



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Angelo Del Toro Educational Complex

Elementary-Middle School M108

**1615 Madison Avenue
Manhattan
NY 10029**

Principal: Gryssele Machicote

**Date of review: March 16, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Dr. Thomas McBryde Jr.**

The School Context

Angelo Del Toro Educational Complex is a Pre-Kindergarten to Eight school with students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade eight. The school population comprises 28% Black, 65% Hispanic, 1% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.0%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
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	Focus	Developing
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	Additional Findings	Developing
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	Celebration	Developing
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Additional Findings	Developing
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Additional Findings	Developing

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Developing

Findings

The school's faculty has started to use common assessments across subject areas to determine student progress toward goals, and consistently use ongoing check for understanding.

Impact

Data analysis is beginning to inform guided adjustments to units and lessons. Data from newly designed common assessments are in the process of being generated, analyzed and used to modify instruction to meet students' learning needs. Teachers inconsistently make adjustments during instruction based on checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Supporting Evidence

- Though the school is in the process of administering it's first year of quarterly Common Core aligned interim assessments, data from the previous year's Measures Of Student Learning and Fontas and Pinnell assessments have been used to target students for literacy interventions such as small group guided reading classes and English language arts Intervention classes. However, this common assessment work is focused in English language arts and mathematics and has not reached science and social studies.
- During one of the teacher team meetings, teachers analyzed student work and identified target areas of growth for a group of students that would be addressed during a daily lesson or within the unit of study. However, the practice that was implemented recently was not a uniform practice within other content areas or directly aligned to the curriculum. Teachers communicated that in order to impact a larger group of students they need to look at multiple student work samples rather than just one.
- Within the elementary school, most of the evaluation of student work samples and assessment data did not reflect clear modifications of student tasks or units of study. The student tasks observed were identical for all students. For example, in an eighth grade classroom, students worked on the same task despite their proficiency levels; therefore, some students completed the task early, while others struggled with the task. In mathematics the teacher mentioned generic modifications for student with disabilities and English Language Learners, yet it did not specify the students that would be targeted and why.
- The teachers employ various strategies to check for understanding such as: Do you agree or disagree questions, show me how prompts, use of thumbs, using the stop light in early grades, post-its (used as a form of assessment-what do you know? What don't you know? What are they wondering?) The impact of the strategies has been that the teachers have gained a better pulse of students understanding and mastery of content. Although teachers are checking for understanding, they are not utilizing the assessment data received to modify or make effective adjustments during instruction to meet the learning needs of students.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Developing

Findings

The school is beginning to ensure that curricula in all subjects is accessible to a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards.

Impact

The school is in the process of making curricula adjustments and modifications to ensure that all curricula are common core aligned, that student needs are met and that tasks cognitively engage all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The school started the implementation of ReadyGen for grades kindergarten through second grade, Expeditionary Learning in grades three through eight, GoMath in grades kindergarten through fifth grade, and CMP3 grades six through eight. Last year the teachers implemented the curriculum with minimal modifications and this year they have made adjustments to better meet the diverse learning needs of the school's student populations. The school has begun to align the curriculum to the meet the Common Core Learning Standards expectations as evidenced though the curriculum maps and modifications made.
- The school's approach to integrating the instructional shifts and college and career readiness has been grounded in the implementation of various structures such as: problem of practice, progress monitoring for Special Education students and English language learners, and whole school organizers are part of the school culture to address college and career readiness. All homerooms are named after colleges or universities, which reflect the schools that students will potentially attend. To further researching skills, every 8th grade student is provided a laptop to access Google docs and the digital learning online piece.
- Adjustments have aligned to the CCLS through: work backwards, increasing the level of higher order questioning, focus on vocabulary, and creating scaffolds through organizers. Modifications have been made in pacing and assessments based on last years feedback and focus on formative assessments. Writing was missing in the expeditionary learning curriculum, so the school embedded it through weekly writing, which was evident in curriculum maps, lesson plans, and learning targets.
- Use of Exit tickets inform teachers to make adjusts to lesson plans and/or units of study to support student learning. Also, providing progress-monitoring assessments to decide what adjustments teachers had to make as a result of areas students need to further developments.
- As the school transitions their work to align to the instructional shifts, some lesson plans emphasize higher order thinking and provide a menu of strategies or leveled resources for from which scholars utilize or choose to better understand the subject matter or content areas.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Teachers participate on structured teacher teams targeting the schools instructional focus. The staff is loosely utilizing an inquiry approach to analyze student assessment data and student work.

Impact

The work of teacher teams is beginning to result in improved pedagogy and student progress on assessments. The use of an inquiry approach is developing across teams.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet twice a month to look at student work samples, but the use of specific protocols or other structures were not evident. During an observed kindergarten teacher team meeting, participants were looking at a Sounds and Motions activity to determine next steps with students struggling with the /c/ sound. Teachers viewed Skills assessment data and differentiated groupings based on intervention levels and found that very few students needed intense interventions with the identification and reading of the long /a/ sounds spelled ai and ay. Teachers stated they look at assessments and determine if it correlates with what they have been teaching and make necessary modifications, but there was no evidence of any modified assessments created as a result from the teacher team meetings.
- During the teacher team meeting, teachers analyzed performance tasks to identify the strengths and areas of growth. Teachers analyzed student-writing samples and found that students were struggling with transferring information from the graphic organizer into a clear, organized, and coherent paragraph. Teachers discussed targeted strategies (e.g. utilizing visual models, graphic organizers, enlarging texts and rewriting mini stories in student friendly language) and shared best practices aimed at improving student writing. As a result of the meeting, teachers are starting to set writing goals with students based on areas students need to develop and they are infusing daily writing through writing journals. Teacher's ultimate goal by the end of these scaffolds is to have students write a complete paragraph. Although teachers created and discussed various strategies, it was unclear how and when these strategies would be implemented and monitored to determine the impact on student mastery.
- Teachers engage in inter-visitations that occur in 6 weeks cycles aimed at building professional collaboration. Prior to the visit, teachers have a pre-conference to discuss the areas of focus and a post-conference to discuss noticing's and next steps to improve pedagogy practices.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Instructional practices across classrooms did not consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula with challenging tasks to engage all learners. Across classrooms teachers practices are becoming aligned to the curriculum through the incorporation of questioning.

Impact

Although classes consisted of a diverse student body across classrooms, academic tasks were not scaffolded to engage all learners and, therefore, not all students' work products and discussions reflected high levels of student thinking and participation. Teachers asked a variety of questions but did not vary the degree to push student thinking, specifically for higher achieving learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms there were limited scaffolds for various subgroups that did not allow for multiple entry points. In the 8th grade Mathematics classes, all students were working on the same scientific notation do now problems and asked to explain answers to the class. Some students completed problems quickly and disengaged from the lesson. In a 4th grade class, students were asked to interpret information to make inferences. All students were provided the same task that did not support or possess a level of complexity to demonstrate higher order thinking or effective scaffolding for the middle and upper-tiered students. Students were paired together to support each other, but some students were unclear about the task, while others completed quickly.
- In a 6th grade Instructional Co-Teaching class, students were purposely grouped; however, all students were expected to complete the same task without scaffolds embedded in the work. All students were asked to make the same T-chart about work conditions of the 1800's, whereby some students did not need that level of entry. There were opportunities for student differentiated writing, yet those opportunities were not taken. Feedback provided to student was very general and did not provide actionable feedback that would improve student writing. "Please begin work on time when it is assigned so you can complete it. Focus"
- During various classroom visits, the academic needs and supports of the high achieving learners were not being met or addressed to promote and push higher order thinking.
- During instruction, teachers provided students with direct instruction and did not vary the degree of questions to push student thinking or initiate discussion. In a 6th grade Science ICT class, students were asked to recognize when and how Work is done and classify it as potential or kinetic energy. The teacher asked, "What's science definition of work? What is it causing to move? When you are doing work what kind of energy are you using?" Across various classrooms instruction is teacher centered and students are not provided the opportunity to take ownership of their learning.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

School leaders and staff have established feedback structures to communicate high expectations to both families and students.

Impact

The school's leadership and staff are starting to established a culture of high expectations that has resulted in parents consistently being aware of their child's progress towards meeting grade level standards and students' understanding what is needed to reach the next grade level. The school leader is beginning to communicate high expectations (professionalism, instruction, and Danielson Framework for Teaching) through whole staff professional development.

Supporting Evidence

- Students expressed that teachers use Classroom Cash to motivate them to do the right thing. Students stated that, "teachers push us to our capacity, and they know how to hold you to your limit. Teachers know the weakest points you have and help you with the areas you are struggling with." Although students feel teachers have high expectations for them, high level students and struggling students are not receiving instructional support to meet their individual academic needs. Four out of the seven students communicated the work they were receiving did not challenge them. Students stated, "Nothing is that challenging, but they do give us work."
- The school provides ongoing, lines of verbal and written communication (e.g. Jupiter grades, parent teacher conferences, parent workshops, emails, and notes backpacked home) to keep parents informed about their children's progress. Parents vocalized teachers are accessible and communicate with them continuously during the designated Tuesday parent contact time. Parents also communicated the school has a lot of activities that support student socio-emotional development such as: swimming program, Gold photography program, Lincoln Center young composer program, but advocated for more programs to be created to address bullying, teaching respect, and celebrating diversity and multiculturalism for the school community.
- The school leader is beginning to communicate high expectations (professionalism, instruction, and Danielson Framework for Teaching) through whole staff professional development provided to teachers as outlined in professional development plan. Teachers communicated they would benefit from having individualized professional development plans to help support their instruction in specific areas of development such as teaching writing. Also, during the teacher team "question and answer", teachers were unable to communicate the instructional focus of the school.
- Expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness are communicated through various structures established at the school. Critical thinking is addressed through the H.O.T. S. Students develop goals and utilize organizational systems (3-8 agenda books that holds them accountable for homework assignment, study skills, parent and school communicate skills) to help achieve goals. Teachers have office hours for middle school students and Lunch and Learns with the students in the cafeteria to discuss progress toward goals. In the 7th grade, the guidance counselor provides office hours to support students with High School articulation and scheduling college visits and trips.