

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

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	030200010015
District Name:	Binghamton City School District
School Name:	East Middle School
School Address:	167 East Frederick Street, Binghamton, NY 13904
Principal:	Michael O'Branski
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year 1) – Focused
Areas of Identification:	English Language Arts – African American Students; Students with Disabilities; and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	December 7 - 9, 2011

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

"Everyone Matters at East!"

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The school has a positive, supporting environment that is well managed and organized with stable staff and school leadership.
- The District has committed to providing the school technology, and computers and SMART Boards were in evidence in classrooms.
- Staff has ample opportunities for professional development (PD) in the use of technology in the classrooms. The District has supported teacher-leaders in the area of technology.
- The District has a PD plan; teachers have access to it in the online program, "My Learning Plan."
- The school has an active teacher-mentoring program for students. During the visit, the review team participated in one of the regularly scheduled lunches with teacher-mentors and the students with whom they work.
- The District has committed to Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS), and evidence of this program was observed in the classrooms.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- The school lacks common, predictive assessments. There is a general lack of understanding about how these assessments could be used to inform instruction.
- There is data available for teachers and school leaders; however, they are generally unaware of its availability or how to use the data to inform instruction.
- No focused information is available regarding student performance, either historically or on current State assessments. There is neither a focus on subgroups nor available a data set with information about current at-risk students.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should develop structures to promote the use of data to inform decisions.
- The staff should identify students who are at risk for low-performance on the upcoming assessments and track their progress.
- The District should create a structure for monitoring the progress of students in the Academic Intervention Services (AIS) program.
- The District should provide PD on data-driven decision-making to support the teachers and school leaders in the use of data to inform instruction.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- The school leader and teachers have limited understanding of the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS).
- District curriculum maps are not aligned with the CCLS.
- Although there is a curriculum and strategy for AIS, in the classes observed by the reviewers, AIS was clearly “disconnected” from grade-level curriculum.
- Multiple planning tools were provided to the review team that included "International Baccalaureate (IB)," "Teaching for Understanding," and others. There is no single required planning tool.
- There is no common language to define instruction. The school leader provided the review team with a list of instructional strategies that he looks for during an observation. However, there is no

- there is inefficient use of class time;
 - there is a lack of planning for and the teaching of critical thinking skills; and
 - student engagement is classified as selective because of the lack of consistent engagement of all learners.
- In classes observed by the review team, the typical instructional strategy was for students to raise their hands to be called upon.
 - There is a lack of rigor in classes and homework assignments.
 - Teachers lacked strategies for supporting struggling learners.
 - Teachers reported that they rely on the special education teacher to develop modifications for students. There was limited evidence of collaboration for supporting students with disabilities.
 - English language arts (ELA) teachers employ a variety of rubrics to assess writing. These rubrics use different terminology to define quality writing. During interviews by the review team, some teachers expressed uncertainty about how to use rubrics effectively in their classes.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should focus on and commit to the following:
 - aligning the curriculum to the CCLS;
 - providing PD on developing units aligned to the CCLS;
 - providing PD for school leaders and teachers regarding the elements and characteristics of effective teaching, including support for struggling learners;
 - identifying a single planning instrument that aligns with the instructional strategies;
 - defining, through the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process, an observation instrument that aligns with the instructional strategies;
 - designing common, predictive assessments and using data from them to design and modify instruction;
 - selecting a single writing rubric to be used throughout the school; and
 - developing a process for teachers to ensure that there is consistent agreement regarding ratings based on the rubric, not only in ELA, but all areas where writing is assessed.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDING:

Interviews conducted by the review team indicated that prior to the 2011-12 school year, the District provided K-12 District leaders with curriculum as well as in-house staff developers. As these staff members retired, the District did not replace them. This has resulted in a significant change for the school leaders and teachers; they are now responsible for overseeing curriculum and instruction. Despite the commitment of school leaders and teachers to students, there was no evidence that

teachers or school leaders have assumed this responsibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- With the support of the District, the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) process should be used to define a “plan-assess-adjust cycle” by:
 - determining benchmarks and specific achievement goals for students; and
 - identifying school leaders and teachers who will be responsible for students achieving these goals.
- The District should develop a collaborative structure with the school to support this process.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- In the AIS classes observed by the review team, limited instruction was provided. There was no evidence of a viable curriculum for the students. Additionally, there was no evidence of alignment or collaboration with the general education program.
- General education teachers identify the special education teachers as being responsible for the instruction of students with disabilities.
- There is a lack of time for collaboration in co-teaching classrooms. This results in an inefficient participation of the special education teacher in some of the classes.
- Teachers reported an interest in examining and revising the traditional bell schedule in use at the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- An immediate review of AIS programming, curriculum, and instruction should be conducted.
- Structures of support for students with disabilities and whether or not the co-teaching structure provides sufficient support should be determined.
- School leaders should collaborate with teachers to examine the bell schedule and revise it, if necessary.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDING:

While there are numerous opportunities for PD throughout the District, there was no evidence of accountability for the implementation of PD.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A PD plan should be developed that is clear and focused on the changing needs of teachers and students.
- The school leader should conduct follow-up observations after PD sessions to ensure that teachers incorporate the strategies learned in PD into classroom practice. The school leaders 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:**

- The school is a clean, bright, and recently renovated facility.
- ELA teachers reported that they do not have sufficient resources that are aligned with the CCLS, e.g., textbooks are copyrighted in 1999.

RECOMMENDATION:

The District should review resources to ensure that they are aligned with the CCLS.

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.