



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Marta Valle School

High School 509

**145, Stanton Street
New York
NY 10002**

Principal: Jayne Godlewski

Dates of review: May 21– 22, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Mary Crampsie

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Marta Valle is a middle school-high school with 485 students from grade 7 through grade 12. The school population comprises 16% Black, 69% Hispanic students 13% Asian and 2% other. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 85.9%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 82% eligibility.

Marta Valle is in the process of becoming a high school, with the middle school being phased out. The planned new middle school will be located on the same site. The school already shares the site with two other schools, one of which is a citywide special education provision. The school is barrier free and provides education for students with limited mobility. The school works with AUSSIE consultants and has recently been designated a model site for the use of technology.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well:

- The principal and administration lead by example and combine clarity of vision with excellent communication skills in order to drive school improvement.
- School leaders and faculty gather a comprehensive range of data to identify and improve the performance and progress of all students.
- The school uses a wide range of diagnostic tools to track student progress and measure the effectiveness of plans and intervention strategies.
- The principal has made careful strategic staffing, resourcing and scheduling decisions which clearly support improved student achievement.
- School leaders have provided high quality induction and professional development for teachers and ensured there are opportunities to observe and learn from each other.
- Collaborative goal setting is strength of the school and there is a culture of professional inquiry and engagement with learning about learning.
- Student support services and guidance and advice are well aligned to support the goals of the school.
- The school has developed some highly effective partnerships with a wide range of outside entities to support the academic and personal growth of students.
- The school is using technology effectively to deepen student engagement with learning as well as support curriculum mapping and the assessment framework.

Areas for Improvement

- Utilize available data more effectively to refine further strategic goals for student's projected achievement, based on their previous performance.
- Ensure that all teachers use school, classroom and student data consistently, to plan for and provide differentiated instruction to meet their specific needs.
- Continue to identify good practice in other schools and encourage staff to take opportunities to visit.
- Continue to ensure that school wide, teacher and student goals and action plans are specific, measurable, realistic and time related.
- Continue to work to involve more parents and the local community in the life of the school.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

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

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

School leaders rigorously gather and generate a wide range of data. They manipulate and interrogate this closely, enabling them to understand exactly how well each student, classroom and grade is performing, and to raise questions about progress. The principal and administration also identify trends in achievement as they impact on sub groups of interest to the school. The principal delegates effectively and has established a clear framework for support and accountability. This involves strategic deployment of the assistant principals, data specialists and grade leaders who work closely with and support the work of class teachers. Anticipating the separation of the two schools, the principal appointed data specialists to focus separately on the middle and high school. They have been trained in the use of Scantron and Acuity and passed their knowledge on to the class teachers. Training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of data to inform planning and instruction are strengths of the school.

The principal has fostered an ethos of professional engagement in learning processes and collaborative work at a number of levels. Excitement about learning now extends to how data can inform decision making. Plans and goals are set, but are not objectively measurable or time specific. The first priority for the principal was to address the tone of the school, but significant improvement in this area now allows the school to focus on learning and demand more of students academically. The school makes known its high expectations and has attempted to involve parents/caregivers in their children's education. The school communicates regularly with parents, but many of them are not involved in the life of the school. This is an issue the school is attempting to address. The school aligns instruction to goals set and uses resources efficiently to accelerate student learning. The principal has made professional development a priority to address the inconsistency in using data to inform instruction across the school. As a result, practice in assessment for learning, is improving. The principal and the administration lead by example, and model good practice. An extensive range of effective partnerships supports the personal and academic growth of students.

There has been good progress since the last review. The principal has made a number of strategic decisions which have had a positive effect. Communications and relationships are good and student achievement has risen. Strategic appointments have resulted in considerable improvement in the tone of the school. The work of the inquiry team has been effective in addressing the needs of lower achieving students and recently highlighted the need to focus on students' writing.

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.

School leaders are rigorous in gathering and generating a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data. Meticulous organization of this data has made it readily accessible to staff. An experienced data specialist has been employed to support school leaders update objectively and understand key messages about performance and progress. Grade level leaders have been invaluable in helping classroom teachers to understand and act on this information. Data is displayed accessibly in graphical as well as numeric form. School leaders and faculty know the data in detail and they interrogate it closely, so they understand exactly how well each student, classroom and grade is performing. Relevant data is constantly updated and held in assessment folders by every teacher. The progress of special education students is tracked effectively and individual education plans are reviewed regularly. A significant number of students who arrived at the school identified as having special needs are now achieving beyond expectation. The implementation of collaborative team teaching classes in the four core subject areas has resulted in greater academic success for both general education and special needs students. Similarly, English language learners are grouped in accordance with their NYSESLAT scores. As a result of effective classroom work, a number are no longer in need of language support.

The in school positive team also collect and analyse carefully data related to student success. School leaders are well aware of trends in relation to sub-groups and use data to consider appropriate intervention programs such as Ramp-Up and Read 180. The school monitors progress against previous performance much more rigorously now. However, leaders are aware that greater focus must be given to setting goals based on analysis of past performance and predictions for future achievement. The principal places a priority on encouraging both formal and informal networks. She has identified and shared good practice with other schools through mutual visits for staff and this needs time to become well developed. Management systems and procedures are in place to track student progress and support planning.

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 proficient.

The school leadership and staff at all levels work collaboratively to set challenging goals for improvement. The use of data has improved considerably at classroom, department and grade levels, helping staff to plan interventions and outcomes for individual students. One such plan was to allocate an English teacher to team teach with a social studies teacher. Outcomes from Global Studies Regents confirm that this helped improved scores by paying careful attention to how students construct assignments. Plans to support English language learners pay close attention to language, using key words and context to support decoding. Visual strategies as well as opportunities for speaking and listening are fundamental features of this approach. The inquiry team tracks and monitors the progress of lower achieving students and has carried out a critical analysis of tenth grade student's written work. This has highlighted the need to focus on student's handwriting.

The principal is an effective communicator and shares school wide goals with all members of the community. Academic goals are clear but are not yet sufficiently specific, measurable, achievable and timed. Teachers do not yet have the evidence to connect specific strategies with outcomes and then reframe goals in the light of progress. Students say they feel well informed about how they can improve. The school works hard to communicate with parents and invites them to share information to support their children's progress. Parents report that there has been a positive change in the amount and quality of the information they receive. The school is working to improve the level of parental involvement and has put effective systems and procedures into place.

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 proficient.

School leaders have begun to align instructional activity to goals very effectively. The curriculum now fulfils State and District mandates although the administration acknowledges there is more to do. Efforts to provide a broad and engaging curriculum include the introduction of helpful rubrics, models and frameworks, which scaffold learning for students. The school offers a wide range of courses that include advanced placement classes and electives in a variety of subjects such as marine biology, journalism and culinary arts. A feature of the instructional program is the effective integration of technology. Many classrooms have well used interactive whiteboards and shared laptops support class work effectively. The work of the AUSSIE team has supported curriculum developments such as "blogging". They also support teacher administration such as curriculum mapping. Teachers use their common planning time to develop curriculum maps, paying attention to literacy across the curriculum. These are then posted on a wiki, which allows them to view and further align curricula. This is still a work in progress, as curriculum maps seen were in a variety of formats. The development of assessment frameworks also has the potential to improve workload.

The administration holds teachers accountable for the progress and learning of students. Classroom observations demonstrated a consistently high level of engagement and work seen was interesting and motivating. Many teachers are using data effectively to plan for and differentiate instruction in order to meet the needs of their students. This is not yet consistent across the whole school. A small number of teachers remain to be convinced, although school leaders have made their expectations clear to all staff.

The principal's strategic budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions, based on data, have been effective in improving academic outcomes for students. One example is the transformation of the library from an area formerly used to "settle scores" to an attractive and well-managed resource. There is trust and respect between the majority of staff and students, who believe that their teachers have high expectations for them.

Attendance is lower than that expected for middle schools but higher than average for the district. Detailed procedures, such as student swipe cards, enable the school to monitor attendance and lateness closely and to collect and analyze a range of data each day. The school informs parents of any absence immediately and follows it up rigorously.

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.

Teachers value administration's regular formal and informal classroom observations, and the clear documentation which supports the feedback. The school has introduced the Professional Teaching standards and teachers identify goals at the beginning of each academic year. Professional development offered is in line with these goals and school priorities. Teachers share best practice in weekly grade level meetings and there are opportunities for intervisitation. Experienced teachers act as mentors to first year teachers. New teachers receive individual assistance from a veteran mentor who has received training in the Santa Cruz model. The assistant principals have expertise in English language arts, math and work with English language learners and they model good practice. AUSSIE consultants provide high quality professional development. There are weekend faculty conferences. The school does not yet make take full advantage of sharing best practice between colleagues, or learning from successful work in other schools.

A large team of social workers is based on site. Together with the guidance counselors, they provide support and guidance for students who require it. There is a state of the art college and career center and an annual fair is held to raise awareness of college life. There is an effective discipline code and the ethos and culture of the school is strongly focused on professional learning. Teachers confirm that the principal is "well respected" and a good listener who is both approachable and willing to accept suggestions. Students benefit substantially from an extensive range of partnerships with numerous organizations including higher education institutions. They include ENACT, an arts organization whose work focuses on drama based activities and the National Arts Club, which sponsors an annual art exhibition and creative writing program.

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 proficient.

The school's plans for improving student outcomes are based on a rigorous analysis of data. Administration and staff set challenging goals and assess them regularly, leading to revised action plans. While these plans are detailed, they are not yet produced in a format which makes them easily measurable. The introduction of 'backward design' to provide stepped interim goals has begun to address this. School leaders provide teachers with large amounts of data on student achievement in order to improve teacher outcomes. Grade level teams work hard to identify and meet the needs of their students and the majority of teachers differentiate work. The most effective differentiated instruction results form carefully planned content and specific student grouping. However, it is not yet possible to clearly identify the impact of the various strategies put in place to support students. Teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools conscientiously in order to measure the progress of individual students. Grade level teams have taken the initiative of producing databoards as a means of monitoring the student achievement visually, although the impact is not yet evident. School leaders make good use of technology to carefully track the results of periodic assessments and they use the data to inform the next stage of goal setting. This needs time to become well embedded. The principal has a very clear vision for the use of assessment for learning in the future development of the school.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Marta Valle School	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					

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 makes 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					

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped