

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

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT (SQR)

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| BEDS Code: | 520401040008 |
| District Name: | Corinth Central School District |
| School Name: | Corinth Middle School |
| School Address: | 105 Oak Street Corinth, Corinth NY 12822 |
| Principal: | Susan G. Kazilas |
| Accountability Phase/Category: | Improvement (year-1)- Focused English Language Arts – Students with Disabilities. |
| Areas of Identification: | Mathematics – Students with Disabilities |
| Dates of On-site Review: | November 4 and 7, 2011 |

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“The mission of Corinth Central, a small school district in the heart of an Adirondack community, is to ensure that individuals possess the inner strength and develop the skills necessary to contribute to and excel in a rapidly changing world, while still recognizing the roots from which they have grown.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The school has done much to reduce the “isolation” of students with disabilities and has a strong continuum of services. Specialized reading instruction is provided to students with disabilities as needed, based on the development of an Individual Learning Plan. The school has an 8:1:1 and 12:1:1 class and students participate in the maximum number of general education classes possible. All related service personnel for the Oak Street complex are housed in the middle school.
- A plan-teach-assess-adjust model exists in the school for grades 5 and 6 in reading through a progress monitoring/data team meeting model.
- There is a high level of collegiality among staff. Teachers are visible in the hallways and cafeteria.
- The school is invested in understanding the P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics and is actively participating in mapping the new curriculum. The District has provided professional development (PD) in this area and purchased mapping software.
- The structure of school leader and grade level instructional leaders should be a positive support for improvement.

- Teachers are prepared and rooms are organized.
- Teachers appropriately use wait time and immediate feedback.
- Community members, parents, teachers, Board of Education members, and school leaders participated in developing the strategic plan. They annually review and revise the plan. The community is supportive of the school/district.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- There are individual learning plans for students with disabilities, including multiple assessment data, identification of weaknesses, and objectives. Multiple instructional resources have been acquired for the specialized reading program.
- NySTART and standard Cognos printouts are provided to teachers, providing data on student scores and student performance on assessments. Student disaggregated data is provided from NySTART.
- There is no systematic school approach to data analysis. School data is not disaggregated across the school by subgroup or subject. Data is not used to identify trends, root causes, priorities, and actions to address areas of need.
- A mechanism to use formative assessment data to monitor student achievement or to drive instruction is not evident across all grade levels in ELA and mathematics.
- There are not enough Academic Intervention Services (AIS) providers.
- Low expectations exist for students with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should develop a Data Driven Instruction Team to help implement and maintain a mechanism for the disaggregation and dissemination of assessment data by subgroup and content area. This data should be used to inform instruction and address identified areas of need.
- Measurable goals should be established to evaluate student performance. Teacher accountability should become embedded in the culture of the school.
- The school should increase the development and use of formative and interim assessments and progress monitoring. A process for incorporating assessment data to inform instruction should be developed and implemented.

- Cognos training should be provided to the school and team leaders to promote the use of disaggregated data.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Students with disabilities receive specialized reading instruction as needed, based on a reading evaluation and development of an Individual Learning Plan.
- Grade level teams have common planning time to meet regularly to discuss students, academic programs, and data. Teams include the special education teacher, but not in many cases the AIS provider.
- Scientifically based research and evidence-based strategies are not consistently used within and across all grade levels. In classrooms observed by the review team there were no groupings of students for differentiated instruction. Whole group instruction limited learning opportunities for at risk students. Vocabulary instruction was taught in traditional ways.
- The use of questioning techniques to promote higher order thinking skills was not consistently evident in classrooms observed by the review team. Teacher questions were low level and required mostly factual recall. Instruction was at the basic level and a lack of rigor was noted. Teacher expectations for academic success and appropriate student behavior appeared to be low for all students, especially for students with disabilities.
- Teachers were not observed collecting formative instructional data. In some cases the data was used incorrectly, i.e., grading of homework. Grading policies were not applied uniformly throughout the school.
- There was limited evidence that Individualized Education Program (IEPs) were being followed with fidelity across all subjects and grades by all teachers.
- Instructional objectives in student-friendly language are not posted in the classroom for the daily lesson. Teachers do not clearly define the reason or importance of each lesson.
- Teachers are developing/revising common core curriculum maps, material lists, and assessments to support the development of a coherent instructional roadmap; however, time is needed to complete this work.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should develop and implement on-going professional development (PD) to raise expectations for all students, increase instructional rigor, and ensure consistency in:
 - Employing differentiated instruction;
 - Implementing cooperative learning and/or project based learning;
 - Promoting the development of higher order questioning skills and instructional strategies;
 - Developing and implementing formative, interim and summative assessments; and

- Implementing IEPs and 504 plans with fidelity by all teachers.
- The school should develop a consistent grading and homework policy.
- The school leadership should support the curriculum mapping process to ensure that an instructional roadmap exists to support student success.
- The District leadership should develop a strategy to bring back extended school day programs for at risk students.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- The District mission statement and strategic Plan are available. The District Strategic Planning Committee meets annually to assess, modify, or create new goals. Goals have been set and are actively included in teacher Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plans.
- School leadership has been inconsistent over the last two to three years. A new school leader had been in the school for two months at the time of the review team visit. A vision for student success for all, accountability, inquiry based learning, and curriculum alignment are being developed.
- The teachers who serve as grade level Instructional Leaders do not perceive themselves as partners with the school leaders, although they are considered to be by the school leadership.
- The school leader and Director of Student Services complete formal and informal observations and provide feedback.
- The school leader is improving the plan-assess-adjust cycle through such means as data teams, APPR plan development, accountability and formal and informal observations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School and District leaders should provide additional in-class support and PD to enhance teacher questioning techniques and task/performance expectations so as to promote students' higher order thinking skills that are needed to improve student achievement.
- School leaders should emphasize the importance of student data and its impact on instruction. The school leadership team should ensure the implementation of a data driven instructional improvement cycle that consistently addresses the needs of all students.
- School leaders should complete informal and formal observations on a regular schedule.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- The District uses local, State, and grant money to maximize staffing, technology, instructional materials, and PD based on needs. Budget cuts have affected programs, including after school supports.
- Student services personnel are a good resource for outreach.
- Teaching assistants are assigned to classes and have no formal instructional role.
- Parents and community members have multiple opportunities to participate in District and school planning and support students.
- There are not enough AIS teachers to group students by needs and provide small group instruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should review the schedule to increase remediation opportunities for students with disabilities and at-risk students.
- The District leadership should find ways to reduce the size of AIS classes.
- The School leadership should provide PD to teachers regarding the effective use of teaching assistants to support instruction.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- The Director of Curriculum has administered a needs assessment for core curriculum mapping, analyzed information, and developed a curriculum rollout plan. A District priority is mapping the CCLS. Other areas of need include strategies for instructing students with disabilities, reading in the content area, classroom support, inquiry based learning, and developing students' 21st Century skills.
- Instructional leaders at each grade level hold weekly team meetings to discuss students, plan collaborative activities, and share practices.
- The development and implementation of a data driven instructional improvement cycle that specifically addresses the needs of students with disabilities and at risk students is an emerging priority.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leadership team should ensure the implementation of a data driven instructional improvement cycle that consistently addresses the needs of students with disabilities.

- School leadership should provide PD on strategies to increase students' higher order thinking skills and student engagement that will result in improved student outcomes for students with disabilities and at risk students.
- The school should continue PD for its Data Driven Instruction Team and maximize the use of data by teachers to ensure students with disabilities and at risk students are provided with explicit instruction in areas of weakness.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- The District provides access to sufficient textbooks, workbooks, and resource material. Core classrooms have SMART Boards, a computer and a printer. There is one computer lab and two wireless labs for grade 5 – 8.
- Hallways, classrooms, and bathrooms are not clean.
- Science labs do not exist for grades 5 and 6. Lab activities are not aligned in grades 5 – 8 to prepare students for high school.
- The school lacks a full-time librarian or media specialist. The school's technology teacher is located in the high school, making collaboration on technology difficult. The library and computer lab are only open during school hours, and there is limited free access during the day for students with disabilities and at risk students.
- Computer classes are taught by a TA.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The District should explore reasons for unclean hallways, bathrooms, classrooms and other areas in order to make the school environment a pleasant place for learning.
- A full-time librarian and/or media specialist should be considered to provide increased accessibility to the library and computer lab for all students.

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 (CEP) plan for the school year 2012-13. The school should 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.