

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

DBN:	09X303
District Name:	District 9
School Name:	IS 303 Leadership and Community Service
School Address:	1700 Macombs Road, Bronx, NY 10453
Principal:	Patricia Bentley
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year-1) - Comprehensive
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts - All Students; African American Students; Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	February 14 -15, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“We will strive to provide a safe environment where all members of the community will be held accountable for the success of each member through efficient structures and clear expectations. We will provide learning experiences which develop the learner’s passion for the awareness of his or her own learning. We will utilize this passion for learning and educate the whole person by providing a wide variety of academic challenges and expose the student to diverse, nonacademic activities. We will improve staff practice and student performance by consistent reflection, feedback and evaluation. We will create a culture that recognizes and celebrates achievement. We will create an accessible learning environment where effort is recognized and celebrated, and members are encouraged to do one’s best.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- An established grade team structure is embedded in the school and fosters schoolwide collaboration.
- The school has developed a behavior management plan, is making progress in its implementation and has seen an improvement in student behavior.
- The school has an advisory program that addresses the social, emotional and academic progress of students.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

Finding:

The team's review of documentation and discussions with school leaders indicated that a range of assessment data is collected. However, class observations and materials reviewed by the team did not reflect the use of data to plan specific instructional interventions for students in the identified content area and subgroups.

Recommendation:

School leaders should disaggregate assessment data for all identified subgroups. The teachers should use this data to incorporate specific interventions and grouping strategies in their daily lesson plans. School leaders should conduct formal and informal observations and discuss individual student progress with teachers as part of the post-observation process. Targeted professional development (PD) should be provided, when indicated.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Documentation reviewed by the team showed that the school does not have a fully developed curriculum map for English language arts (ELA). Goals, objectives, explicit teaching points and strategies for daily instruction aligned with the New York State (NYS) standards and P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) were not delineated. Few differentiated instructional strategies to meet the needs of struggling learners, English language learners (ELLs) or students with disabilities were included.
- School leaders indicated that the school is using data to implement a new instructional model that focuses on small group instruction to meet the needs of all students. However, classroom observations demonstrated limited grouping to support the needs of students of different academic levels. All students worked on the same assignment, and materials were not differentiated to either scaffold learning for those who have not yet met the standard or challenge others to exceed the standard.
- The majority of instruction observed by the review team was teacher-directed. In-depth questioning that encouraged higher-level thinking was limited and most observed tasks did not foster higher order thinking of all students through active engagement using techniques such as small group activities or accountable talk protocols.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- To facilitate consistent delivery of curriculum, school leaders, in collaboration with teachers and with the support of the Network, should develop curriculum maps for ELA for daily instruction that align with NYS and CCLS and include specific teaching points and strategies. The curriculum maps should be vertically and horizontally aligned to ensure consistency across content areas and grades. These maps should

include models of appropriate scaffolding to meet the needs of the students in the identified subgroups, in particular, ELLs and students with disabilities.

- The school leaders should provide PD opportunities for all teachers on a variety of effective strategies that support differentiation of instruction. Data should be used as a tool for differentiating planning and instruction for students in all subgroups. Through formal and informal observations, school leaders should monitor differentiation in the classrooms through teacher planning and instructional practice. As part of the post-observation process, school leaders should analyze student progress with the teachers to determine the effectiveness of their differentiation methods and adjust instruction as indicated.
- School leaders should provide PD on classroom discussion techniques and other strategies that provide opportunities for students to be active learners. Additionally, teachers should include in their plans higher-level questions that extend students' thinking and analytical skills.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- School leaders were informally monitoring classroom instruction. However, the team's review of documents provided limited evidence that teachers received feedback regarding effective planning or implementation of differentiation based on the PD sessions they attended. As a result, there was limited evidence that teachers have received sufficient actionable and timely feedback with clear expectations for improvement of instructional practice.
- The school has identified behavior management as a goal and was making progress toward reaching this goal. However, this intense focus on improving the school culture has limited the time available to provide PD on content-specific instruction, higher order questioning techniques, or differentiation.
- Interviews and documentation indicated that the school leader practices distributive leadership that enhances the spirit of collaboration in the school. However, goals, expectations and responsibilities within the grade teams are not clearly delineated, decreasing their effectiveness in improving academic outcomes for all students.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- In addition to required formal observations, school leaders should conduct informal observations and focused walkthroughs that include written, time-bound, actionable feedback on how teachers can improve their practice. Follow up classroom visits should reference previous recommendations to ensure continuity. PD for the whole faculty and individual teachers should align with areas in need of support, identified through these observations and recommendations.
- While maintaining the progress in behavior management, school leaders should consider restructuring available time to provide PD that addresses effective content-specific instruction, higher order questioning techniques and differentiation strategies to meet the academic needs of all students in ELA.

- The school leaders should refine the academic vision and articulate a clearly-defined focus to improve student achievement. The workings of all teams should be redefined to support that vision and include procedures for keeping ongoing minutes/decision sheets that track follow up and ensure continuity. The school leaders should be regular participants in these meetings and closely monitor the minutes/decision sheets. Additionally, the Principal should consider including an instructional component in the grade team structure.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Finding:

School leaders and available data indicated that the majority of incoming grade 6 students are reading significantly below grade level.

Recommendation:

School leaders, with the support of the teachers, should disaggregate available data to identify specific literacy skills that address the needs of incoming students. This data should be used by teachers in all the content areas to differentiate instruction by providing assignments that begin at the students' instructional level, scaffold learning, and target individual student needs.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- Documents reviewed by the team indicated few PD opportunities are provided for teachers to strengthen their content knowledge as they integrate literacy strategies into the core curriculum.
- General education teachers have received limited PD focusing on strategies to support the individualized needs of ELLs and students with disabilities. Additionally, special education teachers and the English as a second language (ESL) teacher have received limited PD to support their students to access grade-level content.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should identify PD opportunities to strengthen teachers' content knowledge while embedding literacy strategies so as to ensure students in all subgroups can access grade-level content.
- The school leaders should assess the PD needs of the faculty and develop a comprehensive PD plan to ensure that all teachers receive appropriate individualized PD that will enable them to increase achievement for all students, including those in identified subgroups.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- Classroom visits and interviews revealed limited use of content-specific textbooks for Beginning and Intermediate ELLs who are mastering the English language. Teachers develop their own resources to support literacy instruction, and these materials were not aligned to content areas currently being taught. Most classroom libraries did not include materials and books in students' native languages to support knowledge within the content areas.
- The school had purchased interactive SMART Boards. In most classes observed by the review team, when the SMART Boards were used, they were used as a projection device and were not used interactively to support instruction. Additionally, students have limited access to computers in the classrooms.
- A school librarian and the library facilities are shared among three campus schools; however, staff interviews and library documents revealed that students are not regularly provided with scheduled access to the library collection or librarian. This lack of library programming does not ensure that all students and teachers utilize the librarian's expertise for literacy support, planning, and development of student research skills.
- Each classroom had a leveled library organized by genre and used by students. However, there were limited independent reading materials in languages other than English, reducing the opportunities for ELLs and former ELLs to strengthen their first language skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leaders should provide PD for teachers to develop methods of scaffolding to support students' access to grade-level content. School leaders and teacher representatives should identify content area texts and additional supplemental instructional materials in alternate formats and other comprehensive linguistic resources for students whose language performance level is emergent. Additionally, school leaders should identify content area texts on a range of reading levels to support students at all proficiency levels.
- School leaders, in collaboration with the technology committee, should survey teachers to identify their level of technological expertise and determine their PD needs. To ensure that technology becomes an integral part of classroom instruction, PD needs indicated in the survey, as well as those identified by school leaders, should be included in the school's comprehensive PD plan.
- School leaders should develop a long-range library usage plan to support development of independent student research skills and literacy instruction. This plan should include opportunities for teachers to integrate the library's computers into instruction and provide students with additional access to technology. School leaders should ensure that students have regularly scheduled access to the library.
- To strengthen the first language skills of ELLs and former ELLs, the school leaders should identify appropriate native language titles and materials aligned with student' interests and abilities to enhance classroom libraries.

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 CCLS, Data Driven Instruction and the Annual Professional Performance Reviews for teacher effectiveness.