

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**Peace and Diversity Academy**

**12X278**

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

**Principal: Andrew Turay**

**Dates of review: March 7-8, 2013  
Lead Reviewer: Elena Papaliberios**

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

### **Information about the school**

Peace and Diversity Academy is a high school with 231 students from nine through grade 12. The school population comprises 43% Black, 54% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 76.0%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is underdeveloped.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal makes organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals that are beginning to engage students in challenging academic tasks. (1.3)
  - Teachers meet on a daily basis in grade teams and in department teams in order to address the school's goals, specifically the goal, "Through a series of common tasks embedded in math and literacy, teacher teams will measure student growth through common rubrics aligned to CCLS writing standards or CCLS math practice standards". Teachers are in the process of creating challenging academic tasks that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in order to engage students at a higher level. In an economics class, for example, the student task is to "Write an argumentative essay in which you state and defend the economic system that you think works best. This can be Capitalist, Socialist or Mixed Economy". Students have to cite from varied sources and use the knowledge acquired from class discussions to support their argument. Additionally, the principal has hired new teachers to address areas of intense need, provide academic intervention services, specifically in math, where students Regents passing is at 25%. The change in staff and the teacher teams' approach to curriculum and task development are focusing on the school's goals for student progress as they meet daily with the potential to improve student work products across grades.
- Teacher practices are beginning to align to a common teaching framework, which helps to improve student work products. (1.2)
  - Teachers spend time at their meetings engaged in supporting each other's development and focusing on the school's selected Danielson's domains as their belief system of how students learn best. Specifically, teachers are working on questioning techniques to engage students at high levels in order to generate student discussions and ownership of the learning process. In a science class where students were studying mass versus weight, all students were engaged in the lab where they were challenged and were asked to conduct an experiment using pennies and rubber bands to determine the impact different weight had on the elasticity of the rubber band. A rotation was set up where students were able to go through five different stations and compared their findings with members of their team. As a result, students' work is becoming aligned to curriculum expectations and students are engaged in meaningful work.
- School leaders support the development of teachers and are working on a system to individualize professional development in order to improve teacher practice. (4.1)
  - The school uses a common teaching framework based on the Danielson's model as is evident in teachers' observation reports. The school took part in the Teacher Effectiveness Program, and continues to use that model in their observation. New teachers spoke about the

support they receive after an informal or formal observation. A teacher stated, "The principal always provides me with additional resources, even if it is just an article on a topic I am teaching. I can attend professional development opportunities outside the school and sometimes I also attend trainings offered by the network or the coach". The school is working on a plan to address focused professional development that is specific to individual teachers based on their observation reports in order to improve teachers' pedagogical skills. The school leader has used the observation process to identify teachers who will receive tenure and those who are in need of additional support and has used this tool to provide actionable feedback to teachers. Furthermore, teacher leaders play an important role at team meetings where they act as facilitators, and meet with the administrator on a weekly basis in order to develop their leadership skills. These practices are beginning to impact the professional growth of all teachers across the school.

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

- Ensure that teachers support the integration of units of study aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards in order to expose students to a rigorous curriculum that engages all learners. (1.1)
  - Teachers are beginning to align curriculum to the expectations of Common Core Learning Standards. For example, the Global History unit on the Industrial Revolution is aligned to the reading and writing Common Core Learning Standards which asks students to cite textual evidence to support analysis and to write arguments to support claims. However, similar alignment is inconsistent across subjects. Although the school is working on tasks that are aligned to the Common Core, there is little evidence of units of study that have been created. Furthermore, tasks are not derived from units of study and the instructional shifts included in the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) are not emphasized in any consistent manner to inform curriculum development. Consequently, students have limited exposure to units that are rigorous and aligned to the Common Core Standards.
  - The school is working on designing academic tasks in each grade level. However, most tasks reviewed did not take into account student data, such as New York English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), Preliminary Student Achievement Test (PSAT) and Individual Education Plan (IEP) data, in order to create tasks that are targeted to engage all students including English language learners (ELL) and students with disabilities (SWD). For example, a task in an English Language Arts (ELA) class asks students to write a persuasive essay "using the dystopias of Lord of the Flies and The Hunger Games...create a constitution for your society". The task does not address the needs of English language learners or students with disabilities. As a result, groups of students are left unable to engage in standards-based work at a level that is appropriate for their needs.
- Create a process to evaluate curriculum, organizational resources and professional development plans in order to make adjustments and meet the rigorous expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. (5.1)

- Teachers are working with coaches from the Network and have begun to align the curriculum to the Common Core Standards. Currently, the school does not have a system in place to review and evaluate teacher planning. For instance, in a Living Environment class visited, students were engaged in a hands-on lab on the respiratory system. The lesson plan for that specific lab listed a reading activity related to the Common Core Standard, “Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text, trace the text’s explanation or depiction of a complex process, phenomenon, or provide an accurate summary of the text”. However, in observing and speaking to the students who were conducting the experiment on how oxygen enters the lungs, they indicated that they had no reading assigned for that day in the lab, that it was a hands-on lab. Furthermore, there was no alignment of the Common Core Standard to the task students were asked to do. Consequently, the lack of systems in place to evaluate curriculum prevent the school from identifying areas that need adjustment in order to meet the rigorous expectations of the Common Core Standards.
- The principal has hired teachers in areas of need and has hired a coach to support them. The Principal sends teachers to professional development sessions offered outside the school. However, teachers do not have an individualized professional development plan and at the teachers’ meeting, a teacher said, “I go to the PD they send me and then I sometimes go to the ones that are advertized.” As a result, without a system in place to assess and evaluate professional development, the school is unable to determine the effectiveness of the sessions teachers attend and therefore unable to make adjustments to meet the needs of individual teachers.
- Use common assessments and assessment of learning strategies in an effort to measure student progress and adjust curricula as needed to improve student achievement. (2.2)
  - The Regents’ item analysis is used in some content areas to determine students’ ability and to measure progress toward graduation. While some teachers review Acuity data, at the teachers meeting they indicated that they are not given the results of common assessments such as the PSAT data and NYSESLAT data for their groups of students. Teachers do not create common assessments across content area or grade level. This limits their ability to assess the entire grade or to see how students are doing in a specific subject area in order to adjust curriculum and refine planning to improve student achievement across grades and across content area.
  - In some classes teachers use exit slips, and a new math teacher assesses learning as she walks from group to group checking student work. However, in most classes observed, the use of ongoing checks for understanding is inconsistently used to determine the level of comprehension among students. Most classes visited contained English language learners, but there was little evidence of assessment of learning done to ascertain that all students were on task and able to understand the concepts taught. Therefore, teachers are unable to adjust their lessons and are unable to provide students with next actionable steps to improve their outcomes.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: <b>Peace and Diversity Academy</b>	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>	<b>X</b>						
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<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?	<b>X</b>						
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?	<b>X</b>						
<b>School Culture</b>							
<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?		<b>X</b>					
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?		<b>X</b>					
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an <b>inquiry approach</b> that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?		<b>X</b>					
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?	<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>