



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Jose Barbosa School

Early Childhood School 112

**535 East 119 Street
New York
NY 10035**

Principal: Eileen Reiter

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Lead Reviewer: Roger Brown

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Jose Barbosa School is an early childhood school with 340 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 2. The school population comprises 32% Black, 60% Hispanic, 4% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 24% English language learners and 27% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92.4%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 87% eligibility.

The school is recognized by the State as an Outstanding Early Childhood School and a High Performing Gap Closing School. The City has selected the school as a Collaborative Community of Practice. It has also received the Pete and Carrie Rozelle Award from the National Center for Learning Disabilities for addressing the educational, emotional needs of all children.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leadership and staff collaborate very well to set highly effective goal for the students.
- Thoughtful and creative innovation is the norm and these initiatives give the students a first-class start to their education.
- The school makes excellent use of data to monitor and support the progress of all students, including special education students and English language learners.
- Teachers, parents and the students all understand that the school has high expectations of what can be achieved and the students rise to this challenge.
- The school gives substantial support to the parents which enhances their commitment to education and strengthens the learning of their children.
- High quality professional development for the teachers supports teachers' instruction, which improves the students' learning.
- The curriculum is dynamic and exciting and a strong emphasis on the arts and science broadens students' horizons very effectively.
- Consistently good quality differentiated instruction contributes significantly to the successful achievements of the students.
- The principal uses the budget strategically to ensure the school's priorities are met and student learning is enhanced.
- The school's leadership has a very clear vision for where they want the school to go and how it is going to achieve this.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop the data monitoring systems to allow teachers to track, study and question students' progress over their whole school life.
- Take the next step in introducing technological initiatives by devising and implementing a series of action plans to improve the impact of this work.
- Share aims and goals with the parents to encourage them to even greater commitment to their children's academic success.

Part 3: Main findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

This school has a very strong reputation in the City and the State. This renown is not just among the parents who strongly endorse the school, but also among the professional educators of the City. Many teachers from schools all over the City and beyond visit to observe the practice in the school. They come to learn, and take up the ideas and techniques that the school has piloted and developed. The teachers and all staff at the school work really well together, forming a very strong team. The students are very well cared for, and as much thought goes into the development of their social and emotional progress as their academic achievements. The school's focus on the whole child frequently extends to support and education for the families as well. This is a very diverse community of students. Not only are there students from many nationalities in the school, but there are students from all over the City with particular learning needs and disabilities as well. All students, whatever their starting point, learn and thrive in this school.

There has been good progress at the school since the last review. Many good developments have been introduced in the technology that the school uses to enhance student learning. A new computer suite has been established and the students get regular access to this. The students enjoy using the equipment, but teachers recognize that they need more training to get the maximum benefit from it. Interactive whiteboards have been introduced into a small number of classrooms and those teachers who have not yet had access to them are eager to attend training so that they too can begin to develop the many exciting ideas these tools offer.

The inquiry team has been established and is starting to expand the excellent practice in the use of data that already exists in the school. Over a number of years staff have consulted and debated with each other on the development of students with particular difficulties. The procedures have principally been focused on those children with language needs or particular learning disabilities. The teachers have comprehensive records for every child, and although they carefully track their achievements and progress in each grade and class, it becomes unwieldy to track them across their time in school. There is however, recognition that technology could be used to create a data monitoring system which would allow teachers to track, study and quiz students' progress more efficiently.

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 outstanding.

This is an area of outstanding practice. Staff take great care to monitor and evaluate all students as they move up through the school. The process is not just about using the formal assessments that the school diligently maintains. In addition to these, staff observations and information from the parents are used intelligently to plan the next steps in each student's development. The emphasis is always on the whole child, not just their academic progress. Frequent staff discussions and debates focus on what are the best strategies for those students who are struggling. This attention to detail goes some way to explain the school's notable success in supporting and developing special education students and those who are English language learners. The other major factor in the school's success with the students arises from the high quality of relationships between the staff and all the students. This is all the more remarkable, given that a significant number of the students attend the school because of the difficulties they have in making relationships in the first place.

The diligence with which the school measures its effectiveness goes beyond the point when the students leave. The principal believes that the school must focus on preparing the students for future academic success by giving them a flying start to their education. To do this, she not only checks on their academic progress while they are in the school, but also gets the results from their assessments when they have moved on into grade 3. She uses this information to make sure that this school is preparing them properly and equipping them with adequate skills to cope at the higher grades.

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 outstanding.

The school has a deserved reputation for innovation and high quality practice. This arises from the sustained success it achieves with developing a wide range of students' academic, social and emotional skills through highly effective goal setting. Teachers, parents and the students all understand that the school has high expectations of what can be achieved. The teachers are constantly seeking ways to improve the quality of their work. They do this by analyzing the data to check the effectiveness of the outcomes for all students. Using the information that they accumulate they assess what is working, and what needs to be improved. The school recognizes that there is not enough time to deal with all the issues it pinpoints. It has already successfully streamlined some of the assessment processes by introducing hand held computers for teachers to record information, but the volume of data is growing annually. The leadership recognizes that for staff to make even more efficient use of the data, it needs to introduce a system that will allow teachers to track, study and quiz students' progress over their whole time in this school.

The academic intervention team meets monthly to discuss data from a wide range of assessments. A number of very effective strategies are then used to target the specialist

teachers to those students “at risk”, and to support the classroom teachers’ efforts with the students. The well-structured extended day program is tightly focused. Teachers work with no more than three students at a time. In each case there is a careful match established between the student’s needs and the teacher’s expertise. The result is that all students, but particularly those who experience difficulties, make very good progress at the school.

Parents are valued partners in their child’s learning. The school gives substantial support to many of the parents. This enhances their commitment to education and strengthens the learning of their children. Parents of some of the English language learners spoke movingly, in English, of the work the school had done to help them acquire better standards of English. Parents of special education students talked very positively about the efforts the school makes to keep them informed and involved with the progress that their children are making. They point out that the balance of students with learning difficulties and disabilities and language problems is not too great. Consequently those students with specific needs get extra benefit from working with and playing with general education students. This helps them to adjust and make relatively rapid progress.

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 well developed.

The school has a strong focus on achieving success in literacy and math instruction. This is deliberate as the principal firmly believes that it is essential if the school is to meet the needs of its many diverse learners. However, in addition to this basic entitlement the school has developed a curriculum that is dynamic and exciting. There is also a strong emphasis on the arts and science and these factors broaden students’ horizons very effectively. The principal uses the budget strategically to ensure the school’s priorities are meeting the students’ needs, and that their learning is enhanced by the provision that the school makes. This year the school has employed a new music teacher, a dance teacher and added more elements to the visual arts program. Science has been given greater prominence with a focus on practical hands-on experiences. When the students were asked, “Which work do you enjoy most?” they were confused. They really could not choose between the subjects because they could all find something good and exciting to say about each of them. The only thing that students could think would improve the school was a better play area.

As part of the school’s innovation strategy, the school is working in partnership with an external expert to introduce new math assessments this year. The administration intends that teachers should use the information the system produces to differentiate their instruction to an even greater degree than they already do and focus as far as possible on individual student needs. At the last review the poor quality of technology in the school was identified as one of the main barriers to improvement. The administration has deployed the new resources thoughtfully, but recognizes that there is still much to do to ensure the use of the equipment has maximum impact on the learning of the students.

The school’s inclusive environment for special education students already helps all teachers to differentiate, but the leadership recognizes that teachers can still do more to maximize the use of assessment information. The school structures its learning environment very thoughtfully. There is a successful mixture of collaborative team teaching classes and self-contained classes. In addition, specialist teachers for ‘Reading

Recovery', English as a second language instruction and special education support match individuals to tutor and mentor. The success of this approach is seen in the State's identification of the school as a "High Performing Gap Closing School".

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.

The high caliber staff make effective use of differentiated instruction and this contributes significantly to the successful achievements of the students. The school is under constant scrutiny from many sources. It has been identified by Columbia University's Teachers College Reading and Writing Project as an exemplary site, and therefore it gets visits from many teachers from around the City and beyond to learn from the work it is doing. In addition, it is a "Scholar in Residence School" for Teachers College. The leadership of the school and the coaches do regular classroom walkthroughs to identify strengths and aspects that need improving. Whenever specific developments are identified by the school, or whenever teachers request support, the literacy and math coaches as well as the Teachers College developer work with them, both novice and seasoned staff. The support takes on different forms, and demonstration lessons, in-class modeling and coaching are all used as appropriate. New teachers are strategically placed alongside more experienced teachers, and each new teacher also has a mentor that they can turn to for help and advice. The high quality professional development for the teachers supports the development of their instruction, which in turn improves the students' learning. It is one of the outstanding features of the school that professional development is embedded into the school day. At present there are seven staff study groups functioning before school on a variety of issues. Staff is allowed the freedom to choose the ones that they feel will be most appropriate for their needs and interests. There is no shortage of take up. The school's many partnerships with professional organizations mean that it has ready access to high-quality professional advice and guidance. This is used to great effect to achieve the best outcomes for the students.

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 well developed.

The school's leadership has an extremely clear vision for where it wants the school to go and how they are going to achieve this. They are not prepared to rest on their laurels. The principal's cabinet meets regularly to evaluate student progress towards meeting the monthly benchmarks. Goals are then adapted as necessary and new plans are put into place immediately. Other groups, including the school leadership team, meet regularly to review other elements of the school's progress towards its goals. Through these meetings decisions are made about any necessary adjustments or modifications that need to be made to improve student outcome. Additionally school leaders and staff use final outcomes to drive the next stage of goals setting, especially for students who are in need of academic intervention. Decisions about how to address areas for development improvement are also made during annually scheduled meetings with teachers. These issues then form the areas for professional development in the coming year. With so much drive and energy for improvement it is little wonder that parents' only response to the question, "What can the school improve?" was, "Expand to grade 5."

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Jose Barbosa 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 demanding, 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?				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?				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	