

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**The Marble Hill School**

**Elementary School X310**

**260 W. Kingsbridge Road  
Bronx, NY  
10463**

**Principal: Elizabeth Cardona**

**Review Dates: January 12-13, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Kyle S. Haver**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 310 Marble Hill is an elementary school with 734 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 81% Hispanic, 1% White, and 18% other students. The student body includes 26% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 93.5%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal aligns school resources to help meet students' learning needs so that they are aligned to the school's instructional goals, which drives positive student outcomes. (1.3)
  - Since examining the 2010 New York State English language arts and math test results, the principal and her leadership staff made some significant changes in order to deepen the focus on the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and on upgrading their curriculum maps and portfolio performance tasks in literacy and math. They began using the Teachers College Reading and Writing system, a school-wide literacy assessment system that tracks students' reading levels and informs a coherent pre-kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade approach to teaching, curriculum development and assessment that will continue to inform the school's long range plan. The school's data checks, including the inclusion of the literacy and math CCLS-aligned portfolio performance tasks, have already positively impacted student performance as evidenced by students' critical analysis and higher order thinking in classroom discussions, students producing CCLS-aligned classroom work products and improved student outcomes as compared to the baseline assessments given at the beginning of the year as highlighted on the school's internal data tracking system.
  - After studying the 2010-11 School Progress Report, the principal organized a curriculum team comprised of assistant principals, coaches and lead teachers that she meets with weekly. By using a range of school-wide study data to inform these discussions, the team members work with their assigned teacher teams during two common planning periods each week to come together in grade study and inquiry team meetings in order to focus on the newly developed CCLS-aligned tasks and resulting student work. The impact of this innovation is evidenced in improvements of grade-level curriculum maps and classroom pedagogy that engage all students in challenging CCLS-aligned authentic math tasks where students illustrated multiple solution pathways and explain their reasoning. In all the classrooms visited literacy instruction reflected these tasks with an increase in the level of informational reading and writing in literacy lessons that resulted in students being able to provide text-based answers and produce writing from multiple sources. In addition, this led to a K-5 collection of student work that teacher teams used to revise their instructional units and tasks.
- There are common teaching practices across all classrooms that reflect an articulated set of beliefs about teaching and learning that is engaging and differentiated to meet the needs of a range of learners. (1.2)
  - With the help of the curriculum team and assistant principals, all classrooms reflect a common approach to balanced literacy and balanced mathematics by using the workshop model. This is evidenced by teachers' established clear classroom structures and rituals, which grow from the mini-lesson and independent and small group work where the teachers confer with individual children throughout the day. As a result of these consistent classroom structures, teachers were observed spending more time on engaging instructional activities (guided/strategy groups, etc.) and using higher-order questioning strategies when conferring with students.
  - The school administration has worked strategically with teacher teams on revising their units of study and introducing new CCLS-aligned performance tasks so that all students are engaged in these tasks. Higher-order questioning strategies as well as the Strategy Collection for English language learners, developed by the teachers, have been the focus

for this year's professional development and used by teacher teams so that all revised units of study include common teaching strategies and questioning techniques. As a result, all students participate in high-level accountable talk, teachers' classrooms allow for multiple points of entry and student work products show evidence of multiple solutions pathways.

- The rigorous curriculum, aligned to the CCLS, engages students in cognitively demanding tasks that build an essential foundation for post-secondary readiness. (1.1)
  - Since reviewing the 2010-2011 data, the principal, assistant principals and instructional coaches have worked over the summer with lead teachers to make significant and purposeful revisions to their literacy, math and social studies units of study. In addition, they have created literacy and math portfolios that include CCLS-aligned performance tasks that are aligned to key standards and the 2011-12 Instructional Expectations. Coaches and lead teachers then worked closely with teacher teams to introduce and support all teachers as they implemented these newly upgraded instructional units. These changes and a close analysis of the resulting student work has lead teachers to make additional revisions to their English language arts and math curriculum units as evidenced in teacher team meetings. In addition, these changes led to shifts in instruction where all students were engaged in more rigorous CCLS-aligned performance tasks. These changes have produced school-wide gains for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, as evidenced in results from Teachers College Assessment Pro as well as Acuity math scores from October to December, 2011.
  - The principal, assistant principals and coaches have created portfolios in literacy and math that include performance tasks, rubrics and student work. The leadership team has also developed a portfolio task calendar to ensure these common assessments are given throughout the year. As result all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, are engaged in rigorous CCLS-aligned performance tasks at least four times over the year where teachers and teacher teams come together and analyze the student work, look for patterns and uncover places for re-teaching, interventions and/or curriculum revisions while setting instructional goals for individual students. In doing so, the students are on the trajectory to meet the new CCLS.
- The school has established a warm and supportive culture where students, families and faculty feel valued, take pride in being part of the school community and celebrate students' accomplishments. (1.4)
  - This year, based on results from the School Survey, the administration assigned staff to launch a K-5 conflict resolution and Respect for All anti-bullying campaign. With the help of the leadership team, they scheduled, designed and hosted celebrations of student work, student success and student accomplishments. This has already resulted in an increase in student attendance as compared to last year and a 35% increase in family participation in school events to date.
  - This year, the administration has focused the school's two guidance counselors on classroom and school-wide climate issues in addition to their work with targeted students in small groups and one-to-one meetings. In addition, the guidance counselors have coordinated the work with community-based organizations including Good Shepherd Services and Jewish Family and Children Services. As a result, the tone of the school is welcoming and focused on celebrating student successes that, in turn, has decreased the number of conflicts between students as tracked by the leadership team.

- The school systematically uses a wide range of relevant data and has an ongoing understanding of the performance and progress of individuals, by group and by subject area, which effectively informs instruction and organizational adjustments. (2.2)
  - After analyzing their previous assessments and their alignment to the 2010-11 Progress Report, the principal and her leadership team have made important changes in the school-wide assessments to more closely align with the CCLS and the 2011-12 Instructional Expectations. By replacing a collection of different English language arts assessment systems with a single coherent, K-5 Teachers College Reading and Writing assessment system and integrating results from Acuity and the newly developed CCLS-aligned performance based assessment tasks, the school has developed a balanced assessment system that is both aligned to New York State Standards and the CCLS. As a result there is a well-balanced set of data for the staff to analyze and use to track individual and cohorts of students to better adjust interventions and instruction. Thus, the school is better able to assess individual student, class, grade, and cohort outcomes over time. These data reports are then shared with the leadership team who in turn shares them with the grade-level teacher teams and individual teachers.
  
- School leaders have developed a system to provide feedback to teachers that accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using a research-based, common framework that articulates clear expectations for teacher practice (4.1)
  - The principal and her leadership team have developed a common observation template based upon the Danielson framework and distributed a school-wide “supervisory calendar” that clearly articulate the goals of the school, the dates and focus of the Instructional Learning Walks and classroom visits so that every teacher knows the instructional foci of the year and when they will be observed. By following this calendar and focusing on specific areas of professional growth over time, teachers have multiple opportunities to work with their supervisors to deepen and extend their classroom practice. One teacher reported, “... by knowing and maintaining my focus and goals for the year, and knowing when my supervisor was visiting my classroom, I was better able to keep a clear picture on what I was working on, and to use their coaching tips and feedback so I, too, was able to see how my teaching improved. By focusing on just a few areas in the [Danielson] framework, I was better able to keep my practice focused on my students and thus improve their achievement.” As a result, teachers have a clear idea of what instructional strategies to focus on and they have clear expectations and a structure to collect student and teacher work over time so that they can focus on improving their practice.
  - The leadership team has developed and implemented a teacher tracking system that manages staff development, teachers’ formal and informal observations and teacher assignment. This system also includes classroom data, current teacher goals, the number of times administrators visited classrooms, coaching points and evidence of “best practices.” The principal meets regularly with her assistant principals to analyze this data, discuss teacher strengths, needs and trends. By doing this, the administration makes data-informed professional development decisions, sets up effective teacher partnerships and mentorships as well as ensures alignment and coherence between the mini-schools. One example of how effective this system is was one teacher mentor/mentee pairing between a novice and experienced teacher where the teachers were freed up to visit each other’s class to learn how to implement and sustain literature circles and balanced literacy workshop.

## **What the school needs to improve**

- Deepen and extend the analysis of student data and student work products to set specific goals for English language learners and students with disabilities in order to inform instruction and effective supports. (3.2)
  - The principal and leadership team have developed several data systems that keep track of students' performance over time, including English language learners and students with disabilities. In addition, each of the teachers received a special strategies packet for these two subgroups at the beginning of this year. However, there is not currently an on-going and systematic focus on English language learner and students with disabilities data or the emerging data from the new portfolio performance tasks. As a result, there are missed opportunities for coaches and teachers teams to study the data and student work to more effectively create, monitor and revise individual student and cohort learning goals that will ensure instruction and interventions that increase student understanding, progress and performance.
- Intensify the school's differentiated professional development plan so that it consistently aligns teachers' goals with school goals while ensuring all teachers are learning about and practicing the instructional shifts needed to reach the expectations of the CCLS. (4.3)
  - Building upon the curriculum and assessment revisions implemented this year, leadership has provided effective and on-going professional development that gives an overview of the CCLS as well as the introduction and implementation of rigorous new performance tasks and the study of student work to inform teaching. The instructional team has started to include school-wide conversations during all-staff professional development and grade-level meetings on how to shift instruction so that all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, meet CCLS requirements. As a result, teachers' instructional repertoire has started to address these practices but lack additional, differentiated follow-up professional development to ensure all teachers get the targeted and individualized support to ensure these practices are consistent across all classrooms and in all content areas.
- Build upon the current structures so there are ongoing opportunities for teachers and administration to check for gaps and redundancies within and across all content areas to ensure coherence and growth in complexity from grade to grade. (5.1)
  - Administration joins teacher teams in the analysis of student data that has informed changes to the curriculum and academic interventions for students. Although the school has structures to evaluate the effectiveness of their curriculum and instructional choices, it has not yet formalized a systematic review of the CCLS instructional units. As a result, the analysis of student work struggles to surface gaps and redundancies, thus missing opportunities to assess and revise CCLS instructional units across grade and content areas to ensure all students are engaged in work that grows in complexity and cognitive demand over time.
- Build upon the use and analysis of student data/work and teacher work to focus a system of evaluating the effectiveness of teacher teams in order to strengthen teacher collaboration and teacher leadership. (5.4)
  - The administration meets regularly with the lead teachers and often participates in grade-level teacher teams to assess and give feedback on the effectiveness of teacher team work. Although school leaders are utilizing effective monitoring practices to gather a general assessment of the professional collaborations, these evaluation practices have not yet evolved into a strategic approach that allows the school to purposefully evaluate in depth ways to strengthen the work of their teacher teams. As a result there are missed opportunities to build a strong cadre of teacher facilitators so that all teams can deepen

the analysis of student work, surface student misconceptions and build instructional coherence across all grade and subject areas.

- Assistant principals and coaches regularly observe and participate in teacher-led team meetings where teachers assume all leadership responsibility. While the school utilizes teacher leaders to enhance the pedagogical practices of the staff, school leaders have yet to identify a highly effective evaluation structure that would allow them to capture exceptional characteristics of teacher leadership and have a more detailed lens on adult learning. As a result, the opportunity to expand teacher leadership and sustain this practice is missed.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Marble Hill	UD	D	P	WD
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?				<b>X</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				<b>X</b>
<b>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.</b>				
<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?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding student's progress toward school and class expectations?			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<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?			<b>X</b>	
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?		<b>X</b>		
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			<b>X</b>	

**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, guidance/advisement 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, with particular attention to the CCLS?		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**

<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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