

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Myra S. Barnes

Middle School 024

**225 CLEVELAND AVENUE
STATEN ISLAND NY, 10308**

Principal: Lenny Santamaria

Dates of review: March 12 - 13, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Teresa Caccavale

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Myra S. Barnes is an Intermediate school with 1414 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 2% Black, 11% Hispanic, 83% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 93.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has aligned curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) emphasizing reading and writing in all subject areas, fostering college and career readiness on all grades. (1.1)
 - Now in its second year of aligning curriculum, for literacy the school is focusing on thematic units in reading and writing for informational purposes and having students citing evidence from text read to support their responses. Teachers select texts based on student Lexile levels to ensure students are reading more complex and difficult texts. Students with disabilities and ELLs have access to the same curricula as general education students and are supported both within and out of the classroom by interventions of varying intensity. In Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) classes, teacher plans include pre-planning learning activities with attention to specific student needs as well as routines for student cooperation in pairs and small group and self-management of learning. Additionally the school offers an accelerated rigorous honors curriculum in math, science, and foreign language, for high performing students in grade 8, which provides a strong base and effective preparation for high school Regents' credit. As a result, writing protocols and use of grade appropriate texts to respond to questions that go beyond recall provides for complexity of tasks and prepares students for college and future careers.

- School administrators ensure that the use of resources, including teacher and student assignments, provides intentionally targeted supports for students in meeting the school's instructional goals. (1.3)
 - Analysis of summative and formative data results used by the principal and assistant principals bring about specific organizational changes which intensify the delivery of instruction in ELA, science, and social studies. In September 2012 a new assistant principal was hired to support the curriculum planning across all grades in ELA and social studies. Additionally Urban Advantage (UA) has been working with the school since 2006, which over the years has grown its science department into one that fully integrates UA tools and strategies into science classrooms and the school as a whole. Most of the teachers in the science department attend UA professional development and they have expanded the science curriculum to create rigorous units culminating in students in two eighth grade classes scheduled to take the Earth Science Regents. The school is also working closely with its Network to provide professional development to support special education teachers in grasping ideas around the special education reform. This had led to increased competence by teachers in Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) writing as well as case conferencing. The school has also increased opportunities for the ICT co-teachers to improve their co-teaching skills with on-site PD. All teachers have received PD with TEQ Equipment and use SMART boards frequently in lesson delivery so that teachers are using technology in effective ways to increase student engagement and meet the needs of all learners. PD provided by Scholastic in READ 180

as part of the Response to Intervention strategies is allowing the school to use additional technology for student interventions. There is close monitoring of students meeting CCLS in ELA and math and support for teachers to differentiate lessons relative to the needs of individual students. Additionally, as a result of intentional staffing and organizational decisions students gain dedicated small group instruction and daily push-in and pullout academic intervention facilitated by in-house experts and groups of teachers who hold themselves accountable for their students' progress, resulting in meaningful student work products. Consequently, approximately 65 eighth graders are accepted into specialized high schools, and 91% of eighth graders who articulate accumulate ninth grade credit for courses required in high school, well above the City and peer group average in this area as evidenced in the Progress Report.

- The school is a safe place, which cultivates effective partnerships, and students appreciate the level of support they receive, thus fostering their personal and academic development. (1.4)
 - Daily, administration greets all students during morning arrival when approximately 1,400 students arrive on over 25 buses. Grade-level guidance counselors welcome students during homeroom classes and individually confer with individual students as needed. The assistant principal, dean, and guidance counselor, loops with students from sixth to eighth grade, thus ensuring that every student is known well by several adults and is supported in his/her academic, social, and emotional development throughout their school experience. Additionally teams of teachers are responsible for five classes thereby getting to know the students well and are able to work collaboratively to build on students' strengths as well as support them in their areas of improvement. This structure has improved student attendance as well as behavior and improved student work products as the adults check in often with students and parents to support them as they give close attention and support regarding homework, study habits, and test results.
- Across classrooms teachers use ongoing assessments and grading practices and analyze information on student learning to use data for planning and adjusting instruction resulting in purposeful support for students. (2.2)
 - The school uses common assessments aligned to key standards, rubrics, and exit and entrance slips, to determine benchmarks student progress across classes and grades. Specifically in math, according to recent Acuity results sixth graders needed additional work with fractions, seventh graders needed additional work in modeling, and eighth graders needed more experience with order of operations. Similarly, recent assessments in ELA identified areas of concern for sixth graders in making inferences, and students in seventh and eighth grades needing extra support in reading strategies. Teachers track their individual class results by logging into his/her Acuity account and comparing student pre- and post-assessment results, resulting in strategically informing effective revisions to lessons to target specific needs of and group students. In addition, teachers share the data with the leadership to analyze school and class progress towards goals.

- Across classrooms teachers check student work, ask questions, and have students explain their understanding of a topic or instructions to ensure that students are on target. Significantly, in many classes, peer-to-peer feedback allows students to revise and reflect on their own work via the use of rubrics and checklists. In science students were working collaboratively on looking at animal habitats, creating posters to reflect their work, and teachers use the final work products as a check for understanding of content and process and to guide them in their own next steps for instruction.

What the school needs to improve

- Sharpen depth of questioning, student discussion, and use of varied activities, in order to enrich and promote students' participation and their developing critical thinking skills. (1.2)
 - The school believes that students learn best through the workshop model, and across classrooms students were grouped and working on tasks during the independent portion of the lesson. Teachers circulate the classroom taking notes and having discussions with small groups about the tasks thus providing additional guidance, but lesson adjustments were not always visible. Classroom structures to ensure that all students participated in tasks as well as differentiated questioning during independent work was not consistent, thereby resulting in limited scaffolds and supports for all students to produce high level work. Furthermore, a few classes' lessons did not provide students with adequate opportunity to think deeply about text, but instead had them summarize readings or respond to questions, which did not require analysis, resulting in missed opportunities for all learners to show high levels of thinking.
- Strengthen teacher teamwork to ensure a deep analysis of student work to adjust instructional practice and increase student achievement. (4.2)
 - The schedule allows teachers to meet weekly during the school day in order to collectively discuss data on students they share and offer supports and strategies to improve student outcomes. Teachers have assigned roles to help facilitate and complete items on the agenda. However, conversations place too much emphasis on organizational items such as trips and attendance. Analysis of student work does not yet reach sufficient levels and as a result the work of the teacher team does not yet lead to suitable classroom impact relative to designing tasks and developing instructional strategies that are sufficiently challenging to all students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name:	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	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							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	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							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	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							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed