

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

<b>DBN:</b>	09X414
<b>District Name:</b>	District 9
<b>School Name:</b>	Jonathan Levin High School for Media and Communications
<b>School Address:</b>	240 East 172 Street, Bronx, New York 10457
<b>Principal:</b>	Nasib Hoxha
<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 Graduation Rate
<b>Dates of On-site Review:</b>	April 3-4, 2012

**PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT**

“Our school’s mission is to develop the skills and knowledge that will prepare a diverse student population to take advantage of the burgeoning career opportunities in media and communications.

In addition to providing a comprehensive academic program, which will ensure the capacity of all students to meet graduation requirements, each student will gain a strong foundation in media literacy.

The Jonathan Levin High School for Media and Communications will provide a groundbreaking, media-based education where students will work collaboratively with professional mentors in the areas of film, television, print, and other media.”

**PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS**

- Hallways of the Jonathan Levin High School for Media and Communications reflect the media theme, with student photography displayed to celebrate the school, its accomplishments, and its students.
- The teachers and school staff are supportive of the students.
- School leadership has allocated common planning time for teachers.

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

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

#### **FINDINGS:**

- There was limited evidence of the use of item analysis of Regents exam performance in mathematics and English, or other data sources, to inform teacher practice and differentiate instruction for individual students.
- During interviews conducted by the review team, students reported setting goals at the start of each marking period. However, there was limited evidence that the students have a clear understanding of graduation requirements or that the school provides guidance, beginning in grade nine, to help students track their progress.
- There was limited evidence that the analysis of the data collected addressed the specific areas of English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics that need to be targeted for professional development (PD) in support of student achievement.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school leadership should establish procedures whereby item analysis of Regents exam performance in all subject areas, especially ELA and mathematics, is completed each semester. This analysis should inform class and tutorial support for those individual students who have not demonstrated a capacity to meet the standards. The analysis should also include identification of areas in need of additional support for student groups. In addition, the analysis should inform departmental unit planning and be used to identify areas of PD.
- Procedures for tracking the academic progress of the cohort should be established within a grade-level team meeting structure. The school leaders should establish procedures to ensure that all teachers and students are aware of graduation requirements and credit accumulation. All students should have a clear action plan for each semester that indicates their status towards meeting and addressing these requirements. Students should have opportunities for periodic conferences with teachers, school counselors and school leaders.
- The school leaders should establish procedures whereby teachers keep data binders with current academic data for each student, including periodic assessments, Individualized Educational Program (IEP) data and modifications, and English language learners (ELLs) status and scores. School leaders should provide PD to ensure that this information is used by teachers to develop and scaffold tasks, assignments, and assessments, and to measure student learning in lessons.

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

#### **FINDING:**

Classroom observations conducted by the review team indicated that although some students complete classroom tasks many were passively engaged in their learning. Many of the lessons are structured to meet neither the varying needs of small groups of students nor individual learning levels or styles. Teachers' lesson

plans inconsistently reflect meaningful strategies to address the specific skills, abilities, and academic needs of individual students and/or subgroups.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The school should support teachers in the development of unit and lesson plans that are aligned to the standards and differentiated to address the individual needs of students and/or subgroups in an effective manner. When planning lessons, teachers should reference specific instructional strategies and provide multiple entry points and learning activities that are scaffolded to meet the academic needs of individual students. School leaders should follow up regularly to monitor how planning is impacting teacher instruction and student achievement.

**III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

**FINDING:**

The school leadership consists of the Principal and four assistant principals. However, the coordination of their roles and responsibilities does not provide sufficient direct support for the supervision of instruction. Classroom observations conducted by the review team indicate that many teachers need supervisory guidance to improve pedagogy.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The school leader should reassess and redistribute supervisory resources to increase accountability for improvement of student learning. A top priority of the school leaders should be to monitor, supervise, and support instruction. All school leaders should set aside time daily for classroom observations, formal and informal, that focus on the effectiveness of the teachers' implementation of the set of strategically identified instructional practices learned during PD sessions. As the instructional leader, the Principal should also provide specific written feedback to all teachers through the formal and informal observation process.

**IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**

**FINDINGS:**

- School organization is such that students remain in the same classroom all day while teachers rotate from classroom to classroom. Based on classroom observations, the review team noted that instructional time is lost while teachers transition from room to room. In observed classes, the review team found a number of students were disengaged from the learning process. Classroom environments were often untidy and lacked displays of student work.
- The review team noted that teachers' daily schedules include a common planning time and that each day is designed to have a different focus. As a result, there is insufficient time allotted for grade level team meetings to address specific foci in greater depth.
- The school follows the New York City Discipline Code and has posted signs throughout the school highlighting what is expected of students. Interviews and classroom observations conducted by the review team indicated that the school has structured self-contained classrooms for all students to ensure a 'safe

environment’ and to address lateness, class cutting, and incidents in the hallways. However, student attendance is still a challenge for the school, and students reported that others leave classrooms freely and without consequence.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- School leaders, with a committee of teachers, should revisit the current policy of programming students to more effectively address the academic and social/emotional needs of adolescents. A revised policy should allow teachers to create a classroom environment that reflects their subject area, stimulates learning, and celebrates student progress.
- The school leaders should review the use of common planning time and consistently include grade level team meetings. Grade level teams should use this opportunity to track the progress of students in their cohort. In addition, these teams should share knowledge of specific students and barriers to learning. A plan should be adopted to address these needs to ensure student success. This should include a procedure for keeping ongoing minutes/decision sheets to allow follow ups and ensure continuity.
- A committee, including teachers, students and parents, should be convened to review the issues related to the learning environment and lateness to better outline what is expected of students and the consequences of their actions. This committee should also work to ensure that everyone understands these expectations. All members of the school community should be responsible for monitoring these expectations, and key members should be identified to follow-up. Additionally, the committee should strive to find ways to publicly and regularly acknowledge students and staff that go above and beyond expectations, creating a positive learning environment focused on success.

#### **V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

##### **FINDINGS:**

- The school’s PD plan includes a calendar of topics to be covered. Some agendas include topic description, participants, materials, and activities. However, a comprehensive plan for meeting the needs of individual and/or small groups of teachers was not evident. Teacher team meetings observed by the review team showed a variance in approach and process, with limited evidence of outcomes or next steps.
- PD takes place during the common planning period. The new P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and Danielson’s Framework for Teaching have been introduced. However, the review team observed few teachers integrating those best practices into lesson plans or classroom activities.
- The review team observed limited use of teaching strategies and materials that prepare students to answer the extended responses found in the New York State English and Mathematics Regents Exams.
- School leaders have intentionally structured a professional learning period for all instructional staff four times a week to promote understanding of the (CCLS) and the Danielson Framework for Teaching rubric. However, the meetings observed by the review team did not have a consistent focus, a process for learning, or defined outcomes.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- School leaders should develop a school-based PD committee to conduct a needs assessment and develop a comprehensive plan for PD. The plan should integrate the topics presented with a road map for teacher implementation and provide teachers a variety of PD based on individual needs. In addition, school leaders should conduct frequent, focused walkthroughs and provide specific written feedback to support teachers' implementation efforts.
- School leaders should make informal and formal observations to ensure that teachers are implementing the strategies introduced during PD into instructional practice.
- Teachers across the curriculum should employ ELA and mathematics strategies in the classroom that will assist students to build and master the skills necessary to be successful on NYS Regents exams, as well as in college or a career.
- The school leadership should share the responsibility of setting guidelines and closely monitoring teachers' professional learning periods. There should be a consistent structure for this work that includes specific protocols and clear expectations for promoting adoption of the CCLS and the Danielson Framework for Teaching rubric. These meetings should be facilitated by a lead teacher who has been identified by the group, with additional oversight and support by a school leader, when necessary.

## **VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

### **FINDINGS:**

- Classroom observations conducted by the review team found textbooks stored in classrooms; however, teacher interviews indicated that textbooks and resource materials are not always available to meet the needs and the varying ability levels of students. There was limited access to young adult novels or other supplemental materials
- Although a school library is available, the review team found limited evidence that students and teachers make use of the space or resources.
- The school has provided a laptop computer and projector to every teacher. Classroom observations conducted by the review team found that most teachers use these resources. Laptop computer storage carts with sets of 30 computers are available for teachers to use with students. However, there was minimal use of computers by students.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Supplemental materials, aligned with the varied needs and abilities levels of the students, should be available for instructional use.
- Teachers should include activities that promote the use of resources available in the school's shared library. School leaders should monitor the use of the library resources through the review of lesson plans and observations.

- School leaders should provide teachers with PD on strategies for integrating technology into lessons to ensure that students have exposure to these resources. School leaders should monitor the use of the technology resources by students through the review of lesson plans and observations.

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