

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Samuel C. Barnes

Elementary school K054

**195 Sanford Street
Brooklyn
NY 11205**

Principal: Lorna Khan

Dates of review: February 13 - 14, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Barbara Freeman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS 54 is an elementary school with 286 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 60% Black, 35% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 90.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has designed a curriculum that is rigorous and engaging for all learners. (1.1)
 - After discussing what students need to know and understand, the school has identified “power standards” in each grade that support the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the current state standards. For these power standards the school has identified: the need to increase the volume of informational text being read by students, strengthening of comprehension skills such as summarizing and inferring and preparing students to engage in performance based tasks. This has created a cohesive curriculum with access points for all learners and increased the dialogue between the teaching staff around practice, enabling the curriculum to become more demanding while providing appropriate scaffold for all learners.
 - The school examined student work samples, summative data of state assessments and initial school-wide tests and found that students lacked the ability to defend their constructed responses in the written form as well as orally. Using this data, the school chose to focus on student and teacher questioning. The staff monitors their own questioning skills as well as students’ oral and written responses on teacher-created assessments. Student responses are the topic of conversation during inquiry and grade meetings to support teacher effectiveness. Monitoring the skill demands for each task and what needs to be taught to support all students enable the careful alignment between current standards and future CCLS demands.
- The school aligns curriculum with beliefs on how students learn best so that all students may produce meaningful work samples. (1.2)
 - With a belief that all students learn from each other through conversation prompted by high level questioning and actionable feedback, learning environments across the school reflect opportunities for student to have choice in representations of their work. Through math exemplars and writing work samples students are held accountable for defending their choices and decisions. This allows teachers to adapt their practices to meet the needs of their students.
 - Through a workshop model approach that presents concepts and skills with multiple entry pathways for diverse learners, teachers have focused on their level of questioning using the Depth of Knowledge rubric and monitor their effectiveness by interim and teacher-crafted assessments and student responses. Classrooms include various charts that capture shared responses from the class during a unit of study. Students may refer to them for added assistance. As a result, students are supported and challenged to think and respond more critically.

- The school makes effective organizational decisions that support its goals to meet student needs, resulting in more rigorous tasks and meaningful student work products. (1.3)
 - Each classroom has prominently displayed the “flow of the day” accounting for every minute of the school day, thus providing students with a visual reminder of the workload for the day and that each minute for learning is valued. Teachers work with support personnel to ensure the most appropriate time students are pulled out for support services, with the goal to have all services pushed into the classroom. Teachers engage in inquiry meetings twice per week arranged in the master schedule to facilitate dialogue around performance tasks and aligning rubrics. This enables teachers to norm the rating of student work products as well as assess the rigor of performance tasks while integrating the CCLS. Consequently, instruction is improved for all students as illustrated in student work samples and teacher created tasks.
 - Individualized support programs are aligned to specific student’s strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are assigned student groups during extended periods to accelerate student learning and careful consideration of student needs is made for their placement. Teachers are familiar with individual learning goals and support them in small groups focused on remediation, extensions and enrichment. Sharing specific students within the grade has resulted in mutual accountability and responsibility among the staff on the successful performance of students.
- The school aligns assessments to curriculum and analyzes data to adjust instructional decisions at the grade and classroom level, leading to accurate information on student learning. (2.2)
 - Teachers use summative and interim data to make changes in their pacing calendars and the types of teacher-created assessments that need to be produced to measure the work they are teaching. Rubrics also are developed to match those assessments. Grade teams decide the question types and student performance influences their teaching in the classroom. Thus, teams have revisited curriculum maps and identified exemplary student work samples to make certain the rigor built into the curriculum remains constant while addressing student skill gaps.
 - With the use of running records and teacher conference notes, teachers are able to analyze the data for the school’s targeted subgroups: English language learners, students with disabilities and students with attendance issues. Their progress is tracked and passed on to the school’s Children Are Reason Enough (CARE) team and the administrator assigned to that particular grade, leading to the creation of additional supports such as individualized tutorial schedules or referrals to community based organizations affiliated with the school for these students.
- School leaders use observations and outcomes to guide teachers toward improved practices and strategies that promote pedagogical growth. (4.1)
 - Teachers receive feedback from observations based on a research-based rubric. The data from those observations is gathered by administration and analyzed to determine professional development needs of the staff. Walkthroughs on student questioning has been highlighted throughout the year and within the rubric for effectiveness it is stressed, resulting in

defining clear expectations for teacher practice such as eliciting thoughtful responses and allowing sufficient time for student answers.

- School leaders ensure internal and external professional development opportunities exist in order to further the staff's professional growth. All staff members receive actionable feedback from their observations and have the opportunity to select professional development to support them in highlighted areas for growth. Frequent professional readings are also distributed to staff to address pervasive school-wide issues. Follow-up observations are used to determine the effectiveness of the feedback and additional specialized supports producing an acceleration of professional growth and reflection of practice among teachers.
- School leaders provide professional development opportunities for leadership growth and reflection on their practice to enable teachers to consistently evaluate their own teaching practices. (4.3)
 - Teachers who attend external professional development are required to turnkey the information to support their colleagues. External vendors differentiate professional development by need and stages in a teacher's growth with all staff receiving training on higher order questioning. Professional development also supports teachers to integrate CCLS in current lessons. This has ensured that development is aligned to the school's current goals and a commitment to accelerate student learning.
 - Administration supports the staff's professional growth by involving several members in educational administrative programs and then utilizing them as mentors and content specific coaches. Grade leaders, who are instrumental in supporting teachers with data gathering and analyses, are also supported in their leadership with additional periods to meet with each other in order to provide vertical insight about school goals and their implementation and impact. They use their own class data and then model how they make instructional decisions such as strategy groups for accelerated students. This illustrates their integral part in assuring instructional decisions are based on a thorough analysis of data.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to establish a coherent vision for future progress with focused, data-based goals. (3.1)
 - The school reviewed summative data and created data-based goals and shared them with parents. Their theory of action is focused on "moving students in the right direction." However, the lack of clear short- and long-term goals that are time-bound and focused on academic as well as social-emotional objectives limits the school's ability to monitor and revise plans. As a result, students, especially those in grades where performance was low and those in targeted subgroups, missed opportunities for their curriculum to be adjusted and improved in a timely manner, and opportunities to increase student achievement were missed.
 - The school sets goals, develops action plans and curriculum maps predominantly at the School Leadership Team level and grade team meetings yet the inconsistent comprehensive analysis of data does not ensure that the correct instructional and organizational decisions are being made, causing less targeted assistance and supports to students.

- Deepen the data informed process to set measurable and different learning goals for student subgroups. (3.2)
 - Through conferences with colleagues and students, teachers gain information about the strengths and weaknesses of targeted students. Students are aware of goals setting and most are aware of what their annual goal is but there was limited evidence of annual and interim goals specific for English language learners, students with disabilities and students with attendance issues. As a result, the school's ability to monitor student progress and opportunities to make necessary adjustments to school, grade and class plans are lacking.
 - Administration looks at student supports, the learning environment and changes in teacher lesson plans to discern if goals are being used to influence the ways teachers deliver instruction. Changes have been celebrated within the community but no clear analysis has been done to distinguish whether the changes are leading to increased student performance, diminishing the schools ability to detect what additional instructional and organizational supports are needed to attain set goals.
- Strengthen the evaluation of instructional and organizational decisions, making changes when necessary to ensure school-wide coherence. (5.1)
 - The school structure allows monthly monitoring of its instructional decisions. Administration is aware that with the integration of the CCLS examining has to be "more frequent now" because of content issues with staff. Through monitoring, several units of study were truncated and some extended to support current student and teacher knowledge gaps. That said, the use of student data to help inform these decisions is overlooked, weakening the coherence between teacher practice and the power standards identified.
 - The school frequently monitors its organizational resources from hiring substitutes to the classroom supplies. However, structures that would correlate student learning needs to organizational decisions are currently lacking, making the school less able to maximize resources.
- Expand the collaborative and transparent system in which short term and long term goals are measured and adjusted throughout the year. (5.3)
 - The annual school goal development process is structured to take from June to September with yearlong monitoring. However, the school is currently missing a strategic process to revise plans based on student and teacher performance and the integration of CCLS. This weakens the school's ability to optimize goals that accelerate student learning.
 - Interim goals are discussed as they pertain to the school's grading policy and are determined by benchmarks set up for the course of the year. Across teacher teams there is not a sense that this monitoring is ritualized or apparent at distinct times of the school year, limiting the coherence of assessments and data to determine whether goals are leading to increased student performance.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Samuel C. Barnes	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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			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	
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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?			X	
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?			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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			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, guidance/advisement support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			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, with particular attention to the CCLS?			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				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed