



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

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

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**The Margaret Lindemeyer School**

**R013**

**191 Vermont Avenue  
Staten Island  
NY 10305**

**Principal: Paul Martuccio**

**Dates of review: November 25-26, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Jessica Jenkins**

## **Part 1: The school context**

### **Information about the school**

Margaret Lindemeyer is an elementary school with 855 students from pre-kindergarten through grade five. The school population comprises 17% Black, 42% Hispanic, 25% White, 14% Asian students and 2% other. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 18% 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 95.8%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has created and refined curricula across grades that align to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and integrate the instructional shifts resulting in coherence across the school. (1.1)
  - Across content areas, curriculum maps reflect rigorous high order thinking skills to meet the needs of all students to improve learning outcomes. The school employs a multitude of resources focused on the integration of the instructional shifts. For example, in math, teachers create their own curriculum maps using Engage NY modules and in English language arts (ELA), teachers adapt Ready Gen curriculum using an interdisciplinary approach that utilizes the New York City Scope and Sequence for Social Studies. College and career readiness is promoted across units through the use of accountable talk and student discourse, resulting in high expectations and demonstration of student thinking across grades. Furthermore students are provided with opportunities across subject areas to have rich and rigorous conversations, which are dependent on a common text. A kindergarten integrated co-teaching class, when presented with text-dependent questions, enthusiastically discussed their ideas and responded to higher order questions via partner share and a written description. Additionally lesson plans include a lesson action cycle (what-how-why) for learning and record higher-order thinking questions. As a result, there is a school-wide focus on coherent and rigorous learning experiences that focus on higher order thinking skills, leading to increased academic achievement on performance tasks across classes for all students. Furthermore, to leverage capacity, an instructional coherence team meets with the administration regularly and evaluates vertical and horizontal mapping, resulting in adjustments and modifications to build coherence across grades.
  - Teacher teams regularly refine units of study and tasks using student work, exit slips, and conference notes. For example, the math team meets regularly to analyze a range of student exit tickets to assess mastery and to adapt the task and instructional techniques accordingly. As a result, instructional methods are adjusted based on continual monitoring of student progress, as evidenced by a range of grade level curriculum maps, student work samples and student data portfolios. Additionally, supports for students are extended by including parents in actual class lessons where they participate in learning activities to support their children's understanding of concepts, ensuring access to curricula. Parents shared that teacher modeling of instructional techniques has assisted them in providing additional support for their children at home.
- School leaders make effective and strategic organizational decisions aligned to the school's instructional goals that enhance support in order to address all students' learning needs. (1.3)
  - The school subscribes to a school-wide push-in model for all academic support, which lowers the student-teacher ratio, as well as allows teachers to share responsibility for student learning goals to meet the needs of special populations. The principal purchased Achieve 3000, a web-based differentiated literacy program, which is used for all students, including

students with disabilities (SWDs) and English language learners (ELLs). This program is utilized both during the school day and in extended-day programs. In two classrooms observed, students worked in separate flexible groups guided by two teachers, while a third group accessed Achieve 3000. This program has begun to impact the performance of SWD's and ELL's as evidenced by an Achieve 3000 data analysis tracker indicating a 40-point increase in lexile level set scores.

- The strategic hiring of consistent substitute teachers allows teachers to engage in additional grade-team meetings (ATM's) each Thursday. In addition to ATM's, teacher programs provide for at least two weekly common planning periods, as well as a third teacher team meeting on Monday. Furthermore, the principal has allocated additional funds for teaming, including a lateral coherence, special education, positive discipline, and grade leader team meeting, who meet every three weeks. The entire staff engages in a teaming structure, ensuring that faculty has opportunities to work collaboratively to develop curriculum, create flexible groups, plan instruction, and analyze student work. As a result, there is improved instruction across grades, as evidenced in one English language learner (ELL) classroom, where both teachers facilitated a purposefully planned guided group, while a third group engaged in independent, structured work on computers.
- The school collaboratively builds teacher capacity through shared leadership and the deep study of student learning, thereby influencing instructional strategies resulting in improving student outcomes. (4.2)
  - All teachers are involved on teacher teams that meet regularly across grades and content areas, to collaboratively analyze student work. The literacy and math teacher teams routinely engage in a six-step protocol to analyze student work and plan for next steps. A presenting teacher provides background on the task, presents student work samples, and asks the group questions such as, "What does this work sample show that the student knows?" or "How can I move this student forward?" Group members then ask clarifying questions about the task and independently review the work presented. They then transition to sharing interpretations of the work as well as suggestions for next steps. After processing team input, the presenting teacher responds with next steps. Moreover, one product of the collegial work of teacher teams is the creation of a common lesson plan format consistently utilized in literacy and math, resulting in shared improvement and coherence in teacher practice. When asked how teacher teaming has impacted teacher practice, one member responded, "The answers are always in this room. We rely on each other to collaboratively improve our practice to meet the needs of our students." This collaboration is evident in curriculum maps that have been modified by teacher teams to address the needs of students, resulting in greater differentiated support across classrooms.
  - Leadership is shared on teacher teams as evidenced by rotating facilitation of team meetings. The use of protocols to look at student work has become a regular practice and the presenting educator also rotates weekly. Additionally an instructional coach is instrumental in providing support for teachers in the classroom as well as during team meetings. One teacher shared, "our administration is supportive of us trying different strategies, suggesting ideas, and encouraging us to learn from each other through inter-visitation." The impact of increased teacher capacity is shared ownership of curriculum,

student progress and the advancement of teacher practice.

- Teachers use ongoing assessment practices and the analysis of student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels. (2.2)
  - Teacher teams and individual teachers analyze data from exit slips, on demand CCLS-aligned tasks, lexile growth captured in Achieve 3000, and assessments in order to align and adjust curricula to identify and close gaps in student learning. For example, a group of literacy teachers analyzed a second grade common assessment on retelling sequenced events of a short story. After engaging in a six-step protocol to analyze the student response, the team agreed upon a number of next steps, including the use of a more detailed graphic organizer, resulting in instructional adjustments to the unit of study.
  - Across classrooms teachers were observed using exit tickets, conferencing, and checks for understanding, as noted in an English as a second language (ESL) class when the teacher asked students to reference the text for evidence, stated, “I will know you found it when I see a thumbs up.” Additionally, a collection of student work and individual portfolios contain actionable next steps and progress toward mastery of goals based on the individual needs of students. Students are provided with multiple opportunities to revise their work, as evidenced in individual student data binders. Furthermore, checks for understanding during the mini-lesson allowed teachers to target support during the work time portion of the lesson when students transition to stations, which was observed in one third grade math class. As a result, students receive targeted and individualized support based on need.

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

- Expand the systems that evaluate the quality of administrative decisions to ensure deep understanding of the impact of programs and structures to increase coherence and improve outcomes for all students. (5.1)
  - The principal and assistant principals participate in teacher team meetings to examine student work and to make revisions to units of study of learning based on CCLS standards. Monthly, the school tracks student progress in literacy using Achieve 3000. Additionally, the principal shared that the adoption of the school-wide problem-solving framework for math and the school-wide implementation of exit tickets to assess for understanding and inform instruction, was the collaborative decision of teacher teams. These strategies, as well as administrative participation in team meetings enables the school to actively reflect on the work of teacher teams. However, analysis by teacher teams focuses on smaller groups of students as opposed to trends across grades and subgroups. This limits the school from defining progress or trends across grades for a larger sampling of students. As a result, responses to trends are less timely, impeding a full understanding of the effectiveness of exit tickets and the problem-solving framework on school-wide outcomes.
  - While there is an overall positive culture in place as evidenced by the most recent learning environment survey which is reviewed by the cabinet and

school leadership team (SLT) when released, there is no formal system in place to regularly analyze school environment and culture with the staff. This limits the school's capacity to explore underlying assumptions to assess, analyze, and improve leadership and teacher practices.

- Enhance instructional practices to guarantee a range of entry points for a diversity of learners in order to cognitively challenge all students in high levels of thinking and participation. (1.2)
  - The Danielson Framework supports the school's beliefs in promoting a rigorous and engaging learning experience for all students, as evidenced by lesson plans that incorporate a wide range of useful scaffolds including questioning, graphic organizers, and discussion to activate thinking. Additionally all math lessons include a framework for problem solving that one student shared is a "useful strategy" which helps her to "think through" difficult tasks. In one class observed, students were working in flexible groups to solve problems utilizing this framework. In another classroom, an ELL teacher utilized a graphic organizer to support the work of academic vocabulary. However, in some classrooms observed, teachers engaged the class in discussion that lasted a full class period, which did not strategically address multiple entry points limiting access for all learners, thus hindering high levels of engagement. While a number of students in these classrooms participated, several didn't. Furthermore, in one special education classroom observed, the teacher posed higher-order thinking questions in rapid-fire succession resulting in missed opportunities for students to think deeply.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The Margaret Lindemeyer School – R013	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			X				
<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?			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			
<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?			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				
<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?				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				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed