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

**Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)**

# SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

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| **BEDS Code:** | 140-600-010-308 |
| **District Name:** | Buffalo City School District |
| **School Name:** | PS 198 International Preparatory School @ 187 |
| **School Address:** | 333 Clinton Street Buffalo, NY 14204 |
| **Principal:** | Kevin Eberle |
| **Accountability Phase/Category:** | Improvement (year-.1) - Comprehensive |
| **Area of Identification:** | English Language Arts (Middle-Level) - All Students; African American Students; Hispanic Students; and Economically Disadvantaged Students |
| **Dates of On-site Review:** | January 23 -24, 2012 |

## PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

"The International Preparatory School at Grover is a professional learning community that brings the world into focus. Through rigorous curriculum, professional development and unconditional regard that all children can learn, students will develop academic, language and leadership skills necessary for their success through college and the world. Through our partnerships with families, and community-based organizations, all stakeholders of the International Preparatory School at Grover will create an educational environment where economics, citizenship, culture and emotional intelligence lead to creating lifelong learners."

## PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The teachers care about all the students.
- The students are happy to come to school and reportedly feel safe.

## PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

**FINDING:**

The data that the school collects is not being analyzed rigorously by teachers to identify precisely what aspects of English Language Arts (ELA) need to be the specific focus for improvement. The analysis of data is not focused sharply enough to identify the key changes required in programs or the delivery needed to bring about urgent improvement in student progress.

**RECOMMENDATION:**
The school leader should request professional development (PD) support from the District in developing the essential teacher skills needed to implement a more rigorous and systematic analysis of the ELA data. The school should hone these skills to identify the aspects of ELA that are the greatest concern. Plans should be put in place to address these issues on either a school, grade or classroom level to ensure that these areas are a focus for teaching and learning. The school leaders should monitor and hold staff accountable to ensure that improvements are made.

### II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

**FINDINGS:**

- The International Preparatory School at 187 Grover Cleveland has had a 65 percent growth in English language learners (ELLs) since May of 2011. There were 119 ELLs in May 2011 and 196 ELLs in January 2012 out of a total of 553 students. The school has embraced these students, but a high expectation for their academic abilities, as evidenced by the instruction in ELA, was not observed by the review team.

- Fifteen percent of students are students with disabilities (83 students), which is the capacity for the school. For the most part, in integrated classes and in the small group interventions, positive behavioral supports for the students with disabilities were not observed by the review team, nor was there a positive classroom climate. Additionally, there was no discussion of the purpose of the lessons taught before, during, and at the closure of the lesson, nor were the students with disabilities engaged in the classroom activities. There was no evidence that instruction reflected student Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs).

- Much of the ELA instruction is teacher-directed, with accompanying work sheets and little variety of instructional strategies. Students have few opportunities to engage in conversations about the lesson by working in pairs or talking with different groups of students.

- Few examples of differentiated instruction were observed in ELA classrooms. There was little evidence that data was used to group students or to match tasks to the differing ability levels of students.

- Based on classroom observations, the review team concludes that the co-teaching model is not effective or skillfully implemented in ELA classrooms. Classroom observations by the review team show that for the majority of the instructional time, one teacher is primarily responsible for the delivery of ELA instruction and the other teacher's role is that of a teacher assistant. Therefore, students are not

benefiting from having two certified teachers in the classroom. Teachers are not effectively distributing their time or attention to provide additional support to all students or to work with small skill based groups. Co-teachers are not consistently planning lessons together, which negatively impacts the effectiveness of the co-teaching model.

- There is a lack of rigor in questioning strategies. Problem solving is lacking in the school. Students are asked to recall facts and details; they are not challenged to analyze, evaluate or synthesize information.

- Pacing and sequencing in some classrooms is weak, and learning time is not maximized. A slow instructional pace negatively impacts student attention span, and some students are off task and not deeply engaged in learning. Loss of instructional time was evident as students moved from one activity to another and from room to room. Lack of classroom management was evident in some classes and negatively impacted student learning.

- Student engagement in meaningful ELA instructional activities was often lacking. There were many lessons where instructional activities lacked challenge and did little to interest students. These same lessons did not provide students with opportunities to interact or work collaboratively. In these lessons, students were not active participants in the learning process.

- In the majority of ELA lessons, student learning goals were not developed and were not displayed. Few students were able to articulate what they were learning. Teachers did not routinely refer to student learning objectives or check that students had achieved them**.**

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- ELA teachers should be provided with Sheltered Instruction and Observation Protocol (SIOP) training to improve their interaction in the classroom with the ELLs. They should also be provided with support from the District in how to effectively instruct ELLs and maintain high expectations to improve their academic performance. The District should consider providing multilingual classroom aids to help address the communication barriers in the classrooms.

- The students with disabilities cohort requires specially designed classroom instruction that includes:
  - The teacher understands the student IEP and ensures the accommodations and modifications are taken into considerations in the classroom.
  - Staff reminds students with disabilities of behavioral expectations and acknowledges demonstrations of that behavior;
  - Staff models the act of making positive statements and creates activities designed to ensure positive classroom interactions;
  - Staff makes explicit statements that students with disabilities will successfully achieve stated objectives;
  - Staff explicitly teaches and re-teaches necessary ELA skills and strategies as well as organizational strategies; and
  - The teacher explicitly connects prior and upcoming lessons.

- School leaders should provide PD to introduce teachers to a wider variety of ELA instructional strategies that can be used in the classroom to promote greater student participation in the learning process.

Teachers should be expected to implement these strategies, and the school leader should monitor implementation and provide additional support and PD for teachers when necessary.

- The school leader should provide PD opportunities for teachers on a variety of instructional practices to promote differentiation of instruction. The focus of the PD should be on the use of data to drive lesson planning and instruction. Strategies should focus on ensuring that tasks match the academic needs of the identified subgroups. The school leader should regularly monitor teacher planning and instructional practice in the classroom to check that differentiated activities are in place throughout the school. Ongoing PD should be provided for teachers who continue to struggle with using data to match instruction to the individual needs of the students.

- The school should provide on-site training to support full implementation of the co-teaching model strategies. Scheduled common planning time should be provided so that co-teachers can equally share in the planning and delivery of effective instruction. School leaders should model effective co-teaching strategies thorough the formal and informal teacher observation process and ensure that best practices are shared across the school. Where teachers are not effective, further PD should be provided. Department meetings should be used to review lesson plans to ensure that the learning goals are aligned with the planned instruction. The school leader should regularly monitor the incorporation of learning goals in direct instruction and highlight good practices in sharing learning goals as the focus of an inter-visitation schedule.

- The teachers should move from questions that require one-word answers or recall to questions that require students to support answers by citing text, by elaborating on the answers of other students and by summarizing and rephrasing new information. 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; use random selection and/or avoid calling exclusively on willing student volunteers; and also require students to answer in complete sentences.

- School leaders should ensure appropriate pacing and sequencing of instruction by requiring teachers to post the flow of the lesson with times. The students should clearly understand expectations and be self-directed and personally accountable. For example, students should start and complete the Do Now within the first few minutes of class. Teachers should plan effective closures so that students summarize the day's lesson so 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. Classroom rules and consequences should be discussed and posted.

- Through collaboration during common planning time and PD opportunities provided by the District, teachers should ensure that all student work is appropriately challenging and demanding. Teachers should provide regular opportunities for students to work cooperatively and discuss issues so that they become more proactive learners. The leadership team should carry out regular observations of lessons to monitor that this is consistently occurring.

- The school leader should ensure, by observations and walkthroughs, that learning objectives are displayed and discussed with students at the beginning, middle and end of lessons. This practice should be quickly embedded and follow-up visits by the school leader should be made to classes to ensure its implementation.

## III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

**FINDINGS:**

- The school leader has empowered teachers to make decisions on many school issues and, consequently, there are many teacher leaders in the faculty. However, teachers are asking for guidance in how to improve their practice to increase student performance.

- School leaders do not set high enough expectations for the performance of all students and staff. There is no strategic plan that clearly and specifically outlines what roles key staff are to play or how progress towards challenging and achievable goals is to be measured. A culture of high achievement is not fully embraced by all staff and school leaders.

- Despite the need for PD for teachers of ELA, ELLs and students with disabilities, the school leadership has not developed a plan that ensures all teachers will receive the necessary training.

- School leaders do not monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in an effective manner to bring about sustained improvement in classroom practice.

- The supporting documentation required for the School Quality Review (SQR) provided by the school leader was limited. Additional supporting documentation would have provided a more comprehensive review. This limited the depth of the review.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school leader should ensure that he and the professional staff get the critical information and training necessary to bring about student academic improvement. There should be a sense of urgency surrounding this effort.

- The Principal, with the support of the leadership team and the District, should develop a Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) to improve ELA achievement. The school leaders and staff should work together to articulate a clear vision that drives the school towards high student achievement and clearly outlines the responsibilities of staff and leaders. The plan should include goals, action plans, PD, and use all resources available through the District. The implementation of the plan should be monitored carefully and its impact on student achievement routinely measured.

- The school leadership should seek to hire substitutes and arrange coverage so that all teachers of ELA, ELLs and students with disabilities receive the necessary PD in ELA. These workshops should take place at an appropriate time to ensure that these teachers can attend. The school leadership should set expectations that strategies learned in the PD sessions are incorporated into teacher practice.

- The school leadership should implement a classroom observation schedule to monitor more closely the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Written feedback should be provided for all formal, informal and walkthrough observations, including clear targets for improvement. Follow-up observations should be included in the schedule to check on progress. The school should seek support from the District in developing lesson observation protocols, including training for school leaders in writing

effective teacher feedback. The outcomes of lesson observations should provide a focus for the school PD plan.

- The District should ensure that policies and expectations for maintaining required records for State and federal programs are clearly understood by school leaders. Additionally, the school leader's management of the school's organization, operations and resources should be addressed in order to create an effective learning environment. There should be increased accountability by all staff towards continuous improvement in student attainment.

## IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

**FINDING:**

The school has not developed a systematic process to involve parents and families in the life of the school. There is no evidence of attempts to obtain parental feedback on the school activities, assess parental needs, and obtain their views and opinions.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The school leader should request assistance from the District to work with the Parent Coordinator in the development of an action plan to involve more parents in the education of their children. The action plan should be implemented for formal and ongoing two-way communication, shared leadership, and collaborative decision-making with stakeholders.

## V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**FINDING:**

A comprehensive PD plan was not provided to the review team, nor was the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP); therefore, the team was not able to ascertain if the PD offered was consistent with the stated goals of the CEP. The formal and informal observation forms for teachers were not made available to the team, so any correlation between teacher needs and a PD plan was unable to be determined.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The school leader should initiate the development of a PD plan designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning and ensure that teachers participate in substantial PD in order to remain current with their profession and meet the learning needs of their students. The PD plan should be aligned with the school's CEP goals and take into account the differentiated needs of the staff and the students.

## VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

**FINDING:**

The school is currently in a "swing school" while the building that is its home is being renovated. The current structure is older and does not contain all the technological equipment, such as SMART Boards, that would bring an added dimension to student learning. Classes are large because of the limited classroom space, and the classroom environment is not positive.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The students and staff should be returned to their newly renovated school at the earliest possible time. The move back to the newly renovated school will provide a positive environment for learning and new opportunities for the staff.

## 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 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.