

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

DBN:	10X368
District Name:	District 10
School Name:	In-Tech Academy (MS/HS 368)
School Address:	2975 Tibbett Avenue, Bronx, NY 10463
Principal:	Yvette Allen
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year-1) - Comprehensive English Language Arts - All Students; Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners; and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Area of Identification:	
Dates of On-site Review:	April 3 – 4, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

"We are committed to becoming self-reliant learners who are prepared through technology and academic rigor to become productive and responsible citizens of our local and global community."

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The school has a welcoming and nurturing atmosphere with good relationships among all stakeholders, thus providing a supportive learning community.
- Effective policies and procedures for day-to-day operations ensure that the school has a safe and secure environment.
- There is a culture of collaboration that ensures a common purpose from all teams in the school.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- The school staff collects and analyzes data from multiple data sources to assess student achievement. However, classroom observations and review of lesson plans by the review team show

that teachers do not consistently use this information to modify instruction to meet individual students' needs.

- The school staff makes use of item analysis from standardized assessments to target students' areas of need. However, review of documentation by the review team shows limited evidence that the school uses this approach to analyze teacher generated assessments to target interventions to students' learning needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should regularly monitor teachers' planning and instructional practice in the classroom to check that differentiated activities are in place throughout the school. Ongoing professional development (PD) should be provided for teachers who need additional support with using data to match assignments to the individual needs of students.
- School leaders should ensure that internal formative and summative data are used to inform instruction and monitor impact. Teachers should extend item analysis to include informal teacher generated tests and assessments in order to provide a wider range of information on which to base modifications to instruction at periodic intervals throughout the school year.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Classroom observations conducted by the review team found that although teachers use questioning to check for student understanding, the level of questioning did not consistently encourage students to apply their knowledge or to extend their thinking.
- There is a focus on reading and writing in most lessons. However, classroom observations by the review team revealed that this focus limits opportunities for ELLs to develop speaking and listening skills.
- Classroom observation and review of lesson plans by the review team indicate an inconsistent use of explicit strategy-based teaching in some classes.
- Technology is a focus in the school's mission statement, and the school has a technology plan in place. The school is equipped with desktop computers and SMART Boards in every classroom, and teachers have access to laptop computers and iPads. However, there was limited evidence that technology was being utilized or used as an interactive tool. In classes observed by the review team, the SMART Board was being used as a projector; in other classrooms students were not utilizing desktop or laptop computers. As a result, technology was not used to enhance student learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should provide PD for teachers in developing a variety of questioning techniques aimed at critical thinking and using problem solving skills appropriate to student development.

Teachers should ensure that strategies identified in training are implemented in daily instruction. School leaders should make questioning techniques a focus for observation.

- School leaders should provide PD on strategies to develop speaking and listening skills. Teachers should provide more opportunities for the development of speaking and listening skills when planning instruction, especially in classes with ELLs. The opportunities could include the use of “accountable talk” prompts; collaborative groups; and speaking and listening included in student assignments, with corresponding rubrics for assessment of these skills.
- School leaders should seek the support of the Network in providing PD on planning and implementing explicit and strategy-based teaching for all students, including students with disabilities and ELLs. School leaders should monitor PD effectiveness through formal and informal observations and provide additional support to teachers as needed.
- School leaders should review and revise the current technology plan to ensure the effective use of technology as aligned with the school’s mission. Staff should be surveyed to identify individual and collective needs, and a PD plan should be developed as a result of the findings. School leaders should identify model classrooms and provide inter-visitation opportunities for staff members. School leaders should also include the use of technology as a focus during formal and informal observations and provide additional support as needed.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- Interviews by the review team revealed that school leaders place a priority on monitoring instruction and providing developmental feedback. However, during subsequent walkthroughs, school leaders do not consistently monitor teachers to ensure that they have integrated this feedback into their pedagogical practices.
- Review Team document reviews and interviews showed that instructional leadership is provided by staff who have multiple roles, limiting the time available for instructional support. The school does not have a staff member to focus exclusively on improving instruction in ELA.
- A review of the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) by the review team found goals for improvement for ELA. However the goals address only one grade and do not include specific goals for identified subgroups. As a result, the plans do not fully reflect the instructional needs of all students.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should ensure that improvement strategies provided during observations are implemented. When follow-up observations are conducted, school leaders should ensure that these recommendations are put into practice. These recommendations should be used to inform individual PD plans for teachers.

- School leaders should explore additional possibilities for strengthening instruction and support in ELA, including the use of a literacy coach, model classrooms, or master teachers who are effective in improving student performance in ELA.
- School leaders should include in the CEP specific improvement goals for identified subgroups. These goals should include interim benchmarks for success and monitoring progress against them.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDING:

Interviews by the review team of teachers and school leaders indicate that the school provides time for common planning at grade level. However, special education and content area teachers meet to plan through informal arrangements made between individual teachers. This limits the time available for content level planning for these teachers.

RECOMMENDATION:

School leaders should create a formal common planning schedule in which teachers can meet across grade levels and content areas. Protocols and expectations should be established for the use of this time.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDING:

A review of the school's PD plan and interviews conducted by the review team show that the school provides multiple opportunities for training in various areas. However, the impact of these PD sessions on classroom practice is inconsistent.

RECOMMENDATION:

School leaders should conduct follow-up observations after PD sessions to ensure that teachers incorporate the strategies learned into the instructional program. The school leadership should develop detailed recommendations based on the PD provided and specific next steps in their observation reports to focus their next observation.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- Some classrooms observed by the review team had books categorized by genre, but not by reading level. The books were predominantly fiction books, limiting the choice and suitability of reading materials for students.

- Some classrooms visited by the review team had rubrics linked to student work, with teacher feedback displayed. However, this practice was inconsistent across the school, indicating that the required standards for high quality work was not always clear to students. Teacher feedback was not specific to individual assignments, leaving students unaware of what was needed to improve their work.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders and teachers should assess the current classroom library collections and provide resources for student independent reading. Libraries should include a variety of genres to accommodate students' interests. Libraries should be leveled to ensure that students select the appropriate reading material.
- Teachers should extend the use of rubrics to include displays in all classrooms to improve students' understanding of the standards required for high quality work. Teachers should include specific feedback to students so they are aware of what is needed for them to improve their work and move to the next level.

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.