



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Jose Celso Barbosa School**

**Public School 206  
508 East 120 Street  
New York  
NY 10035**

**Principal: Myrna Rodriguez**

**Dates of review: January 30 – 31, 2007**

**Reviewer: Alvin Jeffs**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

This is a school of 296 students from grade 3 through 5 located in East Harlem. Nearly 90% of the students have Title 1 eligibility. Twenty-two percent of students are identified as having special educational needs and approximately 30% have individualized educational plans. This is higher than other similar and City schools. Another 18.5% are English language learners. Over two thirds of students are of Hispanic origin with Black students making up 31%.

An attendance rate of 92.6% is slightly above that of similar schools and close to the City average.

The school has gone through an unsettled period, with a significant number of staff leaving as the result of the loss of grade 6 students.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The new principal has a strong commitment to raising the achievement of all students.
- Parents rightly see the school as a welcoming place where their children can work and play in safety and with enjoyment.
- All members of the school cabinet use data regularly and well to identify students, and groups of students, whose progress is not satisfactory.
- All staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the school and its students.
- Instruction is characterized by clear learning objectives, varied activities and strong student involvement.
- Academic intervention service staff have high levels of expertise and use data well to develop student programs.
- Student engagement in class and their behavior around the school is good.
- The professional development program is excellent and links well to the needs of the school and its students.
- The curriculum is enriched by a good range of popular high quality activities, such as music, gym and health education.

### What the school needs to improve

- Extend the effective use of data by all teachers to improve their planning for individual students.
- Develop further strategies to involve students in setting targets for their own improvement.
- Increase opportunities for joint planning between teachers based on their interpretation of class-based data.
- Find ways to increase parental involvement, through the very good communication and workshop formats the school has developed.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

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

The present principal took over at the school a year ago, coming from the tandem school and therefore knowing the students and their families well. This was an unsettled period with grade 6 classes being removed from the school. The consequent loss of staff contributed to a temporary lowering of morale. In addition, a new school moved into the top floor vacated by grade 6.

Despite this challenge, the principal was able to gain senior staff support for a number of initiatives which required a significant re-assessment of the school's vision and practices. These included developing a sharper focus on the use of data to assist with planning student programs and classroom groupings and the setting up of a collaborative team teaching class. These and other initiatives placed considerable demands on all staff. However, their commitment to the school and its students remains very high, and there is a feeling of staff involvement in developing a school that cares about the intellectual, social and physical progress of its 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 proficient.**

The school uses an adequate range of assessment tools to gain a detailed picture of each student's performance in English language arts and mathematics. These include the State test results, on-line assessments, reading tests and a collection of diagnostic instruments, administered and collated at regular times during the year. These measures are also used proficiently for comparison of students' performance from year to year and with other schools.

The standards-based tests have provided the basis for detailed analyses by the principal and senior staff which has shown that the levels and progress of some special education students gives cause for concern. The cabinet has also been able to see how well general education students are learning which has indicated that there is consistent progress in this group. Much data is collected and analyzed very effectively by academic intervention support staff, providing the basis of case study meetings of a very high standard. This team is very experienced in the use of diagnostic reading assessments and has introduced classroom staff to miscue analysis techniques that are beginning to provide a clearer picture of individual students' strengths and weaknesses in reading. These are then used effectively to inform teachers' planning and instruction.

Detailed analysis of mathematics data has been effectively undertaken by the assistant principal and mathematics coach. This has ensured that the school has a detailed picture of the skill levels of its students. Senior staff are able to look at patterns of progress for

sub-groups within the school. This allows them to monitor the appropriateness of materials and programs for gender and ethnic sub-groups as well as those students with individualized education plans. Thanks to this work, specialist staff and senior managers can see the trends in student performance and areas where programs or approaches should be introduced or modified.

**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.**

Classroom staff use assessment data and samples of student work to consider whether modifications should be made in goals and instruction for groups and individuals within their classes. This approach is developing and is more evident in some classes than others. Some teachers are using data from the Princeton Review program to plan individual and small group modifications to work within class. The sharing of data with students and parents is still at an early stage, but there is a strong commitment to involve both more regularly. The success in collecting, analyzing and using data is best in the support for special education students. Teachers develop and follow detailed individual student programs with clear targets and deadlines. The review of development for individual students takes place on a regular basis and new targets are set. Reviews of student progress towards these goals trigger the question, “If this is not working what should we do?” To maintain a culture of high expectation the new principal asks staff, “How do you know if it is working?” Teachers engage well with this question, improving the way they devise and set appropriate goals for individual students. This practice is developing well but does not yet consistently involve the students themselves in setting their own goals.

The school has a very collaborative culture and teachers share ideas freely. There is some discussion about the evaluation of data within grade teams and between teachers. This is not yet focused to the point where there is a consistency of its use in planning across classrooms. The introduction of the collaborative teaching team has set up a model where detailed discussion and program design are natural and essential parts of the week. This practice is creating effective development in goals setting and monitoring of student progress. The school strives to involve parents with a very good program of workshops, particularly in mathematics. Although parents attest to the success of the school’s ‘open door’ policy and its regular communications this area remains undeveloped due to its limited success in engaging significant numbers of participants.

**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 principal and senior staff have designed a stimulating curriculum that creates the necessary data for students’ progress to be evaluated and engages them well. The extended day and after-school programs have been very successful in ensuring that all students receive extra instruction in English language arts and mathematics. The music, gym and dance curricula have also been developed well. The school has been particularly

successful at involving the community and the 'Healthy Schools Healthy Families' is a good result of this.

As a direct result of the data gathered, the school has developed a range of different classes to support bilingual and special educational students. The collaborative team teaching class has been a great success and is modeling effective ways of differentiating instruction combined with effective recording and assessing of progress. All teachers are now using clear learning objectives and students understand what they will be learning in each lesson. Classrooms are stimulating environments for students with good resources and displays. All of these factors are appreciated by students.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are used proficiently to align instruction with the needs of students identified by analysis of data.

The respect shown to students and the resulting good relationships are a well-developed feature of the school. This is helpful for those students who lack confidence and others who may find the rules and procedures of the classroom more difficult. Students and their parents indicate that they feel respected and well cared for by all of the adults in the school. This is one reason why attendance is good. Another contributory factor is the work carried out by the dean and other staff, who ensure that absences are followed up promptly.

**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 well-developed.**

The principal has had a significant impact on the school. She has successfully introduced a new philosophy and targeted funds at specific developments, such as the computer suite and the bulletin boards. These have made a real difference to the learning environment. She has also maintained the existing links with support services, ensuring effective support for special educational students. The school runs smoothly as a caring and welcoming place. A parent summed up the principal's impact by saying, "She is the reason my child is here."

The principal is well assisted by senior staff who demonstrate a uniformly high expectation of students in terms of both academic progress and behaviour. They have all developed a strong involvement in data collection and analysis to contribute to the further improvement of the school. This leads to effective teamwork in which the evaluation of results is used to review plans and make adaptations as needed. Senior staff model this aspect of the school's work very well. Further opportunities for class teachers to use this data in joint meetings would extend their capacity even further to evaluate each other and use what is learned to drive improvement.

The professional development program is outstanding. It is closely linked to the needs of students and is seen by staff as a valuable enhancement of their own skills. Although many teachers attend external courses, much of this work takes place in school with increasing use of good practice being modelled by the coaches and opportunities to observe colleagues' good teaching. Teachers describe their professional development opportunities as "wonderful" and "very exciting".

This excellent professional support is enhanced by very detailed and high quality classroom observations carried out by the principal and assistant principal. They are able to report back to individual teachers in the context of current school priorities, such as the use of data to identify specific student needs and the potential for group work within the classroom.

**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.**

This school has a staff who subscribe to a common vision rooted in a wish to see all students flourish. The culture of goal-setting drives everything that is planned and provided. It is consistently designed to move students from where they are to where they, and their parents, would like them to be.

There is a detailed and effective Comprehensive Education Plan which comes into being through detailed consultation with all staff. Teachers feel very involved and know that their ideas and modifications will be taken seriously and acted upon. The 'open door' policy of the principal extends to staff as well as parents, creating good collaborative decision making and evaluation of the progress towards goals. There is coherence in the emphasis on planning in detail, using readily available data, against clear deadlines and reviewing to see if the outcomes are as expected.

It is too early to quantify the impact of this on students or school, but the data available halfway through this academic year suggests that there is already positive movement in terms of student progress. Staff, students and parents attest to a developing school environment that really does provide for the whole child successfully.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Jose Celso Barbara School (PS 206)</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	