



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Clara Barton School

Elementary School 050

**1550 Vyse Avenue
Bronx
NY 10460**

Principal: Francesco Cruz

Dates of review: October 24 - 26, 2007

Reviewer: Peter Birks

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Clara Barton School is an elementary school with 629 students from pre kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 35% Black, 64% Hispanic. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 92.1%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 96% eligibility.

The school serves an ethnically diverse population. In 2004 the school was designated as a corrective action school because of low student performance in ELA on the grade 4 tests.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school reviews and regularly updates its knowledge and understanding of the performance and progress of individual students.
- There are very good systems for tracking the performance and progress of special education students and English language learners.
- The school tracks overall student performance over time and adapts its targets as and when necessary.
- The school focuses on groups of students whose performance or progress is causing concern.
- There is a clear focus on core subject data, English language arts, math, social studies and science, to monitor student progress.
- Attendance and punctuality have improved because of careful and rigorous monitoring.
- The school has taken effective action to ensure it runs smoothly and efficiently.
- The school leadership plans well to provide clear goals for improved student outcomes.
- School leaders track student performance well and use the information to modify strategic decisions.

What the school needs to improve

- Rationalize the systems that support teachers' use of data to make it easier for them to retrieve the necessary information.
- Ensure that teachers plan more consistently to meet the needs of students through differentiated instruction.
- Formulate a schedule of classroom observations to gain an accurate picture of the strengths in instructional practice and areas for improvement.
- Provide more opportunities for teachers to observe each other's instruction so they can improve their own practice.

Part 3: Main findings

Progress made since the last review

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

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Clara Barton School has embarked on a period of significant change and redevelopment. It operates in an area with an ethnically diverse population where 16% of students are English language learners. Under the astute leadership of the principal, it is working diligently to raise the standards of performance in literacy to match those achieved in math, science and social studies.

The school reviews and updates its knowledge and understanding of the performance of its students on a regular basis. There are good systems for closely tracking student progress. These are particularly effective for special educational students and those who are English language learners. The school analyzes the performance of students over time and school leaders are sensitive to changes in patterns of student progress. In this way the school is able to distinguish between groups of students whose performance and progress needs maintenance or enhancement, and those whose performance or progress is of particular concern.

The school has enjoyed notable success in various academic competitions, sometimes leading to significant sponsorship for the school, for example, when winning the Stock Market Competition in 2006-2007. The school has developed enhanced computer facilities for students and is proud of its very attractively designed Robin Hood Foundation Library.

The school has made some progress since its last review, particularly in its ability to collate and process data on student performance. An inquiry team has been set up. This has met on two occasions and is now due to meet on a weekly schedule.

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 proficient.

The school places great importance on the collation of data of all kinds over the length of the academic year. It interprets its data to good effect. For example, the attendance and punctuality rates of students previously were of great concern to the school. Recognizing this, the school introduced strategies to change what had become accepted practice in this area. It began to collate detailed information regarding the attendance patterns of individual students. This enabled the school to target individuals and groups who were not

attending well. In addition, it started to make changes to procedure and to introduce attractive incentive packages. As a result, the school attendance rate has improved to 92%

The school has made considerable progress in the management of data relating to special education students and English language learners. This information has justified a well-organized increase in the academic intervention support for some students. The school has expanded its academic intervention provision from level one students to include bi-lingual and level two students. It has created a comprehensive program of specific support for bi-lingual students. This includes a creative arrangement with teachers to provide three 50 minute periods instead of the more traditional 37½ minute periods. The data available on student performance and progression indicates that this has resulted in improvement in student performance.

The school shows a firm understanding of issues associated with ethnicity and language diversity. Often the data extracted from the New York City data system misplaces some students because of misunderstandings over the use of language. The school is able to correct these groupings and identify more accurately the students' needs. School leaders are able to use the wide range of data available about student performance to gain an accurate picture of individuals and groups. Teachers however, find it difficult to access the data to note the strengths and weaknesses in their students' performance.

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.

The school is working hard to move away from what it describes as a "band aid" or remedial approach to students whose performance and progress is a particular area of focus. The school is also resisting a total concentration on the demands of testing grades, although it recognizes that the tests are important. Instead, the school is committing itself to a theme of continuous student improvement linked to curriculum continuity. The aim is to bring greater cohesion to the student experience. To support this, most teachers have remained with the same group of students as they had last year. This means that they have been able to concentrate on the goals set for individual students at the end of last year without wasting any time.

Senior leaders examine school data regularly and generate school goals to improve the performance and progress of students. These goals contain specific objectives and timescales. They share the goals with staff and the entire learning community. The emphasis is on a realistic expectation of progress for students, but within a context of ambitious expectations. Goals are then correlated effectively with the strategies devised to help students reach expected levels of performance.

Parents and caregivers are well informed about their children's performance and behavior at school. The contact between school and parents reflects a realistic understanding of the high expectations of the school and the reality of student home life. Teachers and the principal are approachable and as a result, mutual respect is growing between home and school. The school involves parents promptly when issues regarding their children arise. The parent coordinator's work is useful in promoting parental involvement in the school and in developing their understanding of school programs.

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.

There is a clear focus on data to monitor student progress in the core subjects, with detailed analysis to identify specific areas for student improvement. The literacy coach recently moved from the school and temporary arrangements are in place while the school seeks to appoint a permanent replacement. The school is therefore currently at a disadvantage in its support for literacy, a major area for development. A strong arts and dance program supports the core curriculum and the school makes good use of support from the Cosita Maria Foundation for after-school activities. The school suffers from the lack of a gym and parents would like more physical activities, “Our kids need to burn off their energy, especially in winter.”

As the school alters and redevelops its curriculum approaches, the style of instructional is also changing. Teachers are developing a more collaborative approach to planning, and are starting to share their instructional expertise. They are now encouraged to plan a wider range of activities to meet the different needs and abilities of the students in their classes. Some have risen to this challenge well and this is showing in students’ increased achievement. Progress towards this is, however, inconsistent across the school and remains a high priority for further improvement.

The school manages its budget effectively with careful targeting of priorities and specific areas of development. This has benefited students in need of particular help and support, especially those who previously have had problems with attendance and punctuality. Similarly, the school previously suffered from a high level of staff absences but this too, is improving.

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 proficient.

The school’s main goal is to improve the quality of learning experiences for its students, and as a result, enhance and accelerate the pace of their learning. This drives the changes that the school is introducing, and is the focus of the professional support available to the teachers. However, insufficient use is made of classroom observations and intervisitations to help teachers to improve their instructional practice. The school has plans to build on these procedures, by enhancing the role of grade leaders. They will take responsibility for promoting greater exchange of effective practice between teachers. The school is also introducing a program for a more rigorously scheduled pattern of daily, informal classroom observations by senior school leaders.

The administration has introduced a number of very beneficial changes to school organization. It has moved the support services within the school and reorganized patterns of access. Students show a sense of pride in wearing the new school uniform. The appointment of a dean and the establishment of a school leadership team have further strengthened the way the school operates. The school is now more secure and orderly at the beginning and end of the day.

There is a considerable amount of turbulence in the school's roll. This includes a significant number of transitional students who only stay for a short time. The school places a lot of emphasis on family support and provides a good number of effective student services that parents appreciate greatly. .

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 school collects substantial amounts of useful information about student progress and performance. It analyzes the outcomes in good detail. Information is updated regularly so that strategic plans and practices may be adapted to meet particular goals. The school leadership is alert to the need to establish interim goals, set within timeframes if it is to address its target of reducing the number of students scoring level one. It has introduced reliable assessment procedures to support this approach.

The school leadership has established clear goals for improved student outcomes. The leadership targets individual and groups of students accurately for specific support and development. Teachers share this information and set it within their own classroom planning. School leaders are developing more frequent and clearly focused classroom visits to promote and sustain attention on the performance and progress of these students. Such visits are also planned to provide evidence to evaluate the strategies used to improve student performance. Presently, the two assistant principals share responsibility for monitoring the student outcomes.

The school has undergone an intensive period of change and some developments are not yet well established. For instance, there is a marked variation in the skills of teachers and school leaders in using data to plan for differentiated instruction. The principal has a very clear vision for the future development of the school and recognizes the nature of the long-term strategy needed to effect this development. The school's priorities are clear. They include accelerated progress for all students, a significant increase in student performance levels, and the development of a greater sense of personal responsibility by students for their own learning. To achieve these goals, the principal has set in motion a transformation in the patterns of learning and instruction in the school. This transformation is at an early stage, but the seeds are sown and the future looks bright.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Clara Barton School	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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 make 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		