



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

**Quality Review  
Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning  
2013-2014**

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**Vito Marcantonio School**

**Elementary – Middle School M050**

**433 East 100 Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10029**

**Principal: Cynthia Rochez**

**Dates of review: May 12-13, 2014  
Lead Reviewer: Alexandra Estrella**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Vito Marcantonio School is an elementary-middle school with 328 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 38% Black, 59% Hispanic, 2% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 31% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 89.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leadership and teachers are beginning to develop Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) aligned units emphasizing key standards, as well as the instructional shifts, in order to increase rigor and student achievement. (1.1)
  - The principal hired a consultant in an effort to support the staff as they implemented the Teachers College CCLS-aligned curriculum across grades as well as from kindergarten to grade 8. In the principal's office, data tables display and track students reading level and mathematics proficiency utilizing iReady. As observed in the middle school math team meeting, teachers discuss patterns they notice in student work samples and discuss modifications and adjustments they would make to the area and volume unit to support the diverse learning needs of the middle school students. For example, students were struggling with determining the area and volume of an object; therefore, teachers revised the lessons for the week to infuse additional practice time with the concept and relevant manipulatives to help students visualize how to determine the area and volume of a three dimensional object, including visuals to support students when solving word problems. The team also addressed strategies that helped special education students meet their learning needs by embedding small group instruction, one-on-one support, and differentiated tasks for English language learners and students with disabilities in the weekly plan. In an effort to promote college and career readiness, the school has the same expectations for all students, but provides differentiated entry points to the work. For example, the school started the Leader in Me advisory program for students in kindergarten to grade 8. This program elevates student achievement by developing positive learning habits as well as the study habits and behaviors necessary to be successful in college. For example, students are taught seven habits of success and then these habits are addressed throughout the day in an effort to build their capacity to self regulate and set high academic and social expectations for themselves. Hence, across grades and subject areas, planning documents showed the beginning of a coherent commitment to embed differentiated tasks that make the work accessible to all learners, as well as engagement in academic positive social emotional academic language. As a result, students are beginning to develop rigorous habits and higher order skills that will prepare them for college and career success.
- The school uses its resources in support of the educational goals and provides structured time for teachers to meet regularly, resulting in increased instructional capacity. (1.3)
  - School leadership has provided a number of professional development opportunities informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and sent teachers to external professional development to support them in their teaching practices. Through teacher observations, the principal revealed that teachers needed additional support in implementing the instructional shifts and CCLS. Also, they showed that teachers needed to focus on setting a clear objective and classroom discussion as per findings using the Danielson rubric. As a result, this year the administrative team organized the schedule to allow team meetings to occur at least once a week so that staff can

strategize how to focus their instructional objectives and create opportunities to engage students in classroom discussion. Additionally, to increase student achievement in the areas of math and literacy, the principal purchased iReady, Achieve 3000, additional classroom library books and Foundations. These programs, combined with the academic intervention afterschool program and the Saturday program, provide struggling students with an opportunity to strengthen their skills; thereby, increasing their proficiency in math and literacy.

- School leaders have developed an observation cycle to provide feedback to teachers that has resulted in professional growth and enhanced teaching practices. (4.1)
  - The principal has developed an observation cycle to observe teachers regularly in order to provide feedback aligned with the Danielson Framework for Teaching and Learning. The principal created an observation calendar to support the administrative team to insure that observations are done in a timely manner. Through classroom observations the principal noticed that most classrooms had a teacher-centered approach. In response, the administrative team provided professional development centered on how to create a more student-centered environment; this has remained an area of focus this year. The administrative team utilizes the trends found as a result of ongoing classroom observation to design and provide professional development for staff in the different targeted areas. The principal encourages staff to engage in intervisitations to learn from one another's best practices. Based on school-wide observation trends last year, the administrative team identified three areas of focus: creating a student-centered classroom, engaging students in higher order thinking questions, and developing lessons that promote student engagement. Additionally, during the beginning of the year, teachers were asked to set three long-term goals prior to their planning conference with the principal. In the meeting, the principal worked with the teachers to make sure their goals align with the teachers' needs as well as the needs of the students they are serving. As evident in several samples of teacher observations, the leadership team provides feedback and then monitors the development of areas of concern by observing the teachers multiple times and assessing improvements using the Danielson Framework. As a result, subsequent observations address different areas of concern and move teachers towards meeting their individual professional goals aligned to the Danielson Rubric. Consequently, some teachers, regardless of their level of experience, are on track to reach their goals by the end of the academic school year, thereby increasing student achievement as evident by students' running records.

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

- Develop assessment practices to reflect ongoing checks for understanding as well as the use of rubrics to make adjustments to instruction and provide feedback so that all students' learning needs are met. (2.2)
  - Individual teachers and teacher teams are beginning to gather data from running records, performance-tasks assessments in math and English language arts, and unit tests to determine student performance trends. However, the practice of analyzing student performance is in its developmental stages within teams' and individual teachers' practice. Hence,

teachers are grouping students in pair or groups of three or four, but differentiated instruction or tasks were not evident in most classrooms observed. As a result, teachers are struggling to meet the specific needs of individual students and sub-groups and are thereby limiting students from accessing higher levels of achievement. For example, teachers do not have a systematic approach to record and analyze students' reading levels to monitor their growth. The principal started to track student progress using programs like iReady and Achieve3000, but this analysis has yet to impact day-to-day instructional practices. At the onset of a unit, teachers give a pre-assessment that would inform instruction at the beginning of the unit, but most lesson plans reviewed showed a limited amount of modifications made as a result of any of the assessments tools currently utilized by the school. The ongoing cycle of assess, analyze, revise, and re-teach was not consistently evident through individual teacher lessons or teacher teams. Also, the practice of analyzing student performance is inconsistent across teams and teachers. As a result, not all teachers are able to differentiate their instruction to meet the specific needs of the student sub-groups, resulting in not all students being able to accelerate their learning. For example, the kindergarten through grade 2 team discussed students whose promotion was in doubt, together reflected upon an article titled, How Do I Effectively Check for Understanding, and addressed the need to reassess that subgroup of students. Also, teachers conducted an additional running record as a final assessment to determine specific areas of growth for students that had their promotion in doubt and to determine if they had grown in the areas of concern. However, they did not clearly articulate how the curriculum or lessons would be modified to support students in their areas of growth, thereby making the cycle of data analysis incomplete. While teacher teams routinely analyze both summative and formative assessments, there are few examples of teachers designing customized assessments tailored towards capturing specific information about students' understandings. Also, there was limited evidence that teachers utilized assessment findings to inform instruction. This prevents teachers from exploring in detail what students need to learn and developing student proficiency levels within the different content areas.

- Enhance instruction across classrooms to ensure teachers strategically provide multiple entry points into the curricula to engage all learners in high levels of thinking and discussion, as well as increase student ownership of the learning. (1.2)
  - The principal believes that students learn best when they are engaging in small group instruction that is aligned to the objective of the day. She also believes that everyone in the building is collectively responsible for the success of all students and that, in connection with outside partners, the school can effectively provide differentiated services to the school's diverse learning community. Throughout the school, classroom teachers inconsistently had students working on tasks that were aligned to the objective of the day. In several instances, students were not able to articulate the rationale behind the task or how it connected to an overall theme or big idea. Also, the principal stated that questioning and acting as facilitators was an area teachers needed to further develop during their lesson planning and delivery in order to encourage higher-level thinking and discussion. Teachers in one out of the eight classrooms observed were starting to infuse higher order questioning and were effectively acting as facilitators, but this was not

evident throughout the school. Additionally, school leaders have started to use teacher team meeting time to look at student work and make adjustments to the curricula to provide multiple entry points to all students as evident by the math team meeting lesson plan and unit modification discussion. In several classrooms visited, students were in pairs or small groups. To add, tasks that provided multiple entry points into content to challenge all learners, including low and high performers, English language learners, and students with disabilities were not evident in most classrooms, resulting in fewer opportunities for all students to consistently demonstrate higher-order thinking.

- Strengthen the inquiry-based collaborations and analysis of student work among teachers so that it can inform and improve coherence and increased achievement for all students. (4.2)
  - Teacher teams, led by grade team leaders, loosely engage in collaborative inquiry by looking at student work samples and determining next steps to support students in meeting their goals and strengthening teacher practice. The teams are organized by grade and are in the process of aligning vertically by content. The grade level teams meet once a week to look at student work samples and analyze data trends to inform revisions to the curriculum. However, the curriculum and lessons reviewed did not have any modifications as a result of the team meetings. Also, the middle school math team did not have an agenda, making the objective of the meeting unclear. During the grade kindergarten through grade 2 team meeting, teachers discussed the spelling inventory for children in early elementary, in which students needed support, and described how they tiered the students according to need. However, with the exception of one class, this was not evident during classroom observations. Teachers discussed areas of concern for students, but did not look at student work during the meetings. Furthermore, they did not address how they would re-teach the skills or concepts needed to successfully support students to spell words accurately. Teacher leaders and teachers within the team are given leadership opportunities to make and adjust curricula and decide on key instructional adjustments that affect student learning across the school; however, the collaboration is not yielding improved instructional practices and limits improved student learning outcomes.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Vito Marcantonio School	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		<b>X</b>					
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
<b>School Culture</b>							
<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?		<b>X</b>					
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations?		<b>X</b>					
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<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?			<b>X</b>				
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?			<b>X</b>				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<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>