Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

# 2014-2015

**Marta Valle High School**

**High School 01M509**

**145 Stanton Street**
**Manhattan**
**NY 10002**

**Principal: Jannett Bailey**

**Dates of review: January 8, 2015**
**Lead Reviewer: Marisol Bradbury**

# The School Context

Marta Valle High School is a High school school with 401 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 42% Black, 49% Hispanic, 2% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 8.2% English language learners and 24.2% special education students. Boys account for 39.4% of the students enrolled and girls account for 60.6%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 79.8%.

# School Quality Criteria

| Instructional Core | | |
|---|---|---|
| *To what extent does the school regularly...* | **Area of:** | **Rating:** |
| 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. | **Additional Findings** | **Developing** |
| 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 | **Focus** | **Developing** |
| 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. | **Additional Findings** | **Developing** |
| **School Culture** | | |
| *To what extent does the school...* | **Area of:** | **Rating:** |
| 3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations. | **Additional Findings** | **Developing** |
| **Systems for Improvement** | | |
| *To what extent does the school...* | **Area of:** | **Rating:** |
| 4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning. | **Celebration** | **Proficient** |

## Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development | Rating: | Proficient |
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**Findings**
Teachers are engaged in structured inquiry based work and look at assessment data and student work for subgroups and cohort students on whom they are focused.

**Impact**
The inquiry work of teachers within their department and grade level teams has yielded improved teaching practice, use of assessment, and student literacy skills.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The members of the ninth grade inquiry team look at student work for the lowest third subgroup to make instructional decisions. Together, they share ideas about teaching strategies to scaffold the learning for this sub group of students. For example, a social studies teacher shared the work of four students. After using the Tuning Protocol template to examine their response to text, teachers in the team identified the need to implement annotation and text deconstruction in order to help students comprehend the complex document.

- The Cohort teams are comprised of teachers across grades 9, 10, 11, and 12. They identify students on track, almost on track, and off track to graduation. Together, they identify interventions for students not meeting graduation requirements according to state accountability. The ninth grade cohort team identified a group of students failing one or more courses and implemented a plan to collaborate with students and their parents. The intervention included outreach and meetings with families, after school tutoring, and Saturday Academy.

- Teacher leaders leading the work of the inquiry and cohort teams meet weekly with the literacy coach, lead literacy teacher, data specialist, network staff, and Generation Ready consultants to discuss and review school wide data, such as graduation rate, eighth grade scores, and scholarship reports.

## Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Developing |
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**Findings**
While teachers articulate the importance of implementing the gradual release of responsibility, the use of teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points and extensions. Student work products reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

**Impact**
Across classrooms, teaching strategies, such as questioning and routines inconsistently support students, including students with disabilities (SWDs) to help them demonstrate higher order thinking and generate meaningful work products.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In one English language arts (ELA) class, students participated in a class discussion by listing three pieces of textual evidence to support their claim. Students engaged in a fishbowl protocol. They responded to one another's perspective and built on each other's ideas. In other lessons visited, while there were attempts to engage students in discussion, usually, the same group of students answered directly to the teacher. Moreover, the questions were mostly generated by the teacher.

- In two math classes observed, teachers used the smart board to model the procedure to solve problems and equations, followed by independent practice, in which students were presented with similar problems. Teachers roamed the room helping students identify the correct answers. Students were assigned the same problems and activity sheets that were not differentiated.

- Across classrooms, lessons reveal a gradual release of responsibility approach to instruction. Lessons observed included a learning target, opening activity, modeling, guided practice, and independent component. However, the activities provided to student varied in academic rigor. For example, students in a math class engaged in matching definitions to mathematical terms. In social studies classes, students completed graphic organizers, charts, and worksheets. In an earth science class, students engaged in the steps of a lab experiment related to the rate of weathering, but, were not able to articulate the difference between chemical and physical weathering or how climate and temperature affect the rate of weathering.

- While conversations with students indicated that teachers were helpful and supportive, the lessons and assignments did not fully challenge them. Expectations about reading, writing and presentations vary across classrooms. For example in one English class, students read a 4-page essay in two days and used a graphic organizer to answer questions. In a social studies lesson, students created a chart and shared a brief response.

## Additional Findings

| Quality Indicator: | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: | Developing |
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**Findings**
The development and planning of curricula and academic tasks that promote rigorous habits vary across subjects. Students have limited access to rigorous tasks that promote cognitive learning.
**Impact**
Curricula and academic tasks inconsistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills and reflect planning to intellectually engage all learners, including SWDs.

**Supporting Evidence**

- While some lesson plans list the Common Core Learning Standards that emphasize higher order thinking, the tasks included in these plans elicit low-level student thinking and participation, such as graphing, solving problems, matching names with definitions, copying information onto graphic organizers, and charting low level responses to share out with the class. In addition, many tasks are drawn from Regents' exams, so students are exposed to limited problem-solving situations.

- While teachers post the Learning Target (LT) on the board and include them in their plans, they inconsistently aim to achieve high-level learning. For example, in a living environment class, the LT asked students to design a controlled experiment to prove a hypothesis. In an ELA class, the LT aimed to engage students in a literary discussion using academic language to support the claim, However, across other classrooms, the LT aimed to achieve low level learning such as “We will learn how to graph a linear inequality with two variables”, “Complete charts and share out information in order to make connections” “know how to subtract and use exponents in excel” “look at yesterday’s text and answer the following questions in groups and on graphic organizers."

- Curriculum maps list Common Core, yet projects and tasks do not consistently emphasize higher order skills so that all students can engage in high-level discussion and intellectual work. A review of student work and projects provide evidence that there are limited opportunities for students to conduct research, present their work, and generate high-level writing products.

- A review of student work, lesson plans, and units of study provide evidence that teacher skills is emerging in planning targeted lessons aligned to the Common Core and the academic needs of students. With the exception of one science class, in which groups of students engaged in different labs to prove their hypothesis, across other classrooms, students were asked to engage in the same activities, solve the same problems, and read the same books.

- In two lesson plans: social studies and science, students were given choice of tasks, such as which country to analyze and which hypothesis to investigate. However, across other lesson plans, the development and planning of rigorous tasks with suitable scaffolds for students at different levels is still emerging.

| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessment | Rating: | Developing |
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**Findings**
While the school uses common assessments, the results are inconsistently used to adjust curricula and instruction. Across classrooms, formative assessments and checks for understanding are inconsistently used to make effective adjustments.
**Impact**
The systems to monitor student progress and use of assessments have not resulted in adjustments to the curricula and instruction to meet all students' learning needs.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The administrators stated that they use the assessment results from Gates-Mac Ginitie, Achieve 3000, eighth grade ELA and Math state exams, and Regents' exams to program students for additional support and interventions, such as tutoring during the day, after school programs, and Saturday Academy. These programs are extended to all students.

- While teacher teams have data for subgroups of students, they have not yet identified the strategies to guide adjustments in instruction. For example, during a teacher team, teachers shared the comprehensive support put in place for students failing one or more courses, this support encompasses attendance, lateness, after school tutoring, and lunch help, however, this information has not informed ways to modify the units of study and lesson plans.

- While teachers use common assessments aligned to Regents' exams, some teachers create their own assessments. The scoring criteria for written work, student participation, and discussion vary across classrooms. Students stated that some teachers use rubrics for scoring their written work and that presentations and discussions are not expected across subjects.

- A review of assessments, lesson and unit plans of one English and one social studies teacher indicated that these two pedagogues make changes to their plans and units of study after analyzing the exit slips, drafts, and summative assessments. However, across classrooms, while teachers check for understanding by asking large group questions, monitoring student work, roaming the room, and assigning exit slips, the results do not inform the structure of current and future lessons and units of study.

- Some teachers are developing a mastery-based approach. For example, students stated that some teachers use rubrics and employ the draft process to allow them the opportunity to learn and master skills and topics. There are other teachers, who allow students to correct and retake the exam in order to obtain a higher grade.

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Developing |
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**Findings**
While administrators communicate high expectations, they are strengthening the accountability systems aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness.

**Impact**
Administrators are building coherent structures that support the school's expectations about teaching and learning and build buy-in and accountability amongst staff, students, and their families in order to create a culture of support and accountability that promotes college and career readiness.

**Supporting Evidence**

- While the principal has implemented various initiatives that promote college for every student, such as college fairs and trips, National Honor Society, Peer Leadership Program, and elective courses among many others, the academic expectations of students across grades are not aligned to college entry-level demands. The inconsistent demand for extensive writing, complex text reading, and high-level discussion limits student thinking, participation, and ownership.

- The principal communicates high expectations via the professional development schedule for the school year 2014-2015, which addresses the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model, WEBB'S Depth of Knowledge, DOK, Learning Targets, Mastery Learning targets, and Selecting Complex Text. However, during the classroom visits, review of student work, and conversations with parents, it was observed inconsistency around rigorous curricula and instruction.

- Administrators shared that the Learning Target, one of the professional development goals, describes the intended lesson-sized learning outcomes and the nature of evidence that will determine mastery of that outcome from a student's point of view. However, teachers articulate different definitions of LT and the LTs posted across classrooms were inconsistent and lacked rigor and alignment to Common Core Learning Standards.

- Expectations vary across the school, for example, during a teacher team, teachers analyzed student work comprised of a t-chart describing what students saw and understood from a one-paragraph document from Plutarch and Pericles Funeral Oration. The majority of teachers in the group agreed that the document was too difficult, dense, complex, and that students could not extract the information. There were few teachers, however, who liked the challenge posed by the teacher team and provided strategies to deconstruct the text and support students with the language. In another teacher team, teachers shared that they offer outreach for students who fail classes and their families. Teachers also stated that attendance, punctuality, and behavioral issues were the reasons for students' failure. Parents stated that some teachers post grades and feedback to students through the website and online grading system.