



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Norma Adams Clemons Academy**

**Public School 6**

**43 Snyder Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11226**

**Principal: Ellen Carlisle**

**Dates of review: April 20 - 24, 2007**

**Reviewer: Denis Pittman**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Norma Adams Clemons Academy, Public School 6, is a kindergarten through to grade 5 school, located in the East Flatbush section of Brooklyn. The school is housed in a well-kept modern building. There are 636 students enrolled. The ethnic composition of the school is 85% Black, 10% Hispanic and 5% Asian. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding. Ten per cent of students are English language learners and 9.5% are special education students. Attendance levels at 92% are in line with city and state targets.

This is an empowerment school and subsequently it has more flexibility to make key decisions in controlling the resources for the school community. Empowerment schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has a clear vision, is well respected by students, parents and staff and leads by example.
- The school efficiently collects data and effectively monitors the progress of students.
- Relationships between students and staff are positive, which is reflected in the positive support and help students receive.
- The principal and staff set high expectations and they know and respect students and respond well to their needs.
- Students enjoy school and take an active part in their lessons.
- Attendance is a high priority and the school monitors attendance well, contacting parents immediately when there is an absence.
- The school runs smoothly on a daily basis with clear and effective procedures which provides a safe environment for students.
- The school has good partnerships with the community and other agencies to enhance its instructional program.
- Staffing and budgetary decisions reflect the learning needs of students.
- The school provides a stimulating learning environment for students.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop teacher competencies in analyzing and using data and use this in planning the curriculum.
- Ensure that differentiated instruction is consistently applied across classrooms and within grade levels particularly for English language learners.
- Further develop the use of technology as a tool for teaching and assessment.
- Focus on formalizing strategies for monitoring lessons and evaluating outcomes in order to achieve consistency and coherence of practice within the school.
- Continue to develop strategies for improving parent involvement in the school.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school.**

The principal has effectively created a safe, stimulating learning environment for students. Day to day administration runs smoothly, and students feel they are valued and their views respected. The ongoing challenge is to achieve consistency in the school's work and to improve standards of achievement, particularly in writing. An essential element of the school's planning has been to achieve consistency and coherence in teaching throughout the school. Staff are working collaboratively to bring about this objective. In most lessons the work is geared to students' level of ability, and has a sufficient range of activities to motivate them. The school is monitoring the progress of students well through the development of regular periodic assessments. Parents are appreciative of the support their children receive and the progress they are making in lessons. Productive partnerships within the community are broadening the learning experience of students.

#### **How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria**

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.**

#### **This area of the school's work is well-developed.**

The school has a substantive range of standard tests and formal assessments which are compiled to provide data on the academic and personal development of all students. The City tests are studied and analyzed to identify trends and potential areas for improvement. Student achievement is showing an improving trend in relation to these city standards and the school has identified writing as a focus for improvement across all grades. The school also generates a significant amount of assessment data which is based upon standardized programs, for example, the early childhood literacy assessment system assessments is used well to establish baseline data for the earlier grades. These diagnostic tests effectively utilize an item analysis to identify student competencies in mathematics and literacy. The formative assessment of students compiled by teachers is detailed and comprehensive. Each teacher has assessment information of the basic skills of individual students which constitute a running record of achievement. The school has established a coherence and consistency to its assessment data by requiring teachers to compile an assessment binder and produce a portfolio of students' work. The school is aware of trends in the data of groups of children related to ethnicity but no detailed analysis is compiled. The diagnostic assessments for students who are English language learners and special education students are detailed and comprehensive. Although the former group is relatively small, the analysis of their needs provides informative supplementary evidence for teachers. The Empowerment School Intensive program provides an effective, ongoing qualitative assessment of English language learners from grades 3 to 5.

A particular focus of the school is to determine appropriate support for level 1 students in greatest need of improvement and those students who have had successive holdovers. The school effectively collects and analyses the data compiled for these students to ensure that the appropriate intervention strategies are geared to their requirements. The staff are also provided with a comprehensive breakdown of strategies for supporting these

students in the classroom. Overall the analysis of its own data is robust and rigorous. The comparison of performance with similar schools does not have such a strong focus for the school as the nature of the data related to these schools is not clearly delineated. However, the school has received State recognition for its work in the closing the achievement gap. Data in relation to past performance is analyzed well to identify trends of improvement. The compilation of the student portfolio is enabling the progress of students within the school to be evaluated more systematically on a year to year basis.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The administration and senior leadership team are involved in a scheduled collaborative process to establish medium and long term goals such as those identified in the Comprehensive Education Plan. An emphasis has been given to the development of writing genres through all grade levels. This work has been supported by the literacy coach who has modelled good practice. Some interim evaluations, resulting from ‘soft’ data collected through walk-throughs, have highlighted areas for development such as story structure in grade 3, responses to literature in grade 4 and information-processing in grade 5. The school is encouraging a greater commitment to writing tasks in content areas such as science and mathematics. The impact of this work is seen in improved writing assessments at the end of the respective marking periods.

The school is effectively using its assessment data to track the achievement of students and evaluate the impact of its collaborative team teaching program. This program, which operates in the earlier grades, is a reflection of the school's commitment towards an inclusive education where general education and special education students are taught together. The information collected in individual classrooms is now being organized in a more coherent way so as to guide curriculum decisions within grade levels or to support English language learners and special education students. This is particularly relevant to those who are bilingual but who are also special education students.

The principal has established clear messages about the high expectations she has in relation to improving achievement and promoting personal responsibility. These messages are reinforced in assemblies and documentation which goes out to students and parents. At the classroom level there are clear expectations about the compilation of student portfolios which are used to document whether students are meeting grade level requirements. In specific terms the creation of ‘levelled libraries’ has conveyed the expectation to students of a continuous improvement in their reading levels. The evidence of this improvement is shown in the ability of students to pick appropriate books. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's education but the response is very variable.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The curriculum is appropriately aligned with mandated requirements. The school has made a commitment to balanced literacy and balanced mathematics approaches for its delivery of the curriculum. The units of a prescriptive mathematics curriculum are proficiently assessed to show the individual progress of students. In the literacy context, staff have more opportunities to make specific content contributions to the curriculum map. This work has provided a more effective structure for the assessment of literacy. Staff compile a portfolio of evidence to record examples of writing skills such as editing and drafting. The development of the curriculum is improving its capacity to provide more meaningful data about student progress. For example, the Empowerment School Intensive data is being used to develop curriculum and inform instruction for English language learners. The principal has clearly delineated the responsibilities of staff in relation to improving teaching and student outcomes. The introduction of an assessment binder has provided a structure for better recording of information. The school recognizes the need to rationalize elements of this data collection to ensure that it can be used consistently as a basis for improving instruction, particularly for providing activities differentiated to the ability level of students.

The expenditure on the Empowerment School Intensive is illustrative of the way the budget is being effectively used to address student needs as indicated by the data. The school prioritizes its staffing according to its data. The emphasis given to improving English language arts and mathematics achievement is reflected in the hiring of coaches in these content areas. The hiring of an art teacher was in response to the need to improve academic enrichment courses. The rescheduling of the support programs to accommodate intervention strategies is an indication of how the school responds to the specific needs of its students. Where lessons provide interactive opportunities and a range of learning activities then students are more actively involved in their lessons. In these contexts students use checklists and rubrics to scaffold completion of unit projects to provide evidence of self managed learning. Some lessons are very teacher directed and as a result there is less engagement by students. Students say that they feel safe in the school and know who to go to if they have a problem. The school identifies attendance as an important issue for students. Parents are encouraged to make this a high priority.

**Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The administration has clear criteria for its selection of staff. The expectations of being able to work collaboratively and be open to professional development are seen in practice. The staff have been given effective guidance as to how to collect evidence in relation to periodic assessments and how to assess writing tasks through the development of rubrics. However, the ability to use data to inform instructional programs is variable. For example, the school has identified a lack of understanding of how to interpret the Grow report and need for greater awareness of how to use data to inform strategies to meet the needs of level 1 students. This need is reflected as an aspect of professional development planning. Staff have received relevant training in the use of periodic assessment data, Smart Boards and the use of technology. Although, the use of technology is not strongly evident in classroom activities. The practice of using informal learning walks is a strong aspect of the accountability strategy and the procedure for improving instruction. However there is no formal protocol for lesson observations which impacts the ability to achieve consistency within the administrative team. Staff do share good practice by visiting each other's classrooms but this tends to be an informal arrangement rather than a structured

approach. The collaboration amongst staff is seen in the effective planning which takes place in grade and content area meetings. This support for each other is reflected in the sharing of English as a second language strategies to promote the effectiveness of classroom instruction where there are bilingual students. The principal is respected by staff, parents, and students. She has been able to build upon good practices within the school and change ineffective procedures. She has been responsible for the greater emphasis given to utilizing data better to inform instructional planning. However she recognizes that this is still a 'work in progress'. The school runs smoothly.

The school is committed to developing its community relationships. A number of effective partnerships have been established including Project Arts Foundation which enriches the creative and aesthetic experience of students with courses which are run during and after school. The school is also conscious of its responsibility to its local community. Through the Neighbourhood Literacy Campaign it provides workshops for parents designed to teach them strategies for helping their children.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The Comprehensive Education Plan provides an appropriate focus and context for the school's work. It is compiled as part of a collaborative process and contains relevant benchmarks to evaluate performance relative to the school's goals. The plan contains some redundant and out of date information which undermines its effectiveness as a document which can be continually referred to.

The principal and assistant principals effectively analyze formative assessment information and identify areas of underachievement in any classes or specific group of students. Administration and teachers work collaboratively together to analyze class performance. Report cards are reviewed after each marking period which leads to an analysis of a student's program and actions for intervention. For example, analyzing the performance of level 1 and level 2 students to determine the level of academic intervention services support or determining the decertification of special education students.

A specific objective, as reflected in the periodic assessment practice, was to establish a consistent basis for collecting and interpreting data within individual classes. Although this is still a work in progress, a more cohesive body of information, has been established to support strategic decision-making. The comparison of student progress is taking place within individual classrooms but that information is not consistently completed to get a picture of comparative patterns within and between classes. Some of the formative assessments of students are incomplete and as such are an inconsistent measure of progress. There is some evidence of the collection of diagnostic assessment impacting upon practice. For example, in the promotion of literacy objectives the development of common rubrics is achieving consistency in grading of students' work. Senior leaders are proficient in their evaluation of the school's work within their areas of responsibility. A particular strength is their ability to respond to immediate issues, showing adaptability and flexibility in response to students need.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Norma Adams Clemons Academy (PS 6)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.</b>	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>			X
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>			X
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>			X
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			X

\* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

<b>Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.		X	
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>		X	
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.		X	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.		X	
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>		X	
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X	