



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Clara Barton School

Community School 50

**1550 Vyse Avenue
Bronx
NY 10460**

Principal : Francisco Cruz

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Reviewer : Jan Lomas

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Community School 50, Clara Barton School, is currently a pre-kindergarten through grade 5 school, having phased out grade 6 in the school year 2005-6. It has emerged from a period of turmoil and challenge and is now a more stable community with a clear focus on the achievement of all students.

It has 625 students who come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, although the largest proportion (65.2%) is from Hispanic families. In addition, 33.1% are Black and the remainder from Asian, White and other backgrounds. Nearly 16% are English language learners and the number of students newly arrived in the country, often from the Dominican Republic, is rising although it remains below that of similar and City schools. The proportion of students who are known to be Title 1 eligible is 96% and is above that of similar schools and significantly above that of City schools.

Attendance has historically been below that of similar and City schools but this is now beginning to improve.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Through clear and effective leadership, the principal has enabled the school to stabilize and to focus upon priorities for student achievement.
- The principal has a strong and strategic grasp of the use of data to affect school improvement and is now leading others to develop these skills.
- Plans, goals and strategies are well focused to better meet the needs of all groups of students.
- The school is continuing to work hard towards developing and maintaining a calm, orderly environment conducive to learning and raising self-esteem.
- Professional development is planned effectively around school priorities and individual needs.
- Students speak positively about the changes and improvements the school has made.
- Staff work collaboratively to support development.
- The school works very hard to develop partnership with parents and is capitalizing upon their growing contribution to school life.
- Teachers are working well to develop a more vibrant and inviting learning environment.
- The rate of attendance is rising as a result of the effective strategies being used to ensure students come to school.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the ability of staff to use data to plan, set goals and effectively revise strategies for teaching and intervention.
- Further develop systematic and rigorous structures to collect and monitor data at all levels, for all groups and over time.
- Build on the valuable progress made with mapping the curriculum to ensure that links across content areas are clear and that it generates clear and useful data.
- Increase the engagement of students by strengthening the capacity of all teachers to translate information from data into well-differentiated and structured learning opportunities.
- Develop all students' confidence and ability to contribute to self- and peer-assessment and planning for the next stage of their learning.
- Establish measurable interim goals and timescales for school improvement to allow for more effective evaluation of progress.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

Community School 50, Clara Barton School, has made very positive strides forward in recent times. The principal has been in his position for a year and has been successful in leading his team in establishing a culture that is now more firmly focused on the quality of teaching and learning and the achievement of all students.

The use of data to underpin planning and goal-setting is central to the principal's approach, and teachers are strengthening and developing their skills in response to his lead. One teacher commented that the principal had made it "crystal clear that all teachers are academic intervention teachers", and that the appropriate achievement of each and every group of students within the school is the driving force.

The staff has worked hard in recent months to develop the learning environment and to make the classrooms well-organized and attractive places to come to each day. Displays support and celebrate learning and there is a developing consistency about how teachers use the space and resources in their classrooms to support the school's approaches to instruction. Staff, students and parents are positive about the changes made and are aware that there is work yet to be done by all.

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.

Clear leadership by the principal has enabled all staff to focus upon the effective use of data and this is now effectively underpinning a more objective view of achievement across all subject areas and groups within the school. He has a strong capacity to analyse data strategically to identify priorities for school improvement and is now building the ability of other school leaders and teachers to do the same. More time will be needed to fully develop the range the school wants to achieve, to achieve consistency and to realize staff potential, but the approach is now established.

The school uses a range of tools to assess student achievement and has now usefully introduced Rigby Benchmark Assessments to provide an assessment of progress more quickly at the beginning of the school year. There is a clear schedule for all more formal assessments. In addition, teachers are developing the range and detail of ongoing assessments to check on specific skills and of observations in class. The structure of meetings to enable collaborative reflection, appropriate support for staff and ongoing monitoring is proving effective in helping with appropriate analysis of the data generated and the timely alignment of practice to meet students' needs.

The school has already used data well to identify priority groups and content areas where interventions and strategies are being focused in order to accelerate students' progress.

The impact of school improvements is, as yet, uneven across grades, classes and subject areas. However, improvement has already been seen in better student performance in, for example, the 2006 grade 4 English language arts tests, an area where resources and interventions had been specifically focused following analysis of previous results.

A significant shift in the culture of the school has been towards recognizing the development needs of all students, including special education students and English language learners. The principal has taken a determined lead in ensuring the careful analysis of results for such students and the alignment of school improvement strategies around all special populations. Senior leaders and teachers are now embracing this important change and the result is that appropriate interventions and strategies are now also targeted towards improving achievement within these groups.

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.

Teachers’ ability to use data for goal setting and differentiated planning is not consistent across the team at present, but further improvement is being targeted through professional development. For example, a senior leader used a set of mythical class data to demonstrate how to make an assessment of this and use it to plan initial groupings and differentiated strategies for the beginning of the school year in a particular content area. Teachers then used this model to plan for their new classes. Such strategies, collaborative working and support from senior leaders are enabling more timely and focused intervention for students most in need.

Students now contribute to class-based conferencing and sharing sessions and thus are learning to evaluate and plan for their learning. The principal is eager to develop students’ confidence and self-esteem through opportunities to articulate their views about the school and their experiences of learning.

There is a core group of parents who have aligned themselves in support of the new climate for change and the school is working hard to reach out to increased numbers of the parental group. Examples of this are the training of parent volunteers as ‘learning leaders’ and the varied range of parental workshops which are a strength of the school. All this is helping parents to contribute to discussions about their children’s learning in a more informed way. All stakeholders within the school community are aware of the drive towards sharply focused improvement, and, in a short time, the principal has been effective in stabilizing the culture and engaging support for change.

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 has made good steps forward in mapping the mandated curriculum and some grades have now mapped across English language arts and other content areas to develop themes. This latter task has yet to be completed in some grades before the

curriculum is fully developed as a means of generating data about specific skills and concepts. The focus has shifted from an emphasis on activity and content to purposeful learning through effective use of data and the subsequent timely alignment of teaching practice.

Teachers are aware of their accountability for ensuring that all students in their care make best progress. They have grown in their understanding of how careful analysis of data can underpin the decisions they make about how they will teach their lessons and select the interventions that are employed to help students. In the most effective lessons, teachers structure lessons well, enabling all students to participate at the right level and to remain motivated to stay on task. However, the capacity of all teachers to structure and differentiate lessons effectively is variable at present. Professional development opportunities and discussions after classroom observation are helping teachers to continually improve instruction and to support all students both academically and socially.

Staffing, budgeting and scheduling decisions are appropriately driven by ongoing analysis of the growing range of student data. There is a clear focus on improving attendance and initiatives are kept under ongoing review. Emerging data is being monitored carefully and quickly to measure the effectiveness of strategies and is already showing a clear improvement this term.

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.

Teachers are selected for new appointments by a team of staff and are asked to demonstrate their use of data to plan and set goals for student achievement through examples of their current work and practice. This is ensuring that the increased focus upon using data productively to affect improvement is maintained as the team develops.

Professional development is valued by staff and they are growing as a team of reflective practitioners focused on teaching and learning. This sense of collective purpose can be exemplified by a comment from one teacher who said that they were "proud of the work done together" and another who felt that "the school listens to me and my opinions are valuable". Their views about professional development activities are sought through surveys, and colleagues are also encouraged to share their skills and knowledge at 'learning lunches'. Professional development is planned around key goals for school improvement and the evaluation of effectiveness is a regular activity. Opportunities are also taken to respond to emerging issues drawn from classroom observation. For example, when it became clear that the sharing of learning objectives with students at the beginning of classes was not consistently undertaken, timely professional development was provided to give additional support and clarification. There is a clear schedule for classroom observation. Formal observations are carried out by the principal and his assistants and have a specific purpose and focus, rooted in key priorities and shared with teachers.

The extended day is being used increasingly well to focus upon specific students' needs which emerge from analysis of data, observation and professional discussion. Varied use is made of community organizations to enrich the curriculum, and parent workshops provide a broad range of opportunities which help parents to be involved with school life and support family members.

The principal has a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development. He has strong skills in data analysis and is using this strategically to affect change, which demonstrates good capacity to lead the school to further improvement. Parents and students are appreciative that the school is now a calmer and more orderly community but are aware, as is the principal, that new procedures and expectations need time to become a consistent part of school life for all students. The school work's hard to monitor and supervise behavior at busy times of the day such as dismissal and to maintain consistent standards.

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.

Regular grade team meetings, led by assistant principals, are used to keep planning, and the organization of students into groups designed to focus on targeted needs, under review. Academic support and literacy and numeracy specialists also attend these meetings. This structure means that staff are being given on-going support in focusing on how they use data from interim and ongoing teacher assessments to analyze student progress. Guidance is also given on how to flexibly adapt their instruction and interventions to support the next stages of learning for groups and individuals. The opportunities for discussion allow teachers to share outcomes and good practice as well as gain support from one another. Good steps forward have been made and the school is aware that this is an ongoing area for development and strengthening of teachers' practice.

Goals and action plans focusing on key priorities arising from analysis of data have been developed and most objectives are measurable by percentage increase. The use of data in action plans is mainly proficient, although the format does not always clearly show who will specifically lead each strand and ensure all is 'on track'. In addition, the detail of how each goal will be achieved is not always broken down to show how specific milestones and events will occur, making progress more difficult to monitor and evaluate.

Despite this, the principal ensures that there is ongoing monitoring and evaluation of progress towards whole school improvement goals, and that revisions and adaptations are made along the way to refocus or to introduce appropriate initiatives and interventions. He is increasing the capacity of all staff to fully understand their individual contributions to the collective responsibility for whole school improvement. They are developing in their ability to use data to ensure that decision-making is objective and based on quantifiable evidence. The work in progress to identify the specific accountabilities of senior leaders and teachers in reaching these goals will be valuable in setting more detailed time frames, evidence and clearer success criteria. Effective use of data for goal setting has already led to useful examples of planned strategies for improvement. For example, the timely identification of specific needs in reading comprehension resulted in targeted planning utilizing the workshop model and the introduction of purchased comprehension skills kits.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Clara Barton School (CS 50)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

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.	∅	✓	+
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"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 		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"> • ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students* 		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"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 		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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		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.

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.	∅	✓	+
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
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

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.	∅	✓	+
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
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
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.	∅	✓	+
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
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X
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.	∅	✓	+
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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	