Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Clara Barton School P.S. 50

Elementary School X050

1550 Vyse Avenue
Bronx NY
10460

Principal: Kim Nohavicka

Date of review: January 15, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Maria Giacone

The School Context

The Clara Barton School P.S. 50 is an elementary school with 187 students from grade three through grade five. The school population comprises 41% Black, 58% Hispanic, 2% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 37% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 93.0%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school…	**Area of:**	**Rating:**
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	**Additional Findings**	**Developing**
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	**Focus**	**Developing**
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	**Additional Findings**	**Proficient**
School Culture		
To what extent does the school…	**Area of:**	**Rating:**
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	**Celebration**	**Proficient**
Systems for Improvement		
To what extent does the school…	**Area of:**	**Rating:**
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	**Additional Findings**	**Proficient**

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
High expectations grounded in the Danielson Framework for Teaching, are consistently communicated to the staff via professional development and other forms of communication. School leaders and staff communicate expectations connected to college and career readiness skills with families to support and understand the steps towards student progress.

Impact
Ongoing communication amongst school leaders, faculty and families builds buy-in and accountability leading to increased student achievement, understanding by school stakeholders and college and career readiness across classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Written feedback to teachers includes specific observations, comments and next steps for teacher improvement which highlight the expectations of the Danielson Framework and the school's instructional focus as well as trends in teacher practice that include the use of rubrics, checks for understanding and student self-assessment. Feedback also makes note of practices that are aligned to school-wide expectations. For example, one comment reads, "The Learning Target is aligned to the school's instructional focus and the Common Core Learning Standards." Another comment reads, "Students used information from class, were asked to take a position and write about it using details from their notes and handouts. This is in sync with the school-wide instructional focus, writing."

- The principal has provided staff with guidelines for developing highly effective lesson plans. These guidelines are linked to the Danielson Framework and also include the Common Core instructional shifts and a correlation between the Common Core Learning Standards and long-term teaching targets that describe expectations for planning to the standards. Accompanying these guidelines are expectations for providing effective feedback to students. The principal has also provided guidelines based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) that delineate scaffolds for English language learners, students with disabilities, and students below and above grade level. Teachers are held accountable to the implementation of these expectations with references to them made by the principal in written feedback.

- Written and verbal feedback is consistently provided to families through such venues as newsletters, pamphlets explaining the Common Core expectations, websites for parents to assist their children, phone calls home, progress reports regarding their children's achievement, and workshops in different disciplines. Parents' suggestions are taken into consideration. One parent said, "It was our idea to have a math workshop and they helped us to understand the math they are teaching."

- To ensure that all parents have access to the school's efforts to communicate, parents can avail themselves of translator devices via headsets where they can listen to what is being discussed at meetings in Spanish or in French ensuring participation. Parents expressed that they are always welcome and can easily speak to school leaders, teachers, guidance counselor and social workers at any time. One parent said, "We know all of them, and they are always available to us."

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing

Findings
Across classrooms there are structures for students to work in groups. However teaching strategies to ensure higher order thinking and participation by all students and the provision of multiple entry points for all students are uneven across grades and content areas.

Impact
Across classrooms there were missed opportunities to facilitate student-led discussions or active student engagement by a diversity of learners. As a result, students do not have the opportunity to demonstrate higher order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across all classrooms visited, teachers employed Kagan Cooperative Learning strategies to invite student engagement including such routines as “numbered heads” and “huddle and answer.” However, structures to purposely group students by need and not just by level were inconsistent. For example, in a 4th grade class, all students engaged in a rally robin exercise to drill multiples of 5 and then were partnered to complete exercises. In a 5th grade class, students were asked to think of two main ideas to share with their neighbors.

- There were a number of scaffolds to assist students in accessing the tasks at hand across classrooms such as charts and visuals. However, employing strategies such as modeling and the strategic use of other adults in the classroom to leverage expertise were uneven across classrooms. For example, students in a 5th grade class were given directions to look for two main ideas without a modeled example. In a math class, the teacher facilitated the work of an advanced group of students who engaged in an extended discussion with each other, while the para worked with a needier group of students.

- Across classrooms, teachers used Kagan structures to give students prompts to engage in discussion and to ensure participation by all students. For example, in a 4th grade math class, “rally robin” was used for students to drill each other on multiples. However, across classrooms there were missed opportunities for students to engage in extended discussion, guided by higher order questions, to work through a problem or explain their thinking. For example, in a 4th grade class, the teacher asked students to share one fact they found in their reading. Several students shared in a whole class setting. Then students filled in a Venn diagram.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
Across classrooms teachers use common assessments and rubrics to track student progress and make instructional revisions. There are systems and practices in place to check for understanding and make adjustments to curricula at the team and classroom levels.

Impact
Teachers use common assessments, track student progress and consistently check for understanding to make instructional adjustment in order to meet the needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Embedded in the work of the teacher teams is the ongoing monitoring of students to assess progress towards goals and assign student groups. Teachers explained that during team meetings they examine the results of assessments to measure students' progress towards goals, rethink student grouping, and make changes to forthcoming lessons. For example, one teacher said, "We noticed that students had problems with open-ended questions. We broke the short response into steps for them to follow and we saw improvement."

- Students are familiar with the use of rubrics to guide their work. During a student meeting, students spoke about rubrics to guide their writing. One student said, "While we write, we use a rubric." Another student added, "I'm an apprentice. I wrote stance, provided details, attempted to organize. But I didn't do complex sentences."

- Through teacher-student conferencing, students develop specific writing goals and can speak to how to achieve them. For example, during a student meeting, one student said, "I used to get 1's. Then my writing goal was to get better at details. Now I read a text and get the information I need to support my writing."

- Across classrooms visited, checks for understanding included a number of strategies such as one-on-one conferencing, and student use of red, yellow and green cards to communicate their level of understanding to teachers who addressed issues as they circulated. In a 5th grade class the teacher noticed that students were having difficulties with main idea. She had students stop their work and reviewed with them strategies for identifying main idea before continuing their work. In a 4th grade class students were asked to engage in a math exercise with partners and then record observations about what they had learned and how they had learned it. These observations were shared

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
Teacher teams are engaged in collaborative work that promotes the achievement of school goals by analyzing assessment data and student work to improve teacher practice and student achievement. Distributed leadership practices are in place to allow teachers a voice in making key decisions.

Impact
The work of teacher teams has strengthened teacher collaboration resulting in improvements to pedagogical practices and a stronger voice in key decisions affecting achievement for groups of students throughout the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work by looking at patterns in areas of strength and areas in need of improvement in order to reflect on and adjust instructional practices to devise strategies to address student needs. For example, the 4th and 5th grade math team noticed that students were not holding place value with zero. They reexamined the 5th grade lesson from the beginning of the unit on place value to modify the lesson to include extra time and practice on place value. Students were grouped according to need revealed by item analysis. One teacher explained their next step. "Then we conference with our students to help them formulate goals."

- Teachers support each other in implementing strategies to align with school-wide goals and assessing their result. There is a particular focus on Kagan Cooperative Learning strategies for engagement. During a teacher team meeting, one teacher said, "I used a new Kagan structure and saw that some kids were idle. I discussed it with my colleague and I reflected. Maybe that was not the right structure for the questions I asked." Another teacher added, "We engage in peer observations where all teachers have been involved. We 'steal' ideas from each other." As a further example, they shared that one teacher's checklist was adapted and used by all math teachers.

- Teachers have a voice in making key decisions that affect student learning. There is a leadership team comprised of teachers from various grades and specialties that facilitates professional development and makes decisions regarding instructional practices and interventions. During a teacher team meeting, teachers spoke about the decision to move from a 2-point rubric and checklists for writing to a 4-point rubric in order to allow a more detailed view of students' abilities and areas of challenge. One teacher said, "We decided to change the rubric to get more specific data."

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing

Findings
Curricula and academic tasks reflect planning to provide students access to curricula and tasks. However rigorous habits and higher-order skills are inconsistently emphasized across classrooms for a diversity of learners.

Impact
Students are not consistently challenged with high level tasks that extend student thinking and promote college and career readiness for all learners, including students with disabilities and English language learners.

Supporting Evidence

- All lesson plans reviewed showed that teachers group students in three generalized categories for purposes of differentiation: advanced; approaching/grade level; and struggling students, including lowest 3rd, students with disabilities, and English language learners. However, how scaffolds are differentiated to address specific learning needs for struggling students, English language learners and students with disabilities were not explicit.

- A review of curriculum documents revealed that there are some embedded supports for subgroups of students. For example, the 5th grade science curriculum includes differentiated support for English language learners and enrichment activities for advanced students. However, supports for English language learners and students with disabilities are inconsistently incorporated into other curriculum documents.

- In English language arts and social studies, tasks largely require short answer responses rather than extended writing. Thus, curricula did not demonstrate a pathway that leads to increasing complexity and rigor through higher order questioning and challenging tasks.

- Curricula and academic tasks reflect planning to provide students access to the curricula. For example, all lesson plans reviewed reference particular Kagan Cooperative Learning strategies to be used. Teacher team meetings are structured to include changes to lessons or strategies to improve teaching and learning based on student work. However, the systematic refinement of curriculum that builds towards rigorous habits that cognitively engage all students including English language learners and students with disabilities is not a consistent practice. For example, for literacy, teachers stated that their main focus in upper grades is short response rather than a progression of skills leading to extended writing.