

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Vito Marcantonio**

**Elementary-Middle School M050**

**433 East 100 Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10029**

**Principal: Ester Quinones**

**Date of review: May 5, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Alexandra Estrella**

## The School Context

Vito Marcantonio is an elementary-middle school with 338 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 37% Black, 60% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 30% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013 - 2014 was 87.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Developing</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Finding

The school leader is beginning to communicate high expectations for professionalism, instruction, and the Danielson Framework for Teaching through whole staff professional development. School leaders and staff have established feedback structures to communicate high expectations to both families and students.

### Impact

The school leader is developing systems to hold staff accountable for school-wide expectations. Structures are beginning to develop to ensure parents receive feedback on their child's progress.

### Supporting Evidence

- Student assemblies, the Parent Association (PA), the School Leadership Team (SLT), and parent newsletters are the primary structures used to build the school culture. The school provides ongoing, lines of verbal and written communication to families through Tuesday one-on-one meetings, parent teacher conferences, workshops, emails, and notes backpacked home to keep them informed about their children's progress. Parents vocalized that teachers are accessible and communicate with them continuously during the designated Tuesday parent contact time.
- Parents and students communicated their excitement of the new administration and the changes that have been put in place to support them. The administrative team in collaboration with the teaching staff, is in the process of outlining a clear promotion policy as well as ongoing communication with parents about their child's progress. During a meeting, one parent expressed how she was going to remove her children from the school. However, after observing how the new leadership and staff have established clear expectations around what students need to learn as well as student behavior, she decided to have her children continue at PS/MS 50 next year. To support teachers in implementing strategies to support these expectations, the principal trains teachers on Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS). PBIS strategies were visible in some classroom visits. The principal has brought additional afterschool intervention programs for scholars that need additional support and utilizes PBIS to support teachers and students to exhibit positive behaviors.
- The principal has established an observation system to continuously meet and support teachers in utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, the principal has a flow chart of the dates and times for teacher observations followed by a feedback session. The principal is in the process of identifying areas of focus based on completed observations. The professional development team will be identifying patterns and areas of concern to focus on during professional development sessions.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

The school leader is in the process of enhancing curricula maps and units across grades to align to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts as well as to provide access to challenging tasks.

### Impact

The initial integration of the Common Core Learning Standards, instructional shifts and planning to engage all students in cognitive learning is beginning to build coherence and promote college and career readiness across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers work to adapt pre-existing curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Sources, which serve as starting points for this work, include Teachers College Reading and Writing Workshop for grades kindergarten through 8, GOMath! for grades kindergarten through grade 5 and Connected Mathematics Project 3 (CMP3) for grades 6 through 8. For social studies and science, the school is using the citywide Department of Education scope and sequence. Last year, the teachers implemented the curriculum with minimal modifications and this year, they have made adjustments to further meet the diverse learning needs of the school's student populations. A review of curriculum maps and modifications demonstrate that the school has begun to align the curriculum to the meet the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards.
- Staff members have adjusted curricula to align with the Common Core Learning Standards to include working backwards, increasing the level of higher order questioning based on the Depth of Knowledge (DoK) matrix, emphasize a focus on vocabulary, and contain scaffolds through graphic organizers. Modifications have been made in the curricula pacing calendar and, based on last year's Quality Review feedback, a focus on formative assessments had been developed. Writing was missing in the curriculum created, so the school is beginning to embed it through weekly tasks, which was evident in curriculum maps, lesson plans, and learning targets.
- As the school transitions their work to align to the instructional shifts, some lesson plans are beginning to emphasize tasks to include learning targets and questions to target critical thinking and provide a menu of strategies or leveled resources for scholars to utilize or choose from. For example, science and social studies lesson plans reflect the use of visuals aids such as primary sources, scientific tools or devices, graphic organizers, and leveled texts for diverse students.
- Teachers are beginning to provide different techniques to support students in solving complex mathematical problems. For example, in an eighth grade math lesson plan, the teacher planned to use the Study the problem, Organize the facts, Line up the plan, Verify your plan of action, and Examine results (SOLVE) process to support them with the steps of problem solving.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

The administrative team and teaching staff are in the process of developing common assessments and ongoing checks for understanding practices as well as the use of rubrics to determine student progress toward school goals.

### Impact

Effective adjustments in curricula and instruction are in the process of development to ensure all students' learning needs are met across grades and content areas.

### Supporting Evidence

- Individual teachers and teacher teams are beginning to gather data from running records, performance-tasks assessments in math and English language arts (ELA), and unit tests to determine student performance trends. A review of work samples and lesson plans reflect that teachers are grouping students in pairs or groups of three or four, but these strategies are not based on data findings and tasks are not modified to meet students' needs.
- In the elementary grades, teachers utilize running records and writing prompts associated with the Teacher College Readers and Writers Workshop to determine the reading levels of students and make adjustment decisions. For example, in grade 2, the teacher grouped students based on their reading levels and worked with a small group of students that needed additional guidance within a guided reading group. However, in grades 6 to 8, a review of curricula reflected only some adjustments in instruction such as organizing students in groups. Across those grades, only some teachers have an approach to record and analyze students' reading levels or content area assessments to monitor their growth in the middle school.
- 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 some modifications made as a result of any of the assessments tools currently utilized by the school. In grades kindergarten-2 plans, there was evidence of guided reading groups based off the most recent running record data. However, in a grade 7 science lesson plan, there was no evidence of grouping or modified tasks. Additionally, the kindergarten through grade 2 team discussed how to modify the next Teachers College literacy unit, but they were not utilizing assessment results to inform modifications needed.
- The teachers employ various strategies to check for understanding such as: Do you agree or disagree questions, "Show me how" prompts, use of thumbs, using a stop light in early grades, post-its used as a form of assessment with questions such as "What do you know? What don't you know? What are you wondering?" Although teachers are checking for understanding, during class visits, utilizing the assessment data to adjust the lesson to meet student learning needs occurred in only some classes.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### **Findings**

Instructional practices across classrooms are inconsistent in providing multiple entry points into the curricula with challenging tasks. Furthermore, levels of student work products and discussions were uneven across classrooms.

### **Impact**

Across classrooms, missed opportunities to engage fully in challenging academic tasks and higher order thinking leads to uneven levels in students' work products, discussions and engagement.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- In a grade 1 ELA class, the teacher used multi-leveled texts and graphic organizers to have students analyze different forms of informational text about animals. Students read the leveled texts to identify how different genres of text are organized for the reader. For example, students were looking at patterns and style of text written to inform the reader about a topic.
- A grade 7 science class, reflected groupings, yet, some students were observed copying content onto their graph and data sheet from fellow group members who were more familiar with the task. Hence, students were spending more time copying notes and were not analyzing the information provided by the teacher relative to the science-learning objective.
- During instruction, teachers provided students with direct instruction and did not vary the degree of questions to push student thinking or initiate discussion. In a grade 6 Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) science class, students were asked to explain how organisms get energy from in the food chain. The teacher asked, "What is the main source of energy? What are producers? Who are consumers?" and, "Why are they called producers?" Across various classrooms, instruction observed is teacher centered using a lecture style. In several classes, students were not engaged in dialogue to include skills such as interpretation about the content being taught.
- In a grade 7 social studies class, all of the students were provided the same text and task on the Gold Rush regardless of their levels or familiarity with the material. Several groups of students were completed with the task early and the teacher did not provide them with next steps or additional questions to tackle. The groups engaged in discussion that was not related to the task.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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**Findings**

The school's faculty is beginning to examine formative and summative data as well as look at student work samples in grade-level teams. Leadership structures are beginning to provide a means for teachers to have input on key decisions about curricula and teaching practices.

**Impact**

The work of teacher teams is in the process of resulting in improved pedagogy and student progress on assessments. The new administration is beginning to establish shared leadership structures to build capacity and improve student learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- During the teacher team meeting, teachers were engaged in discussing logistics in preparation for the start of a new literacy unit for grades kindergarten through 2. However, the team did not use student data as part of their discussion to make adjustments for struggling students nor were engaged in the inquiry process. When asked how they engage in the inquiry process and how this increased student outcomes, teachers were unable to articulate how they analyze student work or data as a teacher team. One teacher stated that this would be the focus starting next year.
- During a team meeting, teachers stated that the content and grade teams are beginning to use running records and unit assessment data to determine the key skills students are struggling to develop. Teachers reported that units of study are being modified to meet the diverse student population within the school. For example, teachers are reading aloud some of the text for struggling students who are unable to understand it due to their low reading levels as a strategy.
- The principal stated she is working on building teacher team support structures. Teacher teams are beginning to lead professional development meetings around assessment and checking for understanding. Various committees help support key decision-making such as the advisory committee. For example, the advisory committee has decided to adopt and implement the Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) system to support students in making good decisions, creating a positive school culture and increase learning outcomes.
- During an interview, teachers communicated that they are starting to utilize protocols to analyze student work and look at trends in order to make curriculum adjustments and identify what skills need to be retaught. Teachers reported that adjustments are made to the scope and sequence after unit assessments to make modifications needed to reach diverse learners. Although teachers communicated they are starting to make adjustments utilizing assessment data during teacher team meetings, the evidence provided reflects this work has only begun this year.