

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

<b>DBN:</b>	01M332
<b>District Name:</b>	District 1
<b>School Name:</b>	University Neighborhood Middle School
<b>School Address:</b>	220 Henry Street, New York NY 10002
<b>Principal:</b>	Laura Peynado-Castro
<b>Accountability Phase/Category:</b>	Improvement (year-1) – Comprehensive
<b>Areas of Identification:</b>	English Language Arts - All Students; Hispanic Students and Economically Disadvantaged Students Mathematics - All Students; Hispanic Students and Economically Disadvantaged Students
<b>Dates of On-site Review:</b>	April 3 – 4, 2012

**PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT**

“The mission of the University Neighborhood Middle School is to provide a nurturing experience that helps students develop a positive self-image and achieve academic and social growth that will enable them to enter and succeed in an academically rigorous high school. Our University Neighborhood Middle School CARES values are; Consistency, Achievement, Respect, Empathy, Shared, Responsibility.”

**PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS**

- School leaders have developed a culture of collegiality among school staff.
- Teachers have infused technology into their instructional practice.
- Teachers feel empowered and supported by school leaders.
- The school provides a safe, clean, and nurturing environment for students.

## **PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA**

#### **FINDING:**

Based on a document review and interviews by the review team, there is evidence that the school collects a wide range of data that is analyzed and disaggregated at the individual student and subgroup level. The progress of individual student subgroups is tracked, and there is evidence that teachers have a great deal of information available to plan lessons using this data. There is limited evidence that all teachers consistently use the data available to plan lessons. Some students make limited progress because lessons are not consistently designed to meet their academic needs.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

School leaders should ensure that all teachers use summative, interim, and formative student performance data to design skill-based activities for small groups of students with similar needs. This data should be used to adjust the planned curriculum, with a special focus on at-risk students and identified subgroups. School leaders, through the observation process, should regularly monitor teacher use of data to plan lessons that meet the needs of all subgroups. School leaders should also provide professional development (PD) to teachers to ensure that they have the capacity to use data appropriately to meet the needs of their students.

### **II. TEACHING AND LEARNING**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- A review of lesson plans and classroom observations by the review team indicate that some teachers of English language arts (ELA) and mathematics use data to group students and in some cases provide additional support and resources to students who require assistance. Classroom observations indicate, however, that the planning for and the implementation of differentiated instruction is inconsistent across content areas. There is limited evidence that all teachers consistently plan differentiation to deepen and extend the learning of those who work quickly or to modify tasks for those who need additional support. As a result, all subgroups do not consistently make progress.
- A review of documentation by the review team indicates that, in many classes, teachers plan a range of activities to engage students for the full instructional period. However, in a few classes, the review team observed students not engaged for the full period. There was a loss of instructional time in classes where this occurred. Additionally, there was limited evidence that teachers throughout the content areas consistently summarize lessons and assess students' understanding to determine how well they have mastered the lesson.
- The review team's observation of the school's book clubs, which are used to provide Academic Intervention Services (AIS) to students, shows that teachers are generally well prepared and students attend regularly. However, the instruction provided during book clubs varied from classroom to classroom. In some classes, students were focused and engaged with the text. In other classes, students

listened passively and expressed little interest in the material. As a result, there is limited evidence that the book clubs consistently impact the learning of students.

- Observations by the review team indicated that a team teaching model was used in some classes to support the English Language Learners (ELLs) in the content areas. In classes where subject area teachers do not have the support of an ELL specialist, students received inconsistent support for English language acquisition and did not consistently contribute to class discussions.
- A review of documentation indicates that the school provided PD on using questioning strategies to develop students' higher order thinking and language skills. In many classrooms, there is evidence that teachers are applying these strategies; however, classroom observations by the review team indicated that a few teachers did not use adequate wait time in questioning, limiting the ability of students to develop and articulate their ideas. Additionally, some teachers did not ensure that all students responded to questions.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- School leaders should provide further PD opportunities for teachers on a variety of instructional strategies to promote differentiation of instruction. The focus of the PD should be on the use of data to drive lesson planning and instruction. Strategies taught during PD should focus on developing learning tasks that match the academic needs of identified subgroups. School leaders should regularly monitor teachers' planning and instructional practice in the classroom to ensure that teachers consistently use differentiated activities to support student learning throughout the school. Ongoing PD should be provided for teachers needing additional support with using data to match tasks to the individual needs of students.
- School leaders should monitor lessons to ensure that learning time is maximized and used effectively. Teachers should plan effective closures so that students summarize the day's lesson, the teacher is able to assess the degree to which students mastered the day's content, and students are able to efficiently transition to the next class.
- School leaders should evaluate the current book club program. School leaders should ensure that the clubs support ELA instruction and provide at-risk students with necessary remediation. School leaders should consider using teachers with successful book clubs to support and develop other teachers who may need assistance with implementing this program. School leaders should create a cycle of inter-visitations where teachers who need additional support view effective motivational strategies developed by their colleagues. School leaders should regularly monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the book clubs.
- School leaders should seek ways of using the expertise of the English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher to support subject area teachers who teach classes with ELLs. Lesson planning should be evaluated to ensure that strategies used in classes with ELLs are appropriate to meet the needs of these students. School leaders should consistently monitor the implementation of these strategies by content-area teachers to ensure that the needs of ELLs are met in all classroom settings.
- School leaders should identify teachers who need additional support using questioning skills and provide additional PD for those teachers. Teacher lesson plans should include pre-created questions that require critical thinking and discussion. Teachers should use wait time and not allow students to opt-out of class

discussions. Teachers should use random selection and avoid calling exclusively on willing student volunteers.

### **III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

#### **FINDING:**

In the past, the school had a coach for ELA and mathematics; however there are currently no coaches to support ELA and mathematics teachers in developing content, curriculum, and strategies. Classroom observations by the review team indicate that some areas of instruction, particularly in mathematics, need further development. There is evidence to suggest that the ELA and mathematics teams have not identified which key skills students are lacking that are limiting students' progress.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

School leaders should identify staff with expertise in both ELA and mathematics within the school to serve as content area specialists. School leaders should conduct PD on a regular basis and monitor instruction by teachers to ensure that they are using the techniques learned in PD to improve instruction. School leaders should use the resources available from the Network, including the achievement coach, PD opportunities and inter-visitations to similar schools within the Network, that have proved to be effective in improving student performance.

### **IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- Based on interviews with school leaders, the review team found that AIS are provided through the book clubs, Ivy Key, New York University (NYU), and are embedded into the regular and extended day instructional programs. However, there was little evidence that AIS consistently takes place throughout the day for both of the identified subject areas. The lessons the review team observed showed that AIS takes place during the ELA period in the form of book clubs, and students are not targeted to receive additional support. There is little evidence that AIS is provided to support students in mathematics. As a result, students who need additional support in mathematics are not receiving targeted services to ensure their progress.
- Interviews and document reviews conducted by the review team indicate that the school has many community based organization (CBO) partnerships providing afterschool tutoring and arts enrichment. There was limited evidence that school leaders evaluate the impact of the services provide by the CBOs to ensure that they are meeting the needs of students.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- School leaders should ensure that struggling students are provided with opportunities to receive academic support in both ELA and mathematics. Additionally, school leaders should ensure that all teachers providing AIS and other intervention services are trained and provided with the materials and supervision

necessary to positively impact student achievement in both ELA and mathematics. School leaders should monitor AIS implementation through observations and walkthroughs.

- School leaders should consistently monitor the impact of the work of the CBOs in the extended day program to ensure students are engaging in activities to improve their learning.

## **V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **FINDINGS:**

- A review of documentation and interviews with teachers indicated to the review team that the school has a schoolwide PD calendar and teachers receive surveys to determine their individual needs and interests. Content area meetings are held twice a week to enable teachers to discuss instructional strategies. Evidence also shows that two foci this year are questioning strategies and differentiation. However, the review team's observation of classroom instruction indicates that there is inconsistent implementation of these learned PD strategies by all teachers.
- Based on a document review and interviews, the review team found that teachers have many opportunities to attend PD and to take part in schoolwide, research based PD methodologies to support instructional practice. In some mathematics classrooms, instruction is whole group and teacher directed, which limits the engagement of students. Observation of lessons and interviews by the review team indicate inconsistency in the teaching of mathematics.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- School leaders should consistently monitor the implementation of PD by all teachers through regular formal and informal observations. The information from observations should be used to adjust the annual PD plan and provide individualized support to teachers as necessary.
- School leaders should work with the Network to find appropriate PD for mathematics teachers that supports the development of their content knowledge. Teacher teams should develop coherent instructional strategies to be used by all teachers to ensure the continuity of instruction for all students. School leaders should regularly monitor the impact of the PD in mathematics classrooms.

## **VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

### **FINDING:**

Based on a document review, classroom observations, and interviews, the review team found evidence that the school is well provisioned with books and technology. However, there is a limited supply of resources to meet the needs of students with disabilities, such as manipulatives and adaptive texts.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

School leaders should ensure that teachers of students with disabilities are provided with all of the additional instructional materials necessary to support instruction.

**PART 4: CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

The findings and recommendations noted in the report are intended to guide the school's inquiry, planning, and the development of the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) for school year 2012-13. The school should also continue its efforts in the implementation of the following Regents Reform Agenda initiatives: P-12 Common Core Learning Standards, Data Driven Instruction and the Annual Professional Performance Reviews for teacher effectiveness.