

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

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| BEDS Code/DBN: | 170500009 |
| School Name: | Gloversville High School |
| School District: | Gloversville Enlarged City School District |
| School Address: | 234 Lincoln Street, Gloversville, NY 12078 |
| Principal: | Mr. Richard DeMallie |
| Accountability Phase/Category: | Improvement (year 1) / Comprehensive |
| Area of Identification: | English Language Arts (ELA) |
| Dates of On-site Review | January 19 - 21, 2011 |

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“The mission of Gloversville High School is to provide instructional experiences which use the resources of the school, home and community to maximize individual achievement and develop the skills and talents of all students. We intend to promote individual responsibility for learning, self-direction, and the positive attitude toward individual differences necessary for participation in a global society.”

PART 2: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- There is evidence to substantiate that teachers are using data (NYS Report Cards, quarterly grades, progress reports, practice Regents exams, benchmark assessments, and other interim assessments) to monitor student progress. However, the process of disaggregating data and analyzing assessment results to inform instruction on a more formative basis is just in the beginning stages.
- Formative assessments are not always used, and the use of formative assessment data is limited.
- The school’s daily attendance rate is 85-90 percent. However, teachers reported that period attendance indicates that many more students are absent from classes and from school.
- A review of attendance documentation indicates that honors level classes have higher attendance rates than other classes.

- The school did not make Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) for graduation rate. As reported by teachers, some students are not aware that they are at risk of not graduating on time due to insufficient credit accumulation, missing courses, etc.
- There is little evidence that data for the students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged subgroups has been analyzed to plan interventions that address the academic needs of all students. Currently, the interventions that exist for students with disabilities include “modified” courses and Academic Intervention Services (AIS) for economically disadvantaged students. These interventions are scheduled for after school. The attendance rate for the AIS program is very low.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Department chairpersons should develop departmentalized benchmarks and a process for disaggregating data and assessment results to inform instruction. Department meetings should include time to analyze data and to conduct item analyses of summative assessments.
- There should be an increase in the use of formative assessments i.e., within one or two weeks, and in the use of the data collected from these assessments to aid in instruction and to improve student achievement.
- The Principal in collaboration with staff should revise the school’s attendance policy to ensure that strategies to address period attendance and lateness are included. The school should continue to use the family facilitator to communicate with families and students and to provide community outreach in an effort to increase daily, period, and after school program attendance. An “alert” should be added to the electronic data attendance system to enable teachers to identify students who have been absent for more than one period in an effort to increase period-by-period attendance.
- The Principal should consider assigning a staff person to take on the role of an “attendance officer,” to track attendance data to determine the reasons for low attendance and how attendance could be improved. The In School Suspension policies should be reviewed and revised (if appropriate) to support increasing period attendance and improving the daily attendance rate.
- Guidance counselors should identify students who are “at-risk” of not meeting graduation requirements earlier and communicate this information to the students, parents and teachers. Graduation as a goal for all Gloversville students should be advertised and communicated to students, parents, community members, teachers, guidance team and instructional staff in other district school buildings.
- The administrative team should develop AIS and other intervention services within the school day schedule to ensure greater student attendance and collaboration between among instructional staff (general and special education) to better plan for academic supports.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Although teachers are using a curriculum that's aligned with the State Learning Standards, there was little reference made to the State Standards in classes that were visited. There was little evidence that the school has designed and implemented a coherent instructional action plan (based on data analysis and research based strategies) that is specifically designed to meet the needs of identified subgroups and all students.
- In some of the classes, the NYS Learning Standards were not included in lesson plans and were not communicated to students as the goal and objectives of the lesson being taught.
- Classroom observations and student interviews revealed that students are taught in large groups with very little small group work, cooperative learning or differentiated instruction.
- The school lacks a consistent approach when using research based instructional strategies in reading/ELA, mathematics, and science and for students with disabilities.
- There is evidence of high expectations in student access to challenging learning opportunities that include: Advanced Placement (AP) courses; college credit bearing courses; Project Lead the Way; national exams; access to the Career and Technical Center; honors level courses; and early admission to colleges and universities. However, the enrollment of economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities in these opportunities is limited.
- Despite the fact that Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and other pertinent information regarding students' skills are distributed to all teachers who may have a student with a disability enrolled in their classes, classroom instruction consisted mostly of large group instruction. Few accommodations are provided to address the specific skills, abilities and educational needs of individual students and subgroups.
- There is evidence of expectations for student and staff behavior/conduct, i.e., student and teacher handbooks, a discipline matrix, and a code of conduct. However, students and staff report that the expectations for behavior and the established rules are not consistently applied and reinforced.
- Extra help for students is not always available within the school day, and study halls are not always a good use of students' time.
- Extended day academic programs and activities are available in addition to AIS for economically disadvantaged students after school. These programs/activities are poorly attended, in part, due to a lack of transportation. Only one late bus is available to transport students enrolled in after school programs.
- A uniform grading policy across all grades/content areas is not in place.

- Although the Principal has a “cabinet” of faculty members who act as an advisory council, there is not an active shared decision making team.
- Many special education students are placed in “modified” courses or in inclusion classes, where the special education teacher acts only as an assistant to the identified student.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- In addition to department meetings, time should be established for grade level/cross-curricular teams to meet. A curriculum mapping project should be created throughout the school that addresses curriculum across grade levels and literacy across departments, incorporates strategies for specific subgroups, and integrates NYS Standards into everyday lessons.
- The administrative staff should ensure that classroom lessons include small group work, cooperative learning and differentiated instruction in an effort to increase student engagement and to meet the needs of all students.
- Professional development opportunities that are researched and/or evidenced-based should be offered to teachers to support ELA instruction across the content areas. The school should continue to explore and assess the implementation of the Brockton’s Literacy Program.
- Challenging learning opportunities should be expanded to include more ELLs, students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students.
- The administrative staff should ensure that professional development opportunities for cooperative learning and differentiated instruction are provided to all teachers and staff. The work with the current training program and study guides should be continued.
- Student and teacher handbooks and other disciplinary policies should be annually reviewed and revised periodically as required by the school safety team. Students should be involved in establishing classroom rules and disciplinary policies. A schoolwide theme for following the rules should be created and displayed throughout the school building.
- The administrative team should provide AIS during the school day and explore other opportunities for providing academic support for students.
- Extended day programs/activities should be advertised throughout the year and student attendances should be monitored. School clubs should be created around student’s interests. The Principal should seek ways to provide better transportation for students who stay for extended day programs.
- The grading committee should update the current grading policy and ensure that the policy is used consistently throughout the school.
- The shared decision making team should be re-established and should include teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents.

- The Principal should explore expanding the special education placements available in the school. Professional development on co-teaching strategies should be made available to general education staff as well as special education staff. Time within the school day for general education and special education teachers to meet and plan should be established. Special education students should have more access to the general education curriculum and higher-level coursework.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- Although the school’s Mission Statement maintains a commitment to high standards, a shared responsibility for student success, and accountability for performance; this was not observed during classroom observations. In many of the classrooms, the NYS Standards were not addressed in lesson plans, objectives were not shared with students, and teachers were not accountable for promoting high expectations as higher order questioning was rarely observed. Cooperative learning and differentiated instruction were not routine teaching practices in the school.
- Some students with disabilities are in co-taught classrooms; however the co-teaching model in this school has been ineffective in improving student achievement. In addition, some special education classes are “modified” courses where special education students are separated from their general education peers for core subjects. Furthermore, there is a belief amongst the majority of teachers that the general education teacher only accepts responsibility for the learning of the general education students and the special education teacher only accepts responsibility for the special education students.
- The Principal and assistant principal conduct walkthroughs for tenured staff and formal observations of non-tenured staff. However, these visits are neither frequent enough nor used to guide professional development or training in how to implement best practices.
- Although school administrators are working hard at finding and creating new programs and initiatives to improve student achievement, there was not a system in place to provide continuous improvement of educational practices via data-driven, collaborative instructional planning and continuous monitoring of progress of all students and subgroups.
- At the time of the visit, the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) had not been developed and a school improvement plan was not in use to guide the school’s improvement efforts.
- A system for shared accountability for student learning which is assessed through measurable goals and objectives does not exist.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school’s Mission Statement should be re-visited through a shared decision-making process. The administrative team should foster and encourage a culture of high expectations

and success for all students, which include shared responsibility amongst all faculty and staff. The team should ensure that the school's Mission Statement is articulated throughout the school building and community and is posted on the school's website. Teachers should be held accountable for including standards in their lesson plans, posting them in their classrooms; and informing students of lesson objectives at the beginning and closing of each lesson. Teachers should also be accountable for incorporating cooperative learning and differentiated instruction in their classes.

- The school leadership, in conjunction with district staff and the Committee on Special Education, should review the continuum of special education services in the school and determine if students are truly in a least restrictive environment based on their individual educational needs. Furthermore, co-teaching assignments should be reviewed to ensure that co-teachers are appropriately assigned. PD should be provided to ensure that all teachers understand co-teaching strategies and work together following a coordinated lesson plan. The Principal should hold all teachers accountable for teaching and learning that results in improved student performance for all students.
- Professional growth plans for teachers should be more carefully monitored, and walkthroughs by school administrators should be conducted on a more frequent basis. The data collected from the walkthroughs should be used for faculty meeting topics (and/or professional development topics) on best practices and model classrooms.
- Administrators should ensure that teachers are held accountable for using formative assessment data to plan and adjust lessons, content and curriculum to meet students' needs.
- The Principal must ensure the development and implementation of a 2010-11 CEP. The Recommendations in the School Quality Review (SQR) Report should be aligned with the CEP. To ensure that the CEP is a working document, it should be continuously reviewed, modified and shared with staff through the school leadership team.
- The Principal should hold teachers responsible for student learning and develop a tracking system for assessing where students are having the most success.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- AIS and extra help for students are available after school; however, these programs are poorly attended.
- The school has established some community partnerships, although the partnerships may not be fully developed and not everyone in the school is aware of them.
- Some students, especially ELL's and students with disabilities, may need intensive guidance and social work supports that the school is not offering enough of at this time.

- The allocation and deployment of resources is not always needs-based, and/or results-driven.
- There are some opportunities for parent/families to attend school events (i.e., Open House); however, these are often not well attended. There is also little opportunity for parents/families to have a "voice" in matters that directly affect their children's learning and achievement, i.e., active and meaningful participation on the school leadership team.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A plan to schedule AIS within the school day should be developed. At-risk students and their parents should be made aware of the availability of AIS and any additional academic supports that are available.
- The school should continue to build and expand upon relationships with the Fulton County Chamber Office, the Fulton County Mental Health Organization, Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery Preventative Services, Gloversville Library Volunteer Organization, and Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery Community College.
- The administrative team should review the school's funding resources to see if additional guidance counselors and/or social workers can be added to school staff.
- The Principal should review the resources that are allocated to the school and work closely with District staff to better align resources with the school's needs, including teacher placement, use of instructional aides, expanding the use of technology, etc.
- The school should create more opportunities to increase parental involvement and promote an atmosphere of mutual respect and proactive, two-way communication between school staff and parents/families. Possible strategies include: changing the date of the Open House until a little later in the school year; creating a "virtual" Open House that parents can watch on the website or on a DVD; changing the format of Open House so that parents have more time to interact with teachers; changing the time and/or format of parent/teacher conferences, etc. If possible, consideration should be given to the creation of a parent/family coordinator position.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- Professional development needs for staff members is mostly determined by district initiatives and not by the use of data, classroom observations or the needs of the students or teachers in the school. Other than mentoring, job embedded technical assistance is not available to support effective instructional practice to promote student achievement.
- Department meetings are not used to analyze student work and are only just beginning to explore using assessment data to determine students' learning needs.

- Each department has a set of goals that do not always include teaching literacy across the content areas. The goals are not interdisciplinary, but subject specific. In addition, general education and special education teachers do not always work together on goals for the students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are viewed by most staff as the sole responsibility of the special education teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Assessment data, classroom observations, walkthroughs, teacher surveys, student surveys, and other pertinent information should be used to determine the professional development offerings (i.e., co-teaching, differentiated instruction etc.) that are needed in the school. Consideration should be given to creating literacy and math coach positions to provide job embedded professional development. Teachers within the school could also offer professional development on best practices, based on their individual areas of expertise.
- Department meetings should include routine time for reviewing student work and analyzing assessment data to determine student skills and areas that need improvement. In addition, grade level meetings should be held regularly using these same agenda items. Both general education and special education teachers should be included in these meetings.
- The administrative team should revise department goals to include literacy across the content areas and the utilization of interdisciplinary goals. Professional development should be offered on team building to create an atmosphere in the school where everyone in the school feels responsible for students' continuous learning and for school improvement.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- Although there were computers in each classroom for teacher use and LCD projectors with internet access available, there are only two SMART Boards in the school. It was observed that technology was neither used by students nor incorporated by teachers into instruction.
- Staff reported that some of the computers and computer labs are not working and that the recording studio in the school was never completed.

Classrooms observed were orderly and clean; however, there was little student work displayed,

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The use of technology should be incorporated into lesson plans for more interactive lessons with more student engagement. A technology plan should be developed that includes having laptop computers available for students to use.
- The Principal and district staff should review and revise the school's Technology Plan to address the current technological needs of the school.
- Engage students in the learning process by setting high standards, posting student work, posting rubrics for each assignment, having students take part in creating classroom rules,

and by posting the NYS Learning Standards. Consideration should also be given to having students participate in improving the atmosphere within the school and the classrooms (i.e., posting student work, painting murals, etc.).

PART 3: CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The Gloversville High School and Gloversville District administrators and staff are to be commended for their efforts in completing the SQR Quality Indicators document, and their assistance throughout the review.

The Gloversville High School SQR team is aware of the changes that need to be made to improve student achievement. Among the most critical changes are:

- an increase in the use of formative assessment with school leadership holding teachers accountable for using more formative assessment data to adjust lessons, content and curriculum;
- teachers incorporating small group work, cooperative learning and differentiated instruction into their class work;
- special education students having more access to the general education curriculum and higher-level coursework and time established within the school day for general and special education teachers to meet and plan for their students;
- walkthroughs by school administrators being conducted on a more frequent basis to look for items such as including NYS standards in their lesson plans, having them posted, and making students aware of the standards and the purpose of each lesson as it relates to them;
- promoting an atmosphere of mutual respect and open communication between school staff, students, and parents/families; and
- providing embedded professional development that is monitored and followed up on and based on student and teacher needs through the collection of assessment data, classroom observations, walkthroughs, and student/teacher surveys.

The findings and recommendations in this SQR Report will become the basis for the planning, development and revising CEP goals for the remainder of the 2010-2011 school year and implementation in the 2011-2012 school year.