

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**Roberto Clemente Learning Center**

**Elementary School**

**04M038**

**232 East 103<sup>rd</sup> Street  
New York  
NY 10029**

**Principal: Norma Caraballo**

**Dates of review: November 3 - 4, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Luz T. Cortazzo**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Roberto Clemente is an Elementary school with 301 students from Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 25% Black, 52% Hispanic, 5% Asian and 13% other students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 90.9%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The implementation of well-differentiated, curriculum aligned project based learning allows students to undertake research and solve problems meeting the needs of all learners.
  - Strong beliefs about how students learn best are consistent across classrooms, with project based learning that allows students to follow interests, approach work in a multi-sensory way, feel safe, take risks and reflect on progress at the heart of the teachers' and principal philosophy. Teacher teams are involved in examining student work to develop teaching strategies and provide multiple entry points for all learners. Students, from grades kindergarten through 5, consistently engage in critical thinking activities aligned to the curriculum such as analyzing math problems using varied tools, exploring the effects of weathering and erosion on the environment and examining physical maps to understand the geography of Nigeria. As a result, students are highly engaged with their work and are able to articulate the quality and value of their work.
- The principal makes informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school that support improvements in learning.
  - The principal uses the budget strategically to channel resources to the classrooms through additional staff. Teacher and student time is structured to respond to the learning needs of all students observed daily during guided and independent work. Classrooms are well equipped with manipulatives and are strategically arranged to facilitate movement of students and adults during group time. Although expensive, these resources align well with the needs of the students and the school's philosophy. This results in students engaging in challenging academic tasks and developing higher order thinking skills as evidenced during project time.
- The school maintains a very safe environment, with high expectations for attendance where students are engaged in learning and appreciate the good level of support they receive for their personal and academic development.
  - Students and parents acknowledge that the school is a safe haven where students' social emotional and academic needs are readily addressed. A review of the school's Learning Environment Survey (LES), referral, attendance and suspension rates lead to the formation of a discipline steering committee, and an attendance committee to address patterns of absences and tardiness. The school established an incentive system towards improving attendance and is currently participating in "Wake Up America" as a tool to improve student tardiness. As a result of these initiatives there is evidence of a decrease in student incidents noted by the steering committee and an increase in student attendance from 90.8% to 93.7%.
  - The school's small, inclusive culture, allows students to be well known by staff who support their academic and social growth. Students and

parents appreciate that they can turn to teachers and members of the pupil personnel team to help resolve personal issues and concerns that interfere with learning. Additionally, the use of the Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) throughout the school reinforces principal and staff expectations for student behavior. As a result, students report that they “feel safe” and are able to focus more on their academic achievement.

- All teachers collaborate on inquiry teams analyzing student data, to support and share best instructional practices which has increased academic performance for all learners.
  - All teachers at the school consistently exhibit a comprehensive understanding of each student’s changing needs, as demonstrated by their ongoing analysis of a wide range of data, including unit tests, conference notes, and student work. As a result of supplementing summative data with these pieces, teachers are able to adjust their teaching resources and strategies to challenge students appropriately. Additionally, teacher teams across the school meet twice per week, as part of their ongoing structured inquiry work, to further analyze student work using a rubric, augment the rigor of performance tasks, and ensure their alignment with the taught curriculum. Consequently, teachers noted positive writing outcomes for special education and English language learners sub-groups studied by the 5<sup>th</sup> grade team.
- The implementation of a rigorous curriculum is aligned to key State standards which is closing the achievement gap between a diversity of learners.
  - The school leader and a faculty steering committee met over the summer to align curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Expectations for delivering a rigorous standards-based curriculum are clear and supported well by instructional units, pacing guides and instructional calendars that include progress-monitoring points. Preliminary results of unit assessments indicate an improvement in student achievement. Grade level teams consistently refine academic tasks based on student work and data results to cognitively engage all learners.
  - Teachers use effective questioning strategies, print and technology resources to engage all students in science experiments, extend their mathematical thinking and engage them in map research skills to accelerate their learning process. These are embedded practices across grades. As a result, a comparison with baseline assessment data reveals that students demonstrate progress in their end of unit assessment in math, science, and social studies, resulting in increased academic achievement for all learners.
- Through regular use of a wide range of relevant data, teachers and administrators monitor the progress of students which informs effective instructional and organizational decisions for growth.
  - The effective use of teacher data reports, Periodic and State assessments has resulted in an increase in student progress; thereby narrowing the achievement gap for English language learners. A concern

over the performance of the lowest achieving students served as the basis for the creation of the inquiry intervention teams, specifically targeting special needs students during the extended literacy and math blocks. Strategic efforts by the third grade inquiry team to examine student writing has resulted in focused instruction that is showing improvements on monthly assessment data for the students studied by the team.

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

- Expand the use of data analysis to regularly evaluate and revise the effectiveness of adult collaboration and capacity building in order to support distributed leadership.
  - School leaders are at the beginning stages of instituting coherent and aligned systems across all teams to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness. Although teachers facilitate on a rotational basis, teacher leaders are not yet receiving sufficient support to develop their own skills as facilitators of adult learning. Consequently, teachers have not cemented the expertise that allows them to reflect collectively on each other's facilitation techniques to further support their personal and collective growth in order to improve their leadership development.
- Refine action planning to support interim goals and benchmarks for all plans so that progress can be measured, readjustments made and celebrate success along the way to support improvements.
  - Currently, there is no transparent system for the administration to measure and evaluate progress toward interim and long term goals or to identify areas where improvements in plans are needed. This is hindering the school's ability to identify specific areas where adjustments in plans and instructional strategies are needed in order to increase student achievement at targeted intervals.
- Enhance the rigor of tracking progress of school-wide goals and plans from one common assessment in order to take timely action.
  - School leaders use a range of data to evaluate progress towards plans and goals. Teacher teams and individual teachers use data at the classroom level to track progress of relevant subgroups. However, the school has not yet selected a common assessment that is used by all teachers to set and track ambitious goals; this leads to some inconsistency in the adjustment of goals and the setting of interventions that can be implemented to adjust and inform instructional decisions at the school level.
- Use a research based framework in order to improve teacher effectiveness that will result in increased student achievement.
  - Although the school has a common understanding of effective teaching that is articulated by leaders and teachers, the school is still developing a system for providing actionable feedback to teachers and identifying next steps to improve teacher practice.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

<b>School name: Roberto Clemente</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				<b>X</b>
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			<b>X</b>	
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			<b>X</b>	
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>		
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			<b>X</b>	

**Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.**

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?		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
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X	
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, guidance/advisement support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X	

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

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?			X	
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X	
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?		X		
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		X		

<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>