

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code/DBN:	261600010041
District Name:	Rochester City School District
School Name:	Kodak Park Elementary School - School 41
School Address:	279 Ridge Road West, Rochester NY 14615
Principal:	Marion Whitfield
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year 1) Comprehensive Elementary ELA- All Students, Black Students, Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Area(s) of Identification:	Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	January 10 – 12, 2011

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“We are a safe, nurturing, professional learning community engaging our students in effective research based instruction. We are building an educational foundation that prepares our students for high school, college, work, and 21st century citizenship.”

PART 2: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- Although there was evidence of a schoolwide focus on formal assessments (recent school performance data from the NYS School Report Card, nySTART Report, DIBELS, etc.), there was little evidence that data were used to inform instruction. There was no evidence that data were reviewed across grade levels to adjust instruction based on assessment results.
- There was some evidence of an attempt to organize data by learning standard; however, these efforts did not include an analysis of performance indicators to directly impact classroom instruction.
- There was limited evidence that formative assessment data were collected and used to differentiate instruction in order to address students’ diverse needs.
- There was insufficient evidence to document that formative assessments are used to monitor student progress or to modify curriculum, level of rigor, or pacing.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school administrative team should ensure that teachers are provided training on data analysis and how to effectively use data to inform instruction and intervention strategies.
- Grade-level teams should examine assessments performance trends 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 along with the District should ensure that teachers are trained in the collection and analysis of data to inform differentiated instruction. The school leadership should provide teachers with training in the delivery of differentiated instruction and monitor the implementation of the instructional strategy through walkthroughs and formal and informal observations.
- Formative assessments should be used to improve progress monitoring. The resulting data should be analyzed and used to inform the planning of standards-based instruction and the differentiating of instruction to meet the specific needs of students.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Schoolwide schedules provide time for Academic Intervention Services (AIS) during the school day. There was little evidence of differentiated instruction or intervention in general education classrooms. Walk-to-Intervention was noted on schedules; however, it was not observed in action except for one pull-out phonics intervention in a small group setting. There was little evidence of additional classroom intervention provided during the ELA period or at any other time during the school day. It was reported that AIS was provided after school and informally through teacher tutoring; however, at the time of the visit, there was little evidence that AIS were being effectively implemented.
- The New York State Standards, Rochester curriculum agendas, curriculum maps, lesson plans, and rubrics were not posted in most classrooms, nor were they referred to during classroom observations. Evidence of the use of instructional rubrics was limited to few postings in the hallway of exemplary writing samples. Although performance levels were posted in some classrooms, there was limited evidence of shared rubrics and/or grading policies.
- Rigorous learning was evident in some classrooms, but this was inconsistent throughout the school. Most observed lessons focused on lower levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy, such as recall and basic comprehension; there was little evidence of tasks requiring higher order thinking skills. Lessons often involved students “listening to” a teacher and, in a few cases, copying down notes; few lessons involved active learning and an inquiry approach.
- There was some evidence that reading instruction in observed classrooms encompassed the five pillars of literacy. The use of comprehension instructional strategies were noted in some classrooms; yet questioning was at a recall and basic comprehension level. Additional vocabulary was previewed and pretaught in a very traditional way (copying down the definition in a notebook); there was minimal connection to the word walls in the classrooms.
- There was limited evidence of differentiated instruction to meet student needs in observed general education classrooms. While guided reading levels were referenced in classrooms, there was no observation of leveled reading in the ELA classes. Students were observed listening to a read-aloud of grade level literature and/or reading the same piece of text in small groups or with partners. There was, however, some evidence of accommodations to classroom instruction in the integrated special education classrooms. In many classrooms, teacher-directed whole class instruction was the instruction strategy predominately in use. Students sat passively for extended periods of time, with few authentic learning activities, question/answer periods or expectations for active student engagement.

- There was little evidence that writing strategies are being taught and that students are expected to write frequently during ELA classes.
- In observed co-teaching classrooms, co-teaching roles were not balanced with instructional responsibilities and generally did not increase differentiated instruction in the classroom.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leadership team should review the school’s AIS plan to ensure that the plan sufficiently addresses the diverse needs of students.
- School leaders should ensure the development of instructional plans, pacing calendars and thematic study units for ELA and mathematics. These plans should provide for differentiating instruction based on student need and ensure that students at Levels 1 and 2 receive the specific instruction and support they need.
- The Principal should ensure that the length of teacher directed whole class lessons are minimized to allow time for authentic student learning activities to be embedded into every lesson. Teachers should use effective lesson pacing to maximize the use of instructional time monitor and adjust teaching.
- Teachers should be provided with professional learning opportunities that focus on research-based strategies for strengthening comprehension and vocabulary instruction.
- The school administrative team should emphasize direct teaching of reading comprehension strategies with teacher modeling and ensure that teachers provide opportunities for students to practice newly learned strategies. Students should be involved in daily extensive teacher directed authentic reading and writing activities to improve ELA skills. Additional time should be provided for independent reading for students who often have limited opportunities for reading outside of school. Opportunities for students to write in response to literature should be provided.
- The Principal should establish an expectation that every teacher write lesson plans that involve students in active, meaningful learning during every lesson. Teachers should develop and distribute expectations for writing strategies to be taught during classes. The Principal should hold teachers accountable for implementation of writing strategies.
- The co-teaching model should be revisited to ensure that teachers who work together have clear responsibilities and that both teachers actively engage with students. For example, one teacher could work with a small group to provide targeted reinforcement to students who need additional support while the other conferences with students. Co-teachers should plan together so that students benefit from an enhanced student teacher ratio and individual, small group and specialized instruction. The school leadership team should provide PD and observe instructional practices during formal and informal observations.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- The master schedule was not up-to-date and contained errors; classroom visitations had to be modified on several occasions. In some instances, classroom schedules did not accurately indicate the instruction occurring in the classroom during that time period. Many instances were noted of teacher breaks during the ELA period and/or “changes” to the schedule.

- There was a clear sense of order in many classrooms, although rules and expectations were visibly posted in only a few classrooms. Positive reinforcement and opportunities for praise were observed without connection to the schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) framework.
- There was evidence that time was set aside for grade level teams to meet, however; there was limited evidence of a shared purpose for this time or a clear understanding of the goals for the meetings.
- There was limited evidence of clear expectations for teachers to complete weekly lesson plans.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Create a school master schedule and require that school administrators approve the changes and inform office staff of the changes. It is essential that school office personnel be able to locate teachers and students quickly when necessary. Future classroom schedules should accurately reflect what is being taught to ensure students receive adequate instructional time for each subject.
- Consistent student behavior management strategies that are based on PBIS should be established. The school leadership team should require every teacher to use these standardized strategies for classroom management.
- Professional learning opportunities about team meeting protocols and clear outcomes for meetings from the school leadership would provide the structure needed to ensure the effective use of this planning time. School leaders should ensure that grade level planning time is focused on teaching and learning and used for developing plans for differentiating instruction, developing rubrics, and creating lessons with embedded supports and scaffolding.
- The school leadership should set expectations for improving teacher lessons to more actively engage students in authentic learning activities. Administrators should conduct frequent walkthroughs to monitor these improvements for implementation and provide timely and appropriate feedback.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- Available evidence indicates that the school does not provide adequate support for students classified as Emotionally Disturbed.
- Transition supports for students transferring to the middle school need to be strengthened, especially for at-risk students.
- It was reported that inclusion, special education, ESOL and Bilingual teachers were not involved in departmental and team decision-making.
- The new principal is working to rebuild a strong parent/school partnership.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Principal should ensure that the District provides sufficient special education support to meet the needs of students with disabilities.
- Transition programs to improve communication between the elementary and middle schools should be developed and implemented.
- The administrative team should ensure that inclusion teachers, special education, bilingual and ESOL teachers are involved in grade level meetings.

- The Principal should continue the strengthening of home-school partnerships by actively encouraging parent involvement in School #41 through structured school activities and by making school staff available for parents who need to meet with teachers or administrators.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- A culture of shared professional accountability is needed to move toward student centered instruction, analyzing and using data to inform instruction, shared decision making, and improved classroom behavior management as outlined in the code of conduct for students and teachers. These efforts will require sustained professional development efforts.
- Interviews revealed a demonstrated need for providing shared best practices across grade levels.
- Inconsistent co-teaching was observed throughout grade levels.
- The roles of teacher's aides and paraprofessionals are not clearly delineated.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Ensure that staff is adequately trained on the use and analysis of data to effectively differentiate instruction and improve student learning.
- Provide opportunities for sharing best practices across grade levels. Identify teachers who regularly differentiate instruction, and use explicit instructional strategies and scaffolding to provide peer coaching. Provide ongoing, sustained PD for student centered instruction and monitor for classroom implementation.
- Provide sustained PD on the effective teaching of reading comprehension strategies and developing written responses to literature.
- Provide sustained PD to co-teachers to ensure the maximum use of two adults in a classroom and to facilitate differentiated instruction. Co-teachers should be assigned based on strengths and areas of expertise.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities for teacher aides and paraprofessionals. Teachers should receive professional development to maximize the use of instructional paraprofessionals to support classroom learning.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- Classroom libraries are outdated and do not support classroom instructional goals.
- The school library was only open for classroom use two days a week, which is insufficient for teachers wishing to enhance instruction by using books and technology, including the computer lab.
- There was limited evidence of the use of technology in general education classrooms.
- Several classrooms were disorganized and contained materials that were not used on a regular basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Classroom libraries should be updated by conducting a comprehensive inventory of books in each classroom. The school administrative team should provide adequate resources for teachers to update the classroom libraries in conjunction with the school librarian.
- The utilization of all available research databases and district links to support instruction should be increased by expanding the number of hours that classes have access to the school library. This will provide more opportunities for accessing library books and for classes to utilize the computer lab and SMART Board technology to support instruction. The school leadership should ensure that classroom teachers and the librarian collaborate on the use of the resources.
- Administrative staff should provide professional development in the use of technology to improve instructional practice, and teachers should be held accountable for implementing these strategies in their classrooms.
- School leaders should review and revise current school standards for maintaining an organized classroom environment and monitor classrooms to ensure that each room is set up to foster and promote student learning.

PART 3: CONCLUDING STATEMENT

School administrators, staff, and District administrators are to be commended for their assistance throughout the visit.

The School Quality Review Report serves to provide targeted information about teaching and learning in the school. This report reflects the review team's findings and recommendations based on on-site observations and a review and analysis of school documents and data. The findings and recommendations resulting from this Comprehensive School Quality Review Report should be used as a basis for the planning and development of School 41's Comprehensive Educational Plan for the 2011-2012 school year.