

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

Final Report



BEDS Code	331600010308
School Name	PS 308 Clara Cardwell
School Address	610 Quincy Street, Brooklyn, NY 11122
District Name	NYCDOE CSD 16
Principal	Sharon Odwin
Dates of Visit	May 14-16, 2019



Purpose Of The Visit

This school was identified as needing additional support by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Because of this identification, NYSED arranged for an Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) to visit the school. The visit is intended to help the school identify areas of need that are making long-term success a challenge and provide several visible Quick Wins that can be accomplished and demonstrate the school’s commitment to improvement.

The report provides a critical lens to help the school best focus its efforts.

School Performance

New York State uses multiple indicators to determine the identification status of schools across the state. For each of these indicators, schools receive a number of 1 (lowest), 2, 3, or 4 (highest) that corresponds with how the school performed in relation to either other schools and/or performance targets. More information about how these levels are determined can be found at: <http://www.nysed.gov/accountability/essa-accountability-designation-materials>

The most recent results for the “All Students” group at the school are as follows:

Elementary/Middle School Performance Indicators

Composite Performance Achievement Level	Student Growth Level	Combined Composite and Student Growth Level	English Language Proficiency Level	Average ELA and Math Academic Progress Level	Chronic Absenteeism Level
1	2	1	-	2	1

Clara Cardwell School serves 275 students in grades Pre-kindergarten to eight.

Information About The Visit

- The visit was led by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from NYSED. The team also included a district representative.
- The team visited a total of 29 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited seven classrooms with the principal during the visit.
- Team members conducted interviews with students, staff, and parents.
- Team members examined documents provided by the school, including event calendars, weekly planners, students work lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, projects, newsletters data analysis, Professional Development plans, and student work.
- In advance of the visit, 28 staff members (76 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. This year, the school has had 95 percent of their students participate in State testing, which according to the principal, is the first year that the school has obtained this level of participation. The principal shared that the school had a pep rally to motivate students to be present for testing and that as an incentive, the Harlem Magic Masters basketball team came to perform. As part of the event, the teachers and the principal played against the team and the students were also able to participate in a variety of fun activities. The principal stated that this year, as a result of this event, students had been much more relaxed and motivated about taking the test.
2. For the 2018-19 school year, the school began mentoring programs for the middle school students. The group for middle school girls is called Garnering the Education of a Matriarchal Society (GEMS), and the group for boys is called Garnering the Education of Noble Teaching (GENT). GEMS and their parents were taken to the Women's Empowerment Center in Washington D.C. while GENTS went on college visits and have had a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) studies. The principal shared that these opportunities have provided models of strength and excellence for students and that being a part of these groups has helped students develop purpose and a sisterhood/brotherhood.
3. This year, the principal has begun conducting practice labs with teachers to focus on specific areas identified in lesson observations. During practice labs, the teacher and principal unpack a specific standard observed in the teacher's lesson, go through how the standard should be taught in the classroom, and schedule a time for this lesson to be retaught and observed. Teachers interviewed by the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) shared they are invited and voluntarily participate in the labs and have found that the support provided by the principal has assisted them in thinking more deeply about how they teach and how their students learn.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **The principal should work with staff to further develop the school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program.** Teachers interviewed stated that they felt that there was a need for more rewards and consequences for student behavior and greater clarity on how the restorative justice practices work. They also shared that there is a need to reestablish school wide systems, including how students should walk and conduct themselves in the hallways, as well as how they manage backpacks to get ready for learning. Parents interviewed shared with the IIT they would like to see the code of conduct enforced more consistently and that there should be stricter consequences for students who repeat unacceptable behaviors. The IIT observed that the school has some components of the PBIS process in place, such be respectful, be responsible, and be safe, and the use of classroom dojo as a tool for home-school communication; however, other aspects need to be developed. The principal and school support specialist both shared that building on the existing components within the school would be helpful to develop an effective behavioral management system.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The principal should work with staff to create a shared sense of ownership for meeting the needs of the students in the school.** Staff reported that most have been working in the building for many years, and that

they need greater clarity on why the changes school leaders are proposing are the most effective and needed. The principal shared that there is a need to better unite and empower the strength and knowledge of veteran teachers with the enthusiasm to try new things that many of the newer staff demonstrate. Staff stated that monthly events where they could collectively explore the challenges of the school and develop a better sense of understanding as to why the principal is recommending changes could help foster community and unite staff in working to better meet the needs of students.

- **The principal should consider ways to provide additional planning time for the integrated co-teaching (ICT) teams.** The IIT team observed collaborative planning for grade level teams, but in many cases, the special education teachers were not a part of the planning. The special education teachers interviewed stated that they are often co-teaching in other classes when the teams meet to plan, and that additional planning time would allow them to thoroughly plan how to cover the necessary content areas and to present more rigorous, effective, and engaging lessons.
- **The principal should provide teachers with additional professional development (PD) so that they can more effectively use the technological equipment that is now available in their classrooms.** In classrooms visited, the IIT observed interactive whiteboards that were being used to display content but were not being used for interactive instruction. The IIT did not observe students using laptops either in their classrooms or in the computer labs. The teachers and students interviewed told the IIT that additional technology is needed in the building because much of what they have is outdated. The principal told the IIT that she has focused on purchasing additional technology hardware and plans to add more each year.

Learning at the School

- **Teachers should provide students with better and more frequent opportunities to discuss and think deeply about content during instruction.** In the lessons observed by the IIT, students had few opportunities to engage in discourse and discussion about the content being delivered, as students were typically working independently on their assignments. The IIT also observed that students were typically expected to provide either one word or incomplete answers to mostly recall questions posed by the teacher without elaborating or justifying their responses. The observed level of engagement was low in many classes, and in some lessons, the students sat with their heads down on their desks.
- **Teachers should use student performance data to group students to complete learning activities that are more accurately matched to their learning needs.** While the IIT observed students sitting in groups within many of the classrooms visited, there was a lack of clarity around what data was used to support the creation of these specific groups. The principal shared that Fountas and Pinnell data is used to measure student's growth and to group them for reading; however, in most groups, the IIT found that students were expected to complete the same tasks. The students shared with the IIT during interviews that they like to work in groups in their classrooms when everyone has specific roles, so it doesn't feel like one person is doing all the work.
- **Teachers should use a wider and more effective range of strategies to check the understanding of the students during lessons.** The principal shared with the IIT that checks for understanding should take place in all classrooms through the use of progress monitoring forms and exit tickets. The IIT observed teachers in primary grades using progress monitoring sheets as they circulated in their classrooms, and in the upper grades, teachers were observed asking students to self-report their understanding of concepts through the use of a thumbs up/ thumbs down approach. The use of exit tickets is an area for continued growth.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Students would like the school to develop a school council or advisory board.** Students interviewed stated they would like to have a way to share their ideas about events that could be held at the school.
- **Students would like the school to consider providing opportunities for them to learn a second language.** Students in both the elementary and middle grades told the IIT that they would like to learn a foreign language.
- **Students would like school leaders to consider allowing them to occasionally wear clothing other than their uniform.** Students shared with the IIT that they liked earning points for attendance and would like to be able to earn points to wear free dress once a week.
- **Parents felt that school leaders should develop and circulate a survey to determine student's interests.** Parents interviewed by the IIT stated they would like to see more clubs/sports at the school and that the school should survey students to identify their interests so that clubs and activities can be provided to give students additional opportunities for enjoyment outside of academic instruction.
- **Parents requested that school leaders should explain the purpose of the Tuesday parent engagement time to all stakeholders.** Parents stated that they were unsure of what the purpose and expectations were for the parent engagement day held at the school each Tuesday. Parents shared that they would like clear guidelines for the use of this time, which they would like to be used to enable additional conferences with teachers.
- **Parents would like school leaders to organize for either a school leader or member of staff to greet them at the front door of the school at the beginning of the day.** Parents interviewed stated that they would like to have someone meet and greet them when they enter the building in the morning because it feels empty and bare, with only the school safety officer present.