

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**School Name**

**Marie Curie MS 158  
46-35 Oceania Street  
Queens  
NY 11361**

**Marie Nappi**

**January 29, 30, 2014  
Anita E. Saunders**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Marie Curie is a middle school with 1126 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 4% Black, 14% Hispanic, 20% White, and 62% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 97.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is well developed.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal and staff have developed engaging, rigorous curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards offering meaningful learning experiences to improve student achievement for all students. (1.1)
  - The school is using Scholastic Code X for English language arts (ELA) that is Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS ) aligned and includes the citywide instructional shifts, focusing on argumentative writing, and are being implemented to ensure college and career readiness. Project PACED (Participation and Collaboration in Educational resource Development) Mathematics 2010, and the New York City Department of Instructional Support for Mathematics pre- and post- units are CCLS aligned. The school has implemented the citywide instructional focus in math, uses Engage New York, and teacher designed tasks that are CCLS aligned to ensure rigorous instruction. The CCLS and instructional shifts are integrated in all content areas. Presentation boards throughout the school display students' argumentative essays and mathematical problem solving. Seventh graders wrote essays about sports with the claim that mental strength was as important as physical strength, citing two pieces of evidence to support or refute the claim. Another board displayed ratio and proportional relationships which listed identified CCLS, a rubric and a real world problem about a person's car trip home from San Francisco to New York. Students were required to use a problem solving tool that included making a table, writing an explanation for their thinking and an equation. Additionally, some students were challenged with a higher level question. Due to increased focus on the CCLS and instructional shifts, 60% of level 3 and 4 students increased their ELA averages from one marking period to the next and 45% did so in math.
  - The assistant principals (APs) meet regularly with a teacher teams to ensure curriculum alignment and coherence across all grades. The teams use data to analyze gaps in learning, look at student work and the tasks assigned, and monitor misconceptions before teaching next lessons. They engage in lesson plan study and learning walks looking at student work products. All teams are focusing on multiple entry points and Depth of Knowledge (DOK) higher order questions and discussions to promote higher level thinking. Lessons include time for student discussions explaining reasons and multiple ways to obtain an answer. A protocol chart is displayed in classrooms that includes suggestions for student-to- student discussion with prompts such as "I agree with ..., I disagree with..., or I would like to add..." All English language learners (ELLs) are programmed into specific general education classes where teachers have English as A Second Language (ESL) training; ESL teachers pull out students as well as push into classrooms. Teachers use the Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP) to scaffold instruction and ensure higher order thinking with small groups of students using thoughtful high level questions, vocabulary development, visuals and visual prompts, and graphic organizers, with emphasis on building oral language for ELLs. The Special Education Support Service (SETSS)

teacher pulls out students with disabilities. As a result. English language learners have increased 52% in ELA and 53% in math and students with disabilities (SWD's) have increased 50% in ELA and 42% in math from one marking period to the next.

- The principal makes informed and data based organizational decisions across all aspects of the school and allocates resources that support student growth. (1.3)
  - The principal purchased iReady, an assessment and instructional program, to remediate and improve the lowest performing one third of students, as well as to accelerate the highest level students. Funds were spent for Laptops, SMART boards, Code X, and vocabulary building books for the Title 3 program that serves English language learners. Additionally, per session funds are allocated for a before and after school program for ELL students and common planning times, and per diem funds for lead teachers to attend monthly network meetings on content area curriculum and instructional strategies. Several on-line recording systems were purchased: Teachboost, used by administrators to track observations, Skedula, used by teachers for grading, assignments, attendance, and parent messaging and Pupil Path, parental communication with teachers. iPads for all teachers were purchased for use with the common grading policy. These budget actions support the schools Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) goals and lead to increase teacher and student growth as evidenced by increased use of technology by all teachers, access to review and analysis for all student data and assessments, and professional development to improve instruction. Teachboost analysis reveals 1% of teachers have improved in Danielson 3b that measures questioning and discussion from November 8<sup>th</sup> to December 4<sup>th</sup>. Student work products displayed reveal the use of a four square model to increase conceptual learning in math resulting in a 38% increase of level 3 students and a 51% increase in level 4 students. Parent access to student assessments, attendance and immediate goals enable parents to monitor student progress and support increased student growth. Student absences for the most at risk students decreased from 140 to 95 from September to January as a result of daily parent communication in Skedula
  - The principal employs a rigorous hiring practice that begins with an interview of questions that reveal familiarity with the CCLS, love of children, a sample letter to a parent indicating tone, ladder of discipline, and a demonstration lesson. A Spanish teacher that is currently replacing staff member on a leave of absence a vocal teacher, and math teacher were hired under this process. An integrated co-teaching special education teacher was moved to a self-contained class. At the end of every year students are placed in different programs such as special progress, and teachers' expertise and personality are selected to match student needs. One of the teacher teams is organized by the class that teachers in every department share. They analyze and discuss student assessment results, both formative and summative, share strategies that remediate identified deficits, and hold themselves accountable for student progress. As a result, student achievement in one math teacher's class has improved 31% from the pre- assessment to the mid unit assessment and 25% from the beginning to the end of a unit.

- Through regular use of a wide range of relevant data, leaders and staff have an ongoing understanding of the performance and progress of individuals, which effectively informs instruction and organizational adjustments. (2.2)
  - All content areas and grades use common assessment calendars that include the CCLS pre- and post-assessments with aligned tasks and rubrics. Assessment data revealed a gap in the teaching of writing to students and lessons needed to be scaffolded and broken down into smaller components to ensure higher levels of student writing. Students needed to include more details and evidence from texts. Additionally math assessments revealed the language in problem solving needed to be addressed with English language learners and students with disabilities, and problems needed to be more real world oriented. Students receive feedback with next steps listed on their work, as well as individual conferences with the teacher, so that a clear picture of their work is assessed and understood. Students are able to explain what they are working on and their next goal. A conference book listed next steps which students signed. Skedula ensures alignment and equity since teachers enter grades for all staff to view, including parents who can view grades in Pupil Path, the parent component of the Skedula program. There is a common grading policy that is aligned so that 70% of student grades are based on summative assessments and 30% on formative assessments.
  - Teachers are constantly assessing student work, through tests, homework, questioning, student discussions, and observations. Teachers track student work and use a chart to scribe the number of times a student participates in discussions citing text evidence. Students self-assess, participate in peer editing and use exit slips that provide teachers with a quick assessment of their understanding. Teachers consistently adapt and differentiate lessons based on this assessment data. One teacher used two different articles in a social studies class with three different lexile reading levels and various graphic organizers to meet the needs of students and ensure student learning. Another teacher had three different groups, each with differentiated tasks to meet student needs for low, medium and high levels, while another teacher had several different entry points for a math lesson that involved designing a camping map using coordinates. As a result, teachers effectively adjust curricula and instruction to ensure students' growth and achievement. Data revealed that 63% level 3 students, 56% level 4 students, 52% English language learners and 50% students with disabilities showed progress from the first to the second marking period in English language arts. Likewise, 38% of level 3 students, 51% level 4 students, 52% English language learners, and 50% students with disabilities showed progress from the first to the second marking period in math.
- School leaders promote teacher professional growth and reflection with effective feedback grounded in the Danielson rubric resulting in improved school wide instructional practices. (4.1)
  - Two new teachers are being mentored and provided with feedback: one for classroom management and the other for coherence with CCLS and instructional shifts in planning lessons. The principal collects lesson plans

and provides teachers with specific feedback such as the use of ARIS Learn, a self-regulated professional development on-line system with specific resources aligned to the Danielson framework for teaching that provides videos, articles, modules and websites. Another teacher was mentored for time management and now uses a bell in the classroom to keep parts of her lessons timed. The school leaders are on the third cycle of Danielson observations and meet individually with each teacher and articulate specific feedback with suggestions and next steps, as well as provide written feedback. Lead teachers meet with the principal and assistant principal three hours per month to plan professional development based on an analysis of student data and Danielson observations. Five half days of professional development focused on engaging students through high level questioning and student discussions. The last professional development was differentiated into four groups based on observed teacher needs: assessment, coherent instruction, instructional objectives, and knowledge of students. The principal and assistant principals visited classrooms to monitor the learning and teaching. Additionally, the leadership team and lead teachers engage in learning walks with the same objective for each classroom. The last walk focused on What Are the Students Doing? They wanted to see if students were intellectually engaged and participating in discussions and questioning to a greater degree and were pleased to note a positive change. These walks provide topics for professional development and individual teacher goals, and ultimately lead to increased teacher performance and student achievement. Teacher growth on the Danielson rubric from September through January indicates 16% moved from effective to highly effective and 22% moved from developing to effective.

- The principal and staff work as a unified team to create a calm, respectful, orderly and caring environment that promotes student academic and personal growth. (1.4)
  - The school is safe and calm with students walking the halls and stairs in an orderly fashion respectful of one another. It is a caring environment where students participate in a weekly early morning program, “Words of Wisdom,” that sets a positive tone for the week. On one day the words gave advice for preventing colds or flu by maintaining a healthy body. Another topic “Simple Kindness” promoted respect and tolerance, and the realization that kindness is an antidote to bullying, teasing and violence. Curie Stars Awards are presented to students for citizenship, effort, character, and responsibility. In addition, the arts and academics are promoted. The school band achieved a Level 3 Gold in the New York State School Music Association and was invited to participate in the Hofstra University Honor’s Band. Student artwork was chosen and exhibited by ARTS Connection. The school achieved 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Stock Market Game, 1<sup>st</sup> place at the local Math Counts competition to compete in Albany, 68<sup>th</sup> place in the Nationwide American Mathematics competition with three students achieving the top 1%, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader winning 1<sup>st</sup> place in the New York State Chess competition, and a 1<sup>st</sup> place winner in the national Pokemon competition. The Student Organization (S.O.) consists of one student from each class who meet regularly with a staff advisor. There is a suggestion box in the library for students to drop notes of concern and/or suggestions. Recently, the S.O. met with the school food supervisor about more options on the lunch menu and resulted in pizza as

a daily option. Additionally, they also posted signs in the bathrooms, such as “Don’t forget to flush” and “Keep this bathroom clean.” The S.O. made Valentines for Vets, held a toy drive and participates in numerous fund raising activities including Penny Harvest. Teachers have developed core values of how students learn best which are posted throughout the classrooms and building. Each year teachers reevaluate these values. One of the practices listed is that students learn best when they participate in group discussions. It is this belief that underlies students being intellectually engaged in discussions that surface different perspectives that justify and challenge their thinking. As a result, students in a 7<sup>th</sup> grade science class were engaged in student- to student- group discussions on the theory of continental drift, displaying high level thinking with some agreeing, some disagreeing and some adding to the initial statement.

- The guidance counselors stay with the same class throughout the students’ years in the school, ensuring each child is well known socially, emotionally and academically. Parents and staff are involved in a safety committee that meets regularly. A system to monitor attendance and lateness with charts and stars per class hangs in entrance hall and the class with the most stars receives a pizza party. As a result, an attendance roster for September to January shows a decrease in ninety-five absences for the most at-risk students. An anti-bullying club enables students to role play and sends positive messages by creating posters that are hung throughout the school. One such poster reads “Bullying makes me feel...” An art class designed Mood Meters posters, displayed in the halls and stairs that allow students to check in on their emotions. As a result, student suspensions dropped 25% from September to January.

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

- Continue to provide multiple opportunities for meaningful student engagement in lessons that motivate students to reach their highest potential with high level thinking and work products. (1.2)
  - Teachers have participated in numerous professional development sessions on higher level DOK questioning and conversation Roundtables to promote student- to-student discussions. They adapted “Accountable Language Stems” for a student discussion protocol to be used in group and whole class discussions. Teacher teams are focusing on adapting lessons to include high level questioning, student discussions and multiple entry points, including English language learners, students with disabilities, and lower and higher achieving students. Many teachers use DOK questioning and in some classes instruct students to use these in peer discussions. Multiple entry points are usually provided for students. Differentiated student work assignments and products demonstrate the focus of ensuring that student learning needs are met. However, not every classroom is showing evidence of implementation to the same extent, thus preventing all students from engaging in tasks that result in the production of work products that cement the demonstration of high levels of thinking.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Marie Curie MS 158	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>