



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Clara Barton High School for Health Professions  
High School 600**

**901 Classon Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11225**

**Principal: Jacqueline Foster**

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**Reviewer: Roger Brown**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The school opened in 1939. Currently the school has 2,483 students in grades 9 through 12, although the building's capacity is only 1800. It provides a wide range of courses including a number designed specifically to train students for careers in the health professions. Most students are Black (84%), a smaller proportion is from Hispanic backgrounds (13%), and the remaining 3% are from a range of different cultures. Just over 4% are English language learners, while over 7% are special education students. The proportion that is Title 1 eligible (64%) is higher than that normally found in New York City schools. Attendance at 83% is lower than that normally found in New York City schools, but the problems with attendance are mainly concentrated in those groups of students who have been held over a grade or who have specific learning difficulties. Most students have good levels of attendance.

The overcrowding in the school is a significant barrier to learning. Nevertheless, a higher proportion than is normal for New York City schools graduates from the school (75%) and most students go on to college and careers in medicine.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The majority of students succeed on the courses they take and achieve well.
- Programs for the high attaining students and the professional courses run by the school breed an atmosphere of success and equip the students well for life after school.
- Teachers are well informed about teaching and learning: they are thoughtful about their classroom practice and willing to experiment and change what they do to improve the impact of their teaching.
- The leadership of the school is creative in difficult circumstances: people are prepared to be reflective, think creatively and inventively, be flexible and collaborate effectively.
- The school works hard to expand the experience of the students, and those students who make use of the opportunities benefit greatly by the opportunities they are presented with.
- The teachers' center at the school is a valuable resource supporting teaching and learning very effectively.

### What the school needs to improve

- The inflexibility of the building with too many students and no space to accommodate change is a severe limitation on the school's creativity and its ability to meet the challenging demands of its students.
- Assessment data is not well enough used to differentiate instruction.
- The present system for recording and enforcing attendance, although carried through rigorously, is not sophisticated enough to cope with the needs of the school.
- The school maintains good levels of data on the performance and achievements of its students, but this is not shared sufficiently between teachers and departments.
- Most of the special education students do not make progress in line with that of other students and require a more flexible approach to achieve greater success.
- The professional development of teachers is strong, but developing collaborative training networks where teachers can support, mentor and develop each other could improve this even further.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

**This is a proficient school.**

The school successfully educates the majority of students it serves despite the difficulties of overcrowding. The daily schedule revolves around the need to find space to fit in far more students than it can properly accommodate. The complexity of this scheduling makes it very hard to develop good levels of attendance. The majority of students attend well, make a good commitment to their courses and succeed, but for a significant minority who are struggling to gain credits it is too easy to exploit the situation and opt out. English language learners achieve well. The school has developed a number of courses for these students which give very effective support to their acquisition of English and as a result they now make good progress.

The school has developed a good reputation for the practical courses it runs in medicine and business studies. Both students and parents report that they value the unique nature of the curriculum on offer. The emphasis on medicine does however tend to skew the profile of the students who choose the school; over 80% are girls, which makes it hard for the school to offer a balance of extra-curricular activities as there are too few boys for some sports.

The school spends significant resources, time and energy ensuring that the building is safe and secure. Its success in reducing the level of disruption is a significant factor in its success.

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

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

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

The school knows its students and their performance well. The results from the annual Regents examinations are examined to assess where more emphasis needs to be placed to improve the outcomes in following years. The impact of individual teachers' work is examined and where more support or development is needed it is put in place. The school follows the progress of the health careers majors through to college and on to workplace success, feeding the information back to modify and adjust courses where necessary.

Individual students' performance is recorded, tracked and analyzed regularly with every student issued with a report card six times a year. However, the analysis of the students' results does not yet result in sufficiently differentiated instruction. The school is well aware that a significant problem it has to overcome is low levels of literacy amongst many ninth graders. It has implemented whole school staff training in literacy issues, but there is only limited inter-departmental cooperation in producing coherent programs for individual students. Individual teachers tend to be only incidentally aware of how individual students perform in the different subjects they take. This has less impact with the more able students than it does with those who are struggling. The more able students already

possess a range of skills and knowledge which allows them to make good progress while the less able struggle because of the gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Consequently, students with recognized special education needs do not make as good progress as the more able. This results in these students being more likely to drop out, or have poor levels of attendance. The programs for these students are not meeting their needs; this is an issue the school recognizes. To try and begin to overcome this it is working in partnership with two neighboring high schools to run specific extended day sessions. These will include a 'credit recovery academy', 'credit accumulation classes' and 'small group instruction'.

**Quality Statement 2: 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.**

Individual subject departments have a secure understanding of their work and its impact. Teaching in all departments is monitored regularly and the results of assessments are analyzed and used in planning the next steps in learning, as well as in planning for future developments in the courses. There are good systems to ensure that there is consistency of practice. For instance, in the mathematics department, in addition to regular lesson observations, the senior teachers model lessons for new colleagues in the aspects that they will be teaching. The professional development of all teachers is greatly enhanced by the work of the teachers' center. This provides resources, guidance, proformas for planning and facilities for teachers to research and prepare. There are good levels of professional debate in the school about how to teach and it is clear that practice in the school is changing and developing.

In order to try to address the issue of the past under-performance of significant numbers of ninth graders the school has modified its schedule for them this year. They are able to concentrate upon a narrow block of subjects for a longer period of time before moving on to the next subjects. The school hopes that by doing this it will raise significantly the level of students' performance and heighten the expectations of what the students believe they can achieve.

Students are well informed about their progress and get good guidance on the options that are open to them. Those who need extra support are given good opportunities to access extra help, but, significantly, relatively few special education students choose to do so. They show a reluctance to acknowledge their difficulties and dislike the very structured methods that the school has to use. Everybody at the school, staff, students and some parents, all agree that more parental involvement is highly desirable, but despite the best efforts of the school this has not materialized. Everyone also recognizes that those students with most need for support were least likely to have parents who were likely to get involved.

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

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

The school's program of courses for the more able students is very effective. The highest performing students enter the Gateway Program for college. Students wishing to follow a career-based or technical course have a choice of six courses relating to medicine and one for business. Many students are very positive about what is on offer. The school and the teachers are careful to make the courses relevant and engaging. The good links with business greatly strengthen the school's work.

The building has the capacity to house 1800 students, but the current number is over 27% above capacity. This causes many difficulties for the school and is a significant barrier to students' learning. The situation is exacerbated by an over-running program of refurbishment to some of the science laboratories and the temporary loss of its auditorium to house the high school placement program. The school has no free space at any time during the day. Individual students and staff begin and end the day at different times; lunch periods begin at 9:30 am and run all the way through until after 2:00 pm just to help accommodate the overcrowding. This makes it hard to provide programs of extra-curricular activities and makes the scheduling of courses very complex. Much effort goes into making sure the students make the necessary progress and while this works well for the majority of students it is less effective with those students who have special education needs.

Student attendance at 83% is below the City average and the school's own target of 90%. This is despite a great deal of effort by all staff. The school's systems for registering attendance do not function coherently. One system registers students when they enter the building, but then it is easy for students to exploit the fact that it is not possible to easily or quickly check out where and when they are meant to be in the school. The overcrowding and the subsequent complex scheduling exacerbate this problem.

**Quality Statement 4: 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's principal has a detailed knowledge of the school and is well supported by the school cabinet and the teachers. This is not a school that is standing still. New ideas, new courses, new techniques are welcome and implemented thoughtfully and carefully. There is a great deal of reflection and consideration given to what works well and what needs to be improved. The strong emphasis on the safety of students and staff is reflected in the generally calm and productive atmosphere that prevails throughout the day. The school runs smoothly, despite the difficulties it has to overcome in terms of too many students, no free space, restricted hallways and staircases and a complex daily schedule.

The principal knows her staff well. New teachers are observed regularly, encouraged to reflect on their practice and are mentored throughout their first year. The teachers' center provides very good support to all teachers. Individual teachers can get specific support and guidance while also taking part in the school's general professional development program. This is carefully aligned with the school's priorities for improvement. The professional development of teachers is strong, but collaborative training networks where teachers can support, mentor and develop each other are not yet sufficiently well developed.

**Quality Statement 5: 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 school has established successful procedures and practices to monitor and evaluate the work and progress of its students. These work well when students attend regularly and are committed to their own success. They are less successful with the reluctant students. The school meets its adequate yearly progress target but recognizes that it needs to do more with the disadvantaged students it cares for. The progress of students who are English language learners has improved markedly over the past two years thanks to a program of extended day activities, community partnerships and focused teaching. Because of the analysis of performance data, the school now is ready to begin to develop a similar program in partnership with two neighboring high schools for the special education students. These programs are going to be held at Clara Barton, despite the difficulties in allocating space to them. The school is strongly committed to ensuring its students have no excuses for not attending and is determined to address the issues of underperformance.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: CLARA BARTON HIGH SCHOOL</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>	Ø	✓	+
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>	Ø	✓	+
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>	Ø	✓	+
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	