



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

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2015-2016**

**The Angelo Patri Middle School**

**Middle School X391**

**2225 Webster Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10457**

**Principal: Graciela Abadia**

**Date of review: May 3, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Tracie Benjamin-Van Lierop**

## The School Context

The Angelo Patri Middle School is a middle school with 516 students from grade six through grade eight. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 24% Black, 72% Hispanic, and 2% White students. The student body includes 36% English Language Learners and 28% students with disabilities. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 90.2%.

## 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 <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products | <b>Additional Findings</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>Proficient</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>Focus</b>               | <b>Developing</b> |

## Area of Celebration

|                           |                              |                |                   |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Quality Indicator:</b> | <b>3.4 High Expectations</b> | <b>Rating:</b> | <b>Proficient</b> |
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### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

### Impact

Training to the staff is provided and the school has a system of accountability. Ongoing feedback is offered to families to help understand student progress toward expectations of college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- “To increase student achievement in reading and writing by focusing on student engagement with higher level instructional tasks” is the instructional focus that the staff and leadership hold itself accountable to and guides the work happening throughout the school. The instructional leads facilitate lunch and learn sessions to engage in professional learning such as strategies to make student thinking visible, jigsaw activities, review of student feedback, and action plans for next steps related to student outcomes. Intervisitations connected to all professional sessions and additional professional learning opportunities are memorialized through teacher reflections and reviewed by instructional leads and school leadership.
- Throughout the school year, there are five cycles of professional learning focused on the competencies of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and Framework for Great Schools. Cycle one focusses on collaborative inquiry; cycle two engages teachers in improving the quality of lesson plans; cycle three focusses on improved teaching strategies, methods, and techniques; cycle four explores quality of feedback; and cycle five is about reflection leading to a cohesive plan for the 2016-2017 school-year. As a result, teachers are opening their classrooms to each other more than in previous years to share best practices, specifically on student discussion and engagement.
- The school monitors parent engagement through the use of a survey in Spanish and English at the end of each parent workshop to inform upcoming sessions during the school year. For example, in a workshop titled, “Exploring Common Core – How to help your child succeed?”, some of the questions asked of families included, “What did you learn from the workshop?” and “What will you apply from what you learned at home?” Parent responses included, “I learned how to go on the website with my child so they will understand the Common Core especially in math.” Another parent replied, “I learned how Skedula can help me communicate with my child’s teachers about Common Core.”
- At the beginning of the school year, the school hosts a high school articulation meeting for eighth grade families in the morning and evening in English and Spanish. Additionally, the school engaged in student-led conferences this year, which families during the parent interview, agree is a practice they find beneficial. A mother commented, “The student-led conferences have made a tremendous difference. As a parent, I have a sense of pride because I saw my daughter’s self-confidence increase as she spoke about her learning.”

## Area of Focus

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| <b>Quality Indicator:</b> | <b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b> | <b>Rating:</b> | <b>Developing</b> |
|---------------------------|---|----------------|-------------------|

### Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations on teams that may be loosely connected to school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams analyze assessment data and student work for students they share.

### Impact

The use of an inquiry approach is developing across the teams. This work is has not yet resulted in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- During a teacher team meeting, a teacher stated, “We are now unpacking the standards in math and tracking all of our students which is informing our grouping and how we differentiate our practice.” Another teacher stated, “We’re asking ourselves, how do we infuse literacy in science classes?” “What do I do if my students have comprehension challenges? We decided to embrace the literacy focus and conducted an intervisitation with the English Language Arts (ELA) teachers to see how they were unpacking their questions.” In math and science, teachers are in earlier stages of unpacking the standards and are now embracing literacy in their teaching practices whereas this was not happening at this level last year across content areas.
- Teachers noted their collaboration with the school’s consultant is improving their practice as it relates to looking at student work during common planning meetings. A review of documents included teacher-created PowerPoint presentations focused on the collaborative inquiry process and a prioritized list of high-leverage strategies based on student data from the 2014-2015 State assessments. Additionally, teacher teams create action plans that outline steps to plan lessons that use specific strategies. The action plans include the evidence of progress or completion of each step, the resources needed, such as a laptop, or close reading chart, the target date, and the point person from the team.
- The math team is working to address the needs of their students who have declined in student achievement benchmarks according to the Renewal Benchmark Update results. In an example of a work product, the team focused on using metacognition in math as it related to the problem-solving process. Teachers presented student work at each grade level, modeled think aloud strategies, and shared research-based articles that guided their work.
- Teams across content areas and grades produced agendas for their meetings along with action plans for professional cycles completed thus far. However, the impact on improved teacher practice and student achievement progress is building school-wide as teachers continue to use and analyze data to increase their instructional capacity.

## Additional Findings

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| <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 Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

### Impact

The school makes purposeful decisions to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students across grades and subjects, and for English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school uses *Expeditionary Learning* and Teachers College writing which according to the leadership team, has had a direct impact on student performance as the school is on target to meet their student achievement benchmarks in ELA for the school year as evidenced by the New York City Department of Education Renewal Benchmark Update report for the 2014-15 school year. The school also uses myON, an on-line digital reading platform that allows students to experience personalized learning with guidance from their teachers. At the beginning of the school year, 83% of students performed at level one, 8% performed at level two, 8% performed at level three, and 1% at level four.
- The school's population consists of approximately 40% ELLS and 30% students with disabilities, which requires that teachers collaborate during common planning sessions. Tasks are scaffolded and there is an understanding that students, who may not be classified in a sub-group, have access to tasks that may require the same scaffolds. For example, an ELA unit on heroes, includes reading and writing standards, supporting targets and materials including an English as a New Language beginner template, struggling writer graphic organizer, and checklists ranging from a fourth to sixth grade level.
- All units and lesson plans reviewed included content curriculum standards, lesson objectives, big ideas, performance assessment, and target academic vocabulary including activities for students below and at grade level. There were limited examples of student learning activities for high performing students. Units that did include more rigorous tasks highlighted Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* levels that were only noted during performance assessment section of the plan and not throughout the entire lesson plan.

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| <b>Quality Indicator:</b> | <b>1.2 Pedagogy</b> | <b>Rating:</b> | <b>Developing</b> |
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts. Across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

### Impact

Although opportunities for discourse are built into lessons, teaching practices supporting belief systems are still developing so that all students are not fully engaged in high levels of thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school believes students learn best when they are doing and working with purpose at their respective independent instructional levels, and have the opportunity to make their thinking visible, especially to their peers. For example, in an English as a New Language class, ELLs prepared for the NYSESLAT, and students were seated in front and rear groups working with a partner on the lesson's objectives. "I can understand how to complete a speaking task and I can look at a checklist/listen to my partner communicate their answers, and respond to what my partner did or did not say", stated a student. Students transitioned with ease from one group to the next to share their thoughts while some students had the choice to work on laptops to answer teacher-generated questions. There was evidence of students taking on leadership roles in their different partnerships and active participation.
- During a math lesson, the focus questions asked, "How do you identify and use the median?" and "How can you compare two distributions of data using the medians?" Throughout most of the observed lesson, most students were unclear of next steps when asked by the reviewer, "Can you explain what you're working on in class?" and some of the student responses were, "I don't know." Two students, who understood the task, were paired together and became restless after completing the activity and waited for next steps from the teacher. Conversely, in another math class, students had to use their knowledge of algebra to solve for unknown angle measurements. Students had the choice to work independently and respond to the focus questions of the lessons combining the previous day's lesson with the current lesson, and when the teacher asked a group, "How do you know the angles are congruent?" the students turned to each for support in responding to the question and referencing their notes.
- During a science lesson, students were seated in groups and tasked with creating a food web illustrating relationships in an aquatic ecosystem and determining the impact of environmental changes in the ecosystem. The pacing of the lesson allowed for extended periods of time on tasks that were not necessary as the majority of the class completed their food webs and began to have conversations unrelated to the task. Students were all provided with the same graphic organizers while some did not utilize the tool to assist their learning. In another class, the learning objective focused on applying mathematical skills in word problems and diagrams involving complementary and supplementary angles. During the Do Now activity, students were tasked with creating a list of basic angles with a definition and appropriate diagram and the time spent on the activity extended beyond what the students needed. However, the teacher continued to wait until the allotted amount of time was completed although most students were finished with the task and either sat quietly and waited for next steps to be announced or talked with their peers.

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

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

### Impact

Actionable feedback is provided to students and teachers regarding student achievement and the results are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

### Supporting Evidence

- Students participate in a quarterly assessment taken online to measure preparedness for the state exam in ELA and math. The data is used to increase student mastery levels and prepare students for the New York state exams. The school uses STARS scholarship reports to measure student pass rates per marking period and myON data which captures the overall Lexile levels and student progress. Teachers are using the data from assessments to inform how they are teaching. For example, a science teacher stated, “Reciprocal teaching [an instructional activity in which students become the teacher in small group reading sessions] is being used in our classes to continue to increase Lexile levels, which have increased school-wide from 500 to 590, with the goal being 1000 by the end of the school year.”
- The school uses a progress-monitoring chart that connects to the Framework for Great Schools. The chart includes the tenets for the framework, indicators, baseline data, and target points. For example, the baseline student passing rate for mastery of ELA and math was 69%; the mid-line passing rate in January was 76.4% which is above the 75% target rate at the end of the school year. Baseline data for student mastery of writing was 8%, in February, it increased to over 20%, and the end of the year target is 30%.
- A review of the grade six ELA assessment calendar includes assessment types, title of assessments, scan sheet due dates, and when the data from the assessments will be available. Some of the formative assessments included a personal narrative writing piece, on-demand writing for an argumentative essay, discussion assessments on figurative language and word choice, and an end of unit assessment analyzing President Barack Obama’s back-to-school speech.
- Students receive feedback on their work based on a New York State two-point holistic rubric with level zero representing “no evidence/far below”, level one, “approaching”, and level two, “met standard.” The rubrics include a column for teachers to add comments on student evidence provided and next steps. Students also receive feedback via Google Docs from their teachers and one-to-one conferencing. During the student interview, a student stated, “We always receive a rubric and we get time to reflect on our work as well, especially with the performance tasks.” Students also mentioned using PupilPath to guide their work in specific content areas.