

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**Staten Island School of Civic Leadership**

**31R861**

**280 Regis Drive  
Staten Island  
NY 10314**

**Principal: Rose Kerr**

**Dates of review: March 19 - 20, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Erminia Claudio**

## **Part 1: The school context**

### **Information about the school**

Staten Island School of Civic Leadership is an PS/IS school with 720 students from Pre-K through grade 8. The school population comprises 21% Black, 38% Hispanic, 30% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 18% 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 95%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is well developed.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school designs engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, inclusive of the arts and technology, for a variety of learners aligned to key State standards. (1.1)
  - The school's rigorous core curriculum, inclusive of the arts, technology and physical education, centered on leadership and civic engagement, has earned the school the distinction as the highest performing school in New York City. With a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary learning, rigorous habits and higher order thinking is embedded across grades and subject areas. This is evidenced in the consistency of rich questioning techniques, student work products, student reflection and curriculum maps that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCLS). Through a triad model of collaborative team teaching, inclusive of two general education teachers and a special education teacher, students are supported by in-depth, differentiated lessons planned and revised based on student work and outcomes. For example, all 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were involved in an interdisciplinary action project which culminated in the creation of a multi-sensory interactive World War II Museum. Each student contributed a project that involved extensive research, technology, real world connections, and visual and performing arts presentations. Using the footage that was filmed, students edited film and chronicled events that they feel exemplify their research. As a result of this authentic project based task, students gained a deep understanding and appreciation of a significant time period, and applied critical thinking across core subject areas.
- The school develops pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensures that it is aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products. (1.2)
  - The school's belief that action research is paramount to providing students with a well-balanced rigorous education has led to the extensive work around explicit vocabulary instruction. Students are immersed in rich language across grades and content areas. For example, in the middle grades there is a focus on Latin and Greek roots that form the basis of language acquisition and in the early grades student are exposed to enriched vocabulary which they refer to as "Power Words." Across classrooms and content areas teachers are using Depth of Knowledge (DOK) to formulate higher order thinking questions and tasks that challenge students to think deeply and challenge each other's thinking. For example, teachers' created a *Higher Order Thinking Tracker* that supports Meta cognitive development. Students use the tracker to check their short responses to monitor that they use higher order thinking to support their answers. As a result of this school wide initiative, the achievement gap has been narrowed as evidenced by 10% increase from the November 2011 English language arts (ELA) Predictive to the February 2012 ELA Predictive. Student work products, end of unit exams and extended responses reflect habits of mind that meet the rigor of the CCLS, supporting college and career readiness.

- School leaders make strategic organizational and resource decisions to support the school's instructional goals that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults. (1.3)
  - The principal's judicious use of budget, staff, time and resources has led to the programming of triad teaching teams, inclusive of the academic intervention teachers (AIS) and special education teachers. Where possible, related service providers work within the confines of the classroom to maximize the learning conditions for students' individual needs. The programming of common preparation periods for various teacher teams to meet weekly provides an opportunity for teachers to meet by triad, grade, subject area and a vertical team. These teams look at student work products, use formative and summative data to set, target and track goals for students through the use of teacher created authentic pre and post assessments that are aligned with the CCLS. The hiring of a part time data specialist has been critical in the school's ability to use formative and summative data to support student achievement. To support the school's goal of increased student attendance, the principal hired an attendance coordinator, and purchased a phone messenger, resulting in a 1% attendance gain. Based on the analysis of a school created parent survey, the principal used Title I monies to provide parents with various workshops that support academic and social/emotional topics to inform parents so that they could support their children. Using Title III monies, the principal has sustained an after school program for ELLs and has purchased extensive nonfiction text for all students that support the work of the CCLS and result in meaningful student work across the school.
  
- Teams of teachers align assessments to curriculum, use on-going assessments practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level. (2.2)
  - Individual and teacher teams create content specific rubrics that offer students a clear picture of their performance and next steps. Students voice that the use of rubrics helps them know what they do well and what they need to do to improve. All classrooms utilize on-going checks for understanding to differentiate instruction, implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to engage students at various entry points. Teacher created trackers specific to skills and strategies in content areas are embedded in the culture of the instructional practice throughout the school. For example, reading and math toolbox trackers across grades provide students the opportunity to self-checks, reinforcing the school's belief in self-directed work. As an outgrowth of the pedagogical practice, a student data team was formed to analyze, evaluate and track their classmates' short responses in both English language arts and math. The students created a short response toolbox tracker to use as a whole class learning tool. Students give feedback to classmates, provide peer tutoring and record and chart the data which is displayed on a bulletin board. As a result of this student data team, both students and teachers voiced that students' short responses have increased by one to two levels.
  
- School leaders use observations of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies and reflection that promote professional growth. (4.1)

- School leaders use one-on-one teacher meetings to support professional growth and assess teachers' progress towards individual goals and the progress towards aligning curricula to the CCLS. Teacher Performance Reviews (TPR) is embedded throughout the school community and data from these TPR is used to enhance best practice through collegial sharing and class inter-visitations. TPR's included but not limited to; adapting reading trackers, academic language across content areas, and writing exemplars. New teachers are supported by mentors and meet regularly with school leaders to create a portfolio of evidence to support tenure decisions. The triad model that is embedded throughout the school strongly supports new teachers through a hands-on approach to modeling best practice. School leaders use a research based protocol of short cycles of observations, extensively looking at questioning, providing timely feedback that highlights effective teaching and outlines next steps to support pedagogy. As a result of the comprehensive feedback teachers receive, teachers voiced that their pedagogy has improved and is evidenced in student oral and written responses that have increased on end of the unit exams as well as running records.
- The school's proactive approach to family outreach is evident in the many home school structures that are in place to equip parents with important academic and social information to prepare their children to be college and career ready. (2.4)
  - The school created a comprehensive and interactive website that provides multiple opportunities for parents to have an open exchange of information regarding students' progress. All students have email accounts that parents have access to. This affords both students and parents to correspond with teachers and administrators on an on-going basis. Students send their assignments in real time to teachers and receive feedback and next steps. Parents can see teacher comments and add their own comments. The website has links to a wealth of academic and extracurricular resources. School information is outlined clearly allowing students and parents to know exactly what the school expects socially and academically from students. An extensive school calendar highlighting school events keeps parents and students organized. The use of Engrade, a data system that allows parents to see all exam grades is extremely powerful. Parents overwhelmingly voiced that they love the school and they feel like their children are in a private school. They praise the administrators and teachers for their vision and diligence for earning the school the distinction of being the number one school in New York City. Consequently, parents speak of the pride they feel that the school has received recognition from the New York Times and other magazine and newspapers about the school's creative opportunities to which their children have access.
- The school partners with families to provide guidance and advisement support services in and out of the school to strengthen the academic and personal growth of students. (4.4)
  - At the root of the school's culture of civic leadership, is the work of Franklin Covey, *The Leader in Me Program*, based on the book, *Seven Habits of a Highly Effective People*. Teachers have received professional development that supports the application of Covey principals to teaching and learning. In order to give students and families authentic real world experience in

community service and self governance, the school has partnered with various outside academic, mental health, cultural and governmental organizations such as Commissioner Fiala's Civic Initiative, Sea View Hospital Health Care, and the Junior Achievement program. These partnerships support the school's mission of developing future leaders through real life experiences, such as working with senior citizens and homeless families. The school supports parents with limited English language proficiency through on-site English as a Second Language (ESL) classes provided by community based agencies. Monthly parent engagement projects are held to keep families active in their children's learning, inclusive of workshops to familiarize parents with the CCLS. Students participate in morning and after school enrichment clubs such as, but not limited to, yearbook, newspaper, public speaking and debate, student data team, mouse squad, green team, Penny Harvest team, peer tutoring, vocal music and test prep. Student in need of academic intervention (AIS) receive small group instruction at the start of the school day. The school is proud that 83% of students are accepted to their 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> choice of high schools. As a result of the school strong commitment to providing supports for students and families, parents feel they have a voice and believe that the school truly cares for their children and supports them to achieve their best.

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

- Enhance the work the school has done in creating a nurturing environment that fosters a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning, to reach all students so that student attendance increases school-wide. (1.4)
  - While the school's vision promotes a safe and inclusive culture and school leaders work diligently to promote a high rate of attendance as evidenced in the hiring of an attendance coordinator and the thoughtful protocols in place to effectively monitor attendance, the attendance rate remains stagnant at 94%. Consequently, student progress is impeded for students that have erratic attendance.
- Strengthen the communication with families in supporting the work the school is doing around Covey, *The Leader in Me Program*, so that the school can effectively partner with families to prepare students for the next level. (3.4)
  - While the school leaders and staff consistently communicate and support high expectations to students and families, the *Leader and Me Program* is the catalyst that promotes the school's mission of civic leadership and personal excellence. As the school continues to its full footprint, parents have yet to be fully engaged in this model. Consequently, new parents cannot fully support the school's mission in the absence of ongoing training.
- Increase the learning opportunities for teachers new to the school to develop collaborative team teaching strategies to support collegial growth and maximize student learning. (4.3)
  - School leaders have an extensive professional development plan that is purposeful and differentiated to support teacher growth across all content areas that are aligned with school's overarching goals of civic engagement,

a strong curriculum and leadership. The school has been successful in the use of the teacher triad team teaching models. The school is still growing and experienced a 30% gain of new staff, more professional development to new teachers have yet to be fully implemented. As a result, increased support to new teachers for collaborative team teaching practices is emerging.

### Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

<b>School name: Staten Island School of Civic Leadership</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>W D</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>W D</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>W D</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>W D</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?				X
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?				X

**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

Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed