



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Quality Review
Office of School Quality
Division of Academics, Performance, and Support
2013-2014**

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Marine Park

22K278

**1925 Stuart Street
Brooklyn
NY 11229**

Principal: Debra Garofalo

Dates of review: December 5-6, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Dr. Rhonda Dawn Farkas

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Marine Park is an intermediate school with 1072 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 47% Black, 18% Hispanic, 27% White, 6% Asian students, and 2% other. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012-2013 was 92.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Across grades and content areas, curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and underscore college and career readiness, resulting in coherence across classrooms and cognitively engaging student work. (1.1)
 - Close examination of the school's yearlong curricula maps, unit plans, and rubrics reflect the instructional shifts and tasks. They include sequenced, coherent progressions of learning experiences that build knowledge and understanding of major concepts and reflect coherence across grades and subjects. Some of the standards addressed across the school include citing evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text, determining a central idea of a passage, and analyzing its development over the course of study of a text. This includes its relationships to supporting ideas, providing an objective summary of the text, and reading and comprehending literary and nonfiction at the high end of the grade 6-8 complexity band independently and proficiently. Students are also required to write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. Rigorous habits, such as questioning and problem posing, taking responsible risks, thinking interdependently, and remaining open to continuous learning, are embedded in academic tasks that appropriately challenge all students, including English language learners (ELLs) and Student with disabilities (SWDs). Additionally, all curriculum maps and unit plans include essential questions, guided reading questions, mini-lessons, mentor texts, assessments, tasks, modifications, targeted skills, key vocabulary and enduring understandings. This year, the seventh grade unit plan entitled, *The Struggle of Identity: The Outsiders*, has been modified to incorporate four stages adopted from Grant Wiggins' *Understanding by Design*, including identifying desired results, assessment evidence, and teachers' learning plans and reflections. The grade seven unit template has been revised to include citing evidence through the research of nonfiction texts and comparing and contrasting the plot of fiction based novels. In addition, the teachers added learning outcomes, which now emphasize the relevant goals addressed in the unit, such as peer revisions, making connections through fiction and nonfiction, answering text dependent questions, reading, annotating, and analyzing texts, and a 'Critical Lens' essay. The school-wide focus on the writing standard W.8.2 necessitates students to write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. This has resulted in coherence across grades and subject areas that promote strong content knowledge and positions students well for college and career readiness. A comparative analysis of students' scores on baseline assessments in September and the first quarterly assessments in November, reflected increases in student performance in ELA, yielding 27%, 26%, and 18% gains in grades 6-8, respectively.

- School administrators ensure that teachers employ strategic instructional approaches informed by the Danielson Framework and provide multiple entry points that result in high levels of thinking and rigorous work products. (1.2)
 - Teachers across the school align their instructional strategies to the researched based Danielson Framework, to optimize learning that is student-centered, experiential, and authentic. In a seventh grade social studies class, prior to listening to the song, “Free America,” students were encouraged to source the document with their partners, using passages on loyalist and patriot perspectives. Data based groups received different quotes and varied graphic organizers for developing a line of argument using multiple perspectives for points and counterpoints. Other scaffolds included a handout entitled, “Quotation Busters,” on which the students had to indicate the quotation, draw a conclusion, and support it with textual evidence. In another handout, they had to “read like a historian” and answer questions from the excerpt “Plain Truth.” To provide additional support in analyzing documents or songs, and note-taking, the teacher created the acronym *SOAPS* to remind the students to include the subject (S), occasion, the period of time in history (O), remember the audience (A), the purpose (P), and the speaker (S), a strategy that was shared with teachers across the school. In addition, the teacher provided more challenging documents for the high level learners. Skills such as annotating through note-taking, highlighting, and citing textual evidence, are also embedded within lessons across grades and subjects. Furthermore, teachers frequently engage in their own reflections upon review of their students’ work. For example, after collecting and analyzing his students’ responses to “Citing Textual Evidence,” a teacher, upon reflection, indicated that he was concerned with one group of students’ lack of evidence. Consequently, he decided to provide graphic organizers for citing textual evidence that was divided into three columns on which students collaboratively discussed the text, reflected independently before jotting an idea about something that they learned from the article, cited the exact words that refers to the ideas, and indicated the reasons the information was worth citing. This type of instructional setting provides students with needed supports as well as vast opportunities to express themselves in different ways, reflect individually, and collaborate. Consequently, visits to classrooms reflect in-depth exploration of topics and genres, students reading analytically using nonfiction texts, citing central ideas, synthesizing, comparing and contrasting while using rich and varied vocabulary. This is resulting in elevated levels of student thinking, engagement, and participation, as evidenced in students’ work.

- Teachers’ use of ongoing assessments aligned to the curricula, and analyses of common information on student learning, results in purposeful support for students. (2.2)
 - Teachers use ongoing formative assessments, utilize data sources to analyze information to inform their instructional decision-making, including student groupings and instructional strategies, to reach diverse student populations as well as create environments that support differentiated teaching and learning. Across the school, teachers use common assessments to track students’ progress across grades and subjects and consistently provide students with specific accolades and next steps, using Student Work Assessment Pieces, known as *SWAPS*, on all draft and

published writing pieces. This consistent written feedback to students is aligned to the school's curricula and results in students being motivated and challenged at their individual levels, actively engaged in discussions or group investigations and awareness of their learning goals and expectations in all subjects. Teachers consistently gather information on students' abilities, and respond to that information by adjusting instruction using ongoing checks for understanding. For example, in a sixth grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) social studies class, the students were finding evidentiary arguments and citing textual evidence to prepare for their argumentative essay on the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II and the debates surrounding it. The teachers asked thought provoking questions that probed for text evidence and reasoning that supported students' answers. Through their ongoing check-ins, the teachers recognized that some of the students were struggling with eye/hand coordination, and had the students work with manipulative time lines, indicative of teacher practice that customizes content through varying instructional processes and resources. In an eighth grade ELA class, students analyzed how author John Steinbeck developed themes in the novel, *The Pearl*. They worked collaboratively as they engaged in their group work and posed their own queries, such as, "How can we incorporate more details in our outline? What transitional phrases can we use?" Their responses to these questions included, "We could cite more textual evidence and use words such as *in addition*, *furthermore*, *additionally*, and *moreover*." Another group posed the question, "How can we make our group essay better," to which they answered, "We can find quotes that symbolize good and evil." This teacher used group skills tracking sheets to ascertain the students' contributions, determine her groups, and provide schemas for her next lesson. As a result of embracing these formative practices and incorporating the principles of the *Universal Design for Learning (UDL)*, using graduated scaffolds that support students with implementing strategies and engaging in decision-making with like-minded peers or competent mentors, and providing specific, timely feedback, students are able to monitor their own progress effectively and use that information to guide their own effort and practice. Such responsive strategies reveal teachers' flexibility in facilitating the learning process while promoting independence and success, while supporting student mastery of skills and content, as evidenced in students' fluent writing across the curriculum.

- School leaders, through observation data and analyses of student data, identify strengths and next steps to provide high quality feedback that supports professional growth and reflection and leverages instructional capacity. (4.1)
 - School leaders, as an integral part of their instructional leadership, use the Danielson Framework as the cornerstone of instructional improvement at the school. They frequently observe teachers and link their high quality, actionable feedback to support teacher reflection, professional growth, and efficacy. Comments on teachers' observations, such as "Use the Depths of Knowledge (DOK) question stems to help pose open-ended questions, which will invite students to think and offer multiple answers," and "Use real life scenarios as part of your questioning," helps to improve teachers' questioning techniques. Another administrator, who conducted a subsequent observation on the same teacher, provided comments such as, "Students should formulate some of the questions themselves to

deepen understanding, in conjunction with your open-ended DOK questions.” This demonstrates supervisors’ practice of following up on each other’s observations to improve teacher practice, as well as conveys a clear sense of the teacher’s professional growth aligned to the feedback provided to improve their instructional practices. Additionally, the administration developed a color-coded spreadsheet in alignment with the Danielson Framework that captures teachers’ ratings on each of the 22 competencies within the 4 Domains. This management system enables school leaders to provide relevant professional development for teachers, based on individual needs, and supports teachers’ professional growth. Teachers also are expected to reflect on their own professional development by completing a feedback form that calls for responses to the following three questions: *What were the big ideas? How will I use what I learned? How will I share with my colleagues?* Accordingly, 65% of teachers are presently in the effective or highly effective range in competency 3B, questioning and discussion techniques, and 82% are deemed effective or highly effective in 3D, using assessment in instruction. These data are indicative of vast improvements in teacher practice, resulting in continual professional learning for teachers, advanced teacher scholarship, and dramatic contributions to student engagement, as evidenced in student tasks and classroom participation.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase the use of personalized supports and family outreach to ensure progress towards the school’s goals, accelerate student attendance rates, and further promote students’ adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors. (1.4)
 - To ensure that students are known well and supported in their academic, social, and emotional development throughout their years at the school, the assistant principals loop with their cohort of students from sixth to eighth grade. The school conducts regular social and attendance outreach to families of students who are absent or late to school. However, efforts to personalize attendance supports and coordinate social emotional learning are not yet fully executed for students recommended to participate in the academic intervention program after the regular school day. For example, in the Extended Day program, where groups of students are invited to participate in targeted intervention, there is no formal structure for informing families if students enrolled are absent in order to monitor progress and encourage students’ regular attendance in the program to ensure that they are on track for making the necessary improvements toward grade level exit criteria. This results in missed opportunities to strategically and closely monitor progress of the school’s lowest third in order to close the achievement gap and contribute to students’ sense of connectedness and augment the impact on their academic and personal behaviors.
- Continue to ensure the communication of high expectations to families and students and provide advisement supports to ensure student progress towards goal mastery to position all learners for post-secondary readiness. (3.4)

- The parent coordinator plans many informational sessions for parents throughout the year, such as High School Night and CCLS: NYS Testing, which provides families with strategies for supporting their children's social and academic development. Student progress is communicated to students on a daily basis through detailed feedback on "every single writing piece." One student stated "Teachers are very prepared for the children; they know what *everyone* is able to do to improve and academically advance. They push you a little further; they have faith!" Similarly, parents assert that the administrators and teachers are "open and accessible" and report that progress reports sent home every quarter ensures that there "are no surprises." Additionally, some teachers use Jupiter grades, a reporting mechanism that offers timely information related to ongoing class assignments and assessments. Through this platform, students and parents are able to check grades and homework, download files and view announcements and calendar notices, as well as see alerts for low grades, missing assignments, and absences. However, not all teachers utilize this reporting system to keep families abreast of their children's progress. As a result, not all parents are equally informed about how to understand and support their children's academic progress in preparation for college and career opportunities.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

| School name: Marine Park | 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 |