

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

Marta Valle High School

**High School 509
145 Stanton Street
New York
NY 10002**

Principal: Jayne Godlewski

Dates of review: December 17-18, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Daniella Phillips

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Marta Valle High School is a high school with 359 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 17% Black, 66% Hispanic, 2% White, and 15% Asian students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 83.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Marta Valle High School completed the phase-out of its middle school grades last year and now serves only high school students. A stable and forward-thinking administrative team of principal and three assistant principals approaches challenges with rigorous data review and keen focus on student outcomes. Recent challenges have included the identification of the school last year as “persistently dangerous” and a commuting student population of whom only 30% live locally. School leaders have addressed these challenges pragmatically, resulting in an improved academic climate for students and adults and increased safety and order.

School leaders and staff thoroughly measure the extent of student achievement and then take deliberate steps to accelerate students’ learning progress. A savvy data specialist supports teacher teams, as well as the school’s innovation team, with meaningful data analysis at the whole school and sub-group level. Staff is very aware of performance trends and they engage productively in collaborative inquiry to address overall areas of weakness. Over two years, the school’s inquiry work and extensive initiatives in writing and vocabulary enrichment have produced significant academic gains for target groups of students. Therefore, teachers see value in the school’s data-driven approach to decision making and they increasingly adopt this practice for instructional planning.

Many students are engaged in learning and benefit from rich offerings in technology and the arts. The staff seeks relevance for students’ learning and they hold themselves accountable for updating curriculum maps and ensuring that students experience 21st century connections in their learning. However, teachers do not sufficiently analyze student work at the classroom and individual level; as a result, differentiated instruction for all learners is not firmly in place across the school.

A broad range of effective partnerships and school programs supports well the personal and academic growth of students. As next steps, teachers, parents, and students seek greater input in school decisions and families want expanded communication about students’ performance.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has made rapid strides in thorough analysis and tracking of student learning progress, which has promoted greater achievement.
 - Analysis of subgroup data confirms that boys are not making significant progress in credit accumulation. This data has prompted the school to evaluate its program and make strategic adjustments in course elective offerings, sports and after school activities, and reading materials in class lessons. Similar data analysis and targeted efforts occurred last year with second language learners which resulted in substantial improvement in their graduation rate.
 - School leaders and faculty employ a wide range of formative, summative, safety and referral data to identify trends and next steps for improved student performance. As part of a school-wide commitment to raise literacy standards, all teachers know well students' reading and writing capacity, and they provide students with a consistent approach to increasing academic vocabulary. This intensive focus on literacy has resulted in impressive gains in Regents passing rates.
- School leaders cultivate external partnerships and train staff to support students' social, emotional, and academic needs and welfare.
 - Affiliations with Grand Street Settlement, Henry Street Settlement, and Educational Alliance offer students extended-day recreation, counseling, and academic programs. Partnerships with College for Every Student and two universities motivate students to pursue higher education.
 - Teachers and staff receive training regularly to support the school's implementation of two initiatives: *Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP)* and *Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)*. Administrators and teachers attribute the school's increasingly safe and respectful culture in part to the two programs.
- Teachers engage productively in collaborative inquiry and robust professional development that sharpens instruction and raises learning outcomes.
 - Administrators pair teachers in a number of co-teaching partnerships that benefit students' learning and supports teachers' professional growth. For example, the earth science teacher and English as a second language teacher teach together and model strategies to succeed on Regents exams. These pairings supplement the school's collaborative team teaching partnerships and maximize teachers' learning from one another.
 - Through the annual Innovation Fair, teachers model and share lesson plans and units of study that engage students using technology tools like blogs, wikis and interactive white boards. This well-attended professional development event elevates and honors teacher professionalism. All teachers participate on grade-level inquiry teams that lead to improved

instructional consistency, especially in vocabulary enrichment and writing standards.

- School leaders and staff work passionately and strategically to improve the academic and social climate for students.
 - Last year, the State identified the school as “persistently dangerous.” School leaders carefully track and monitor disciplinary incidents and implement strategic changes to address problems. For example, the staff now has an explicit ladder of referrals, while students learn about appropriate touching through lessons in ballroom dancing. These and other measures have led to the school’s removal from the State list, as well as growing sentiment by students that they are cared for and safe.
 - Students participate twice weekly in advisory-like seminars that reinforce positive relationships between teachers and students. Students benefit from personal support and develop as independent learners.
- The principal and administrative team have established effective systems for school self-evaluation that support school improvement.
 - School leaders maintain a strong vision for organizational and instructional next steps that best support school improvement, resulting in coherence of school-wide decisions. For example, school leaders and staff jointly agreed to a revised schedule this year with Mondays and Fridays designated for staff development, affording grade teams ample time for collaboration, planning, and training, which school leaders support with carefully monitored resources.
 - Teachers regularly use data boards to revise and plan lessons from curriculum maps for each subject area and utilize the shared technology of a wiki to post the maps. By analyzing school-wide progress on the data boards, teachers are able to adjust lessons to meet student needs. This attention to curriculum development produces instructional coherence and robust assessment practices across the school.
- The school is developing students as 21st century learners by integrating technology and nurturing varied arts offerings into daily learning, thereby engaging students.
 - Lead teachers, administrators and a technology consultant comprise the innovation team and they plan professional development and course offerings to promote technology and student learning. Popular electives include video production, marine biology, culinary arts, and music recording. Many teachers integrate technology in their instructional practices, such as student blogging and multimedia presentations. Additionally, the school provides numerous opportunities to showcase students’ artistic talents via annual film festival, art show, and music and dance performances. These events generate high student interest.

What the school needs to improve

- Further engage teachers, parents, and students meaningfully in setting goals to promote greater investment in decisions at the school.

- These key stakeholder groups express some frustration, via School Survey and in person, about not being as involved as they would like in school-level decisions. For example, teachers want greater input in operational decisions such as in the scheduling of exams, while parents seek administrators' help in transforming the parents' association to include teachers. Students feel more positive about the school's efforts to engage them in decision making, such as the adoption of uniforms, but they also report having little say about behavior, attendance, and academic-improvement decisions.
- Improve the consistency of differentiated instructional practices across classrooms to challenge all students at appropriate levels.
 - Although assessment data drives instruction, tasks are not always differentiated or challenging for all students. Therefore, student engagement in lessons meets a minimally proficient level. Teachers employ strategies for grouping and using technology, but their questioning fails to produce sufficient high-level thinking or student-to-student interactions. Teachers do not routinely offer students choices in assignments and activities which then reduces their motivation.
- Deepen expectations for sharing and analyzing current student work to celebrate learning and make public what is being studied.
 - Although teachers look at quantitative data, they do not do enough analysis of student work aligned with key standards. Across classrooms, there is virtually no student work or rubrics visible, with notable exceptions in an English language arts class and a self-contained special education class. Neither students nor teachers are looking at the ways that student work reflects classroom level progress.
 - Teachers do not sufficiently share and discuss student work products as a way to assess students' learning and instructional consistency across classrooms. Instead, grade and department team discussions center on students' Regents and periodic assessment scores and performance. Thus, teachers' expectations for meaningful student work vary widely.
- Expand communication efforts with students and families, in order to provide regular feedback about interim learning progress.
 - All students receive six report cards a year. This year, math and science teachers also use an on-line grading system to document and calculate students' academic grades so that students and families have daily access to progress. However, this pilot is limited to two departments.
 - Advisory is an effective structure for conferencing with students regarding progress towards graduation and action planning for students at risk of failing. Although students, especially those at risk of failing, know where they stand in relation to graduation, there is not currently an emphasis on next steps.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Marta Valle High 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