis is placed on the development of objective and reliable methods of diagnostic assessment to enable the school to compare outcomes across grades, subjects, classrooms and groups. Teachers are eager to become more competent in the use of technology to analyze with greater efficiency the increasing amount of data that is becoming available in schools.

A significant strength lies in the flexibility with which the school realigns the curriculum. This is because it has well-established collaborative working at all levels. Instruction is organized to respond through all forms of assessment to the identified needs of individuals and groups of students. The school is effective in identifying how to accelerate the learning of its most needy students whilst also putting the same emphasis on challenging all students to do even better.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Margaret Mead School (PS 209)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score			X

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each student, classroom, grade level, 			X
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 		X	
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all other categories of interest to the school* 		X	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.			X
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.			X
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.		X	
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.			X
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X