

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

The Margaret Gioiosa School

31R003

80 South Goff Avenue

Principal: Judith Wilson

Dates of review: December 17-18, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Erminia Claudio

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Margaret Gioiosa School P.S. 3 is an elementary school with 1042 students from Pre-Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 10% Hispanic, 84% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 95.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Teachers align assessment to curricula, use on-going assessment practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels. (2.2)
 - The school purchased a data collection and reporting system that provides teachers with individual student progress and group trends within and across grades. This in depth system serves as a warehouse for data and supports teachers in pinpointing targeted groups of students. In addition to the New York State English Language Arts (ELA), math and science exams, this data is inclusive of the identification of students in need of Response to Intervention (RTI) in English language arts. As a result of this in-depth data analysis, students benefit from tailored instruction that is continually monitored and students and parents receive feedback about their progress towards goals. Baseline assessments are administered to students prior to each unit of study across all content areas. These assessments are a combination of teacher made and program specific tests. Teachers use baseline assessment data to plan lessons and guide small group instruction. At the end of each unit of study students are assessed for learning. As a result, teachers voiced that the new data reporting system has helped them hone in on all students strengths and areas of need and supports their planning accordingly.
 - The school created progress reports for all students grades K-5 that are distributed several weeks prior to the distributions of formalized school report cards. The school, in an effort to make a connection between what children knows and what is required by the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), designed a new report card. At the parent meeting is was voiced that progress reports and the new report card are extremely helpful to parents in understanding what their children are doing well in and what they need to work on. In an effort to ensure coherency across grades and content areas, school leaders and teachers work collaboratively to align percentage grades to New York State assessment levels 1 through 4. Teachers, parents and students voiced that they now understand the difference between each level. Students shared that they are aware of their next steps in order to achieve a higher proficiency level. This year an emphasis around student reflection is evident in students' work and classroom artifacts. To better hone in on student comprehension in grades 3-5, the school now uses Lexile measures. A Lexile measure is assigned to a student's reading ability or the difficulty of a text. Consequently, as a result of using Lexile measures students have the opportunity to select appropriately difficult books from a larger selection of books within their Lexile range, as evidenced on student book logs and students' response to literature.
- School leaders support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with effective feedback and next steps in order to continue growth in pedagogy. (4.1)

- School leaders provide consistent short cycles of frequent observations and feedback to all teachers to support pedagogy in strengthening teacher practice using a research based framework. School leaders engage in conversation with teachers to provide them with actionable feedback that clearly reflects what the teacher does well, areas for improvement and next steps. Teachers also receive feedback on mastery towards personal goals. At grade conferences, school leaders share low inference observations, noting grade trends in instructional practices. These trends along with results from a needs assessment survey, given to teachers in the beginning of the year, drive the differentiated professional development opportunities that teachers are offered, such as the work the school is doing around supporting students with Individual Educational Plans (IEP's) and Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies. School leaders are excited about being chosen to take part in the Department of Education's Teacher Effectiveness Intensive pilot. The principal has indicated that this experience provides her with the opportunity to support her teachers with effective feedback. New teachers are assigned "buddy teachers" to support lesson planning, time management and to model best practice using classroom inter-visitation. New teachers also meet with the principal to track progress towards personal goals and tenure. Teachers periodically do learning walks and give each other low inference feedback during team meetings. As a result, teachers state that the feedback they receive from school leaders and colleagues is useful, supports next steps and has improved their pedagogy.
- The school communicates to parents and students high expectations for effective academic and behavioral progress to support students to reach their full potential. (1.4)
 - In an effort to extend the nurturing environment for all students, the principal and her staff worked diligently to turn the school's annex into an early childhood center that supports hands-on learning and inquiry-based exploration for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students. Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers work collaboratively to build the early childhood experience emphasizing the school's key standards of listening and speaking. This facility change has created much excitement throughout the school community. Parents voiced that they are thrilled with the early childhood center. Prior to this school year, second and third grade students were housed in the annex. Consequently, grades 2-5 teachers' now have the opportunity to meet in vertical teams within the same building to support coherency throughout the grades and content areas, evidenced in curriculum maps and student artifacts.
 - In response to a dip in student attendance, the principal has instituted an attendance incentive program "*Every Student, Every Day*" that celebrates coming to school every day. Monthly attendance assemblies celebrate students that have perfect attendance and the class that has the highest rate of attendance on each grade wins a trophy to display in the classroom and parades around the auditorium while the rest of the students "clap out" to the theme song of 'Rocky.' As a result of the emphasis placed on attendance, the school has seen an overall increase of 2% over last year. The schools' belief that every child can make our world a better place has afforded students the opportunity to participate in community engagement and volunteerism activities, such as, but not

limited to, Project Homefront, Penny Harvest Round Table and March of Dimes. As a result of these efforts, the school was awarded the New York City Service in Schools Award and earned honorable mention in the National Jefferson for Public Service Award for their philanthropic work. At the student meeting, students voiced that their teachers have high expectations for them, and that they are aware of what they need to do to improve. At the parent meeting, parents expressed that they are involved in their children's learning and have access to resources to help their children. For example, parents receive unit goals and an outline of the unit for each subject area. A comprehensive school website with links to educational sites, keep them informed of what their children are learning and offer them valuable resources to help their children complete assignments.

- Teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations on teams that promote achievement of school goals and strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers. (4.2)
 - The principal's strong emphasis on professional collaborations has guided the implementation and programming of several team structures across the school to support student learning. All teams have the common thread of consistently looking at student work and analyzing data to support student progress and strengthen teacher practice. Prior to this school year, the inquiry focus was ELA and Math assessments and student work. Inquiry work now supports analyzing pre- and post- assessments and student work in ELA, math, science and social studies. Teachers at all three team meeting visited by the reviewer indicated that the results of end of unit exams and on-demand pieces drives their instruction and guides the on-going work they are doing with updating curriculum maps. Other team structures include, a vertical instructional team, grade teams, a response to intervention (RTI) team, an ambassador team for math and ELA focus, and a leadership team to build capacity. Grade level teams meet several times weekly to promote the school's goals of lifting the quality of writing in all core subject areas and the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to curricula. For example, the 1st grade team has been using student work to guide them in planning more focused teaching points around using details to extend thinking about writing. As a result of teacher collaboration and revising teaching pedagogy, teachers have seen an increase of students scoring levels 3 and 4 on their second on-demand piece from their first piece on-demand piece. School leaders and grade five teachers, cognizant that since 2008, 86% of all students were level 3 and above, decided to departmentalize so that curriculum content would be more intensive to support the rigor of the CCLS and allow for higher levels of differentiated support. As a result, teachers meet several times a week to plan interdisciplinary thematic nonfiction units of study, inclusive of the arts, supporting the school's overarching goals of improving listening, speaking and writing in all content areas. Teachers look at individual and groups of students work products and pinpoint trends a particular student or groups of students are exhibiting. As a result of strategic teacher assignments and particular concentration by individual subject teachers, this cohort of 5th grade students has shown a 5% increase of students scoring high level 3's and 4's on writing assessments as compared to the prior year's cohort of students.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen curricula and academic tasks to consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills across all grades and subject areas to cognitively engage all students. (1.1)
 - During team meetings school leaders and teachers analyze formative and summative data to make purposeful decisions about curricula across all content area, inclusive of the arts. Academic tasks are planned to support the rigor of the CCLS. All teachers have embraced the new math program and writing program. However, in a few classrooms curricular and academic tasks and higher order thinking skills inconsistently match the planning that teachers do during grade meetings and what is memorialized in curriculum maps. As a result, some students do not benefit from being consistently exposed to high level tasks that promote cognitive engagement.
- Continue to deepen targeted instructional practices so that all lessons engage students and offer suitable challenge at their level, including effective questioning that elicits higher order thinking and extends learning. (1.2)
 - It is the school's belief that students learn best when they are challenged to think critically and reflect on their work. This is evidenced in the consistency of self reflection that students across grades complete after an assignment. Individual teachers and teacher teams are using Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and Danielson's framework to guide their work around rigorous questioning and routines; however, in a few classrooms questions posed led to general levels of thinking. While the school recognizes that there is a need for deepening the kinds of questions students are asked, there remains an inconsistency in questioning techniques across classrooms, preventing high levels of student engagement and thinking.

3Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: The Margaret Gioiosa School	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