

Quality Review Report

2008-2009

Angelo Patri Middle School

Middle School 391

2225 Webster Street

Bronx

NY 10457

Principal: Pedro Santana

Dates of review: March 18-19, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Kathleen Tuttle

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Angelo Patri Middle School is a middle school with 737 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 29% Black, 68% Hispanic, 0% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 25% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 88%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 82% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

On entering the Angelo Patri Middle School you are immediately struck by a school environment that celebrates and embraces the middle level child. Hallways and open spaces throughout the building are furnished with comfortable furniture, tables and student art work. It is common to see teachers working in these open spaces with students. The principal and his administrative team have created a culture where mutual respect and trust is highly developed and is acknowledged by teachers, students and parents. Students and parents can articulate the school's expectations and have learned to appreciate the principal's "tough love" approach to behavior and learning. The clear and consistently applied procedures for ensuring the smooth running of the school create a purposeful learning environment.

The principal is a strong, energetic role model who has shared his vision for raising achievement with the whole community and is a positive role model for students and staff. His tools for realizing his vision combine the use of technology, a guaranteed curriculum and a positive environment for students. The whole school community is on board with the vision and the teachers and students are very excited about the different technology that has been purchased for instructional purposes. Many hallways have a flat screen television instead of bulletin boards and showcase student performances and school events. Teachers developed curriculum units in all subjects over the summer with common assessments that are aligned with the State standards and performance indicators. Lessons are developed during common planning time with coaches and consultants and these support the curriculum and performance indicators. Presently, most lessons are designed for whole groups, with the same entry point and product for everyone. Many of the lessons lack the rigor and challenge needed in order to accelerate the learning of all the students at all levels. Teachers are at the beginning stages of using the data from each unit of study for differentiation of instruction, but this best practice is not consistent throughout the building. Many teachers are piloting a new data tracking system that enables students and their families to access student assignments and grades at any time. Students know exactly what performance indicators they need to master, but teachers have yet to use the data system effectively for more precise student goal setting. The school has begun the goal setting process for school, student and teacher goals. However, clear time frames with short term benchmarks have yet to be established to allow for goal revision, if necessary, to accomplish the long-term goals.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is a strategic thinker and planner who is sharing his vision for raising achievement with the whole community and is a powerful role model for students and staff.
- Curriculum units have been developed to take into account the State standards and performance indicators alongside common assessments for each grade level and subject.
- A tracking program is providing teachers, students and parents with current information on homework assignments, grades, and the performance indicators that students have mastered.
- The principal's clarity of vision, shared with and supported by the whole faculty, is instrumental in bringing about improvement.
- The principal has utilized the budget to ensure that students meet their learning needs in a student centered environment.
- There is a high level of trust and respect between the administration, staff and students.
- Youth development is well supported by in-school and outside services to meet the needs of students and their families.

What the school needs to improve

- Set clear time frames for interim, short-term learning steps for all students in all core subjects and involve students more actively in self-assessment.
- Establish a consistent approach to using formative assessments to plan activities that provide the right level of challenge for students working at different levels within the same classroom.
- Refine action planning by developing interim goals and benchmarks for all action plans to enable the principal and faculty to modify goals and objectives in a timely manner that optimizes the impact of actions and celebrates success along the way.
- Increase the degree of rigor and challenge in instruction in order to accelerate the learning of students at all levels, and in all grades to secure the requisite progress year-to-year.

Part 3: Main Findings

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has made progress since their last Quality Review in analyzing and interpreting summative and formative data. Looking at student data on Acuity and Scantron and using that data to pinpoint student's instructional needs has been a priority for the professional development team of coaches and consultants. Teachers and school leaders use the data to identify patterns and trends across classes, grade levels and school wide.

School leaders and teachers speak enthusiastically about the creation of a unified curriculum across the content areas. Each unit of study has a common formative assessment at the end of the unit. The units are developed around the State standards and performance indicators. Each classroom houses two large charts with the performance indicators for mathematics and literacy. Students keep track of each indicator by identifying whether they are approaching, meeting, or not yet meeting the performance indicator. The school has the systems and structures in place for goal setting; however interim goals for all students presently lack clear timeframes and measurement criteria.

To further develop the use of subgroup data, the whole faculty adopted the individual student data profile sheet used with the inquiry team target population. This allowed all staff who teach these students to have the current test data as well as the support programs and specialist teachers involved with each student. This has led to a wider knowledge of the English language learners and their needs. The school is in the process of identifying next steps for best practices and the resources to use with the different subgroups in the school, but as yet these are not fully established.

There is quite a buzz around the new on-line grading program called Engrade. About one third of the school population is using the program, piloted by the inquiry team target students last year. In a discussion with parents, students and teachers, all confirmed that Engrade clearly indicated the progress or lack of for each student. Students and parents can access it from home and know immediately which assignments are missing, grades on tests and what performance indicators they have met. In turn, both parents and students can email the teacher to get further clarification on the student data or ask questions about the assignment. One student stated that he really likes Engrade because seeing his own data helps keep him motivated to keep up with his work. Teachers agree that the on line system has improved student achievement because students are responding to their data and have increased parental support.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

Students are set individual goals in English language arts, mathematics, and science. These goals are revised at mid-year by teachers and students. Students engage in a reflection that is part of their portfolio on the accomplishment of their goals. Presently, however, the school does not have a systematic structure to implement interim checkpoints that include set timeframes to evaluate and revise whole school, teacher or student goals for ongoing improvement of instruction. Teachers and school leaders work collaboratively to analyze State data against average marking period grades to ensure that on ongoing assessments are fully aligned to State standards. An example of this practice identified the trend that students were performing poorly on the listening section of the test. As a result of this, units of study were modified to include more lessons on listening and note taking and additional materials were purchased to support these instructional plans. Although this was a major initiative for all grade levels, no specific and measureable goals were set to measure the progress in this area.

The school leadership team and the teachers work collaboratively using data to set annual goals for the development of the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP). When decisions are made at curriculum meetings to make changes, the plan is updated. The goals in the CEP are well matched to the school priority to improve student achievement in literacy, mathematics, and science.

Parents are appreciative that the level of communication between the school and families has improved greatly since the principal came to the school two years ago. The parent coordinator, school leaders and outside partner organizations collaborate to provide parent workshops on supporting the adolescent learner. Parents receive a progress report in the middle of each report card cycle to keep them abreast of their child’s progress. The administrators and teachers hold many one-to-one parent conferences as well as keeping in communication with parents by phone and email. Students remarked that “they know the school rules and don’t want to disappoint Principal Santana by breaking the rules”. The high expectations have elevated good behavior and students say that they have more respect for adults and each other as a result.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The principal has set the tone and has developed a whole school environment that is conducive to the needs of middle school students. There are many inviting, comfortable rooms where adults can take students to discuss behavior or other concerns that the students are having. Especially notable is the attitude of the school safety officers. They feel that most students will change their behavior with a private conference, thus eliminating embarrassing the student in front of their peers. This learning environment is embraced by students and they report that they like coming to school. An added benefit of the learning environment is that attendance has risen significantly this year. A further indicator of success is the 0% principal’s suspension rate for this school year.

Recognizing the need to improve student achievement from their State data, teachers constructed a unified curriculum and developed common assessments for each unit of study based on the standards and performance indicators. As a result of the common assessments, there is a more unified approach to student learning in each subject for each grade level. Presently each teacher reviews their data and makes decisions on future instructional lessons based on their data results. School leaders have not yet established a structure and timeframe for teachers to review the common assessments together to make decisions that will impact teaching and learning for all students. Some teachers are beginning to plan to differentiate their instruction. However, at present there is an inconsistent approach to providing the right level of challenge for students working at different levels within the same classroom. The principal recognized the need to support teachers in literacy and mathematics and hired two consultants with the goal of demonstrating how to plan and teach differentiated lessons. Both consultants formulated an action plan with benchmarks to meet the goals. The math consultant and math coach developed a uniform conference note format to help teachers make the transition into conferencing with students in mathematics and deciding on next steps. Structured questions were given for each performance indicator to guide the student conferencing. Professional development is supporting teacher planning and learning. The challenge remains to have teachers transfer their learning into consistent practice. The administrative team has regular school walkthroughs to gauge the quality of instruction and to supply feedback to teachers. They acknowledge the need to increase the degree of rigor and challenge in instruction in order to accelerate the learning of students at all levels.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

All members of the staff have worked closely with the principal to improve the quality of the learning environment. Classrooms are well organized, with displays of student work which celebrate individual achievement. This approach flows into hallways where further displays in a wide range of subjects communicate the same high expectations. The arts demonstrate a positive impact on student achievement.

After reflecting on informal and formal observations and Quality Review feedback from last year, a professional development calendar was created to develop teaching skills on conferencing with students, goal setting for teachers and students and using technology to manage data. Teachers have set long term goals using the California Teaching Standards. At present however, the school does not have interim benchmarks or timeframes for evaluation to provide an opportunity for teachers to assess and revise their classroom practice to improve student outcomes.

The inquiry team has started to lay the foundation for developing a strategic system to track students' progress. The team used a computer program called Engrade with the target students last year to track their progress and achievement on the State performance indicators. The results demonstrated that most students made a year or more growth. This year the use of Engrade expanded to another dozen teachers with the rest of the school coming on board in the fall of 2009.

The youth development is well supported by both the in school and outside partnerships and impacts positively on students' social, emotional and academic development.

Parents and students spoke positively about the school's effort to take seventh grade students on three different field trips so that they can see what kinds of high schools are available. As a result, students can base their decisions in eighth grade on a high school selection with some background information. In addition, the guidance department works with two programs, Positive Behavioral Intervention Support and Students Taking Every Possibility Seriously. The impact of these programs upon students is evident all around the school as students are very respectful and caring to adults and students alike. The school is dedicated to community service. A group of students that are part of Oprah's Ambassadors program were responsible for organizing an outdoor carnival to raise money for children in Africa with HIV and AIDS. Through interdisciplinary study, all classes were involved in the study of Africa's culture, geography, history, and arts.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The principal has shared his vision for the school's development with all constituents and they support him wholeheartedly in working to raise student achievement. School leaders, faculty, students, and families understand that the school is taking a holistic approach to engage the middle school learner. Students and parents feel that by each student charting where their progress is on the performance indicators in mathematics and literacy, they are more focused and motivated to keep improving their level of achievement.

The school has systems in place to formatively assess students, such as running records, conference notes, unit tests, diagnostic tests, and teacher-made tests. However, the school does not have a formal structure that enables administrators and faculty to monitor and make revisions to the curriculum or professional development activities in a timely enough manner to provide the right level of challenge for students working at different levels within the same classroom.

The administrative cabinet meets daily, before school starts, to discuss the needs of the school. Teachers, coaches, and consultants have regularly scheduled weekly meetings to discuss curriculum and student needs. The school's low achievement on the State mathematics test led the inquiry team to study strengthening student's computational skills. The practice of scheduling six periods a week for the impact curriculum and four periods a week for basic skills building was implemented school-wide after the data from the previous school year demonstrated good student achievement for the target population. School leaders have a good understanding of the overall social and academic needs of the school and provide basic support for staff to improve instruction. The school is well poised to take student achievement to the next level.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Angelo Petri Middle School	△	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>				
	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?			X	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?			X	
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			X	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X	
Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>				
	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?		X		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			X	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?			X	
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYO, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.

To what extent do ...	Δ	➤	✓	+
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?			X	
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?		X		
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?			X	
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				
X				

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent do school leaders...	Δ	➤	✓	+
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?			X	
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?			X	
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?			X	
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				
X				

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

To what extent do ...	Δ	➤	✓	+
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?			X	
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?		X		
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?			X	
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				
X				

Quality Review Scoring Key							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed