

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

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	441600010005
District Name:	Newburgh Enlarged City School District
School Name:	Gardnertown School
School Address:	6 Plattekill Turnpike, Newburgh, NY 12550
Principal:	Joan Goundy-Crosson
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year 1) - Focused
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts – Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners
Dates of On-site Review:	November 15, 2011 – December 23, 2011

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“The mission of Gardnertown Fundamental Magnet School is to ensure that all students are provided with an opportunity to learn, develop positive character traits, and to encourage life-long learning. The partnership of parents, staff and students will provide a quality education emphasizing the basic of reading, writing, arithmetic, and enrichment, while developing the fundamental values of respect and responsibility for self and others. Our caring and creative child-centered learning environment promotes academic and personal growth in all our children.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- Professional development (PD) is embedded into the school day.
- School leaders are visible throughout the school.
- Staff is receptive to meeting the needs of students.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- Data is analyzed and used as a road map for making instructional decisions.
- Teacher sharing is a routine practice.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Student work is displayed; classroom rules are posted; learning and literacy centers are evident.
- The Principal ensures equitable opportunities for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities for participation in extracurricular activities, clubs, etc.
- Students were well-behaved and follow the procedures and rules set in classes.
- Effective physical use of classroom space was apparent in most classrooms.
- Word walls are present in most classrooms. These were student generated.
- Writing either in journals or as a result of reading seemed to be taking place regularly.
- Some authentic literature was being read by students when other work was completed.
- Teaching assistants were aiding small group instruction in some kindergarten classes.
- The literacy block seemed undefined. There was mostly whole group instruction at all grade levels.
- No writing rubrics were seen. There was no sign of writing folders for each student.
- No push-in reading specialist time was observed.
- In many cases, teachers did not inform students of the aim or objective of lessons.
- Small group work or literacy center work was not prominent during literacy time.
- Literacy time was interrupted by specials (science).
- Worksheets and workbooks seemed prevalent.
- Teachers position themselves in the front of the room rather than moving around to observe and monitor student progress.
- Little use of technology (SMART Board, LCD projector) was observed by the review team; nor was there much technology present in classrooms.
- Almost no teacher to student one-on-one reading was seen.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Teachers should use data to drive differentiated instruction. The whole group lesson for the day should be practiced by students in guided and then independent small group modes.

- Students work should be displayed with writing rubrics. Student writing folders should contain rubrics. All writing should be kept in a writing folder. This is especially necessary for process writing.
- Students need more creative ways to engage in learning.
- More student work should be displayed in classrooms and hallways.
- The use of leveled reading materials should be improved. Students should be reading at their instructional reading levels during guided reading and at their independent reading levels at other times.
- Teachers should move around the room more to monitor students as they read and write.
- There should be more student talk time. That means student-to-student as well as student-to-teacher. Activities such as peer-to-peer reading and questioning should be a major part of literacy time.
- There is a need for more educational technology, computers, SMART Boards and listening centers.
- An increase in the amount of purposeful, accountable, independent student reading should take place.
- Grade level meeting agendas should reflect discussion around improving the literacy block at each grade level as well as use of data to inform instruction. Vertical discussions should also be taking place.

FINDINGS:

Special Education:

- Most students and staff have access to technology that is an integral feature of teaching and learning.
- NY Standards are neither addressed in plans nor posted.
- Objectives and/or goals are not stated during lessons.
- A variety of activities are going on simultaneously, but they are not aligned to the lesson.
- Co-teachers do not present a unified lesson.
- There is a lack of progress monitoring.
- Lesson objectives are not communicated to students.
- Special education teachers are not provided with the same resources as the general education teachers.
- Classrooms lack evidence of student work.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Special Education:

- The Principal should ensure better support for effective teaching.
- All classes should be representative of the entire student population.
- Teachers should implement strategies to empower all students to become more successful:
 - Make lessons more relevant and meaningful.
 - Make physical accommodations for students as necessary.
 - Provide realistic challenges while setting high expectations for all students.
 - Teach organizational strategies.
 - Plan developmentally appropriate lessons.
 - Frequently monitor student progress.

FINDINGS:

Bilingual/English as a Second Language:

- Classroom schedules reflect the Language Allocation Policy (LAP), with time set aside as required for Native Language Arts (NLA), English as a Second Language (ESL), and English language arts (ELA).
- Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to address the needs of their students.
- There is evidence of direct instruction followed by independent and group practices.
- There is evidence of grouping for instruction.
- Teachers conducted whole group and small group instruction using the core reading program in English and Spanish, as available.
- There is evidence of the use of learning centers.
- There is evidence of culturally diverse classroom materials.
- Classroom routines and procedures are clearly established and articulated.
- Students were involved in their own learning, and there were opportunities for students to support each other in their learning.
- There is evidence of student work on display at different stages of production.

- There is evidence of questioning as a tool to elicit information, but not as a tool to promote critical thinking.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Bilingual/English as a Second Language:

- Teachers should engage students more actively. Although predictable pacing and sequencing of instruction can maximize learning time, it can also disengage students.
- There is a need for more technology.
- Teachers should communicate the lesson objectives so students can be engaged in their own learning.
- Teachers should have high expectations for their students and scaffold instructions so that all students can achieve at higher levels.
- All activities should be standards-based and directly related to the material being covered.

FINDINGS:

Academic Intervention Services/ Response to Intervention:

- Classroom schedules reflect ELA time. Reading specialists' schedules reflects Response to Intervention (RTI) by grade level/teacher as well as time dedicated to Tier III intervention.
- Classroom grouping for instruction across the grade level is evident in Tier III instructional groupings. Tier III group sizes were small (4-5 students).
- Classroom level intervention was observed by the review team in a self-contained setting with students with disabilities.
- Students are actively engaged in meaningful instructional activities that promote learning.
- Teachers conducted whole group and small group instruction.
- Effective classroom routines and procedures are clear and understood by students.
- Posted charts and other artifacts, such as vowel and digraph rules, retell strategy, vocabulary, word wall, story elements, Six Plus Writing Traits, mathematics wall, reflect instruction and processes for working towards meeting standards.
- Culturally diverse classrooms materials were used, including nonfiction text. One bilingual classroom displayed many multicultural titles in Spanish and English.
- Students were provided with individual copies of text and response sheets for comprehension.

- The teacher modeled sound production and sequential decoding/recoding. Students reconstructed words in journals.
- The teacher reviewed the previous lesson, and students looked back in their journals for note taking.
- Students were actively engaged in acting out vocabulary words/verbs.
- Students were involved in their own learning, and there were opportunities for students to support each other in their learning.
- Choral reading strategies were used to focus on comprehension.
- Routines were understood by the students and included warm up/word work and reading of selected text.
- Behavior expectations are posted.
- Limited numbers of computer stations were available. One teacher referenced the use of video to build on background knowledge.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Academic Intervention Services/ Response to Intervention

- Establishing a grade level intervention period for classroom grouping within the classroom and/or across the grade level should be considered. This will allow for teachers and specialists to participate fully in the tiered intervention process.
- Teachers should clearly communicate lesson objectives to students.
- Assessment results should be used to identify student grouping and support flexible groupings.
- Rubrics and assessment criteria should be provided and used for students to evaluate their own work.
- Academic expectations should be posted in addition to behavioral expectations.
- Student work should be displayed.
- Use of technology should be integrated whenever possible.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**FINDING:**

While the Principal assumes ultimate responsibility for the fidelity of curriculum implementation, she seeks collaboration from her Building Leadership Team, instructional coach and specialists.

RECOMMENDATION:

Clearly defined expectations should be shared and communicated.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**FINDINGS:**

- School staff is respectful of the expectations placed upon them with regard to P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) training and implementation as well as other curriculum and instruction directives.
- The Principal ensures common planning time, reviews planning materials regularly, conducts frequent walkthroughs, and uses her Instructional Coach to maximum benefit.
- Academic Intervention Services (AIS) staff, RTI strategies, the Instructional Coach and Technology staff are routinely used to support struggling learners.
- There is evidence of an exemplary Parent Teachers Organization (PTO) and frequent parent communication.
- Teaching staff take ownership for student behavior and redirection.
- Students are regularly recognized for exemplary achievement, behavior, citizenship, etc.
- An Early Warning system that takes into account tardiness, lack of participation in extracurricular activities as well as academic performance data is in evidence.
- Spanish-speaking parents are provided all documents in their native language as well as in English.
- Risk-taking by staff is encouraged.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**FINDINGS:**

- PD is regularly attended at the District level and there was ample evidence that appropriate follow through, turnkey training, etc. occur.
- The Principal reports PD buy-in by staff as evidenced by products, dialog and professional practice.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

The school has a well established community relationship with Mt. St. Mary's College.

PART 4: CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Areas for further study:

- The Building Leadership Team lacks parental participation.
- Students often report work as being "easy."
- While ample technology is present throughout the school, some inequities remain among grade levels.
- School staff is struggling with developing opportunities and pathways for enrichment activities.
- The Principal acknowledges minimal vertical alignment.

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