



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Margaret Gioiosa**

**Elementary School R003**

**80 South Goff Avenue  
Staten Island  
NY 10309**

**Principal: Judith Wilson**

**Date of review: February 11, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio**

## The School Context

Margaret Gioiosa is an elementary school with 990 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 10% Hispanic, 83% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.0%.

## 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>Celebration</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Focus</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>Proficient</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>Additional Findings</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>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure their curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate instructional shifts, and that tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits.

### Impact

Across grades and subject areas, curricula and academic tasks demonstrate coherence and rigor, include building higher-order skills, and promote college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school uses ReadyGen and GoMath from grades kindergarten to 5, curricula that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). A review of literacy pacing calendars across all grades indicate an emphasis on strategies such as annotating text relative to instructional shift 3 on text complexity and academic vocabulary.
- Curricula tasks in math integrate instructional shifts by including real world application and the development of appropriate models for solving word problems. For example, the principal stated that she spoke to a fourth grade class about making improvements to the school's courtyard. The teacher used the opportunity to develop a task to have students develop designs to fit the space. A review of the task and student work indicates the plan was developed with Depth of Knowledge levels 3 and 4 types of questions. Students were asked to create a budget, design blueprints, research materials online, and determine as a class which design would be most efficient.
- A review of lesson plans and tasks reflects the use of a variety of tools to support at risk students, English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs) towards developing higher order thinking skills. For example, in science, one task reflects the use of magnets and a T-chart to assist students with the organization of their ideas to answer the following prediction question, "What do you think will happen when you bring two magnets together?" and "What is your conclusion? Was the hypothesis correct?" In math, a teacher designed a task on place value using the essential question, "How can you use place value to compare, add, subtract and estimate with whole numbers?" and planned real world word problems to expose students to Depth of Knowledge Level 3 questions.

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

### Findings

Although the school's set of beliefs are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and integrated into some classes, multiple entry points leading to high-level discussions and student thinking were uneven.

### Impact

School wide practices are emerging to ensure that students, including subgroups, show progress towards demonstrating high order thinking in academic tasks.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school's instructional focus is centered on students' ability to understand and achieve learning targets through high levels of engagement. Although learning targets were present and available for students to view, in some classes, student responses did not match the learning task. For example, in one class, although students were taught a strategy using a T-chart to determine pros and cons, group work and student responses did not show evidence of meeting the learning target, thus hindering them from developing ideas and comparing and contrasting skills. Student responses included small details found in the text, *Heart and Soul*, and recalling of facts, rather than mastery of the learning target by using a visual to analyze pros and cons. In another class, only some students were provided base ten manipulatives to use as a strategy to help them with number sense concepts in math, resulting in their correct responses. Other students, who were not provided with the same teaching tools, were not able to develop an understanding of the task and made repeated mistakes in their responses, and could not explain their thinking.
- Teachers in some classrooms visited demonstrated strategies to engage students in higher order thinking. Students were asked to work in groups or partnerships. In one English language arts class, groups of students were asked to reflect on a text and determine how a character demonstrated actions which conveyed words like selfless and determined. The students were using graphic organizers and student-to student discussions to lead them to this conclusion. However in other classes, the strategies used did not support student discussion to meet the learning target. For example, in one class, a group of students were observed working on developing opinions about the central message of the text. Although students were provided strategies and tools such as post-its, sentence starters, and a checklist, students' demonstrated difficulty in completing the task.
- In some classes, student discussions led to misunderstandings. For example, in one class, students worked in partnerships and groups while the teacher circulated to observe their interaction with the two magnets. However, students' work showed several wrong conclusions after conducting an experiment on magnet polarization. Additionally, when asked, the same students had difficulty explaining what it meant to determine a conclusion. A review of other student work demonstrated similar incorrect responses.

## Additional Findings

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

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments, design grading policy and rubrics to align with school's curricula, provide feedback, and determine student understanding from ongoing checks for understanding and self-assessment.

### Impact

The use of assessments leads to actionable next steps so that students know what they need to do to improve. Adjustments to instruction promote meeting all students' learning needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, rubrics were used for grading student work in a variety of subject areas. Student grades reflected ratings from 1 through 4 and were aligned to the school's grading policy. In addition, school leaders and staff use multiple assessments, including Teachers College running records, ReadyGen and Go Math benchmarks, and Performance Series Lexile Level assessments, all aligned to the school curricula, to inform them of student performance and progress. During interviews, administration and teachers noted how these assessments provided information for them on student performance and progress.
- During a student interview, students were able to demonstrate understanding of the rubrics and teachers' feedback. For example, one student reviewed his work and stated he needed to work on adding more details to his work. Another student stated, after reviewing his rubric and teacher feedback, "I need to work on editing my work better so I need to use COPS", (Capitalization, Organization, Punctuation, Spelling).
- School wide, teachers confer with students as a means to check for understanding. For example, in one math class, the teacher was observed working with two students after the minilesson, using coaching and questioning strategies to assist in their understanding of the math concept. Student work folders across subject areas included rubrics as a self-assessment, relative to showing an understanding of and performance on a task. For example, a student was provided with questions regarding pre- and post-test grades. She needed to respond relative to her progress. The student's assessment highlighted her need for more work on finding the area of combined rectangles.

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

School leaders and staff are beginning to develop regular systems to provide families with consistent feedback about their children and communicate the school's expectations to students regarding their learning.

### **Impact**

Parents and students do not yet have clear understanding of school expectations. The lack of consistent communication to students limits their understanding of what is expected of them in order to be prepared for the next level.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school has implemented many systems to communicate with families about their children's progress. The use of progress reports, several text-messaging systems, and a school web site provide information relative to student progress. Additionally, during parent engagement time, staff members conduct grade level workshops. However, minimal parent attendance, and the scheduling of the workshops, precludes the information from being shared with a larger audience.
- Parents expressed concern relative to supports offered their children. They shared that requests for additional help for their children during the school day did not lead to any regularly scheduled further assistance.
- Students are unclear about specific academic expectations needed for the next grade level or middle school. For example, when asked how they knew they were ready for the next grade level or middle school and what was expected of them, one student responded, "You have to read a lot of books and write responses." Another student stated, "You have to write open response questions." However, other student responses included, "online reading", "summer reading" and "doing math work".

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

Teacher teams are in the process of engaging in structured, inquiry based professional collaborations using student data and work products.

**Impact**

Professional collaborations are in the beginning stages of inquiry resulting in minimal progress towards meeting goals for student groups and building teachers’ instructional capacity in understanding and using data and student work products to support student achievement.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams meet weekly to discuss methods towards improving instruction and have developed structures including agendas, protocols, team notes, and supplemental materials, to support curricula adjustments. According to the notes, teachers used their team meetings to revise the pacing of unit plans. In addition, kindergarten teachers integrated learning targets, which is part of the school’s instructional focus, into a ReadyGen literacy and math lesson.
- During an interview, teachers focused on pre- and post-assessment data to determine what skills to include in upcoming units. For example, during a review of student work and data, a teacher noticed 17 Level 1 students who were not able to compose a proper sentence and therefore incorporated the 5W strategy to support them. However, evidence of students’ progress in using the 5W strategy was not evident, thus precluding further adjustments to both setting goals and adjusting instruction. While grade level team minutes indicate discussions around curricula adjustments, there was limited evidence of how this information is used to set and monitor student progress towards meeting instructional goals.
- During an observation of a team meeting, teachers reviewed student work and shared strategies with each other. Shared strategies included acronyms, using a Four Square model, looking at peer samples and using index cards. This meeting, which determined a need for students, is not yet a consistent practice as evidenced in yearlong team minutes. Practices have included curriculum revisions yet no clear goal setting for groups of students or progress monitoring during teacher team time.