

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

The Roberto Clemente School

Elementary 01M015

**333 East 4th Street
Manhattan
NY 10009**

Principal: Irene Sanchez

**Dates of review: Jan 7, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Daniella Phillips**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Roberto Clemente is an elementary school with 189 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 33% Black, 58% Hispanic, 2% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 93.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Resources of all types are harnessed effectively and result in progress of student achievement. (1.3)
 - Staff schedule student time to promote diverse groups of learners interacting and working productively together. For example, struggling readers in upper grade classes routinely visit a kindergarten class to read picture books aloud to younger children or read with therapy dogs in the "Bide-a-wee" program. These collaborations raise the confidence levels and fluency of upper grade students, while also making younger students feel comfortable and befriended by older peers. Similarly, the school welcomes and includes significant numbers of special education students from District 75 into various classrooms, with students and teachers alike benefiting from an inclusive culture of learning. To push the academic progress of English language learners and students with disabilities, who together comprise over 40% of all students, the principal schedules all cluster and special education teachers to push-in to regular classes. Through biweekly study group meetings, these educators learn effective strategies for teaching in small group settings which then maximizes students' academic interventions during the school day. Moreover, the school has cultivated over twenty partnerships, including a five-year Change for Kids initiative in arts programming and a long-term partnership with Creative Arts Agency that contributes volunteers and \$30,000 for supplies. The principal and teachers are driven to pursue all grant and partnership opportunities which enrich students' academic and personal growth. All of these efforts result in more meaningful student work evident in classrooms across the school.
- All staff nurture and support positive relationships with students and families such that the school produces an exceptionally strong climate for learning. (1.4)
 - The school serves a disproportionately high needs student population, with 31% of students living in some form of temporary housing and the highest economic need index in New York City. Despite the challenges, the principal, teachers and parent coordinator relentlessly pursue strategic partnerships to support each child and family with a comprehensive array of services, such as free eye and dental exams, food delivery for weekends, in-house counseling and social work, and vouchers to do free loads of laundry at school. The individualized supports were heightened in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, as staff ensured that clothing, food, and emergency supplies like flashlights were provided to families even when school was not in session and daily check-ins occurred with students to address physical and social-emotional needs. This intensive attention to each child and family has raised the overall student attendance rate to 93%, its highest level in over a decade, with mentors and volunteer grandparents closely monitoring attendance of targeted students. Additionally, the school implements the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system with professional training in emotional literacy and consistent use of "mood meters" to remind students to self-regulate behaviors. Together, these supportive external partnerships, attendance and advisement programs, and PBIS training produce a profoundly respectful learning environment for children and adults.
- Teachers use a broad range of assessment data sensibly which leads to meaningful instructional planning, adjustments, and interventions for students. (2.2)

- The principal and teachers maintain a data wall for updated and relevant student mastery of reading and math skills. These visual charts show at-a-glance students' movement and progress based on post-assessments and teachers affirm their usefulness in planning instruction. Teachers analyze a wide range of formative, periodic, and summative assessments, as well as student work products, to identify trends, strengths and areas of need across classes, school-wide and individually. A recent review of conference notes found that all teachers are conferring with students over time with some adjustments of teaching practices to follow up on reading goals. The Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA) and the school's internally-developed Independent Math Assessment (IMA) gauge students' mastery of Common Core standards and provide user-friendly Skills Cards that students take home to practice and review. This close monitoring of students' progress in reading, for example, has narrowed the achievement gap, since third, fourth, and fifth grade readers who have spent an entire year at the school made an average of 1.58 year gains in reading. In addition, the principal provides data binder feedback to teachers at least three times during the year which reinforces the importance of teachers' use of student data for planning and also solidifies common assessment tracking practices.
- The principal has developed powerful processes for analyzing and elevating teacher performance through clear expectations for practice which results in improved instruction. (4.1)
 - All teachers report in person and via School Survey that the principal is an exceptionally supportive presence in each classroom multiple times a month, providing pragmatic and high lever follow up suggestions and fortifying teachers' expertise. She sets an ambitious agenda of frequent rounds of class visits with candid written feedback that models the "2 hugs and 1 push" approach of noting at least two positive observations and one concern with a suggested next step. This observational approach is rooted in the research-based rubric of Charlotte Danielson which teachers reflect on during individual goal setting meetings and continued professional development. As a result, teachers share increasingly common instructional expectations and there is improved consistency of effective teaching practices across the school, as evidenced in classroom visits. New teachers receive strategic mentoring and all teachers rate their professional development in the top 97th percentile city-wide which raises further the caliber of teaching.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop curricula and tasks that challenge students to think, write and problem solve at higher levels so that they are better prepared for middle school and beyond. (1.1)
 - The school embraces power standards and curricula adjustments reflect the citywide instructional shifts to more balance between nonfiction and fiction and deeper study and application of math. In English Language Arts (ELA), teachers have selected to follow six of the ten reading and writing units of study developed at Teachers College, with adaptations of more nonfiction, longer units, and a common template for unit mapping. In math, the school implements the Everyday Math program and supplements weekly with Exemplars math problems to push students to use multiple strategies for problem solving. Furthermore, across classrooms, teachers seek to increase rigor of what students know and can do by revising all ELA and math units of study to align with Common Core standards. For example, kindergarten teachers expect students to include details in their retelling,

fifth grade students "speed book" their reading for improved oral comprehension, and teams of teachers consider vertical alignment carefully in their curricula mapping. Despite these forward steps, there is inconsistency across classrooms in rigor of tasks as evident in research projects that receive inflated scores for minimal product, low volume of student writing in several classes, and social studies content that aligns superficially to textbooks instead of real world and interdisciplinary connections. As a result, students are not sufficiently clear about teaching points or big ideas which then weakens their deeper understanding and ownership of what and why they are learning. This impedes academic readiness for middle school and beyond.

- Strengthen teaching practices with questioning, discussions and routines that extend students' critical thinking and independence to promote rigor. (1.2)
 - Teachers increasingly align curricula and instructional expectations with Common Core standards, and they share the belief that students learn best through active learning and small groups. Therefore, small group and partner learning are evident across classrooms with good examples of differentiated supports for all learners. For instance, fourth grade students explain a 12×8 math array using manipulatives and math talk protocols, while students in kindergarten read and confer with teachers using a strategy of magic pointer fingers. Teachers vary media which then helps students with multiple learning styles engage actively in discussions. While this and many other lessons have good routines in place for small group, cooperative learning and discussions, there is an over-reliance on the teacher to mediate the discussion and push students' thinking. Teacher questions are often open-ended, which then encourages responses, yet there is little expectation for students to deepen their thinking by questioning each other or building on comments made by others. As a result, some discussions remain teacher-directed which then hampers students from demonstrating higher order thinking.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: P.S. 015 Roberto Clemente	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		X					
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?			X				
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?			X				
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?			X				
Systems for Improvement							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			X				
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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				
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed