

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**The Angelo Patri Middle School**

**Middle School X391  
2225 Webster Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10457**

**Principal: Graciela Abadia**

**Dates of review: October 29-30, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Sandra Litrico**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Angelo Patri School is a middle school with 586 students from six through eighth grade. The school population comprises 25% Black, 73% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 28% English language learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 89.80%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school embraces an exceptionally positive school culture and nurturing learning environment that provide social-emotional and academic supports to all students. (1.4)
  - The school implements Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), a school-wide program that uses RAMS core values of respect, accountability, maturity and success to support students in making positive choices. The Mental Health and Wellness Team support the social and emotional development of students by creating safety nets and support services such as Girls' Circle, a support group focused on conflict resolution skills, esteem building strategies and middle school student issues. Students interviewed state that their teachers, guidance counselors and administrators are supportive and are always available to discuss any problem or issue that may arise. As a result, the tone of the school and the respect between and among staff and students are exemplary and current attendance rate is sustained at over 91%.
  - Small learning communities, known as PODs, were created to establish respect and community spirit between teachers and students. WEDIKO, an organization for social-emotional development, works with teachers and students. Consultants provide teachers with professional development related to strategies they can use to support at risk students. Within the PODs, student academic growth and exemplary behaviors are highlighted and celebrated. Students receive awards for moving up reading levels in the 100 Book Challenge Reading program. As a result, the students are enthusiastic about their school. They engage in many activities that support their social growth including Girls Circle, Boys Mentoring Program, Zumba Fitness and Student Government. In addition, the school has established The Caregivers Circle, a forum for families to meet and discuss academic and social concerns they have about their children as students and adolescents.
- Teachers use common assessments and rubrics aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and provide effective feedback to students about next learning steps to improve their work. (2.2)
  - The school integrates common assessments across the disciplines and uses the data from unit tests, performance tasks and rubrics to provide feedback to students with clear and actionable next steps. They also self-assess and monitor their progress through the use of learning targets in the form of "I Can" statements. As a result, the students were able to articulate what they needed to do to improve their work and move to the next level. Students said that after their work is reviewed and they receive feedback from teachers and their peers they have the opportunity to do it over again to improve their work and aim for mastery. One student said, "When you are given a second chance, it means people care about you and want you to do better."

- Teachers use the Standards in Practice protocol to look at student work and identify strengths and areas for improvement. They also review item analysis data to identify skills and strategies that need re-teaching. As a result, teachers are able to make meaningful classroom level curricular and instructional modifications to ensure student progress along with school leaders who review the Early Reading Literacy Assessment data and use this information to track student progress and make informed decisions about intervention programs. As a result, the school made adjustments to learning by adopting Imagine Learning, a technology program, to support English language learners and special education students and implemented Action 100, a 12-Step Response-to-Intervention Reading Program.
- School leaders and teachers thoughtfully align curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and promote academic strategies and learning experiences that support student growth. (1.1)
  - Curriculum is aligned to CCLS across grades and subject areas with a focus on developing students' ability to cite evidence to support their arguments in writing and problem solving. The acronym RACE is used school-wide to support students in grounding their work in evidence. Consequently, students are able to restate the question, answer the question, cite evidence to support their answer and end their answer with a concluding statement. This integrates the instructional shifts and promotes college and career readiness for all students.
  - Lessons and academic tasks are planned to provide supports, scaffolds and vocabulary development to meet the needs of individual students. Consultants, teacher leaders and administrators assist teachers in refining unit plans based on student data to include multiple entry points. This increases student opportunities to access curricula. For example, students in the English as a second language classroom were able to make inferences about the character and support their ideas with text-based evidence using vocabulary charts, graphic organizers and close reading strategies thereby cognitively engaging them.
- School leaders make informed and effective organizational decisions to reinforce the school's instructional goals that positively impact student progress. (1.3)
  - The principal cited the author Elmore and his instructional core in triangulating and supporting all three parts of the triad (curricula, teacher effectiveness and student engagement). In turn, when last year's data revealed that fractions were a gap area for sixth graders the principal and administrative team decided to hire a consultant to provide professional development to teachers to support them in teaching fractions. Students have made progress and lessons improved. The principal has hired consultants to support teachers in the teaching of writing and social studies. Furthermore, the decision to continue the implementation of the 100 Book Challenge had a positive impact on students' progress in reading levels and building their stamina thus supporting instructional goals for student achievement.

- The administrative team has hired teachers based on their enthusiasm for learning, caring nature and content knowledge. The school's partnership with a local college provides them with teachers from their residency

program. Having an excellent foundation these teachers are encouraged to follow the motto "Teach Like a Champion". The principal has also hired and identified teacher leaders who have scheduled periods to support teachers. The schedule includes weekly common planning time that is devoted to looking at student work and discussing students' strengths and next steps. This information is used to group students and to identify needed interventions for English language learners and special education students. This includes Language Academy, after-school and Saturday programs. Formative assessments indicate that students in these programs show academic growth in literacy.

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

- Strengthen teaching practices that foster discussion, debate among students, and active learning so that all students engage in meaningful tasks and high levels of thinking. (1.2)
  - While in some cases teaching strategies produce student-to-student conversation, there is an uneven engagement in higher order thinking skills, challenging tasks and in-depth discussions. The work folders in most classrooms were primarily short answer responses to questions, exit slips and unit tests. Notebooks revealed the copying of the aim, learning tasks and note taking. In several classrooms, teachers asked students to support their answers, make inferences, talk with a partner, and agree or disagree with another student's argument. However, many of the classroom lessons observed only focused on the "Do Now" part of the lesson which was teacher- directed and had little engagement. Although Socratic seminar was mentioned as a model used to engage students and promote rich discussions, it was not evident in any of the classroom visits. As a result, there are uneven levels of student engagement in cognitively demanding discussions and thinking thereby minimizing learning opportunities. (c)
  - Classrooms inconsistently provide multiple entry points and scaffolds for subgroups including English language learners and special education students. Although students are grouped according to test data results, lesson plans revealed little differentiation or supports that scaffold learning for individual needs of students. It was evident in several classroom visits that there were groups of students who needed extra support or different strategies to solve problems and/or answer questions. Teachers did walk around and try to assist but there was no plan to address their needs during the lesson. As a result, many of these students are not making adequate progress toward grade level proficiency as evident in student work products.
- Develop the systems for reviewing and revising instructional and organizational decisions in order to accelerate academic progress of students. (5.1)

- Although the school leader has built effective structures, including an instructional cabinet that regularly monitors curricular and instructional practices and progress, more work needs to be done in purposely evaluating the quality and impact of professional development and teacher team work. There was little evidence in classrooms of the implementation of focused areas of professional development including questioning and discussion. Some of the teachers who are being supported by consultants are still in need of modeling strategies and planning high level academic tasks. The teacher team work of analyzing student tasks has not yet impacted daily lesson planning which still lacks scaffolds and multiple entry points. This results in missed opportunities for students to reach mastery.
- School leaders and faculty are beginning to adjust curricular and instructional practices in response to student data. However, the rigor and challenge of academic tasks is not continuously monitored as well as the internalization of the Common Core expectations and instructional shifts to effectively impact student progress and achievement. Therefore, there were many missed opportunities in classrooms for students to engage students in critical thinking and challenging activities that promote student independence.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The Angelo Patri School 10X391	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			X				
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
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?			X				
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?		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				
<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 supports 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 those expectations?			X				
<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 student 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 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?			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					
<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>