

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**Assemblyman Angelo Del Toro Educational Complex**

**M108**

**1615 Madison Avenue  
Manhattan  
NY 10029**

**Principal: Gryssele Machicote**

**Dates of review: May 27-28, 2014  
Lead Reviewer: Alexandra Estrella**

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

### **Information about the school**

Assemblyman Angelo Del Toro Educational Complex is an elementary-middle school with 673 students from Pre-K through grade 8. The school population comprises 28% Black, 65% Hispanic, 2% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 93.0%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school purposefully utilizes resources and makes organizational decisions to support instructional goals and enhance student work products. (1.3)
  - School leaders have strategically allocated their budget to improve student achievement and elevate teaching practices. Funds are used to support teachers' professional development from Creative Solutions as well as private consultants, both focusing on developing questioning techniques and curriculum mapping. In addition, teachers attend workshops from the network and participate in school wide Common Core professional development. Per session funding is set aside to provide students with additional instruction during afterschool and Saturday programs. The partnership with Learning Leaders supports the students academically. Learning Leaders volunteers focus on the needs of the K-8 students to ensure that they are acquiring the foundation and reading skills necessary to prepare for the next level. As a result, the number of referrals for Special Education and for Tier III interventions has declined.
  - Administration purposefully hires and assigns teachers to ensure academic success. For example, this year several teachers, including special education teachers, looped up with their classes to ensure continuity of instruction and address the needs of their students. During the new hiring process, candidates have several rounds of interviews with staff input and a required demonstration lesson. Once hired, the administration assigns novice teachers to experienced teachers to provide additional collegial support. For example, novice English teachers work collaborative with teacher leaders to support them with planning and identifying areas of focus based on student work analysis. Teachers share responsibility, are aware of the students' learning goals and are assigned to provide academic intervention services to the identified students in grades K through eight for early riser or extended day. Learning support groups are developed to address the needs of English language learners and students with disabilities. The English as a second language teacher and Special Education Teacher Support Services teacher (s) push-out and/or push in with students from different classes and provide targeted support. Teacher teams map out targeted interventions in reading and math during the afterschool academic intervention session to support students in areas of focus based on classroom assessment and computer-based programs such as iLearn and iReady. As a result of the school's hiring practices and interventions, students' needs are being addressed as evidenced by progress in Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) English language arts and math assessment data.
- Using the Danielson Framework, the administrative team effectively uses the information gathered from frequent observations of lessons and reflection on student work to support professional growth that improves teaching and learning. (4.1)
  - School leaders have developed a trusting relationship with the staff so that teachers are open to receiving feedback and assistance in reaching their full potential. Teachers fully understand the expectations for instruction as it

relates to the Danielson framework. They have received professional development and have participated in norming exercises. The principal or the assistant principals meet with teachers to set professional goals aligned with the Danielson framework, self-evaluation and feedback from last year. In addition, they discuss strategies to address the needs of the students based on data. There is a mid-year and an end of year meeting to monitor teachers' progress towards their goals as well as student achievement. Teachers state that they have received feedback addressing their questioning and discussion techniques resulting in enhanced practices. Based on student data and teaching experience, a schedule has been developed for observations. After the first cycle of observations, the administration consults and discusses the feedback and next steps. The administrators have placed the teachers in tiers of varying needs according to their strengths and weaknesses to align the professional development. For example, one group of teachers needs additional support with developing groups using the assessments to challenge all students and another group needs support with monitoring student progress and using conferences to enhance student work products. The professional development plan is regularly reviewed and revised based on data. Teacher tenure and retention decisions are based on their effective practices utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching and Learning as well as student achievement data. As a result of using observation data, teachers are receiving focused support aligned to their professional goals to enhance their development and professional growth.

- Most teachers engage in professional collaborations that provide opportunities for shared leadership, as well as strengthen instructional capacity resulting in increased student achievement. (4.2)
  - Teacher teams lead by a coach or lead teacher engage in collaborative inquiry by looking at student work samples and determining next steps to support students in meeting their goals and strengthen teacher practice. The teams are organized by grade, vertical-content, school implementation, and positive behavior intervention supports. The grade level teams meet at least twice a month to look at student work samples and data trends to revise and adjust the curriculum. Once an area of growth is determined, the vertical teams set school-wide expectations on how to address it, and then the grade team leaders share the expectations and next steps with their team. Grade teams then develop action plans to infuse interventions into their day-to-day instruction to address the area of growth. This was evidenced in agendas, meeting minutes and the revised literacy unit plans from the English 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade meeting that took place on May 28, 2014 as teachers planned writing revisions within the unit of study they were working on and outlined an implementation plan. Also, in the previous unit teachers made modifications to support struggling readers to understand the book called *Lyddie* by Katherine Patterson by reading some of the text aloud and creating mixed groups. During the 4<sup>th</sup> grade team meeting, teachers discussed how students were not responding to questions or completing graphic organizers using explicit evidence from the text; thereby, preventing them from responding to questions utilizing evidence from the text to support their ideas. As a result, teachers planned to provide students with sentence starters to prompt them to use evidence from the text. Also, teachers grouped students heterogeneously to provide struggling students with additional peer support. Furthermore, during upcoming mini-lessons teachers would be teaching explicitly how to extract textual evidence to support a response to a question.

Moreover, students that continue to struggle despite the new interventions can receive additional interventions during the afterschool program. Such teacher team practices have strengthened teachers' instructional capacity, resulting in school-wide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for most learners.

- The school's vertical teams are called the School Implementation Teams and are led by teachers who contain valued knowledge in their grade or content area. This distributed leadership structure is embedded so that there is collegial leadership throughout the school and teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. For example, in previous years the school had grade level teams, but the work was not bridged between grades. As a result, the school established the team that is led by teacher leaders and coaches since the Fall of 2011. Additionally, all teachers participate in planning meetings that give them the opportunity to reflect on school-wide and individual practices and provide leadership with feedback regarding what supports they need to develop and implement new programs, standards, or techniques. They meet with the administrative team at least once a month to discuss their findings and next steps. They also utilize this time to review student work and teacher practice, and then develop potential next steps to support instruction. For instance, the staff felt they needed more frequent professional development in the different Danielson domains and as a result, this year they have participated in peer as well as external professional development. Distributive leadership empowers teachers to play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school and improves curricula design and teacher practice resulting in increased student achievement.

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

- Ensure that curricula in all subjects is accessible to a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards resulting in access to engaging, rigorous tasks for all students. (1.1)
  - The school is utilizing Ready Gen (grades K-2), Expeditionary Learning (grades 3-8), Go Math (grades K-5), and Connected Math (CMP3) (grades 6-8) curricula. The school is in the process of adjusting and enhancing curricula maps and integrating literacy with science and social studies as well as aligning with the Glencoe and Harcourt materials. The English language arts (ELA) curriculum emphasizes close reading of informational texts, high-level vocabulary and finding evidence to support their answers. Science and social studies curricula also embed reading strategies that support students' ability to answer questions utilizing evidence from the text, but it is not translating into Common Core aligned writing across the curriculum which was stated as focus for the year. Writing prompts which move students to thoughtfully engage text were not consistently evident in curricular materials, hindering the development of student writing, thus teachers are in the process of infusing writing prompts in all units of study to implement next year. Modifications to the units of study are being made to support English language learners and students with disabilities. Despite the delay in receiving the reading and math materials, all teachers have been delving into the curricula, utilizing on-line resources, attending professional development, and collaborating with their colleagues to identify adjustments that may be

necessary to meet the needs of all learners; however, these efforts were not apparent in all planning documents. For example, the English teachers identified students need for additional time during the period to develop their writing skills because the current curriculum provided limited to no time for writing within the unit of study, which the staff is in the initial process of addressing, thus hindered students' ability to enhance their writing skills in the current grades. As a result of the teachers' creating limited opportunities in all content areas to engage students in multiple writing prompts within a unit of study, student's writing skills will need to be fortified in the upcoming year.

- 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. (2.2)
  - Across the school, teachers are using common assessments such as running records to identify students' independent reading level, post assessments within the English language arts and math curricula, performance assessments, and Measure of Student Learning (MOSL) assessments. All data is compiled in teachers' assessment binders including conference notes and are occasionally used to track progress. Teachers are questioning students throughout the lesson; however, there was limited evidence that timely adjustments were being made as a result of the student's response or identified misunderstandings. One teacher used an exit slip to assess students understanding but didn't provide adequate time for all students to complete it resulting in limited feedback. Student work is assessed by a rubric providing feedback to the students. Students are able to articulate how their work is evaluated and what their next steps are, however the expectations in the rubrics are not always clearly aligned to the curricula. There additionally exist inconsistencies in the scoring, as some rubrics are on a 5 point scale while others are on a 3 point scale thereby lacking school-wide coherence. The 7-8 Grade team developed a scoring rubric aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards that was shared at the team meeting to assess essay writing. Consequently, adjustments to instruction are not always consistent to the areas of concern; thereby, hindering student progress within lessons or units of study.
- Enhance instruction across classrooms to ensure teachers strategically provide multiple entry points into the curricula to engage all learners in high levels of thinking and discussion (1.2)
  - Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to curricula and are generally structured using the workshop model with a whole class mini-lesson, discussion opportunities through turn and talk, followed by students working on a task independently or with a partner. In the class visits all students had an opportunity for discussion, requiring students to find the evidence in the text, but there were little supports for students that needed additional assistance. All students were required to complete the same task and were placed in heterogeneous groups for assistance. The school has a strong focus on utilizing the classroom as a tool for learning; therefore, process charts are vividly displayed throughout the rooms and some students utilized them to support their learning while others struggled to use them as a resourceful too. In the English language arts classes, students were reading

complex non-fiction texts and were being assigned a task but there were limited supports provided for struggling students or students with disabilities. In a third grade class students were to restate and reread the facts from the informational text, but the work products were not differentiated and did not engage students in high-level conversations with one another because all the conversations were lead and directed by the teacher. In a math class, the teacher worked with small dry erase boards and students had to answer to questions on the board on their easel and the task was not differentiated for students. Some students had the capacity to engage in more rigorous task, but were not given that opportunity since the work was not differentiated. In another class, teacher provided assistance with solving problems using the Pythagorean Theorem and students were in groups solving for the same problems. Again, there were no opportunities for students in the higher tier to engage in more challenging or rigorous tasks, while the lower tier also didn't have scaffolded tasks to support their areas of growth. Consequently, the teaching strategies provided limited supports to ensure that all students, including special education students and English language learners, are engaged in appropriate and challenging tasks.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

<b>School name: Assemblyman Angelo Del Toro Educational Complex</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		<b>X</b>					
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?		<b>X</b>					
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the 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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports 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 those expectations?		<b>X</b>					
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</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>				
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 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?			<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>				
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>