

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code/DBN:	26-16-00-01-0068
District:	Rochester City School District
School Name:	Joseph C. Wilson Foundation Academy
School Address:	200 Genessee Street Rochester, NY 14611
Principal:	Jacquelyn Cox
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year 1) Comprehensive
Areas of Identification:	Elementary- Middle School English Language Arts- All s students
Dates of On-site Review:	January 12-14, 2011

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

School Mission

"Excellence for all students in all aspects of their development"

School Vision

“The Wilson Community of students, parents and faculty are committed to a rigorous academic program that ensures our graduates are prepared to participate fully and confidently in their college and career choices. We are committed to creating an environment that promotes academic excellence, fosters an active appreciation of multiculturalism, and develops each student’s sense of personal responsibility.

We ensure that every student is both known and nurtured, has a firm sense of his or her capabilities, and is convinced that a positive future is possible through determined effort. We envision Wilson Magnet High School and Wilson Foundation Academy to be a place where we are intellectually challenged, emotionally enriched, and supported in such a fundamental way that we become more fully human and true contributors in the broader community.”

PART 2: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- Although there is evidence of a schoolwide focus on formal assessments (recent school performance data from the New York State (NYS) School Report Card, nySTART Reports, DIBELS, etc.), there is

little evidence that this data is used to inform instruction. There is no evidence across grade levels of reviewing and revising instruction based on assessment results.

- There is little evidence that formative assessment is collected and used to differentiate instruction in order to address students' diverse needs.
- Wilson Foundation Academy is a newly approved Early International Baccalaureate (IB) school. As such, data collection, analysis and utilization are critical for progress monitoring. However, there appears to be no established schoolwide process for progress monitoring.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Grade-level teams should examine performance trends on assessments to conduct root-cause analysis of the data to determine action steps that will drive changes in classroom instruction with a focus on improved student outcomes. The school leadership team should begin to focus on developing periodic interim assessments that are used by all teachers of a course.
- Teachers should be trained to use interim assessments to improve progress monitoring and to inform planning of standards-based instruction that is differentiated to meet the specific needs of students.
- Ongoing teacher training on effectively analyzing and using data to inform instruction and make intervention decisions should be provided. Professional development (PD) should be connected to the research, training and development materials available as part of the Early IB program.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- There is limited evidence that teachers write daily lessons plans that incorporate essential elements of effective lessons, although leaders indicate they check to see that lesson plans are completed.
- NYS Standards, Rochester Curriculum agendas, curriculum maps, lesson plans, and rubrics are neither visible in most classrooms nor referred to during observations. Evidence of the use of instructional rubrics is limited to a few postings of exemplary writing samples. Expectations for performance levels (1-4) are visibly posted in some classrooms. There is only limited evidence of shared rubrics and/or grading policies.
- In some student-centered classrooms, students are actively engaged in authentic learning activities. Teachers in these classrooms maximize their use of instructional time and use student feedback to adjust their pacing and instruction, as needed. In many classrooms, however, ineffective time management and a lack of appropriate lesson pacing are evident. Teacher directed whole class instruction predominates. No differentiated instruction is evident in these classrooms. Lessons often involve students "listening to" a teacher. Students sit passively for extended periods of time, often with no opportunity to engage in authentic student learning activities.
- Some classrooms show evidence of rigorous learning, but this is inconsistent throughout the school. Some observed lessons focus on lower levels of Bloom's taxonomy, such as recall and basic comprehension; there is limited evidence of tasks requiring higher order thinking skills. Although a few lessons involve active learning and an inquiry approach, there is a lack of embedded practice of cognitive processing skills for questions, analyses, and error analysis.

- There is limited evidence that reading comprehension strategies are regularly taught, modeled, scaffolded or practiced. Instruction on the implementation of effective comprehension strategies does not appear to be strategically developed or consistently delivered.
- While the *Read 180* program is implemented in some classrooms, it remains unclear the extent to which this intervention program is being used specifically for students in need of academic intervention in reading/English language arts (ELA).
- While schoolwide schedules provide time for Academic Intervention Services (AIS), there is no evidence that the required AIS is provided for students in need of academic assistance. Although the classroom schedule listed AIS class times, no AIS or Response to Intervention (RTI) was observed when these classes were visited. In fact, some classrooms were vacant during the times listed as AIS.
- Although some teachers teach writing strategies and focus on critical lens essays, in some classes there is only limited evidence that writing strategies are explicitly taught, or that students are expected to regularly write.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Require that every teacher write lesson plans that involve students in active, meaningful learning during each lesson, while providing scaffolding support throughout. Administrators should review these plans and create a staff meeting agenda on maximizing student productivity through rigorous, scaffolded, relevant, skill-based and student-centered instruction.
- Post the NYS Standards, Rochester Curriculum agendas, curriculum maps, grading policies and rubrics, and refer to them during lessons. Post student work at timely, regular intervals within the classroom and in the hallways.
- Utilize the available Rochester Instructional Framework and the locally developed Workshop model of instruction in order to increase the amount of time for differentiated instruction. The administration should conduct frequent classroom walkthroughs to check for implementation
- Provide teachers with professional development if necessary to improve use of the workshop model and Rochester Instructional Framework.
- Plan and deliver instruction for conceptual depth by using concept maps, proactive questioning and activities that develop higher level thinking skills. Monitor progress and adjust instruction, accordingly.
- Emphasize direct teaching of reading comprehension strategies with teacher modeling and opportunities for students to practice newly learned strategies. Involve students in daily extensive teacher-directed authentic reading and writing activities to improve ELA skills. Provide additional time and opportunities for independent reading of trade books for students who often have limited opportunities for reading outside of school, as well as writing in response to text.
- Clarify expectations for the implementation of the *Read 180* intervention program. Policies and procedures should be created and communicated by the District and school leadership so that teachers understand their responsibilities in implementing the *Read 180* intervention program for students in need of additional instruction in ELA. PD for effective implementation is recommended.

- Provide the required AIS for students not meeting State Standards and identified as in need of additional instruction according to the District AIS plan. It is essential that the District Director of AIS, as well as the Director of Special Education, monitor Wilson Foundation Academy for implementation of academic supports to meet the needs of at-risk students.
- Consistently develop reading comprehension strategies in content area subjects using a systematic approach to monitor learning and progression. All disciplines should employ the same strategies on a daily/weekly basis to reinforce the concepts and skills and to improve reading in the content areas.
- Develop instructional plans, pacing calendars and thematic study units for ELA and mathematics that provide differentiated instruction based on student need in order to ensure that those students at Level 1 and Level 2 receive the specific instruction and support they need.
- Set clear expectations that writing strategies are explicitly taught, writing assignments are regularly given in all classrooms across the curriculum, and rubrics are shared with students and clearly posted in each classroom. It is recommended that professional learning opportunities focus on research-based strategies for strengthening instruction on comprehension vocabulary and writing.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- The school's master schedule was inaccurate, so that classroom visits had to be modified on several occasions. Classroom level schedules are not indicative of the instruction actually occurring in the classroom during that time period. There were instances of teachers changing their schedules that were not reflected in the master schedule. Many of the inaccuracies involved AIS and other intervention classes.
- Mentoring support for teachers is limited to District-sponsored first year mentoring for new teachers. Several observed teachers possess teaching skills that could benefit the entire staff if they became teacher leaders or peer coaches.
- There is a reported need to continue to improve the sense of community among staff, as well as a reported need for the development of collegial circles for effective planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- It is essential that administrators and school office personnel have an accurate and up-to-date master schedule, especially for safety reasons.
- All teachers, including experienced teachers, can benefit from peer coaching on specific strategies for improving instruction, as the school community embraces a continuous improvement model. Consider implementing peer coaching/mentoring supports for teachers on using data-informed differentiated instruction, as well as for the use of authentic student learning activities. Conduct regular informal classroom walkthroughs with rubrics to ensure that teachers are planning and implementing effective instruction. Provide timely feedback to teachers.
- School leaders should provide administrative guidance to teaching staff on team meeting protocols and clear outcomes for meetings in order to provide needed structure to make the use of this time effective. Continue efforts to create a cohesive learning community. PD should be provided on the development of collegial circles.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- There is a need for additional reading teachers to provide AIS in ELA. It is reported that there is a systematic lack of support for students in need of academic assistance beyond extended testing time. NYS School Report Card for 2009-2010 reflects the essential need for increased support for students with disabilities, who, as a group, scored 47 points below State Standards in ELA and 44 points below State Standards in mathematics.
- It is reported that students with disabilities are not receiving appropriate supports for addressing socio-emotional behaviors that impact student learning.
- Students are allowed to have electronic devices, such as cell phones, during the school day. The policy on usage does not appear to be clear. Many students will go on to attend Wilson Commencement High School, which has a strict “no personal electronics” policy.
- Many parents choose Wilson Foundation Academy for their children because of the Early IB program. Parents generally feel welcome in this school, although they would appreciate more opportunities for parent involvement. The Principal disseminates a parent letter.
- It appears that this school has established a safe, respectful learning environment for students; however, teachers note that some students have persistent behavioral issues that need to be addressed. Peace circles are implemented in home-base classrooms.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Provide appropriately certified teachers of ELA and mathematics to provide AIS/RtI to at-risk students.
- Provide additional support systems for teachers to develop an effective behavior management system for students with disabilities.
- Develop a clear and consistent policy on the possession and use of personal electronic devices during the school day. Since many students will attend Wilson Commencement High School for grades 9-12, consider aligning school policy on electronics with that of the high school or develop a District policy to minimize inconsistencies. Include the policy on electronic devices in parent orientation materials and student handbook.
- Build on efforts to engage parents as valuable partners in their children’s education. Provide ample communication to parents concerning school activities, academic expectations and opportunities for their involvement in the school.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- Now that the school has been accepted into the Early IB program, there appears to be ongoing challenges to plan for implementation of the Early IB model. Staff indicates concern about the lack

of planning time designated specifically to develop consistency of programming and voiced a need for leaders to guide the school forward in this regard.

- A few observed lessons reflect what differentiated instruction means and how to plan for it; however, in many classrooms there is a demonstrated need for teachers to learn how to incorporate differentiated instruction into each lesson.
- There is a need for ongoing PD in using interim assessments, analyzing and using data to inform instruction, and implementing student-centered classrooms.
- It is reported that teachers seldom participate in the District PD offerings. It is unclear whether teachers are participating in other PD opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Provide dedicated time for teachers to develop an effective, consistent IB model of instruction for the 2011-2012 school year with clearly communicated expected outcomes.
- Provide additional training for teachers on the analysis and use of data acquired through both formal and informal assessments to plan and implement differentiated instruction.
- Provide ongoing teacher training by administrators on how to effectively analyze and use data to inform instruction and make intervention decisions. Link this PD to the research, training and development materials available as part of the Early IB program.
- Develop and provide sustained PD on lesson planning, pacing, and progress monitoring. Leaders should conduct walkthroughs to monitor for implementation of strategies learned. The administration should ensure teachers actively engage in District PD activities and outside sources.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- Wilson Foundation Academy is a bright, clean, modern building, with halls and stairwells maintained in excellent condition.
- Many teachers report that resources and technology in this school meet their needs; however, there appears to be some uneven distribution of resources available for implementing effective instruction for students. There is a reported need for providing adequate resources for self-contained classrooms.
- Some teachers indicate a need for leveled trade books for their reading program, and a need for additional books for classroom libraries.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Ensure equitable distribution of resources, and ensure that self-contained classrooms, as well as intervention classes, have sufficient resources, as needed.
- Provide trade books for classroom libraries to increase opportunities for meaningful reading.

PART 3: CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Wilson Foundation Academy's administration and staff are to be commended for their efforts in providing the School Quality Review (SQR) Quality Indicators documentation and the submission of their Comprehensive Educational Plan, as well as other relevant background information that assisted with the review.

The SQR Report serves to provide targeted information about teaching and learning. The observational information for this report was gathered during a three-day on-site review. This report reflects the review team's findings and recommendations based on these observations and a review and analysis of the school's documents and data.

The findings and recommendations resulting from this Comprehensive SQR Report should be used as a basis for the planning and development of Wilson Foundation Academy's Comprehensive Educational Plan for the 2011-2012 school year.