

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code/DBN:	661401030006
School District:	Ossining Union Free School District
School Name:	Anne M. Dorner Middle School
School Address:	Van Cortland Ave., Ossining, NY 10562
Principal:	Regina Cellio
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year 1) Focused English Language Arts and Mathematics - English Language
Areas of Identification:	Learners, Students with Disabilities
Dates of On-site Review	February 15 – 16, 2011

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“The mission of the Ossining Central School District is to:

- Recognize the value and importance of family-school-community partnerships in educating all students.
- Place emphasis on high standards, quality instruction, and significant pupil achievement, because all children can and will learn.
- Hold high expectations for each individual student.
- Educate each child to his/her potential recognizing individual differences and cultural diversity.
- Prepare students for informed and active participation as responsible citizens in our American democracy.”

“The mission of Anne M. Dorner Middle School is to:

- Help students become resourceful, literate and productive community members.
- Achieve the above through equitable opportunities for all [students].
- Encourage staff, parents/guardians, and students to accept the responsibilities and challenges of their roles in making this a shared mission.”

PART 2: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- There is some evidence that formative and summative data are being used for student tracking. However, the academic performance results for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities indicate that the monitoring efforts are not effectively improving student performance.
- There is a need to expand and strengthen the “Take 5” Plan (each teacher is responsible for providing additional support to five students) as a strategy for reaching and helping at-risk students within the school.
- A Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), which outlines teaching and learning priorities for students with disabilities, was developed for the school, effective December 2010 – June 2012.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- On-going use of data to drive instruction should be an integral part of lesson planning that includes differentiating instruction and focusing on ELLs and students with disabilities. Central administrators should establish procedures for monitoring the effective use of data to promote further student academic achievement. The use of formative and summative assessments should be increased, and data that is collected from these assessments should be used to drive instruction to improve student achievement. Administrators should ensure that teachers are held accountable for using formative assessment data to plan and adjust lessons, content and curriculum to meet student needs.
- School administration should develop evaluate the effectiveness of the “Take 5” Plan. Effectiveness should be measured on the basis of how well students are adjusting to the school culture and gains in literacy and numeric skills.
- The Principal should ensure that staff implements the QIP priority needs identified (p.4) for all grades to increase literacy skills for students with disabilities and ELLs.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Although there is evidence that the school has developed a series of curriculum maps for various units of study, all staff do not use them.
- Instructional rigor is an integral part of the school Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP). Little rigor in content or questioning was evident during classroom observations and via staff interviews. In many of the classes that were visited, teachers were primarily engaged in teacher directed instruction; differentiated instruction was not evident.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Professional development (PD) on the implementation of curriculum maps should be provided to teachers. Planning should take place among teachers of ELA and mathematics for the identified subgroups, and a subcommittee should measure the outcomes for effectiveness.
- The administrative team should monitor the consistency of rigor in the delivery of content instruction for all students through walkthroughs and formal and informal observations. Timely feedback should be provided to teachers. Teachers should receive training in incorporating differentiated strategies into instruction and be held accountable for implementation.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- There is a need to increase the opportunities for dialogue between elementary and middle school teachers to address concerns regarding student transition from elementary to middle school level.
- School and district administration should provide additional in-class support and PD to enhance teachers' questioning techniques and task/performance expectations and promote higher order thinking skills necessary for students to be successful on State assessments.
- Some teachers in the upper grades are using looping as an instructional approach. These teachers are assigned the same students over a two-year period. Students and teachers report that the long-term relationship that is established by this initiative supports student learning.
- Based on observations and interviews, the team did not find evidence that teachers were using data to drive instruction. In some classrooms, the lessons were teacher dominated and individual student learning was not monitored.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The District should consider establishing time during the school year for an exchange of personnel from elementary and middle schools to provide opportunities for teachers to experience a typical middle school /high school day.
- Central administrators and school leaders should hold teachers accountable for a rigorous instructional program with high expectations for all students.
- The school should consider expanding the looping process, whereby teachers are assigned the same students for two years.
- Central office and the school administrators should place a greater emphasis on the importance of student data and its impact on good instruction. School administrators should ensure that teachers are using data to inform instructional practices and to make adjustments based on the needs of the students. Teachers should be using the array of available data to

group students and differentiate instruction. This should be monitored via formal and informal observations conducted by school administrators.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- Several of the students interviewed stated that more clubs, projects and elective courses such as science, music, dance/drama, crafts and technology are needed.
- Parental involvement is limited. Not enough parents are involved in their children's education, as evidenced by the number of parents who attended Report Card Night or other activities at the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- To the extent practical, more student clubs and elective courses should be considered for students. Advanced courses for motivated students should also be considered. Additionally, teachers should incorporate more hands-on/group projects to enhance the teaching and learning process for all students.
- The school should continue to explore additional strategies to involve parents in non-traditional and traditional ways that emphasize the importance of their role in student achievement, e.g., changing the time and format of open house and/or parent/teacher conferences or providing resources and information for parents to help their child succeed.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- It is evident that the District and the school have devoted time and resources to PD and updating curriculum materials. However, based on staff interviews and classroom observations, the team finds need for additional PD in such areas as differentiated instruction, looping and curriculum mapping.
- Additional PD is needed for teachers involved in co-teaching to maximize their instructional efforts for both general education and students with disabilities. In classes that were visited by the team, one teacher taught the class while the other teacher observed. As a result, teachers did not provide opportunities for regular interaction between students and did not make adjustments during the lesson based on individual student needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should continue to work with Central staff to target PD based on student and teacher needs. School administrators should continue to support staff participation in external PD opportunities that are aligned to student needs.
- The school/District should provide additional PD to teachers involved in the co-teaching instructional model. The PD should include an emphasis on the different models that enhance differentiated instruction to effectively meet the needs of all students.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- There is a need for more computers and SMART Boards in classrooms. Many of the observed lessons could have been enhanced and made clearer for students if these technologies were available to address and challenge the different learning styles of students.
- The classroom environment is clean and orderly. However, little student work was displayed that would indicate mastery of New York State Learning Standards and serve as a resource for continuous learning and reinforcement.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School administrators should ensure that appropriate technology and software applications are available for student use. Teachers should be trained on how to use technology as an instructional tool to enrich and actively engage students in all content areas. Teachers and the administrative team should monitor the use and effectiveness of available software for different student subgroups, particularly the ELLs and students with disabilities.
- Quality student work should be displayed as motivation for students to produce exemplary work. Teachers should ensure that they regularly provide feedback on student work. Rubrics should be referenced, and teachers should make clear what students need to do to improve to reach the next level. The administration should regularly review student work.

PART 3: CONCLUDING STATEMENT

School administrators and staff are to be commended for their efforts in preparing for the review and assisting the SQR team.

The careful collection, analysis and use of student data are key to implementing recommendations made in this report. The data clearly indicates that the school's top priority should be to focus on the core subjects of ELA and mathematics for ELLs and students with disabilities, while strengthening the teaching and learning for all students. The school leadership should develop strategies to aid and support staff in embracing whole school reform, while taking a rigorous approach to teaching and learning. Professional development in such areas as curriculum mapping, co-teaching, looping and differentiated instruction should be carefully coordinated to facilitate effective delivery of instruction to all students. In addition, Central Office staff should ensure that the extra resources that maybe required are effectively used in achieving the school and District goals.

The findings and recommendations resulting in this SQR Report should be infused into the discussion, planning and development of the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) for 2011-12 school year. This plan should also form an overall framework for the many initiatives that are currently in place to assure greater coordination between and among the various programs.