



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability
2010-2011**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Simon Baruch School

Middle School 104

330 East 21st Street

New York

NY 10010

Principal: Rosemarie Gaetani

Dates of review: October 18 – 19, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Daria Rigney

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Simon Baruch School is a middle school with 997 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 12% Black, 21% Hispanic, 19% White, and 48% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 95.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal establishes a seamless structure for involving an overwhelming majority of the staff in collaborative inquiry focused on improved results for students not meeting yearly proficiency on State exams.
 - Teacher teams come to meetings well prepared to discuss students' progress and are equipped with an extensive array of artifacts of student learning. This plethora of data provides a rich context for planning strategic teaching steps that support improved outcomes through changes in instructional approaches.
 - There are 14 active teacher teams collaborating on sharpening their expertise in analyzing and categorizing student writing across content areas. This work has been the catalyst for creating targeted professional development in the teaching of writing resulting in students' capacity for writing with voice, increased volume, and their more accurate use of punctuation.
- The school provides multiple opportunities for teachers to emerge as leaders and to manage their own professional growth.
 - Teachers are invited to identify themselves as leaders. At this time, five teacher leaders have demonstrated their competence in data analysis, goal setting and student outcomes. They lead inquiry work and develop capacity for additional teacher leadership through a study group with the principal in which they study relevant texts and plan instructional improvements.
 - The school goal of improving student writing drives weekly meetings of teachers who analyze and evaluate student work through the lens of the Common Core State Standards. This has led to strategic lesson planning that emphasizes analytical writing, academic vocabulary and challenging assignments as well as the use of a school-wide writing rubric resulting in student writing that demonstrates improvements in quality and quantity.
- The principal implements an ongoing schedule of formal and informal observations to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and determine professional development plans for teachers at all levels of practice.
 - Teachers develop professional goals based on their documented results with students. This process is guided by samples of student work documenting progress towards the goal selected. Administrators analyze the collective data and provide tiered professional development that strategically raises the level of teacher effectiveness.
 - The principal uses her observations for making performance decisions. She keeps charts, lists, and graphic organizers to efficiently track data for granting, denying, and extending tenure. She regularly collects student work across grades and content areas to use as a measure of teacher effectiveness and a springboard for performance evaluations.
- The principal leads her staff in a clearly articulated and extensive study of the available data, sharing her analysis and hypotheses, and identifying trends and patterns in student achievement.

- The principal and her cabinet analyze a wide variety of summative and formative data to identify key areas for improvement. Complementing these data are school-generated diagnostic assessments yielding a rich, detailed picture of students' deficits notably in the area of reading non-fiction texts and writing analytically. This led to curricular changes and targeted lesson planning in a wider array of genres.
- The school pays particular attention to students' extended responses as reliable artifacts of students' strengths and needs. They use these responses as anchor papers in identifying specific areas for improvement and entry ramps into school-wide plans for making incisive instructional decisions.
- Teachers continuously gather and analyze data garnered from the ongoing development and implementation of classroom level assessments, creating a detailed portrait of each student's needs and strengths.
 - Teachers develop diagnostic assessments in all core areas to capture the information about students' knowledge and skills that are foundational for day-to-day planning. In 6th grade science, teachers target key skills, such as graphing or reading charts in order to group students for effective instruction
 - Teachers reflect on their class data in a variety of ways including a narrative that requires them to create an overall picture of their students' needs identifying significant areas of strength, deficit, or confusion. This practice provides an understanding of class trends and patterns as well as opportunities to utilize differentiated methods and materials.
- The principal, with her community, has a clear, coherent vision of school improvement evidenced by databased goal setting and strategic planning.
 - The principal has prioritized student writing as a school goal and began the year with a survey that elicited teachers' level of knowledge and confidence in the teaching of writing. The survey results provided powerful data for generating an action plan for creating a professional development plan that results in students' improved writing skills.
 - The school has created a wiki with resources for the teaching community including curricular supports, lesson plans, and intervention resources. The principal writes a weekly newsletter to her staff in which she summarizes instructional methods, comments on professional goal setting and tracks school-wide progress resulting in a broad base of support.

What the school needs to improve

- Initiate regular, dependable systems for communicating progress to families.
 - The school uses an electronic grade book system for tracking grades and communicating with families. However, teachers' use of this system is inconsistent and information is not always updated in a timely way resulting in some families not having current information to support their children.
 - The school maintains a website for sharing general information however the curriculum is not posted. As a result, parents do not have access to specific information such as content and skill objectives in order to support their children's learning and monitoring of their progress towards meeting learning targets.
- Institute systems for regularly evaluating and revising the effectiveness of curricular decisions and instructional methods.

- A detailed review of the data in English language arts revealed students' weakness in analyzing information in non-fiction texts. However, a delay in integrating this data into a revised curriculum is resulting in students not receiving targeted content instruction needed to improve learning.
- The principal's creative use of resources yielded small classes for grade 8 students performing below grade level. However, the impact is not yet measurable against student outcomes. Therefore, the school has not yet determined whether adjustments are needed to further support students' opportunities to succeed.
- Establish dependable feedback systems for measuring progress towards both interim- and long-term goals in order to revise as necessary.
 - While teams of teachers and individual teachers provide a repertory of interventions and supports, there is currently no school-wide system that monitors students' short-term progress towards school or individual goals. As a result, the school is unable to fine-tune the content and frequency of the interventions in order to strategically narrow the gap between teaching and learning.
 - The principal has clearly articulated a short list of annual data based goals, two of which focus on writing skills. However, at present, there is no coherent school-wide system in place that allows the school to measure on-going progress and to effect revisions. This hinders the successful movement of all students to higher levels of writing proficiency.
- Develop a comprehensive set of school wide beliefs about learning as the foundation for ensuring effective instruction in all classrooms.
 - Although some teachers offer differentiated support for students at all levels there are other classes where there is little evidence of differentiation taking place. Content and pacing, in these classes, rely on the entire class progressing together in novels, science projects or writing assignments. As a result, students are not provided with an array of opportunities that both support their growth and challenge them to higher levels of achievement.
 - Currently some student work products require high levels of student effort while others do not require students to use or develop skills of exploration, analysis, or synthesis. This was apparent in the use of whole class worksheet and chart completion. This uneven level of student engagement and critical thinking results in some groups of students unable to attain the skills and knowledge to achieve successful outcomes in complex tasks and sophisticated problem solving.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Simon Baruch School	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			X	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?		X		
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			X	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X	
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?			X	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.

<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X	
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X	
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			X	
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				X
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?				X
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X	

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

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?		X		
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X	
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?		X		
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X		

Quality Review Scoring Key

△	Underdeveloped	➤	Developing	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed
---	-----------------------	---	-------------------	---	-------------------	---	-----------------------