



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Samuel C. Barnes School

Elementary School 54

**195 Sandford Street
Brooklyn
NY 11205**

Principal: Lorna Khan

Dates of review: May 22 - 23, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Sue Alton

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Samuel C. Barnes is an elementary school with 332 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 66% Black, 30% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 90.6%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 83% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The visionary principal has very high expectations of students and staff to ensure the school continues to improve.
- Administration and cabinet use data well to understand the strengths of the school and what needs to take place to bring about change.
- Staff work collaboratively to gather and analyze data and to plan in their drive to continually improve instruction and achievement.
- There are good systems to identify students in need of improvement through the school's effective use of data.
- Support services and guidance are an integral part of the school and work closely with teachers to ensure interventions are appropriate and effective.
- Students enjoy the wide range of enrichment activities including arts and music, which motivate them and enhance their learning.
- Administration and cabinet use lesson observations very effectively to plan a carefully differentiated professional development program.
- Teachers value the many opportunities they have to meet, share their practice, to plan and improve their instruction.
- Parents value the many opportunities the school provides for them to be involved in the school and the good range of information they receive.
- The school's systems for improving attendance are good.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure all teachers use differentiation consistently to ensure work is always matched to student needs and all lessons are interesting and compelling.
- Refine processes for setting rigorous, objectively measurable goals, including interim goals, and timescales for reaching them in all plans.
- Further develop systems to use information from the monitoring and evaluation of plans to inform strategic decisions, goal setting and planning.
- Improve systems to communicate goals and the steps to achieve them to parents and students, so that all understand them.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made (little, some, good) progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

“We’re proud of the progress we’ve made in the last two years and we’re heading off the roof!” exclaims the visionary principal of Samuel C. Barnes School. She has established a strong collaborative team that is focused on continual improvement. Carefully differentiated professional development supports these improvements well. All staff use data effectively to plan and set goals to improve student achievement. Goals are not always explained fully to students and parents. Support services and guidance are an integral part of the school team. They communicate well with teachers to ensure interventions are carefully planned and evaluated to ensure their effectiveness. The inquiry team works successfully with students, identified through use of data, to improve achievement in reading. Enrichment activities enhance learning and are enjoyed by all. Monitoring and evaluation processes are in place, but systems for this have not been sufficiently refined to enable this information to effectively inform future planning and goal setting.

Since the last Quality Review, much has been achieved. Data is collected systematically and analyzed to support planning, goal setting and to review the progress of individuals, grades and specific groups. The use of data to provide differentiated instruction is still variable. Strategic planning by administration is focused on data and there are good monitoring and evaluation processes, although these are not always formally recorded against the main plan. The use of interim goals and timescales for reaching them is not consistent. The curriculum has been reviewed and more emphasis placed on continuity and progression. Parental involvement has increased significantly, through the school’s positive and creative approaches.

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 the student’s progress over time.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

Administration and cabinet use data effectively to maintain a constantly updated overview of the performance of students, classes, grades and subjects. Data is carefully analyzed to identify issues and trends and to plan to ensure that there is continuity and progression across classes and grades. Special education students and English language learners are equally well tracked to ensure they make appropriate progress to

meet their goals. The school maintains an overview of the performance of specific groups, using a range of data including Acuity. As a result, teachers hold conferences with boys about their reading habits and more resources to attract boys to reading are being purchased. The performance of different ethnic groups is beginning to be tracked. The school identified that children from a specific country achieve less well. They attribute this to the different education system and the later start to school for these students in this country. These students are targeted for additional support. The school works closely with the parents of these students to encourage their children to use their home language outside school, to support proficiency in English.

Comparisons are made with similar schools, leading to inter-visitations and the sharing of practice to improve instruction. As a result, further opportunities for music were introduced and the school reports that students show improved focus in class as a result. The school continually tracks progress for individual students, classes, grades and subject areas to ensure that the strategies introduced are impacting on student achievement. Administration and cabinet carefully track progress against previous years, by class, grade and for individual students. This data shows an upward trend in the last two years in all subject areas. The good range of training on data use enables all staff to use data effectively to track progress and plan future improvements.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

Teachers work collaboratively to develop plans to ensure individual students and their classes reach grade level. Interim goal setting is developing and teachers use regular benchmarking periods to measure progress against long-term goals. Teachers use information from these assessments to discuss progress with children and parents. High expectations are effectively communicated about long-term goals and parents appreciate the information they receive about goals and the early notice if there are concerns. However, they are not always clear about the next steps in learning to achieve long-term goals. Students know their goals in reading, but have less clarity about specific goals in other areas of the curriculum, although some students say rubrics help them to understand what they need to do to improve.

Parents appreciate opportunities to become involved in school. Workshops are popular especially when their children are involved, in demonstrating expectations for each subject and grade. The school organizes a number of successful informal events such as “craft night” and “male night” (fathers and their children), where parents often provide important information about their children in an informal social setting.

Processes to identify and focus on specific areas or students in need of improvement are effective. Staff use data skillfully to support this process. Teachers prepare detailed profiles of each student when a particular need is identified, which they use to form the basis of planning meetings and to establish a baseline against which to measure progress. Fifteen students in grade 3 achieving below Level 3 in English language arts are the focus of the inquiry team, which aims to improve comprehension skills for these students. Research identifies some key issues, for example, the importance of ensuring the correct match of students to their reading book level and the need for students to understand the author’s main idea. Information from this research is effectively

communicated, along with specific actions for teachers. Evaluation of this work highlights successes in terms of pupil progress in the understanding of texts and motivation to read. The school plans to use the outcomes of the research to inform planning for the coming year.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The curriculum provides a range of data, for example, the computerized math program assesses students as they work. It provides immediate information, which teachers use to track student progress and inform planning, and this is developing in other areas. Students, parents, and teachers value the good range of enrichment opportunities, including music and art. Study groups, based on student and teacher interests and cross-curricular work motivate students well. The library is used very well to extend learning. Pre-kindergarten students were animated as they watched a film on worms. As they watched, the librarian described the worm “scrunching and stretching,” which helped to focus students well. Their learning was reinforced very effectively as they were encouraged to move across the library floor as worms, “scrunching and stretching.” A presentation and international lunch prepared by parents, celebrated, and reinforced learning on Japan, India, and China in grade three. Students were enthusiastic about their learning and all students listened attentively and congratulated each other, showing a genuine respect and value of each other’s talents. The use of innovative approaches to learning is inconsistent in general instruction, where lessons are often teacher led, with little differentiation and in some classes this leads to students being distracted and off task.

Teachers are held accountable through the performance of their students and their classroom instruction. Administration and cabinet monitor achievement and progress through classroom visits, tracking information and discussions with teachers. Budgetary decisions are made appropriately, based on school priorities and use of data, for example, the decision to employ the guidance counselor full time. Procedures to reward good attendance are enjoyed by pupils. Absences are followed up immediately and, where necessary, home visits are made. In one case, there was such concern that the principal visited the home. She reports that there have been improvements in attendance as a result.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

Administration observes lessons both formally and informally. Parents say the principal is always in class and comment on how important this is, “so that she knows what’s going on and what our children are learning.” Information from observations, teacher surveys and data, is used effectively to plan a good range of professional development, which is carefully differentiated to teacher needs. Teachers value the professional development opportunities and the support they receive from coaches. All staff work very effectively as a team and there is an open culture where support and advice can be

requested. Learning from teacher study groups is displayed along with student work, which provides an effective model of continual learning and improvement. As one teacher said, "We're moving on up! We have embraced everything. There's always room to grow and we're a good learning community." Induction for new teachers is effective and includes a school-based mentor and continual support from colleagues.

Support and guidance services know students well and work very closely and effectively with teachers to ensure support is carefully coordinated, meets student needs and impacts on targeted students. Partnerships with outside organizations support the school's programs well. Family Dynamics provides counseling services and parenting classes and New York Cares has helped to improve the physical environment. Behavior is generally good, although in some classes, students are not sufficiently challenged in their work and become distracted or off task. There are a few students with challenging behavior and they are handled sensitively and firmly, so there is minimum disruption. The school runs smoothly through the leadership of the principal and the systems she has established, including distributive leadership. The cabinet know what is expected of them and work well as a team to ensure the school operates effectively.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The Comprehensive Education Plan and principal's performance review contain measurable long-term goals and timescales for reaching them, but interim goals are not documented. Teachers use interim goals in some areas, such as reading, and these are recorded systematically. Progress towards long-term goals is checked at regular benchmarks. Goals for teachers are related to student achievement and these are discussed at regular intervals with administration and cabinet to ensure students are on track to achieve long-term goals. Teachers and faculty use a range of data, including longitudinal information, their own assessments, formal tests, and progress reports. They use this systematically to evaluate the effectiveness of plans and the impact of interventions on individuals and groups, making changes to plans as necessary. An example of this is that through observations in class and examining student work, it was decided to provide more "push in" support. This means that targeted students do not miss classroom instruction and the support they receive is focused specifically on their curriculum. Administration and cabinet work as an effective team and maintain an overview of data. They share all the information they gather, for example information from lesson observations, discussions with teachers, evaluation of programs and interventions to inform future planning. However, the systems for collating and recording these evaluations to inform strategic planning and goal setting are not sufficiently rigorous.

Much has been achieved in the last year, but has yet to be embedded in consistent practice across the school. The whole school community shares the vision to continually improve. As one parent said, "The school is improving academically. If it continues at the pace it's going – it's limitless where this school can go."

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Samuel C. Barnes School	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score			X		

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?				X	
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X	

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?			X		
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X		

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?			X		
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?			X		
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?			X		
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?			X		
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?			X		
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4					X

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?			X		
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?			X		
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?			X		
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5					X

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped