

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

The Marine Park School

Middle School 278

**1925 Stuart Street
Brooklyn
NY 11229**

Principal: Debra Garofalo

Dates of review: April 13-14, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Marianne Ferrara

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Marine Park is a middle school with 969 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 52% Black, 14% Hispanic, 26% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 93.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The school knows its students well and a supportive culture enables students to feel safe and comfortable speaking with teachers. Routines are in place resulting in an orderly tone and a well organized learning environment. Student behavior is good with teachers making great efforts to motivate their students and support their academic and social development. Parents are pleased with the education their children are receiving. They state that the school communicates well with them, informing them of their children's progress, and inviting them to participate and voice their opinions regarding school initiatives and extracurricular events.

In addition to offering a relevant and broad curriculum, the school has an extensive arts program giving students many opportunities to develop their artistic skills before, during, and after school. Music, drama, and the visual arts play a significant role in the curriculum that is aligned to the school leadership's focus of continually improving instructional expertise in all content areas. Coaches work collaboratively to share best practices and the administration expects inter-visitations among all teachers. The school empowers teachers to take ownership of their learning by encouraging them to present workshops for colleagues to share effective instructional strategies. However, rigorous instruction to accommodate different learning styles and questioning techniques to develop students' higher order thinking skills are not always addressed consistently.

The administration regularly evaluates the effectiveness of instruction and organizational decisions. Data is used to assess programs and initiatives and to make decisions regarding the use of personnel. Adjustments are made to improve student outcomes and provide constructive recommendations. While teachers provide feedback to students regarding the quality of their work, the best use of rubrics to help students with definitive next steps to improve their offerings is not systemically in place.

Teacher teams meet across subject areas at grade and faculty conferences to share good practices, develop multi-disciplinary lessons, and make collaborative decisions regarding instructional strategies. As common planning is not scheduled into the program matrix for teams to meet or for content specialists on and across grade levels to engage in collegial exchanges and co-planning professional expertise is enhanced less.

Regularly scheduled assessments augment the administration's ability to identify school trends across subjects and subgroups, set goals, and guide teachers to design lessons to meet individual student needs. While student goals are updated after analyzing assessment data, students across grades and curriculum areas are not aware of their short-term targets as being the foundation for accomplishing long-term goals.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school offers a relevant and enriched curriculum, with a broad menu of opportunities in the arts and music that meet the creative needs of students.
 - The school supplements the core curriculum with resources that address student needs. Teachers align pacing calendars to curriculum maps. The school provides all students, including English language learners, special education, and high achievers with interventions and extensions.
 - The school has an extensive performing arts program including: a dedicated room for drama, students' rich art displays, orchestral and band performances at cultural and community events. These opportunities are developing positive attitudes, involvement, improvement of individual artistic talents, and enhancing students' skills across disciplines.
- School routines are systemic, promoting an orderly, safe, and nurturing environment where students have academic, emotional, and social support.
 - The school is well organized and there are good entrance and exit procedures. Students receive a handbook outlining expected behaviors with consequences at the beginning of the year. This serves as a guide that teachers, grade assistant principals, guidance counselors and deans reinforce. As a result there is an orderly tone and students report they feel safe and secure.
 - Teachers and staff members know their students well, both personally and academically. They readily discuss their students' strengths and needs. Instructionally, interventions are available for those requiring additional support, with teachers encouraging students to attend extended day classes. Students state they are comfortable discussing concerns with an adult in the school they feel can and will help them.
- School staff collaborates, create profiles of individual students, and identify interventions that positively affect learning outcomes.
 - Teachers examine data from a range of assessments and discuss student outcomes. Practices are shared and multidisciplinary lessons developed revising interventions across disciplines to help students master a skill. Teachers found conferencing to be a successful strategy to identify students needing additional support.
 - There is a strong relationship with teachers and the special education and English language learners' staff. Teachers collaborate with service providers, make recommendations as new information becomes available, and adapt and revise plans and practices that have positive outcomes for subgroups of students as evidenced by their gains.
- The school has a good communication system in place enabling it to share relevant information and promote active community involvement.

- The school communicates effectively. It provides services to families in need of social and emotional support, offering workshops to inform parents of school initiatives, sponsoring events parents suggest such as “Family Movie Nights”. Parents describe the school as nurturing and open to recommendations.
- Between designated reporting periods, parents receive information regarding student progress. These interim progress reports indicate areas that need improvement and ensure parents are aware of their children’s performance throughout the year. Parents state teachers contact them if there are academic concerns. “Fabulous Friday” phone calls to parents celebrate positive news about their children.
- The school monitors classroom instruction to provide teachers with supports designed to ensure ongoing improvement in the delivery of learning activities.
 - Teachers receive support for their own professional development from administrative feedback at individual conferences, through notes and emails, mentoring, intervisitations, and collaboration with coaches. This results in teachers being reflective learners and accountable for making personal measurable progress.
 - The administration uses student data and work products to determine instructional areas to address in teacher trainings. School leaders identify teachers who are successful in these areas and encourage them to design “Lunch and Learns” where they share best practices and assist colleagues in determining next steps to improve student outcomes.
- School leaders use data to evaluate the effectiveness of organizational decisions and professional development and make revisions that improve the quality of instruction for students.
 - School leaders use many sources of data to inform decisions they make when new information becomes available, leading to school plans and practices being adapted. For example, this year there is a change in the collaborative team teacher model, by scheduling special education teachers to remain with their students for all content areas. This results in students receiving consistent support in all their classes throughout the day.
 - The use of formal and informal observations, together with the analysis of student assessments, informs the administration as to effective use of personnel, and helps them to determine the professional development activities that best improve teaching strategies. Teacher assignments are changed to enable teachers to challenge and stretch their potential and empower them to lead professional development activities.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure a consistent delivery of rigorous instruction and challenging tasks to accommodate varied learning styles and that questioning extends student thinking.
 - The school encourages teachers to provide relevant instruction to address all students’ needs, including the higher achieving students.

However, there is a lack of consistency in providing rigorous coursework and different points of entry for students to achieve to their full potential.

- Teachers provide different assignments for students. Even so, some students receive the same instruction and produce similar work products irrespective of their capabilities. Accommodations for different learning styles are not consistently addressed, impacting student engagement and progress.
- Provide feedback to students from subject specific, standard based rubrics, which are understood by them, coupled with clear next steps for improvement that will help each achieve their goals.
 - Teachers use conferencing and written comments to respond to students' work but not all written statements clearly communicate elements designed to develop quality student work. Students' progress is slowed because they do not receive sufficient specific recommendations indicating their next steps to improve.
 - Rubrics are used for performance assessment. However, not all students are able to interpret the descriptive criteria to know what is expected of them. This results in students who cannot adequately match their work to the rubrics and use these to consistently evaluate, create, and improve work products.
- Make certain students understand what they need to do to meet their individual goals and the short-term goals that will help them achieve the desired results.
 - Teachers regularly use assessment data to identify short-term goals for their students. However, the connection between short-term goals as sequential steps to achieving long-term goals is not embedded in students' understanding of their ultimate learning targets.
 - Students receive results from formative assessments and authentic work products. However, students do not have peer and self-evaluation training and always have a clear understanding of what is necessary in order to accomplish and improve their outcomes for themselves.
- Ensure teachers have sufficient scheduled opportunities to engage in professional activities and collegial conversations.
 - Monthly conferences are used for interdisciplinary grade level teachers to meet. Regular vertical and horizontal articulation among core subject teachers to assess specific department work within and across grade levels and ensure curriculum coherence is not systemically in place.

Multiple opportunities for teachers to engage in joint planning and share effective instruction that best meet students' differing needs are not scheduled into the program matrix. This inconsistent communication of successful practices slows progress towards improving student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: The Marine Park School	△	▶	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	△	▶	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?				X
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			X	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X	
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	▶	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?				X
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			X	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X				
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X				
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X				
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?				X			
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X				
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X				
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?			X				
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed