

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Clara Barton

High School K600

**901 CLASSON AVENUE
Brooklyn
NY 11225**

Principal: Dr. Richard A. Forman

Dates of review: April 16-18, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Flavia Puello

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Clara Barton is a high school with 1,558 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 91% Black, 5% Hispanic, 2% Asian, 1% White students, and 1% other students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 24% of the students enrolled and girls account for 76%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 89%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders effectively organize instructional time and resources in order to support the school's instructional goals, maximize teacher collaboration and ensure that students' needs are met. (1.3)
 - The school has made a commitment to expanding academic enrichment opportunities by developing and maximizing instructional resources. The school purchased the Achieve 3000 reading program to support literacy development across all levels, especially in English as a second language and English language arts classes and for students with disabilities. It is also available during lunch, after school and in Saturday school. In addition, the school is currently involved in the New York University Neuroscience Program for NYC Schools. This program allows two scientists, presently conducting neuroscience research, to visit the school and present their research in an effort to engage students with science and biotechnology. Moreover, the school aligns their resources to their instructional goals by purchasing new textbooks, employing the Castle Learning program, and utilizing Smartboards in the classroom. These efforts result in progress in student performance as noted in formative assessments and samples of student work.
 - The school program is structured to support professional collaboration between the staff and the administrative team. This year the school implemented vertical planning sessions to facilitate the sharing of best practices, and the development of content-specific instructional tasks, rubrics and assessments aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). In addition, English as a second language and special education teachers and paraprofessionals meet during after-school time as a learning community to discuss strategies to better support these two sub-groups. The school also implemented a ninth grade small learning community (SLC). A dedicated assistant principal meets with teachers to discuss grade-specific student academic needs and social and emotional concerns. These opportunities for collaboration across grade and content allow teachers to get support with refining academic tasks and lesson plans and elevate the instructional capacity of teachers and strengthen teacher practice. As a result, teacher observations detail that the staff has improved their instructional capacity and student performance tasks demonstrate movement towards more rigorous learning experiences.
- School leaders communicate high expectations by establishing a collaborative and nurturing school community inclusive of all stakeholders that supports students as they prepare for college and career. (3.4)
 - School leaders communicate high expectations for staff as evidenced by the professional development opportunities, faculty conference agendas, principal's weekly message, the cycle of formal and informal observations, and opportunities available for students to engage in the

technical and career field. All health and technical career students participate in mandated internships which are monitored by a work-based learning coordinator or by a staff in the career and technical education (CTE) field. In addition, students have an opportunity to become certified in the following fields: nurse assistant, practical nursing, medical assistant, dental laboratory, dental assistant, and vision technology. Students value their relationships with teachers and report that teachers are available during their lunch and after school to tutor them in small groups. The school provides enrichment activities such as peer tutoring, PSAL sports, college trips, and opportunities to participate in conferences such as STEP attended by the Gateway scholars in Albany, NY. The guidance counselor also provides social-emotional support to students, monitors progress in meeting graduation requirements, and explores college and other post-secondary opportunities so that students can graduate on time and continue their education trajectory. In addition, parents reported that the school makes them aware of everything that is going on with their child so they can track their progress toward achieving their goals. They also reported that they are aware of the new instructional expectations. One of the parents stated, "The school has given us handouts on the Common Core Standards." The current annual attendance rate of 90% shows that students are motivated by the school's high expectations.

- The school provides a nurturing environment that fosters high expectations with well-coordinated supports to promote students' personal and academic development. (1.4)
 - The school has established structures to ensure that every student is well-known by at least one adult and has developed a learning environment of mutual respect and collaboration among students, staff and families. One of the students reported, "Everybody knows me, the security guards and teachers take care of you, the security guards know all students by face and name." Each guidance counselor is responsible for academic progress, attendance monitoring, social-emotional issues, and family outreach. The guidance counselors meet with every student and review their academic record to ensure students are on track to meet graduation requirements. For instance, the school noticed that students were struggling to attain the required credits in social studies and English to move from tenth to eleventh grade. Therefore, the school put in place credit recovery opportunities as well as evening and Saturday school so students could meet promotional requirements. The school instituted a ninth grade academy in order to increase personalization and scholastic outcomes by implementing more social and emotional supports. The parents reported that the school is very safe and that the school has an open-door policy, which allows to them to come and meet with the administration and staff as needed. In addition, the student leadership team meets every month and student feel that they are able to present their ideas to administration about school events or other activities they feel would make the school more engaging for them. The individualized opportunities offered by the school lead to targeted supports and college and career readiness.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment to key standards and increase the rigor of tasks so that all students achieve postsecondary readiness. (1.1)
 - One goal for the current school year is to have teachers working collaboratively in department teams and to develop two units of study that are aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards. As explained by the administrative team, this represents a shift from the previous year when the emphasis was on developing the instructional task. A review of sample unit plans shows that the school is making progress in developing units aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. However, department teams are at different stages in developing Common Core-aligned curricula and performance tasks and do not follow a uniform method for curriculum development and lesson planning. For instance, the science department is focusing on scaffolding the instruction while meeting the demands of the Common Core. The social studies department is looking to identify which ideas are important across historical themes. The English and social studies teams are focusing on using more complex texts and making student writing more sophisticated as students advance through the grade levels. However, intentional entry points and scaffolds for English language learners were not seen during the classroom visits. Students were asked to describe the level of rigor of their classes and many of them rated their classes as a 5 out of 10. Overall, the quality of the curriculum remains uneven among the staff and does not consistently promote rigorous student learning for all. This leads to missed opportunities for promoting higher order thinking skills and college readiness.

- Further develop instructional practices across all content areas so that students are engaged in classroom discussions and complete rigorous tasks that deepen their understanding and promote mastery of content and skills. (1.2)
 - The administrative team discusses and models the use of appropriate and specific instructional strategies through department meetings, inquiry, and whole-staff professional development. It is expected that all performance tasks include a rubric as an exemplary teaching strategy. Teachers are encouraged to model complex concepts and to provide an overview of the big ideas as well as front loading of vocabulary in order to scaffold instruction which ensures the success of all students. In addition, the school administration believes that students learn best by doing or being actively engaged in the lesson. Therefore, the teachers are expected to facilitate group activities and inquiry-based learning. Moreover, the administrative team encourages formal and informal assessment through the lesson, in addition to the use of higher- order questions that are thought-provoking and get to the heart of the content. However, there is inconsistency in how teachers are incorporating and using these learning strategies to engage all learners and improve students' skills and knowledge. Although the school has shared beliefs about differentiation and scaffolding the instruction to provide appropriate

entry points for students, the implementation of agreed-upon strategies for extending higher-order thinking was not present in a number of classes visited. For instance, in one of the math classes observed, students were expected to find the missing angles of triangles; most questions included in the lesson were level 1 and 2 in Webb's Depth of Knowledge. In addition, the teacher did not include any final assessment to gauge student understanding. This results in missed opportunities for all students to engage in challenging tasks that offer opportunities to extend their thinking and in uneven credit accumulation across grade levels. For example, only 66% of ninth grade students and 41% of ninth grade students in the lowest third earned 10 credits for the school year 2011-2012.

- Ensure that formative assessments are used to inform teacher practice, adjust curriculum, and promote student reflection leading to improved student outcomes. (2.2)
 - The content-area teams conducted pre-assessments and periodic assessments to determine skills and content that is expected to be taught across grades. For instance, an assessment analysis of student's skills is conducted in mathematics to determine placement in either a two- or four-term course to master the algebra standards. The team also conducts uniform unit exams and frequent analysis of the results. Science teachers identify students' skills based on English and math course performance in middle school and assessments conducted at the school. Moreover, during classroom observations, some teachers included exit slips, questioning, and other strategies to assess student understanding; however, some were limited to asking if students had questions at the end of the lesson or after sharing the main ideas of the lesson or activities. Therefore, there are uneven practices when it comes to assessing understanding during and after the instructional task. Consequently, the process of monitoring student progress towards content standards is not consistent and does not uniformly inform decisions about curriculum adjustment and lesson planning. As a result, teachers have limited opportunities to track progress towards mastery and effectively adjust the instructional tasks based on student needs, which limits the opportunity to improve academic outcomes and skills for all students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Clara Barton	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score		X		
Instructional Core				
To what extent does the school regularly...	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?		X		
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?		X		
School Culture				
To what extent does the school ...	UD	D	P	WD
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?			X	
Systems for Improvement				
To what extent does the school ...	UD	D	P	WD
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			X	
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?		X		
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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		
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?		X		
Quality Review Scoring Key				