



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Marine Park

Middle School 278

**1925 Stuart Street
Brooklyn
NY 11229**

Principal: Debra Garofalo

Dates of review: October 1 - 3, 2007

Reviewer: Richard Woolf

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Marine Park is a middle school with 1083 students from grade 6 through 8. The school population comprises 55.9% Black, 13.1% Hispanic, 25.7% White, and 4.6% Asian students. The student body includes 3.6% English language learners and 9.2% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 94%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school is divided into three academies. Each academy includes classes for gifted and talented students and self-contained classes. An assistant principal, a dean and a student counselor support each academy and remain with the students throughout their school career at Marine Park.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The work of the school in supporting the progress of special education students and English language learners is exceptional.
- The identification and addressing the needs of special groups, including those who demonstrate academic and other talents, is first class.
- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum enhanced by the well-recognized and celebrated music and arts programs.
- There are strong and supportive systems in place for the induction of new staff.
- The principal supported by a team of professional assistant principals and coaches offers strong leadership and vision.
- The school's organization into academies is a strength.
- The staff are hardworking and dedicated and are respected by the students.
- The school provides good physical conditions, which are conducive to learning.
- Parents are supportive of the school's vision and aspirations.

What the school needs to improve

- Undertake more rigorous data analysis against the subgroups of gender and ethnicity and conduct comparisons with similar schools.
- Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of differentiated instruction throughout the school to further student learning.
- Incorporate the use of technology into student learning and staff analysis of data.

Part 3: Main findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Marine Park provides a welcoming, safe and attractive environment for its students to develop into lifelong learners. The principal, supported by her staff, is providing opportunities for students to realize their ambitions. The staff challenge every one of them to reach and surpass their personal goals. The music and arts programs pay testimony to this by providing outlets for talents, which may have gone unnoticed in other schools. It is gratifying to see how those students who find academic work challenging are similarly encouraged to succeed. The students acknowledge that their school is very good, and is a place where teachers expect them to work hard and behave appropriately. The high expectations required of students are constantly reinforced with incentives and rewards for them to do well in school. The parents support the work of the principal and her staff and appreciate the time and effort they put into improving their children's education. They share the ambition of the principal to expand and become a high school to serve the local community.

The school has made some progress in addressing the areas identified in the previous Quality Review, particularly in the areas of goal setting aligned to achievement and improving grade 8 outcomes. However, the teachers are aware they have still to develop their teaching techniques to demonstrate the effective application of differentiated instruction. The inquiry team has made a positive start in its deliberations and has identified groups of students for closer monitoring over the coming academic year.

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 the student's progress over time.

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

The school's use of data is well developed and has an impact on raising the achievement of its students. The data generated from State tests and the school's own internal diagnostic assessment informs the administration of the progress students make at each subject, grade level and individually. This allows for the early identification of students who may be struggling to achieve their targets or who may require enrichment activities. This approach has been integral to furthering the progress of special education students and English language learners. The data gathered informs the decisions the principal has made in forming smaller teaching groups and providing additional staff.

The school does not yet use the data as effectively to analyze progress by gender and ethnic groups or to compare itself with similar schools. The school has effective structures to show progress over time. This is a growing strength, as assistant principals and their teams stay with one grade level throughout their entire time at the school. This enables them to build up a vast array of informative data on their students' individual progress. The school is confident its teachers are able to use data effectively in tracking students and the progress they make during the academic year. There are systems in place to record and monitor data to inform next-step learning goals. The school is welcoming the introduction of new data retrieval systems, to assist their planning and evaluation procedures.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

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

There is a range of school-wide data showing how the planning and setting of goals is improving achievement across subjects, grade levels and individual student achievement. The school is able to demonstrate clearly how the use of external tests, ongoing internal teacher assessments and student conferences are improving outcomes. The school reinforces this by the use of a whole school grading policy across the faculty. The principal has systems in place to ensure that teachers comply with formal procedures and these are used at the conclusion of each marking period to demonstrate whether teachers and students are on track to meet their goals. The principal demonstrates at every opportunity her determination to improve the outcomes of special education students, English language learners and those who demonstrate academic and other talents. Therefore, the goals set for these groups are monitored particularly closely by the administration.

The principal has put in place clear goal setting procedures to demonstrate the high expectations required of students and that by hard work they will be able to achieve their goals. The parents endorse this as a way of improving the school as a whole. The parents are constantly informed of the goals of the school and the expectations for achieving success. In order to assist in this drive this year the parent association raised monies to provide every student with an *academic planner* to record their targets, goals and progress to date. The early indications of this venture seem to be successful. There is genuine dialogue between parents and teachers in order that students make the required progress set by their individual goals.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

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

The school emphasizes the importance of developing the whole child both academically and personally. In addition to the core curriculum, the school offers a foreign language, physical education and a superb arts program to every student. This has had the effect of raising overall student achievement in State testing.

The teaching of music and the success of the three performing bands is testimony to the dedication of the entire school community in achieving City and State recognition. The

development of artwork within the school is seen as a strength, especially as a source of motivation amongst the special education population.

The three assistant principals acknowledge the independence they are given by the principal to develop their academies. This allows them to challenge teacher expectations and improve curriculum delivery, in a non-threatening manner to raise student outcomes. However, the school does not yet challenge the effectiveness of differentiated teaching and learning amongst its general education population with the same rigor as it does with the special education students and English language learners.

The principal is exceptionally resourceful in the use of the budget. She carefully uses all available data to inform her decision-making. A clear example of this has been the formation of smaller classes with additional teacher support to aid learning amongst the special education students.

There has been a significant climate change within the school over the last three years and this has had the effect of improving trust and relationships between the staff and students. There are measures in place to reward excellent attendance for students. The increased rates of attendance have contributed to the improvement in overall student achievement.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

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

Teacher professional development is proving to be a growing strength in aligning teacher knowledge to student instruction. The principal manages an effective professional development program within limited resources. A great deal of the work of the literacy and math coaches is to deliver in-house professional development according to needs identified by individual teachers and the assistant principals who are in daily contact with their academy teachers.

The common preparation time is used effectively to turnkey information for subject and grade level staff. Teachers recognize that extra professional development is always useful but feel they make exceptionally good use of their sessions. The staff feel supported by the administration and valued for the contributions they have made in raising school achievement. The high level of discussion that takes place in meetings demonstrates the extensive knowledge of the students and their needs. The principal has strong and supportive systems in place for the induction of new staff and teachers. This has been appreciated and welcomed by new teachers as being a strength of the school as it has allowed them to engage speedily with their students and colleagues in a professional non-threatening manner.

The school has developed a citizenship program whereby students are given help and guidance to take their "next steps" as they progress through the school. This is particularly important for grade 8 students as they manage the transition to high school. The school is well managed and the establishment of the academy structure has greatly assisted in this. A dean and a school counselor aid the assistant principals in the development of their work. The effect of this has been the fostering of close relationships between staff and students. The parents appreciate that the academy structure has aided in making a safe and secure environment in which their children can learn.

The school is supported by a vast array of outside organizations whose contribution has been immense in improving the life chances of its students. The most notable of these are VH1, New York University and Brooklyn College.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

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

The school's goals and plans are set with the clear objective of raising student achievement. The cycle commences early in each academic year with a thorough examination of how successful the school was in reaching its previous targets. The parents are included in this process and the group responsible for the production of the Comprehensive Education Plan meets at regular intervals throughout the year to check on the effectiveness of the interim plans.

These interim plans are shared with teaching staff who then map them into subject, grade level and student outcomes. The principal includes a percentage year-to-year increase on all measurable outcomes. However, as she delegates day-to-day responsibilities to the assistant principals for the management of their grade levels, it is their planning which ensures overall targets are achieved by the tracking of individual students and cohort needs. The school has effective systems in place to take immediate action to revise plans as periodic assessments inform progress during the year. This type of planning, revision and flexibility has had a significant effect on improving overall student outcomes.

The entire school community appreciates the leadership and visionary zeal of the principal. It is apparent that she knows exactly how the school needs to develop and by sharing her plans and goals for the future, every person associated with the school is involved in helping her achieve success.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Marine Park (MS 278)	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?					X
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?					X
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?			X		
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X	

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?				X	
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?					X
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?					X
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?					X
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				X	

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to make strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X	