



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Margaret Gioiosa School**

**Elementary School 003**

**80 South Goff Avenue  
Staten Island  
NY 10309**

**Principal: Donna Gioello**

**Dates of review: October 24 – 26, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Roger Fry**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Margaret Gioiosa is an elementary school with 793 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 6% Hispanic, 89% White and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance is 96%, which is higher than the average attendance rate for other elementary schools citywide. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school is located in two buildings, the annex accommodating grades 2 and 3.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal and senior team have a clear vision for the school's further development.
- Students have exceeded the citywide target for average yearly progress for the last four years and the school knows how it will reach next year's whole school targets.
- The school's skill analyses and assessment rubrics help teachers to organize lessons that meet students' next small steps in learning effectively.
- Teachers keep accurate records of individual student data and plan lessons that build successfully on students' previous knowledge.
- Special education students have their needs accurately assessed and the CTT lessons work very well.
- Instructional interventions and enrichment at the start of the day benefit the learning of all students.
- Relationships are outstanding so that a sense of trust and a positive safe learning environment prevail.
- Attendance is 3% above the City average.
- Students enjoy the extra time on English and math, art enrichment and science lessons because they find them interesting.
- Parents strongly support the school and communication is outstanding.

### What the school needs to improve

- Ensure staff in grade teams receive the necessary training to use the new student achievement and progress tracking systems to accelerate student progress.
- Continue to turnkey the reading and writing training received by the literacy coach for the benefit of all teachers to improve student achievement.
- Increase opportunities for teachers to share their instructional practice to improve instruction.

## 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 well developed.**

Since the last review, teachers' expertise in using data to accelerate students' progress has improved. Very recently, the administration has been quick to seize on the opportunity to develop the new student achievement and progress tracking systems developed by New York City. The challenge for gifted students has improved and they have, for example, enriching activities such as book club and greater opportunities to write at length. The school continues to reach high standards in math. A programme of workshops to support the reading and writing initiative are in place and all staff members are taking part. In response to the split site, they join together for professional development days and the principal spends two days a week at the annex.

Student achievement continues to be a strength since the school benefits from a very clear vision from the administrative team and principal. As a result of their work, there is a well developed sense of order and purpose in the school. The teaching has improved and teachers carefully assess how well students have learned new ideas. They teach again any aspect of the curriculum where students have struggled, often the next day before lessons start. Teachers keep accurate records of students' progress and make good use of them to plan lessons. This process benefits, for example, special education students.

Relationships are outstanding, and there is a calm and studious atmosphere in the school. Students enjoy all aspects of schooling and particularly the arts enrichment lessons. Consequently, attendance is above the city average. Parents strongly support the school and communications from home to school are strong. Parents' support for the school rubs off on their children and they are very well settled in their classes.

The school strives to do better every year. The inquiry team has begun work with enthusiasm. The principal and senior staff have already begun to build in new citywide initiatives for analyzing student data. They also continue to turnkey the reading and writing training to raise achievement in English language arts. Both these initiatives are work in progress. The school has also identified that teachers do not spend enough time sharing their practice so they can learn more from each other.

### **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 exceeded citywide targets for average yearly progress for the last four years. The school's success is due to the care and attention that teachers give to assessing what students know, understand and can do. Teachers keep a wide range of comprehensive records about students' performance. They have good records of students' progress in reading, writing and math. They record the results of unit exams, of 'accountable talk' that they have with students and conferences about what students have found easy or difficult in their work. Grade teams look at the overall performances of classes and of students to ensure that no-one is left behind. Teachers study students' scale scores and check to see that students make gains of at least one year's expected progress or more in a year. For those who do not make such gains, teachers review students' progress and interventions are agreed.

The administration and pupil progress team keep a close watch on students' performances. Special education students' individualized education plan targets are highly measurable; hence these students make good progress. When teachers review students' progress they present a wide range of evidence to help the pupil progress team find the right interventions for each individual student. For the few students who are English language learners, the school tests their understanding carefully to ensure that they have programs that meet their needs.

The administration already uses the new student tracking system to help make good the small drop in English language arts achievement last year. This new system and the new student progress checking system have yet to be explained to all staff so that they can use data more effectively.

**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.**

Administration and faculty work closely together. Faculty conferences, grade meetings, common planning preparation sessions and professional development days all contribute to the acceleration of students' learning. Goals for the curriculum have timeframes and the school works at a good pace in all that it does. Teachers and senior staff have a clear view of which individuals and groups are most at risk. The school has identified those students that need an initial push forward to improve their progress. The administration has gone further by using the new student tracking system to identify students whose progress will need to be accelerated in order for the school to meet its targets in 2008. The school has used a process of 'backward design' to do this, where the end result is the starting point for discussions. The administration then works backwards from that point, to set benchmarks for groups of students to meet Level 3 and 4 standards in the different grades.

Students who have not made average yearly progress have mandated time at the beginning of each day for extra practice in the skills that they lack. In this way, the school demonstrates to students and parents its consistently high expectations. Parents respond very positively indeed to what the school does. They support programs and report that information they receive about their children's performances is helpful. They also report that communications are a strength between parents and the school, which gives them confidence in the school.

Students have a clear view of their next steps in learning. They know their targets, because teachers regularly conference with them. The assessment rubrics that teachers and students use in classes also help to maintain a strong grip on the standards expected in each grade in English and math. The school embarked on a new approach to teaching reading and writing recently. There is still work to be done in training teachers in all aspects of this initiative.

**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 offers a broad curriculum which students enjoy. The day begins early for every student. Mandated students receive extra practice in the knowledge and skills that they need in English language arts and math. Other students have opportunities for enrichment, such as project work, to read for pleasure or to use the school's laptop computers for research. Students say how much they enjoy this work, where they have opportunities to decide for themselves what they learn. The self-sustaining program after school, including art residencies, is another strength in the programs the school offers.

Teachers are held accountable regularly for their work. The administration makes checks on assessment binders, the quality of bulletin boards and of students’ work. They also check the learning culture in lessons and the quality of questioning. As a result of this work, the consistency of teaching has improved since the last review. Lessons are most successful where tasks are differentiated for the capabilities of different groups within lessons. Differentiation is at its best in CTT lessons, where adults work with groups on different tasks and students make good progress. Teachers carefully differentiate the reading books that students have in all classes, so that they better comprehend the meaning of what they read, as well as read words. There are opportunities, occasionally, in general education lessons for teachers to set more difficult activities for high achievers from the outset of lessons.

“Honesty, respect, loyalty and trust” are well embedded in the work of the school. This is an outstanding feature; the climate for learning is so positive. As a result, attendance is a strength and students say how much they enjoy school.

**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 receive good support to develop their teaching skills. The literacy coach and grade leaders help less experienced teachers effectively. The outcome of this work is that the teaching is never less than proficient and is often well developed. During their many informal visits to classes, the administration notes any common points for improvement and includes them on agendas for meetings. In this way, the whole staff

learns together to improve the teaching. There are good plans in place to develop teachers' understanding of the new student progress and achievement tracking systems and to further develop the initiatives for teaching reading and writing. The program of support for teachers new to the profession is well developed. They receive good support from both the visiting mentors and the school's own mentor teachers and teach effectively.

Grade and planning meetings allow ample time for discussion and teachers are reflective.

The school has identified that more could be done to encourage teachers, many of whom have well-developed skills in aspects of teaching, to share them with colleagues. At present, instructional practice is shared proficiently. The literacy coach provides model lessons and some intervisitations are made between classes to further raise the standard of teaching.

All staff at the school work very well in teams. The psychologist, social worker, parent coordinator and guidance counselor all have an important place. Between teachers and this group, they effectively set goals for students, both academic and behavioral, and help students meet them. The school runs smoothly because all the committees mesh together effectively. In key areas such as discipline and behavior, arrival and dismissal, and evacuation procedures, the administration ensures that everybody knows what they have to do. The school has good partnerships with many organizations. One of the most important partnerships is that which helps the school improve the teaching of reading and writing. The whole school push in this area is consistent and well organized and is leading to better learning.

**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 enquiry team has made a good start to using the new system for monitoring student achievement and progress. Previously, the school had proficient systems for ensuring that student outcomes improved and that interim goals were set over measurable periods of time. Teachers, for example, have carried out skills analyses and have used an efficient commercial system to do this for some years.

From the various assessments of students' learning, use of diagnostic tools to help special education students learn faster and regular meetings to discuss student progress, the school has maintained good levels of achievement among students. Teachers make regular checks on what students have or have not learned. Where students have not learned an idea or piece of knowledge well enough, that area is retaught the next day or when the subject is visited again. The school is flexible in the way that it creates these groups, and quite often not only mandated students who need extra help receive extra attention. This process is accelerating student progress.

The administration tracks carefully all that goes on in school. Spending decisions reflect, for example, placement of staff throughout the annex and main building, acquisition of resources for students to use in lessons and relevant training programs. All activities are carefully matched to the realistic assessment that the school makes of what its overall

needs are to accelerate student progress further. The principal and the senior team give a very clear lead in this area. They have seized on the new achievement tracking system and are already using basic data from it to set goals for the whole school, grades and individual students.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Margaret Gioiosa School</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				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 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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>				X	