

**NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability**

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

DBN:	04M146
District Name:	District 4
School Name:	PS 146 Ann M. Short
School Address:	421 East 106 Street, Manhattan, New York 10029
Principal:	Mona Silfen
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year-1) - Comprehensive
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts- All Students; Hispanic Students and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	March 6-7, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“It is our belief that we can educate each child to the fullest extent of his or her ability. It is our belief that we can effectively educate General Education, Special Education, and English Language Learner students to meet Standards of Excellence through collaboration amongst staff, parents, and the community. It is our belief that we will create a school environment that fosters and develops students' cognitive, creative and social growth”.

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The school has provided professional development (PD) on the new P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and teachers are beginning to integrate the standards in the planning, assessment and the delivery of instruction.
- Parents interviewed indicated that the school is responsive in helping them with their children’s needs.
- The school has a strong partnership with the International Center for the Disabled (ICD). For the past 13 years, this organization has provided on-site mental health services to students and their families, i.e., individual and group counseling, crisis intervention and a summer program.
- Teachers meet and plan collaboratively with grade leaders and in grade level Inquiry Team meetings.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- In the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP), the school indicated that a goal for June 2012 was to increase critical thinking through writing by 40 percent for students in grades 3-5. Student portfolios contained few examples of completed writing pieces produced during the school year. There was also minimal teacher feedback provided on these pieces. In the classes observed by the review team, there was limited evidence of questioning techniques that promoted higher order thinking skills. Student work both in portfolios and displayed in the classroom did not always contain a rubric to inform students of their progress or areas needing improvement.
- The school is using several forms of interim assessment data. However, there was little evidence that the collected data is being analyzed and that skills and performance objectives are measured comprehensively to obtain a valid view of student progress and achievement across the grades and subgroups.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Interim benchmarks should be established to ensure CEP goals are on track to be met or appropriately reviewed and modified. PD should be provided to support teachers in developing and demonstrating critical thinking and problem solving skills in a variety of forms, including writing across content. PD activities should include modeling the use of rubrics to provide teacher and peer feedback and student self assessment. School leaders should make questioning techniques and the use of rubrics a focus for teacher walkthroughs and observations and monitor the quality and quantity of student writings in student portfolios.
- PD support should be provided for staff to develop the essential teacher skills needed to use student performance data, summative, interim, and formative, to create instructional groups, design skill-based activities for small groups of students with similar needs and adjust the planned curriculum with a special focus on at-risk students and identified subgroups. Data should be used as a focus for teaching and learning. The school leaders should monitor the use of data in classroom practice during walkthroughs and observations.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- There is limited evidence that the school has developed a written curriculum for ELA. Interviews with multiple constituencies indicated the school is implementing a combination of Georgia units of study and purchased programs along with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) as the basis for their ELA instruction.
- Most of the instruction observed by the review team was teacher directed. Teachers rarely asked supplementary or higher order questions to assess student knowledge or understanding. In the majority of

classes, questioning was limited to factual recall or closed questions requiring one word responses from students. Students had few opportunities to engage in group discussions with a stated purpose.

- There was limited evidence of differentiation of instruction. Students participated in the same lesson activities. Lesson plans that were provided did not include provisions for differentiation of instruction in product, process or content.
- Displayed student work was often not evaluated, and when teacher comments were provided, the feedback did not provide specific, actionable next steps for student to improve. In writing folders, a generic rubric was maintained; however, teachers did not always complete the teacher comment section. Within the student writing folders, there were final pieces of writing that contained misspellings and incorrect punctuation. It was observed that feedback was limited to a checkmark with no quantifiable grade.
- SMART Boards and Prometheus white boards were available in some classes. Teachers used these tools mostly as projection boards and not as interactive tools to support instruction for students with varied learning modalities.
- There was little evidence that the school has developed a schoolwide grading policy to evaluate student performance consistently across grades and content areas. The school leader indicated that the school uses benchmarks from Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) and report card grades from each marking period; but there is no written schoolwide grading policy protocols in place to evaluate student performance consistently across grades and content areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- All teachers and school leaders should participate in PD for planning and implementing a rigorous curriculum with delivery methods that are student-centered. The curriculum should be the basis for assessing individual student mastery and progress. Walkthroughs and formal evaluations should include feedback for teachers to address both their delivery and content knowledge of the ELA curriculum.
- School leaders should identify teachers who have effectively integrated higher order questioning techniques into their instructional practice that enable students to participate in a meaningful conversation. PD, including inter-visitations to the model classes, should be provided to support teachers in developing higher order questioning techniques and applying those strategies during lessons to build students' critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- The school leader should provide PD for teachers on a variety of instructional strategies to promote differentiation of instruction. The focus of the PD should be the alignment of instructional materials, lesson planning and instruction and ensuring that tasks match the academic needs of identified subgroups. School leaders should regularly review teacher planning and instructional practice to ensure that differentiated activities are appropriately implemented throughout the school. Additional PD should be provided for teachers who continue to need support with using data to align tasks to the individual needs of students.
- Teachers should use rubrics as an integral tool in planning and assessing student work. Teachers should participate in PD activities that model the use of rubrics to provide teacher and peer feedback and student self assessment. School leaders should monitor student writing work in folders and on display and evaluate the quality of feedback provided to ensure that it helps students improve.

- The school leadership should provide training to ensure teachers effectively use SMART Boards to support instruction. School leaders should ensure that strategies learned in PD are fully implemented in the classroom so that technology is routinely integrated into teaching and learning.
- The school leaders should review and revise the current grading practices to provide consistency across all grades. The grading policy should be easily accessible to students to ensure they are aware of their academic progress and what the next steps are for them to make adequate progress and the criterion that will be used to determine their marking period grade. These policies should be known to students and parents. School leaders should monitor to ensure consistent implementation of these policies.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- There was limited evidence in lesson evaluations, observations or feedback to teachers that they are held accountable to integrate strategies learned in PD into their daily instruction. The Principal and Assistant Principals (AP) do not indicate through their written classroom observations that they are checking for implementation of initiatives or PD training.
- The school received a Robin Hood Library grant four years ago; however, the certified Librarian/Media Specialist left the school last year. The school leader has placed the school Wellness Coordinator in the library position on a part-time basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leaders should use the observation process to monitor and hold teachers accountable for implementing skills learned during their instructional delivery. The school leaders should develop detailed recommendations based on PD provided and specific next steps in their observation reports.
- The school leader should seek to hire a certified Librarian/Media Specialist to encourage and reinforce reading and research for all students and to ensure that the library is an integral part of the school's literacy program.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- Classrooms libraries were observed to be leveled and divided into genres; however, the collection of books in the genres is limited.
- The school has an Absent Teacher Reserve (ATR) licensed guidance counselor providing mandatory services. However, transitional services have not been provided by the guidance counselor for grade 5 students who are moving to middle schools. Rather, the school leader stated that classroom teachers are currently providing this service.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leader should purchase more leveled trade books for the classroom libraries with an emphasis on purchasing more non-fiction books to prepare students for meeting the CCLS.
- The ATR guidance counselor along with the parent coordinator should work in collaboration to provide parent workshops regarding transition to middle school and the process for selecting a school. The ATR guidance counselor should also provide articulation services to grade 5 students making the transition to middle school.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- The school has not developed a comprehensive PD plan. While the school offers many opportunities for PD (both onsite and externally) and there was a PD calendar listing the dates that ELA consultants will be visiting the school from September 2011 through May 2012, the calendar did not identify the topics for PD.
- Based on the review team's interviews with teachers and review of the PD agendas, there is no evidence that PD is being provided to address teacher and student needs. During interviews, school leaders and teachers were not able to cite specific grade level trends based on an analysis of the previous year's student test results.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should develop a comprehensive PD plan that is aligned with school goals by using the available school data. The PD plan should be structured and detailed and in alignment with the school's CEP goals. The plan should take into account the differentiated needs of the staff and students. The plan should have as its primary focus improving teaching, learning and student achievement.
- School leaders should ensure that teacher needs are being addressed using a needs assessment survey, classroom observations, and student data. Grade level trends based on student data should be identified to ensure that PD is being provided to address those needs. Classroom observations should be used to monitor that the teachers are implementing the skills learned during PD sessions.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDING:

There are more than 1,500 books in the school library; however, the library is used as a multi-purpose room. There is no section for native language books, and only one Spanish book was observed on a shelf.

RECOMMENDATION:

The school leader should consider restoring the library to full operation and ensure that there is a selection of native language books that reflect the various cultures within the school.

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.