

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**Peace and Diversity Academy**

**High school X278**

**1180 Rev. James A. Polite Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10459**

**Principal: Andrew M. L. Turay**

**Dates of review: May 14 – 15, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Dr. Tarika Barrett**

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

### **Information about the school**

Peace and Diversity Academy is a high school with 287 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 34% Black, 61% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian students and 3% other students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 79.3%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- An emphasis on key state standards in curricula and the development of Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) tasks support the development of higher order thinking skills in students. (1.1)
  - Subject area departments at the school engage in the development of curriculum maps and these efforts currently reflect the incorporation of CCLS tasks. Weekly visits from network Achievement Coaches support this work, specifically the development of expertise around the use of protocols to evaluate the alignment of performance tasks and subsequent student work to State and CCLS. The improvement of reading skills is emphasized across the curriculum and teachers have incorporated adapted Scholastic READ 180 materials to the curriculum to differentiate for student learning needs. All students completed a rigorous performance task in both math and literacy aligned to either CCLS Math Practice Standard 4 or Writing Standard 1. This subsequently yielded evidence that students required additional support in the development of argument writing skills, a current focus of teacher instructional planning.
- The development of assessment practices aligned with key standards and curricula result in meaningful feedback around the effectiveness of instruction. (2.2)
  - Each academic department at the school works collaboratively to administer an assessment to gain information about student performance. Additionally, departments develop rubrics that support an understanding of content and skill mastery, supplemented by individual teacher-created rubrics that accompany class projects. Assessments and rubrics are aligned with state standards and have begun reflecting CCLS benchmarks, specifically those focusing on the development of argument writing. Periodic assessments are administered twice per year and teachers shared in team meetings that they have timely access to data in order to inform in changes in instruction. Teachers also reported that the Teach for America Tracker was also an important tool for monitoring student performance in some subjects. A key result has been the identification of student deficiencies such as academic vocabulary acquisition and the subsequent implementation of instructional interventions including the increased use of visual aids and text at various reading levels to target learning gaps, especially for English language learners.
- Through analysis of student data, individual teachers and teacher teams identify areas of individual student need, crafting learning goals to move subgroups of students toward mastery. (3.2)
  - Teachers use data to set literacy goals for students and specifically for English language learners. School leaders shared a literacy goal-setting inventory with teachers, identifying critical domains of focus including speaking, listening, and group work and discussions. Teachers, individually and in teams, administer reading and writing diagnostics,

including running records, and then analyze student performance to map out instructional next steps. This work has been in collaboration with the network and with support from the Talent Management Pilot. In collaboration with specialists in the school, teachers develop classroom goals, targeted benchmarks for groups of students based on performance trends, and some individual goals. Individual developmental goals for English language learners are differentiated and include detailed action plans including engagement with speaking, listening and reading CCLS tasks, progress measures, resources and supports needed to ensure success. The overall result has been a greater schoolwide focus on acceleration of learning and specific skill acquisition as it relates to CCLS mastery.

- Short, frequent cycles of classroom observation target teacher effectiveness, offering actionable feedback about teaching and learning grounded in a research-based instructional framework. (4.1)
  - All teachers at the school engage in consistent work through the Department of Education Talent Management Pilot. Through these efforts, teachers continue to develop professional expertise through a deeper understanding of Domain 3 within Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Effective Teaching, along with several other competencies. Teachers receive regular network support from the Talent Management Pilot coach consisting of development of a shared understanding of the definition of effective instruction and planning actual units of instruction. Teachers receive feedback from school leaders and network support staff through regular classroom observations (roughly 4 visits per teacher) and aligned to the framework. There are also regular professional development opportunities that are differentiated based on teacher need. Additionally, each teacher develops personal goals for his or her teaching that is grounded in an analysis of student performance data. A mid-year conversation with teachers also facilitates a transparent dialog about performance and impact on student achievement. The result of these collective efforts is the development of a clear and shared understanding of a framework for effective pedagogy and the gathering of teacher performance data, the latter informing key professional development supports such as increased focus on developing effective questioning techniques.
- A majority of teachers participate in collaborative teacher teams focused on improving student academic outcomes through the analysis of student work and assessment data. (4.2)
  - The vast majority of teachers at the school are members of collaborative teacher teams. Teachers in teams discuss their work together including literacy diagnostics being given and later intervention strategies, as well as other methods of gauging student understanding such as the use of exit slips and unit assessments. Teachers also point to the impact of specialist teachers on the development of teacher team expertise in supporting English Language Learner students and students with special education needs. Teacher teams currently leverage several resources in their efforts including a tool for recording reflections, a collaborative meeting template, and a matrix for purposeful and effective teacher teams. In most teams, teachers develop and administer schoolwide

performance assessments. Teacher teams engage in discussions of student work products and data and some employ student data trackers to monitor progress and refine benchmarks for student performance. They also report that their conversations with each other help inform how they group students and identify and address social-emotional challenges in order to support academic success.

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

- Support teachers in the development and refinement of teaching strategies, questioning and routines that support high levels of student thinking and participation. (1.2)
  - Targeted work to improve teaching strategies, including questioning techniques in classrooms, is currently supported by weekly visits from network coaches, monthly Children’s First Network meetings, and participation in the Talent Management Pilot. Classroom visits, however, found questioning techniques inconsistent, resulting in uneven student responses and student work products, and often not aimed at developing higher order thinking skills. These practices lead to missed opportunities to fully and deeply engage learners from a variety of academic levels.
- Determine how best to effectively engage families regarding student progress and next learning steps, and provide opportunities to engage in schoolwide decision-making and activities. (2.4)
  - While the school has facilitated opportunities for families to participate in their children’s learning including freshman orientation, Open School and School Leadership Team meetings, 12<sup>th</sup> grade meetings and the annual Multicultural Program, these events have yielded limited participation on the part of parents and families. Current methods of communication include “backpacking” information and the use of a phone messenger system. Additionally, some teachers and counselors call families, but the practice is not routinized across the school or guided by a formal process. Although parents were given information about where they could obtain training in the use of online platforms to access student performance data, parents received no training as of the date of this review in the use of student data platforms such as ARIS, limiting family access to important information regarding student progress.
- Strengthen the collaborative development of schoolwide goals to involve all stakeholders in unifying around a shared sense of school vision and progress. (3.1)
  - In the Comprehensive Education Plan, school leaders articulate several goals around attendance and student and teacher performance. Additionally, teachers received 2011-12 SMART goals focusing on course passage, credit accumulation and four-year graduation. However, there is little evidence that teachers and teams of teachers understand the overarching goals in a way that translates into more specific action plans for accelerated student learning. Further, it is also unclear that parents and students are involved in crafting or responding to schoolwide goals, have an understanding of the articulated goals or share in the

commitment to their achievement. As a result, there is not a shared, broad base of support for the school's efforts.

- Identify and leverage partnerships and professional development support for internal staff members to integrate youth development and social emotional supports into the larger academic program. (4.4)
  - Supports for faculty and staff to provide guidance and advisement to students include professional development for new teachers, monthly meetings focused on school tone, small group meetings with the school's dean to review the discipline code, safety practices, and incident referral information. There is also a dedicated team assembled to address issues identified at the grade team level with the goal of providing new social-emotional intervention strategies. Students, however, underscored the dearth of opportunities for consistent advisement at the school; some students had daily advisory classes, some once per week, and others were not currently scheduled for any advisory periods. This results in students having inconsistent exposure to curricula aimed at developing skills such as career exploration and conflict resolution.
  - The school has worked with Ramapo for Children, BronxWorks, Bronx Teens Connection and the Anti-Defamation League among other organizations in order to provide students with opportunities that will promote academic and social-emotional development. With each of these partnerships, only a relatively small group of students are afforded internships and other college preparatory experiences, limiting real world opportunities for students' to experience social-emotional development and post-secondary exposures outside of a school setting.
- Establish systems to regularly evaluate student data to support their use by teacher teams and to ensure accessibility for students and families. (5.2)
  - Individual teachers and teams of teachers are actively involved in the analysis of student data, are designing lessons informed by this information and are also grouping students for additional targeted support. However, structures that allow for the regular evaluation of how data are organized and used among teachers and staff are currently missing. Additionally, student performance data are not effectively shared with students and families to ensure full participation and support of student learning goals and benchmarks, leading to limited engagement on the part of families in supporting improved student outcomes.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

<b>School name: Peace and Diversity Academy</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>		

<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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?			<b>X</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>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		<b>X</b>					
<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>