

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

The Margaret Mead School

K209

**2609 East 7th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11235**

Principal: Fran Locurcio

Dates of review: February 14-15, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Isabel DiMola

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 209, The Margaret Mead School, is an elementary/intermediate school with 763 students from Pre-kingergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 4% Black, 18% Hispanic, 40% White, and 25% Asian students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty are supportive of the social and emotional growth of students and families resulting in increasing engagement and outcomes.
 - Teachers receive ongoing professional development to engage students in building a positive learning environment. The Respect for All curricula permeates the school. The student council meets regularly with the principal and spearheads initiatives such as poster campaigns and student recognition events celebrating academic and personal achievements, resulting in a culture that honors diversity and academic achievement.
 - School leaders provide students and families with the supports they need to expand opportunities for academic success. Internal structures use data effectively to target students and families in need of support from the school's external partnerships with the YWCA and Legal Lives. These organizations provide resources such as counseling, legal, and housing assistance. As a result, many students' home environments are more secure and their performance is improving.
- Leaders make informed organizational decisions that align with school goals and support efforts toward improved student learning.
 - Strategic use of resources supports the needs of students and maximizes opportunities for accelerating performance. In response to data indicating that 7th and 8th grade students were lacking skills to write at grade appropriate levels, programming changes provide these students with three periods a week in a writing cluster class that focuses on supporting student writing. As a result, the quality of student writing is improving.
 - Teacher programs allow for regular common planning sessions vertically and across grades resulting in collaboration among teachers. Teachers share best practices in several areas including vocabulary acquisition skills for English Language Learners resulting in consistency in instruction across grades and the school and opportunities for groups of students to make progress toward their learning targets.
- Teacher teams align curricula and assessments leading to an analysis of outcomes that affect instructional decisions and progress toward reaching learning targets.
 - Weekly teacher team meetings provide a forum for teachers to analyze student assessments and work products to understand student progress toward reaching learning goals. For example, data uncovered that students are having difficulty with inference and making predictions. Groups of students receive intervention and support in these areas resulting in improving performance for most targeted students in these areas.

- Teachers use periodic assessments to measure student progress at specific intervals throughout the school year. Weekly meetings allow for analysis of data including teacher made assessments, Acuity and ECLAS to understand student strengths and areas of need. Teachers are aware of student abilities and are beginning to make informed instructional decisions including grouping and the use of manipulatives to affect student learning. As a result interim assessments indicate that students are making progress in advancing reading levels and math skills.
- School leaders articulate an instructional vision that is creating a culture of collaboration and professional learning.
 - The principal is effective in communicating an instructional vision and focus that has the faculty's support. A balanced literacy approach to teaching infusing content literacy and writing across the subject areas is the foundation of the school's work, providing students with opportunities to build skills and accelerate their progress toward reaching learning goals.
 - School leaders are purposeful in their development of teachers toward building skills that align to overall school goals and the needs of students. Surveys afford teachers opportunities to communicate their needs to leadership. The principal supports teachers with differentiated professional development and is adept at supporting the needs of newer teachers through regular mentoring, team teaching and informal and formal observations that provide feedback to enhance professional growth. As a result, there is minimal teacher turnover and a growing consistency in the instructional practice across the school.
- The principal creates a collaborative school environment that promotes an atmosphere of respect embracing all members of the school community.
 - A safe, respectful environment provides students opportunities to focus on their academic pursuits. Students are comfortable striving for excellence and communicate that the teachers "motivate us to want to do our best." There are many forums including clubs and groups for students to address issues that may interfere with learning and designated staff monitors the social-emotional growth of students so there are minimal distractions hindering progress. As a result, students engage in their learning and demonstrate a willingness to work hard to succeed.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop comprehensive curricula across all subject areas to ensure that instruction is consistently rigorous and emphasizes key standards across all subject areas.
 - Curricula align to state standards, targeting skills that have historically been challenging for students. However, academic tasks do not ask students critical thinking questions to move beyond listing of facts toward analysis of information that leads to individual opinions that are supported by facts. As a result, curricula does not provide the framework for rigorous engagement where students participate in higher order thinking resulting in missed opportunities to reach higher levels of learning.

- Elevate classroom practice to provide students with rigorous, differentiated instruction that is highly engaging and develops higher order skills. 1.2 b/c
 - Teachers use data to plan instruction and to group students as a way of differentiating the material to address specific needs. However, methods of differentiation that include leveling of text and variations on the form and amount of questions are not consistently providing students with opportunities to access the material at appropriate entry points and to scaffold upward ensuring that students make progress toward meeting learning targets.
 - A focus on questioning is providing students with increasing opportunities to think at higher levels; however, the practice is not yet embedded in the overall pedagogy of teachers across the school. Most tasks and student work products demonstrate fundamental comprehension of key facts and procedures but do not push students beyond restating information denying consistent opportunities for cognitively challenging tasks that develop higher order skills.
- Deepen the use of assessments to measure student progress and adjust practice to impact progress and performance throughout the year.
 - Although common periodic assessments are given at specified points throughout the school year, the practice of setting interim benchmarks to monitor progress toward reaching school, class and student goals is just beginning to develop and is not consistent throughout the school. As a result, there are missed opportunities to adjust practice at key points throughout the school year to ensure maximum growth of student progress.
- Develop structures that evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and organizational decisions ensuring alignment with school goals and consistency across classrooms.
 - School leaders meet regularly to monitor data and understand the progress of students and groups of students across the school. However, structures that specifically measure the impact of instructional and organizational decisions are informal and do not allow for concise analysis of whether or not leadership decisions are having the desired affect on schoolwide pedagogy and student progress and performance. As a result, it is unclear whether current practice and structure is moving the school toward reaching its goals and building and building a coherent academic program.
- Establish systems to create and monitor interim progress toward goals to ensure that adjustments in practice are made in a timely manner to respond to the needs of students and groups of students.
 - The school uses a data from various sources to monitor student outcomes; however, they are just beginning to use tools, such as Google Docs to organize the data so that it is accessible at the school and class level. The capacity of school leaders and teachers to disaggregate and organize data so that it is timely and actionable is inconsistent and the depth of which the data is used for varies across the school.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: P.S. 209 The Margaret Mead School	UD	D	P	WD
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, 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	

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

Quality Review Scoring Key

UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed
-----------	-----------------------	----------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	-----------	-----------------------