

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Roberto Clemente School**

**Elementary School K013**

**557 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11207**

**Principal: Maxine Cameron**

**Date of review: January 30, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince**

## The School Context

Roberto Clemente School is an elementary school with 494 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 69% Black, 28% Hispanic, 3% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 89.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations, including elements of the Danielson Framework for teaching, through professional development to the entire staff. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to college and career readiness and partner with families to support student progress.

### Impact

Communication of high expectations to staff results in staff implementing elements of the Danielson Framework and in a culture of mutual accountability. The school successfully partners with families to support student progress toward the high expectations for college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- Staff members are engaged in differentiated professional development based on their area in need of support or their specialty such as English as a second language (ESL), speech and special education. Feedback from the professional learning team and teacher surveys has furthered professional development sessions to embed the elements of the Danielson Framework in all lesson planning. Staff members participate in internal and external professional development as needed to improve instruction and student outcomes. Staff development occurs every Monday during the extended period as well as during “Lunch and Learn” sessions. Teacher teams meet to modify and scaffold instruction, and to adjust curricula based on assessments with the overriding principal of engaging students and having rigorous, higher-order thinking skills embedded into lessons.
- Parents at the parent meeting stated, “There is more structure in the school with this principal, there is an open door policy, student of the month program and more discussions at meeting and workshops around college and career readiness.” They particularly like the automated updates on student progress, the artist in residence program and the extra-curricular activities that the school supports to make a well-rounded child.
- The principal stated that the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching provides meaningful feedback to teachers based upon formal and informal observations. There are professional developments opportunities around Danielson both school-wide and at teacher team meetings as evidenced by agendas and minutes of meetings.
- Partnerships with families to support student progress towards college and career readiness is conducted through workshops given to parents, constant communication to families via phone calls, emails and teacher generated communications on student progress, both academic and behavioral.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

There is a shared belief, informed by the Danielson framework and aligned to pedagogy and curricula. Across classrooms, the use of strategic entry points and extensions that foster deep reasoning in student work products varies across the school.

### Impact

Teachers are using the Danielson's Framework in their practice; student work products and discussions reflect high levels of thinking and participation but this is not yet happening in a vast majority of classrooms, leading to missed learning opportunities for some students.

### Supporting Evidence

- In most classes visited, small group work practices were utilized. However, in some classes student tasks did not always align with lesson objectives or the instructional activities were conducted in a whole group with little evidence of in-depth learning opportunities to support higher-order thinking and discussions. The quality of Depth of Knowledge questions were not always evident in the content areas in these classes, thereby limiting some students' ability to think critically and maximize learning to create high-level work products.
- In some classes observed there were missed opportunities for students to engage in cognitively demanding tasks. For example, in a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade English language arts (ELA) class on poetry, the teacher had students sitting on a rug in front of a pencil sharpener and asked students, "It's a machine to make my pencil sharp or what can it be?" Opportunities to have students turn and talk about this question were not used. The teacher also read a poem aloud but there were no discussions or visual connections provided.
- In an ELA class observed, 5<sup>th</sup> graders were gathering information from two articles representing the health benefits or health costs of drinking chocolate milk in order for them to create a thesis statement. The teacher circulated, checking for understanding. The interactive white board showed examples of thesis statements from both articles in Spanish and English, such as "Chocolate milk is more harmful than healthy." This was of high interest and promoted critical thinking and discussions. Students were asked to choose a strong quote that supported their thesis. Peer-to-peer interactions and questioning occurred. English language learners (ELLs) were working on laptops with an online translation service to help their comprehension. Students were referring to articles in their conversations and sharing out to the class and having articulate discussions, citing text.
- As seen in documents and in discussions with the principal, observations and learning walks teachers, in most classes, teachers are integrating the instructional shifts of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teachers are provided with actionable, specific and timely feedback, to reflect and modify their professional practice. There has been a school-wide focus on Danielson: Questioning and Discussion, and having teachers honing techniques for engaging students. There is a regular cycle of observations and informal walkthroughs that provide feedback to teachers. Teachers are also supported by inter-visitations, intra-school visitations and professional learning that expose them to effective practices. Ongoing professional development opportunities have been provided by instructional coaches, administration, teach team and mentor-program associates. During individual planning conferences, teachers were given opportunities to review their Advance data.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Curricula and tasks are refined and planned using student work and data.

### Impact

School leaders and faculty make purposeful decision in revising curriculum to promote career and college readiness. Engaging curriculum and tasks provide access to a diversity of learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities.

### Supporting Evidence

- With support from the administration, teachers engage in professional development to plan curriculum and align to the Common Core and the Danielson Framework. Curricular work has advanced with the inquiry team refining units of study to align with performance tasks and is reflected in the curriculum maps examined. Curricula and pedagogical and assessment practices are evidenced through Integrated Co-Teaching, grade-wide inquiry teams, refining units of study to align with performance tasks and curriculum mapping adjusted to meet student learning needs.
- The GO Math! Curriculum is Common Core-aligned and teachers are using a wide array of resources to assist them in differentiating their lessons to meet the diversity of learners. Teachers and administrations have changed the order of the math scope and sequence based on an examination of math standards. The math teachers are moving toward more open-ended questions based on levels of student work. Grade level teams have focused on student data and revised curriculum pacing calendars based on student performance.
- Teachers stated that they assist each other in refining curriculum into engaging lesson plans based on classroom data and prior student work. Lessons are indicating academic language and Depth of Knowledge in their plans, as well as a commitment to small groupings and ways to share in pairs. There is a balanced literacy program creating a strong reading and writing element to guide students toward lifelong reading and support students to have college and career readiness. The curriculum maps in ELA examined have strong supports with Depth of Knowledge and essential questions embedded.
- Refinement of curricula and lesson plans are using academic tasks to emphasize the use of rigorous habits and higher-order skills, using assessing and advancing questions to promote authentic discussion across grades, subjects and for ELLs and students with disabilities. There is ongoing assistance in looking at curriculum supplied by the Children First Network through achievement coaches who conduct in-house professional learning sessions.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

Across classroom, teachers use rubrics and assessment aligned with the curricula and use the results of common assessment to adjust curricula and instruction. Teachers' formative assessment practices reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding.

### **Impact**

By monitoring student understanding and analyzing trends for groups of students, teachers provide actionable feedback and make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers use rubrics aligned with the school's curricula to provide actionable feedback to students, as seen on display, in student portfolios and during classes visited. Students in some classes visited were peer-assessing using a rubric. Conferencing with students to gather information is a part of all lesson plans.
- The school uses GO Math! scoring graphs to track student levels and see movement. This data is examined for changing instructional practices and incorporating support for the struggling student. The math team then focuses on analyzing results along with formative assessments to develop scaffolds, such as using a step-by-step method and guided group practice. To support struggling learners, differentiation can be seen in various classrooms to address different types of learners. Teachers use visuals, manipulatives, videos and audio books along with tiered assignments
- The principal, during conversation about ELA, was very proud that students use not only teacher rubrics, but also use student-made rubrics to craft a response to the standards-based writing task, and then teachers examine the results. Individual charts are created to understand the extent of student learning. Teachers make adjustments to lessons through the use of guided reading group instruction, audio-visual aids, leveled texts and graphic organizers such as t-charts, Venn diagrams, "What do you know?/What do you want to know/What did you learn?" charts and sequence organizers to better meet students at their level of need. While teachers engage in ongoing checks for understanding, students are made aware of their next steps through continual feedback. There are checklists and rubrics, benchmark assessments for GO Math!, Teachers College Running Records, thumbs up/thumbs down, utilization of exit tickets and students' use of color coded tools to indicate status of understanding.
- The school monitors curriculum progress by examining Measures of Student Learning baseline, midyear and year-end assessments, informal and formal observations of teachers, and teacher observations of students and interim assessments. A review of teachers' conference notes from team meetings indicated that formative assessments lead to instructional adjustments, such as regrouping student and re-teaching concepts.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

The majority of teachers engage in structured professional collaborations focused on aligning practice with the Common Core Learning Standards and analyzing assessment data and student work.

**Impact**

Teacher practices are strengthened by examining student achievement, and progress on assessments which leads to improved student outcomes.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher Teams, including an inquiry team, grade level teams, horizontal and vertical teams and cluster teacher teams meet regularly with time embedded into the school schedule. Teams analyze assessment data and student work. Teachers are aligning practice to the Common Core and to the Danielson Framework to improve their practice and adding Webb’s DOK into instructional implementation to strengthen the instructional capacity.
- Teachers stated that they have opportunities to engage in inquiry-based professional collaborations that result in school-wide instructional coherence and increased student achievement. Students’ data and work products, including running records, ELA and math baseline assessments along with unit assessment and benchmarks, provide all teams with information about student comprehension. For example there was professional development on developing focus groups based on student learning gaps that would be continued in Team conversations.
- There are monthly meetings with administration to discuss initiatives and concerns, and to give feedback on identified needs and trends. For example, the 1st grade team visited was analyzing running records and discussing results to create new strategies for success. It was identified that students were not hearing different sounds, however they were self correcting when reading aloud. This led to a discussion about incorporating into lessons more foundational work on sounds and words. “Strategies gleaned from analyzing running records would help create next steps”.
- Both teams visited stated that they share best practices and look to further develop their own teaching skills. Teams organize inter-visitations and examine classroom practice with a specific lens toward student engagement, student work products, questioning, scaffolding and assessment. There was further discussion on using common assessments across grades and what the benefits would be for all students, including students in subgroups.