



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Roberto Clemente**

**Elementary M015**

**333 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10009**

**Principal: Irene Sanchez**

**Date of review: February 24, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Kristine Mustillo**

## The School Context

Roberto Clemente is an elementary school with 187 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 35% Black, 59% Hispanic, 1% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 37% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 93.0%.

## 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>Developing</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

**Quality Indicator:**

**3.4 High  
Expectations**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

School leaders have established a culture of learning that communicates high expectations to staff and to families in support of student learning.

### Impact

Structures for communication and collaboration between the school and all constituents result in mutual accountability for student progress.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are in the fifth year of receiving training in the Danielson Framework for Teaching. As a result of ongoing and frequent cycles of observation by administration with focused feedback, administrators are able to identify effective classroom practices and design individualized professional learning for teachers. Significant peer-support via scheduled inter-visitations, and teacher self-selected learning opportunities that include further inter-visitations with their colleagues, have resulted in improved practices in building student engagement.
- The school has an attendance committee, which works with teachers and families to determine why students are not coming to school, impacting students' future readiness for college and or careers. As a result, data shows consistent progress over time, in student attendance that has been well over 90% for the past several years. Additionally, Tuesday afternoon parent workshops such as "Are you smarter than a second grader?", or having parents work directly with their kindergarten children creating books and reading using good questioning strategies, and a grade one session that allowed parents to work with math strategies, support families in helping their children at home.
- School newsletters, which discuss academic expectations for each curricular unit, also provide key information about the research-based program, Habits of Mind that students practice in their classrooms. Additionally, parents participate in curriculum night at the beginning of each year. This gives them information about the expectations of each grade level. Further sharing of expectations around student behavior are conveyed via proud moment cards that go home when students demonstrate positive behavior relative to the Habits of Mind school wide expectations. These are supplemental to monthly progress reports around attendance, reading levels, and individual students' overall academic performance.

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

### Findings

Teachers are utilizing strategies to engage students, but instruction is not yet sufficiently deep to raise student thinking to a higher level.

### Impact

There are uneven levels of student engagement and limited demonstration of higher order thinking evident in class discussions and student work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- Strategies for math instruction build student engagement. In one math class, teachers worked with guided groups using Unifix cubes and fraction manipulatives to provide targeted instruction around combining like fractions adding up to a whole. In a second math class, students worked to solve problems using arrays to support math conjecture. However, during literacy lessons, while teachers used questioning and discussion techniques to build student participation, results were limited in producing high levels of student engagement.
- Teachers use reading response journals as a means to evaluate student work relative to understanding text. Students are required to include two lists of potential responses, one for fiction, and one for non-fiction texts. In a third grade notebook a student wrote in a fall entry, "I want to be friends with the character because I like how she says the sky was raining and it was not and she went to tell the king." In a late winter entry, the same student wrote when describing main idea, "It's about pigs laying and little boys doing a mess and then the pigs got to the farm." Another student selected to compare characters. This entry was repetitive, stated the characters both solved mysteries, and were cousins. Teacher feedback was "awesome character analysis" Teacher feedback lacked good connections to the task, resulting in student responses that do not rise to the level of a deep understanding or higher order thinking.
- Students discussed viewing a movie about Dr. Martin Luther King and having to write about it. Students stated that they could take notes but they did not have to. A student received a Level 4 on the piece with the comment, "this is amazing", yet the student stated that there was no rubric and could not articulate the requirement for the task of the writing piece, except to write an essay about Dr. Martin Luther King. A fifth grade project asked students to compare Thanksgiving and the United Nations Global Compact for Human Rights. A student's essay essentially stated that the student was thankful for human rights. Furthermore, students spoke to enduring understandings about motivations, such as the unfairness of having to "wear pink" every day. However, there was no evidence in student discussion or work products that they engaged in research from multiple sources related to the activity to establish their claims with evidence.

## 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 make purposeful decisions to ensure curricula alignment to Common Core Learning Standards and emphasize rigorous habits across grades and subject areas.

### Impact

Across grades and subject areas, curricula and academic tasks evidence learning targets that address the instructional shifts. Habits of Mind (HOM) are embedded throughout the curricula to promote college and career readiness for all learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- In English language arts, the school has transitioned from the Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) curriculum to a balanced literacy curriculum that includes TCWRP units of study for writing across genres. Junior Great Books is used to provide students with experiences with repeated text and close reading with complex text. Expeditionary Learning supports non-fiction studies, synthesizing information from multiple sources and the production of short and extended writing responses. Additionally, Reader's Theater is utilized to support speaking and listening skills, oral fluency, dialogue and a deeper understanding of story elements.
- The school utilizes TERC math along with exemplars to support skill development, exploration, and application to real world problems. The curriculum emphasizes fluency, deep understanding and application, connecting the school's focus to the instructional shifts. Teachers work with consultants from Metamorphosis creating tiered math problems where students explore the same concepts with less complex numbers and less extraneous information. Teachers also build in extensions to problems so that students demonstrate the use of multiple strategies they can use to solve problem and opportunities to explain their thinking.
- Teachers participate in professional development with Universal Design for Learning and through collaborative planning, identify opportunities within the curriculum to embed student choice and curricula modifications through content, process, and representation. Teachers work to include college and readiness skills with the curriculum to support students' ability for organization, collaboration, and persistence. Teachers have included increased opportunities for group work and discussions in the curriculum, and have increased their use of planning sheets and graphic organizers to help student organize thinking before tackling high-level tasks.

**Findings**

Across classrooms and throughout the school teachers utilize common assessments aligned to the curriculum to inform instructional decision-making, and school-generated rubrics guide students in their work and provide feedback.

**Impact**

Assessment practices give teachers valuable information about student progress. Teachers are providing targeted interventions for individual and small groups of students as well as making curricula adjustments using student work and data.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams align rubrics to ensure the standards for writing quality are the same across grades and content. Teachers are utilizing rubrics to determine actionable next steps for instruction. Increasingly, students are utilizing the rubrics prior to the task to set expectations and guide their work. Within a non-fiction unit, teachers realized that while there were variations in the quality of content, overall students had a difficult time with the organization of report. Teachers built in explicit instruction on writing introductory paragraphs, supporting paragraphs and closings. Teachers also increased their provision of models and various graphic organizers to support development. In addition to the writing rubrics, teachers use the Kinsey Developmental writing scales to assess and advance writing for early childhood and struggling learners.
- Teachers and administration monitor student progress in English language arts and math through a data wall, organized in tiers, and use it to identify students in need of interventions. Each student has a ring of index cards updated in cycles. This system gives administration a snapshot of the entire school and makes student profiles accessible. Students who are identified as not making progress or who are far below proficiency rating in English languages arts and/or math, have an action plan created for them by teacher teams. Student progress is assessed every four to six weeks. Student cards are used in teacher-administrator conversations focused on the connections between instructional practice and student performance.
- School wide teacher use the Independent Reading Level Assessment from the American Reading Company to track student progress in fluency and comprehension. Students who do not meet their learning targets receive intervention services based on the “determined ‘blocker.” School level data shows 70% of students are meeting their February learning target.
- Teachers utilize pre-assessments within the TERC math units to determine whole group and small group instructional goals. Teachers utilize post-assessments to determine student progress and plan for re-teaching. Teachers utilize exemplars to assess student application of skills to problem solving.

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

Across the school, teachers are engaged in professional collaborations focused on improving teacher capacity and improving student achievement.

### **Impact**

The work of teacher teams has resulted in enhanced classroom instructional practices, increased student engagement, and students' writing showing improvement in organization and volume.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams meet monthly with a network based special education liaison to review student data, goals, and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals. Teachers then explore co-teaching models and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies that will support the achievement of these goals. A teacher is also being developed through Teacher's College Integrated Co-Teaching Program to grow practices around differentiation and technology integration.
- Teachers and paraprofessionals participate in study groups, "Planning with Differentiation", to expand capacity in understanding materials, resources, and strategies, that support different learning needs.
- The Instructional Council as a cross grade team works on supporting curriculum development, assessment, and professional learning. Their work is to liaise between grade level teams and administration, strengthening two-way communication and supporting the vertical coherence of curricula and instruction. The instructional council has been the driving force in ensuring Habits of Mind are embedded throughout the curriculum, increased of the use of scaffolds such as text previews to support struggling learners, and has fostered a common understanding of rigor and development of professional sharing structures.
- Teacher teams focus heavily on individual student performance, looking at student work, noting strengths and next steps for each student. In addition to tracking reading and math performance, teachers have implemented structures to track student participation in discussions and verbal demonstrations of understanding. Administration has noted improvements in the questioning and discussion techniques being used by teachers as well as improvements in student engagement in discussions.