



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Samuel C. Barnes School**

**Public School 054**

**195 Sanford Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11205**

**Principal: Lorna Khan**

**Dates of review: March 12 – 13, 2007**

**Reviewer: Iris Baum**

# Content of the report

## **Part 1: The School Context**

Information about the school

## **Part 2: Overview**

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

## **Part 3: Main Findings**

Overall evaluation

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

## **Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Samuel C. Barnes School, Public School 54, is located in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. The school serves many second, third and fourth generation students and several staff members live within the community, factors that contribute to making the school a viable part of the community. The school has a comparable proportion of fully licensed and permanently assigned teachers as to other schools, with a higher percentage of teachers working in this school for more than two years than elsewhere. The principal took over the leadership of the building for the school year 2005-2006.

There are currently 385 students enrolled in grades pre-kindergarten through 5. Of these, 9% are English language learners and 13.5% are special education students. The ethnic composition of the school is 1% White, 65% Black, and 32% Hispanic. There are fewer recent immigrants than in other City schools. The school is in receipt of Title I funding with 83% of the student population eligible, which is lower than similar and City-wide schools.

Attendance for the current school year is better than 90% and is on par with similar and City-wide rates.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is highly visible around the school and is respected by students, parents, faculty, and staff.
- A team approach assesses students most in need of guidance and academic interventions.
- Students feel respected and supported and are well-known by the principal, assistant principal, and faculty.
- The school enjoys a variety of educational and social partnerships with outside institutions and agencies, which provide enrichments and an improving learning climate.
- Parent representatives are supportive of the school and are appreciative of the recent improvements made.
- The staff works hard to create well-organized and attractively maintained classrooms.
- The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.
- The students attend well to their teachers and want to do well.
- The principal is well-supported by her cabinet and instructional team.
- The administration and faculty are engaged in developing a community of learners, as well as educational leaders.

### What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the capacity of teachers to use data for well differentiated instruction that meets the needs of all students.
- Continue to strengthen the systematic collection and use of data in order to be more responsive to student needs.
- Extend the practice of curriculum planning to better scaffold teaching and learning.
- Strengthen parent outreach activities to build upon existing programs.
- Improve strategic planning to enable measurable and effective monitoring and evaluation.
- Improve the tracking and monitoring of specific sub-groups to ensure teaching and learning is effective for all students.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

**This is an undeveloped school with proficient features.**

The Samuel Barnes School is making rapid improvement and is well on its way to being a proficient school. The principal continuously seeks ways to improve instruction and to realize her vision that "... each of us is a learner, as well as an educational leader." She is working with staff to gain a clearer understanding of how this school compares to similar and City schools and how data drives instruction for all students. However, the needs of ethnic groups are not fully compared through the use of hard and soft data nor are measurable performance and progress in content areas, other than literacy and mathematics a focus. There is a growing culture of self-evaluation and use of data, which is strengthening the instructional foundation and educational outcomes for children. Nevertheless, the analysis of data is not yet consistently used to guide curriculum planning and decision making in science and social studies, as well as by class, grade, gender, and ethnic groups.

Students report that they are happy, feel known, and are treated respectfully. Parent representatives report that home/school communications are more frequent, that the faculty's student accountability expectations have increased, and the school tone has improved.

Continued connections to educational organizations provide professional development opportunities and improved reading and writing curricula for staff. There is an emphasis on developing pedagogical skills, strategies, and content knowledge in literacy and mathematics.

### 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 undeveloped.**

The school gathers data from formal assessments to help it assess the annual progress made by students. In addition, the school tracks student progress to see whether children are at risk of not meeting grade level performance standards and are in need of interventions and other support services. This is well illustrated in the way that the academic intervention team uses information to support their discussions of students in need of additional support. The range of data collected is varied and focuses on developing skills in mathematics, and on students' understanding in reading comprehension, and writing across different genres. The school is now analyzing how well different grades and classes perform over time. Special education and English language learners are expected to meet identified benchmarks and are to meet the same criteria set for all students. However, ethnic groups are not a focus, nor are their needs specifically identified via hard and soft data. In addition, the measurable performance and progress in content areas, other than literacy and mathematics, are not a focus except for science in

the testing grade. Even though there is an awareness of how gender differences impact on instructional outcomes, this data is not shared or analyzed among staff.

Running records, reading assessment charts, and interim assessments are regularly used by grade teams as a guide to planning small group instruction. The principal, assistant principal, and other key staff members use hard and soft data to collegially plan curriculum and to assess its impact on student outcomes. However, not all teachers use data to identify the needs of all sub-categories of students. Consequently, there is still some way to go in refining and sharpening the practice as some teachers are not clear on how to consistently schedule, analyze, and integrate the outcomes of running records, conference notes, and other interim assessment data so that instructional planning is timely and appropriate.

**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 school is collaboratively developing instructional goals for itself; however, measurable objectives and goals have not been well established. In addition, data has not been used to establish goals for immediate and long-range improvement in the lower grades. The principal and assistant principal work closely with school teams to create, develop, and implement improvement plans. In writing, students are encouraged to celebrate their published work. However, classrooms lack the use of teacher/student generated rubrics from which pupils can reference benchmarks, evaluate their work, and hold themselves accountable in each content area.

The administration works closely with the academic intervention team to identify and implement instructional strategies and to set goals for special education students and those at risk of not reaching grade standards. Team members regularly liaise with staff and share information for those students who need additional academic, social, and behavioral supports; consequently instructional programs and required services are recommended. However, the team is aware that they should extend practice to collaboratively review data, examine work samples for progress, or assess conference and running record logs to more effectively establish plans of assistance and long and short-term expectations for each student. Special education students receive instruction in self-contained and collaborative team teaching classrooms. The instructional practices, classroom materials, and organization are on par with the school’s general education programs.

The principal keeps parents informed and now provides letters in translation, as well as translators at parent meetings; consequently parent representatives report that native speakers feel better informed on their children’s progress. In addition, parent representatives report that home/school communications are more frequent, that the faculty’s student accountability expectations have increased, and the school tone has improved. Teachers and parents keep in touch through telephone calls, progress reports, and conferences. Parent workshops are targeted at improving the parents’ own skills. Parental involvement within the school is beginning to show incremental growth and increased numbers are attending events due to the school’s outreach activities.

**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 school curriculum follows units of study or mandated content-area curricula. The administration is working towards extending teachers’ understanding of how data supports curriculum planning, goal setting, and modifications to instruction. Teachers are accountable to plan curricula and to assess its impact on student performance, progress, and achievement and the principal and assistant principal meet triannually with staff to identify student needs. Teachers report that they have opportunities to be creative as they work with units of study in literacy; therefore there is a growing understanding of balanced literacy practices. Faculty conferences and grade department meetings focus on instructional practices in literacy, for example in guided reading and hands-on activities in mathematics, however, such practices in other content areas are not fully developed. Assessment binders to record students’ periodic reading and writing outcomes have been established, although there is variation across the grades in how teacher observations are recorded and in collection intervals.

Budget, staffing, and scheduling decisions are based on identified needs. For example, the principal has prioritized the hiring of teachers who demonstrate creativity, innovation, content training, and knowledge of pupils’ developmental needs. Per session monies have been dedicated to begin the work of ‘making science come alive’ in the upper grades.

Classes are small and students are well known, therefore student engagement is evident in all grades. Attendance and timely arrival to school are identified school priorities. The guidance counselor and attendance team meet to establish school attendance and lateness policies and interventions like telephone calls and letters home, as well as attendance incentive programs such as student-of-the month awards. Teachers recognize a need for increased guidance counseling to provide improved academic, social, and behavioral supports for students’ complex needs. Students reported that the teachers are sensitive to their needs; especially prior to standardized tests. In addition, students reported that teachers smile and compliment them when they perform well and write positive comments in their notebooks. Consequently, students feel respected, safe, and happy in school.

**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 school has a comparable proportion of fully licensed and permanently assigned teachers as to other schools. The principal hires teachers who are knowledgeable and have special talents and interests. Committee members are selected based on their ability to use data and to develop instructional, behavioral, and academic plans. Professional development is given a high priority. The work of consultants, facilitators, and coaches are based on the needs identified through direct classroom observations, teachers’ classroom assessments, and data. A schedule of professional development workshops, opportunities for classroom intervisitations, modeling of best practices, and common planning time are provided. School leaders periodically administer surveys that assess staff’s professional interests in order to be responsive to staff needs and foster student achievement. Learning walks are used to assess teachers’ strengths and areas for development in

instruction. Written feedback is given and suggestions of where to go to see good practice, within the school community, are encouraged. The principal frequently makes classroom visits to observe the quality of instruction. The administrators are respected by the faculty and are available to them. The school is well organized and routines are clearly established.

The principal has a clear vision for the continued development of the school and has established instructional teams to lead the work. However, leaders and faculty do not yet consistently perform candid self evaluations as a tool to drive improvements and to move the school forward.

Partnerships with outside organizations and universities are improving upon the wealth and breadth of content area instruction in literacy and mathematics. After-school and community based organizational programs provide enrichment opportunities, tutorial support, and physical activity for students. For example, a student reported her excitement at being selected by her teacher for an after-school journalism class based on her writing ability. However, the school acknowledges the need to strengthen its established enrichment programs during the school day.

**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 undeveloped.**

The principal's vision for the school is being shared and reviewed at faculty and grade conferences, however, not all staff members make the best use of data to establish ways to measure and monitor student success and areas of required improvement. The Comprehensive Educational Plan is constructed through the collaborative efforts of representatives from each school constituency. The committee's work demonstrates that data was used to establish priorities for improvement; however, the school's action plans lack interim targets and measurable objectives, which identify timelines towards success.

The use of assessment data to target the right intervention to a particular student is beginning to take hold. The school has started to longitudinally graph the whole school performance outcomes, making grade-by-grade analysis and individual child assessment available to be used for planning and interventions.

Not all teachers have mastered benchmark assessment tools; therefore, the immediate revision of plans is not fully developed. In addition, the revision of instructional plans and curricula do not yet wholly reflect deeper and more complex forms as more student information is gathered. Although the school meets its annual yearly progress targets and the administration has put forward structures that are strengthening goal setting and improving teaching practices, it recognizes that progress is needed to improve the tracking and monitoring of ethnic and gender sub-groups to ensure teaching and learning is effective for all students. Furthermore, the school's self evaluation acknowledges that improvements need to be made in looking at patterns across grades, continuing the establishment of individual goals for teachers and students, and continuing the monitoring of students' progress over time in a consistent manner.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Samuel C. Barnes School (PS 54)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>	<b>X</b>		

<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>	<b>X</b>		

\* 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>		<b>X</b>	

<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		