

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

The Marlboro School
21K177

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BROOKLYN,
NY 11204

Principal: SHOSHANA SINGER

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Lead Reviewer: Isabel DiMola

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Marlboro School is an elementary school with 952 students from PK through grade 5. The school population comprises 1 % Black, 31 % Hispanic, 40 % White, 27 Asian and 1% other students. The student body includes 28% 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 2012 - 2013 was 94.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Curricula align to Common Core Learning Standards providing all students with opportunities to engage in rigorous instruction that build the skills necessary to be college and career ready. (1.1)
 - Grade teams create units of study that align to the Common Core Standards, integrate the instructional shifts and outline scaffolds, including technology supports, group work with peer assistance and specific graphic organizers to ensure that all students including English language learners and special education students receive access to content and skill development. The curricula provides for group and individual work with opportunities for students to reflect upon their work and revise when necessary. These practices align to the school's philosophy that in order for students to be successful and on the path of college and career readiness, they must build skills in communication, team work, individual accountability and perseverance. Students receive multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of skills throughout the curricula through various embedded tasks that culminate in a summative assessment. Data analysis of individual student and student subgroup progress and performance drives the work of teachers in ensuring that curricula focuses on the specific strands of the standards that will leverage movement toward reaching learning targets. For example, data reveals that students across the school and subgroups need deeper understanding of how to express higher order thinking in their writing. As such, units of study that focus on the writing process exist in tandem with the English language arts and mathematics curricula to give students opportunities to express their learning in the content areas while developing writing skills that promote high levels of cognition around complex texts and ideas. Each unit embeds tasks that consistently promote higher order skills, such as creating an argument and writing extended responses that demonstrate an understanding of how to apply skills to real world situations. As the school's English language learner population grows, the school ensures focus by incorporating measures of differentiation and scaffolds such as leveled readings, picture representations and graphic organizers in each unit. Across grades and content areas, student work products are evidence of the progress students are making in their ability to communicate their learning through writing and in escalating their thinking beyond comprehension toward an ability to analyze and synthesize information and in developing points of view and independent ideas.
- Teaching practices demonstrate the school's vision on how students learn best resulting in opportunities for all students to be cognitively engaged and demonstrate higher order thinking. (1.2)

- Ongoing collaboration between teachers and administration result in instructional coherence across the school that is representative of the shared values of how students learn best. Lessons are structured so teachers use modeling and questioning to foster conversations where students have opportunities to share thinking and cognitively engage in complex conversations. Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning through written and verbal tasks. Teachers differentiate lessons through reading levels and flexible grouping and provide all students with scaffolds to access the content that includes tiered questioning, a variety of graphic organizers and strategy charts throughout the classrooms reducing student frustration and building confidence in their belief that they can succeed. There is a focus across classrooms to ensure that English language learners are provided with appropriate entry points. As such, teachers embed language acquisition skills into all lessons through vocabulary supports, visual cues, speech practice and leveled texts. For example, in a fourth grade class, students were in groups working on identifying similarities and differences across four stories the class had previously read. Each group had a different access point for the task based upon skill. While the advanced group was asked to develop a writing piece that demonstrated the differences and similarities of all four books, other groups were given scaffolds including graphic organizers both simple and complex to build toward the overall task. All students in the class were engaging in high level conversations within their groups and demonstrated abilities to work toward reaching the overall goal of the lesson. As a result, students across the school are making progress in reading levels as measured by the Developmental Reading Assessment with 57% of English language learners improving at least two levels since the start of the school year.
- The school culture is collaborative, supportive and caring of students' academic and social-emotional needs resulting in an environment that is safe and conducive to high levels of learning. (1.4)
 - School leaders make it a priority to ensure that the environment is safe and welcoming and stress the importance of personal accountability for behaviors and actions. The school participates in New York University's Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies (PBIS), a program with a systems approach to ensure that the school maintains a positive climate. A part of the model is following the program that encourages students to "Listen", "Interact", have "Good Behavior" "Have Respect" and "Tolerance" (L.I.G.H.T). Through the L.I.G.H.T. program teachers promote self-esteem and self-regulation by celebrating student success and positive behavioral actions. Faculty and staff know each of the students and monitor the social/emotional aspects of youth development ensuring that every student has the opportunity to be successful. Staff closely monitors attendance, behavior and progress. If a student is identified as at risk, the School Achievement Team collaborates with teachers and families to develop an action plan to address the areas of need and monitor the student closely. As a result, students feel supported by the adults in the building. Students express that, "Our teachers want us to be safe and comfortable. They don't allow bullying and they are always ready to step in and help us if we need it." Teachers

are supportive of student achievement and recognize that the diverse population has differing needs. Students explain, "It is hard for some of us when we first start, our teachers understand that learning English and going to a new school can be scary, so they help us and believe in us." As a result, students demonstrate personal behaviors conducive to academic success, where personal accountability is resulting in an overall two percent increase in the attendance rate with at-risk students improving by 8% and are showing steady progress in meeting their academic goals as measured by summative English language arts and mathematics assessments indicating that there is a 27% reduction in the number of at risk students since the start of the school year.

- School leaders and faculty have high expectations and communicate effectively with parents so that there are multiple opportunities for families to be active partners in improving student outcomes. (3.4)
 - School leaders regularly meet with faculty to articulate the school goals and communicate expectations for professionalism and instruction for the school year that aligns to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. It is made clear that the school is a place of respect for all and where students must be made to feel that they are the priority and are valued and respected. In addition, teachers understand that instruction is to be student centered with scaffolds and differentiation so that all students have access to the curricula. Ongoing professional development supports teachers in reaching the expectations of instruction and professional practice. Grade teams meet to collaborate on developing curricula that support the expectations of instruction, with a focus on developing cognitively challenging questioning that lead to high-level discussions. The principal and assistant principals reinforce the expectations with staff through emails, weekly notices and conversations. This results in a common understanding and shared belief in expectations for professionalism, instructional practice, communication, and an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust and accountability between faculty and administrators.
 - School leadership and teachers effectively communicate high academic expectations and a path to college and career readiness with all students and families. The principal, assistant principals and teachers present at Parent-Teacher Association meetings and workshops to inform parents of school goals and to develop their understanding of the Common Core Learning standards. The development of personal behaviors that align to the skills necessary for college and career readiness are supported within academic expectations and the L.I.G.H.T. program. All students have age appropriate responsibilities and teachers stress independence, organization, time management and encourage students to ask questions and express their views across all subject areas. The L.I.G.H.T. program stresses the character traits that the school values and believes leads to success. These include respect for all, being a caring and compassionate member of the community, self-accountability as well as collective accountability and standing up for oneself and others against unfairness. Parents receive regular progress reports that specifically detail student outcomes and

provide explicit next steps for students to reach or exceed standards. There is clarity around academic and social expectations leading to student understanding of what is expected and a true partnership between the school and families to achieve those expectations.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the work of creating and using assessments to ensure alignment to the standards and to foster deep understanding of student progress and to effectively plan next learning steps. (2.2)
 - Across grades, the school uses common assessments that align to Ready Gen and Go Math as well as teacher created tasks to assess student understanding of the standards. Administrators, teachers and grades and vertical teams analyze the data to guide curriculum revision and plan supports for individual and groups of students. Rubrics guide the grading of student work in many classrooms across the grades, however the feedback offered to students although actionable is not always meaningful to the degree that it creates a clear path of student mastery. In addition, although teachers use the data garnered from assessments, ongoing checks for understanding and student self-reflection to adjust teaching practice to address all student learning needs, it is not evident in the vast majority of classrooms that all students are aware of their next learning steps.
- Extend the work of teacher teams in systemic planning and analysis of student work toward clearly articulating intended learning and to understand the relationship between pedagogic practice and student outcomes. (4.2)
 - All teachers participate in teacher teams that meet across grades or vertically to engage in work that supports the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards into curriculum and instruction. At team meetings, teachers develop lesson plans that align to the standards and create assessments intended to measure student progress toward reaching learning goals. Teachers analyze student work to understand student learning and discuss instructional supports that target specific areas of need. Although the teams use data as a tool to understand student learning there are gaps in the work toward ensuring alignment between the standards that teachers are intending to teach and the assessments they are using to measure progress. By studying the outcomes of students through a thorough assessment of data teachers share best practices that result in improving pedagogic skill, however, the conversations are not yet systemic in how data is analyzed to evaluate the impact of pedagogy on student learning. As a result, the data generated for in-depth analysis of student learning is not always sufficient, and it is not known how teacher practice needs to be modified to improve student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The Marlboro 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 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?			X				
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the 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 supports 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 those expectations?				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 student 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 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?			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