

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

P.S. 209 Margaret Mead

21K209

**2609 EAST 7th STREET
BROOKLYN
NY11235**

Principal: Frances Locurcio

Dates of review: Jan 24-25, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Isabel DiMola

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 209 Margaret Mead is a/an K-8 school with 725 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 4% black, 22% Hispanic, 44% White, and 30% Asian students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011-2012 was 94.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

What the school does well

- Curricula across grades and subject areas align to key standards providing all students with opportunities to engage in learning that promotes progress toward goals. (1.1)
 - Data analysis of student outcomes across grades, subject areas and student subgroups is the foundation of curriculum development. There is a focus on key strands of the Common Core Learning Standards that the school believes will place students on a path of college and career readiness, specifically, comprehension, text complexity, argumentative writing, number sense and problem solving. Scaffolds exist to guide planning that supports the needs of all learners including students with disabilities, English language learners and high achieving students. Curricula outline rigorous content and create conditions for learning so when effectively implemented students have opportunities to make progress toward reaching and exceeding standards. As a result, teachers have a foundation to build units of study and daily lessons to afford students opportunities to engage in tasks that are cognitively challenging.
- Across classrooms teachers use common and periodic assessments to understand student progress and adjust curricular and instructional decisions to support student growth toward reaching standards. (2.2)
 - Pre and post unit assessments in math and English language arts as well as Acuity periodic assessment, Fountas and Pinnell, running records, conference notes, student work and student self-reflection data is continually analyzed by teachers and teacher teams to measure student progress and gauge the effectiveness of teaching strategies on student learning. Teachers create daily assessments that provide ongoing checks for understanding and aggregate the data to recognize the progress of all students as well as student subgroups. Students at the school are extremely reflective of their learning and are adept at using protocols for self-reflection and articulating their academic strengths and the areas where they are in need of support. Teachers use this data to develop lessons, determine student grouping, adjust curriculum and adjust plans to match student needs. As a result, teachers are making instructional choices more purposefully and students are making progress toward learning goals as evidenced by Fountas and Pinnell and Acuity data showing seventy percent of fifth through eighth grade students are making gains toward their reading goals and sixty-eight percent of all students showing improvement on writing tasks graded by teacher created rubrics.
- School leaders clearly articulate a vision for school improvement, setting clear and measurable goals driving efforts for school improvement, resulting in progress toward reaching learning targets. (3.1)
 - School-wide goal setting is a collaborative effort between school leaders and stakeholders in the community. Administrators regularly meet with the school's cabinet comprised of the principal, assistant principals, testing coordinator, data specialist, and instructional leads, a teacher of English as a second language and a special education teacher. At these meetings, analysis of various streams of data reveals the school's areas of need. Overarching school goals with clear interim benchmarks are established and shared with the school community. The School leadership team reviews the goals and engages in discussion so that each constituency in the school including parents and age appropriate students has an opportunity to offer feedback and have voice in decisions around the final goals. The agreed

upon goals are shared with the school community. Inquiry teams incorporate the school's overarching goals into their study of student achievement and instructional practice. The cabinet and the respective teacher teams create action plans that clearly articulate the path they will take toward reaching targets. Interim checks are pre-determined and each goal has a minimum of four yearly benchmarks to ensure that adequate progress is being made. School leadership and teams study Fountas and Pinnell data, common and periodic assessments and student performance on Common Core aligned tasks to determine if students and student groups are making the expected gains and adjust their practice in alignment to the data analysis. As a result, the school is making progress toward reaching its goals. For example, sixty percent of English language learners demonstrated progress by advancing at least one reading level on a Fountas and Pinnell assessment since the start of the school year, with seventy-two percent of students in this group showing accelerated progress in listening, speaking and writing as measured by a predictive assessment for the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT).

- School leaders are supportive of teacher practice and use effective methods to build teacher capacity resulting in opportunities for students to make progress toward standards. (4.1)
 - School leaders are extremely explicit in their expectations for pedagogic practice. Teachers understand that they are to follow a workshop model of instruction that provides students with multiple opportunities to engage in cognitively challenging tasks that demonstrate high order thinking. A thorough analysis of student data and teacher observations set forth the need for support in pedagogic practice in planning, questioning and assessment. Supervisors conduct frequent informal observations of all teachers to support their practice in those areas, providing effective feedback detailing next steps. School leaders follow-up with teachers to ensure that instruction incorporates the recommendations. The Principal and Assistant Principals continually analyze data from observation cycles to understand teacher skill and impact on student outcomes. Professional development plans for the school and for individual and groups of teachers are created to support improving teacher practice. The culture of the school is one of professional learning, where teachers articulate feeling extremely supported by administration and are excited about the professional development and the impact it is having on their pedagogy. Consequently, an analysis of formative and formal observation data indicates growing competency among teachers in aligning unit and lesson plans to the standards and creating assessments that give students opportunities to demonstrate content and skill mastery, thereby setting the stage for improving student progress and improving outcomes for all students.

What the school needs to improve

- Support instructional practices so all students are engaging in highly rigorous and cognitively challenging tasks that results in outcomes that demonstrate mastery of the standards. (1.2)
 - The school follows a workshop model of instruction with a belief that modeling by the teacher followed by group or independent work is how students learn best. Pedagogic practice is beginning to be informed by a research based teaching framework with questioning and ongoing assessment being valued as crucial to accelerate student learning. However, teaching practice that provides opportunities for all students to access the curriculum at appropriate entry points is inconsistent. In many classrooms, teachers group students by summative assessment data and then offer different tasks to each group. Conversely, in most classrooms, differentiation consists of different reading levels of text or reworded tasks

without clear variation in entry point for various learner needs. As a result, there are limited opportunities for rigorous engagement or for students to demonstrate higher order thinking and mastery of the standards.

- Teachers are beginning to develop challenging summative tasks that align to standards and units of study and prepare rubrics for assessment. However, student work product does not yet reveal that students are producing work that demonstrates high order cognition. Although the tasks ask students to describe and analyze a particular idea, concept or event, most students do not move past the describe stage of the task. Students show an understanding on how to summarize and produce organized essays, however, there is a lack of understanding of what it means to truly analyze facts and create a well-supported argument. Instruction is not consistent across the school to address this issue and there are varying levels of pedagogic skill to move students toward evaluation, synthesis and analysis of content, resulting in uneven levels of student thinking and participation.
- Deepen the work of instructional teams in studying student work measuring coherence among standards, instruction, task, rubric and grading so that all students have opportunities to demonstrate learning that reaches standards. (4.2)
 - All teachers participate in inquiry teams that meet either across grades or vertically and are engaging in work around integrating the Common Core standards into curriculum and instruction. Although they use protocols to study student work and share effective instructional strategies that align to moving students and groups of students toward reaching learning targets, the work of the teams is not yet translating to school-wide instructional coherence. As a result, it is not evident whether the teams are having an impact on targeted student outcomes or on the achievement of all learners across the school.
 - Teacher teams use data to determine a group of students to focus their inquiry work. At each teacher meeting, analysis of student work and assessment data leads to understanding of student learning and teachers discuss instructional strategies to target specific areas of need. However, the methods of analysis of student work are not systematic to ensure coherence between standards, task, rubric and grading. In spite of the consistent and relevant data generated in determining effective pedagogic practice and efforts to move students toward reaching or achieving standards, there are not yet sufficient in-depth data analyses resulting in shared improvements in teacher practice across the entire school and mastery of goals for groups of students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013							
School name: P.S. 209 Margaret Mead	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?		X					
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?			X				
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?			X				
Systems for Improvement							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			X				
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?				X			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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				
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed