

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Clara Barton Elementary School

Elementary School 050

1550 Vyse Avenue

Bronx

NY 10460

Principal: Lori Ferguson

Dates of review: October 11 - 12, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Jacqueline Gonzalez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Clara Barton is an elementary school with 529 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 33% Black, 65% Hispanic, and 1% White. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 88.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal makes strategic decisions and aligns key resources in ways that promote the achievement of school goals.(1.3)
 - The school's schedule provides one hour each Monday morning for the entire teaching staff to participate in professional development to build their understanding around Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Grade level teams then meet regularly with the literacy consultant to analyze student work against standards, develop instructional strategies, and design academic tasks that address identified student learning gaps. This has led to improved practices in planning and delivery of instruction.
 - A literacy consultant meets weekly with teachers promoting capacity-building of staff around knowledge of the Common Core Learning Standards and is cultivating a structure for professional learning. Additionally, a Leadership Academy coach supports administrators in organizational and leadership development. As a result, there is a cohesive structure for supporting the school wide instructional focus on writing and promoting student achievement.
- The principal effectively gathers a wide variety of academic and non-academic student data that identifies trends of strengths and areas of need across the school.(2.1)
 - School wide patterns of strengths and student needs are identified by analyzing performance data in reading and math, with a keen eye towards attendance and safety, suspensions, and retention data. As a result, the school has initiatives to address gaps in pedagogy, improve attendance, and significantly reduce suspensions by including behavior intervention supports and providing professional development to improve classroom management.
 - Analyzing classroom level data, including student progress in reading, authentic work in writing, and classroom incidents enables the principal to evaluate teacher effectiveness. This analysis informs decisions to modify teacher assignments, develop focused professional development, and the implementation of a framework for assessing teacher competency in classroom management.
- The principal has defined and prioritized a clear set of goals aligned to key standards that are shared by the school community and focus on promoting student learning.(3.1)
 - The school's clearly defined set of goals is focused on improving instruction and student learning, informed by the analysis of current student performance and the expectations of the CCLS. Student writing and progress in the use of informational text, reflected in action plans and teacher teamwork, has led to a coherent process among teachers to collaboratively address instructional gaps and student needs.

- In a notable shift in communication, the principal has engaged teachers and families in collaboratively developing goals via surveys, cabinet meetings and other forums. As a result, teachers and parents articulate goals and express confidence about the direction of the school.
- Across the school, teachers are engaged in a focused study of student work explicitly connected to their own practice, leading to improved instructional planning. (4.2)
 - In addition to weekly staff professional development, all teachers participate in grade level inquiry work supported by a literacy consultant. During these meetings, teachers systematically look at student work, compare it to a standards based rubric, and are developing the capacity to make instructional decisions to address trends in student weaknesses. As a result, teachers are improving their practice in planning, assessment, and implementing targeted strategies that support student's specific learning needs.
- Targeted professional development is aligned with school goals, needs, and offers leadership opportunities relative to building an understanding of the Common Core Learning Standards. (4.3)
 - Connected to the goal for aligning instruction to the Common Core Learning Standards, professional development includes targeted training in writing using the 'six plus one writing traits', scoring baseline assessments, and understanding the Common Core writing standards. This is resulting in purposeful planning for improved student work.
 - Teachers now are provided with opportunities to lead teacher teamwork, participate in decision-making processes via the school leadership team, instructional cabinet, and academic intervention committees. Consequently, teachers are stepping into leadership roles. The librarian plays a key role in instructional decisions and support of classroom initiatives and a teacher stepped into the role of behavior intervention specialist.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop curriculum that includes rigorous and meaningful academic tasks which integrate the CCLS and provide consistent opportunities for students to produce meaningful work products.(1.1)
 - The school has begun the work of aligning the curriculum to the Common Core Standards and developing teachers' understanding of how student tasks should reflect rigor and critical thinking. However, across classrooms learning tasks are of low-level demand such as filling in worksheets or recalling factual information, and result in limited opportunities for students to produce meaningful work.
 - Through an analysis of the Progress Report and State assessment data, the school has identified a need to address gaps in performance for Black boys and English language learners in reading and math. However, school-wide learning tasks and lessons are not designed to intentionally scaffold language development for students with limited English

proficiency or engage diverse learners, thus limiting students' ability to access the content or advance their learning.

- Increase leadership and instructional capacity for assistant principals so that the school has a coherent message around instructional practice and expectations for student learning. (3.4)
 - Although the principal has articulated clear goals for moving instructional practice and student achievement, there is a gap in the communication of these goals by intermediate supervisors to staff as evidenced in formal observation reports. Consequently, there are inconsistent lines of communication relative to instructional expectations, limiting how practice is developing in classrooms.
 - As a response to families' concerns about school community relations, the principal has increased her accessibility and improved response time to parents. However, parents express conflicting experiences with assistant principals regarding how students' social-emotional needs are responded to, hindering progress in developing key relationships for the school.
- Improve instructional practice so that across classrooms teachers plan for and execute lessons that include meaningful learning experiences that result in high levels of student engagement and thinking. (1.2)
 - Although the school has a shared definition of rigor including authentic student work and higher order thinking activities, across classrooms questions are of a lower level and lessons are undifferentiated. Most lessons lead to minimal discussion or use of content area vocabulary by students, and student work relies solely on recall or review of previously learned information. In several classrooms students were completing worksheets and most classrooms did not allow students to discuss their learning, thus limiting student academic growth.
- Develop teacher capacity to create meaningful tasks and content-specific rubrics that result in feedback to students and adjustments to instruction that ensures all students are learning.(2.2)
 - Teams of teachers and individual teachers are beginning to assess student work against general rubrics aligned to standards. However, rubrics do not capture content or task specific attributes and feedback to students does not yet lead to adjustments in their work, limiting student progress and learning.
 - Teachers participate in analysis of student work to inform adjustments to instruction. However, there is no evidence that this work leads to identifying the specific needs of subgroups across grades or across the school, thus significantly limiting the school's ability to meet the needs of all students.
- Ensure that feedback to teachers across the school accurately captures challenges and clear expectations to improve instructional practice so that all students have optimal learning environments. (4.1)

- The principal has selected classroom management competencies from the Danielson framework for teacher development and support. Although teachers are receiving frequent feedback, the content and focus of what teachers need to improve varies across assistant principals and is not always aligned to the chosen framework for practice. Additionally, feedback does not always give teachers specific next steps, hindering the improvement of classroom management allowing for improved instructional practices.
- The principal is developing a system to capture the feedback from the teacher development process in order to inform future organizational and professional development decisions. However, current feedback is not clearly connected to pedagogy, thereby limiting the effectiveness of this system, and is not yet impacting improved student achievement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: CLARA BARTON ELEMENTARY 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 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

