

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

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

**SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT**

<b>BEDS Code:</b>	400800010040
<b>District Name:</b>	Niagara Falls City School District
<b>School Name:</b>	Gaskill Preparatory School
<b>School Address:</b>	910 Hyde Park Boulevard, Niagara Falls, NY 14301
<b>Principal:</b>	Robert L. Bradley Jr.
<b>Accountability Phase/Category:</b>	Improvement (year- 1) - Focused
<b>Area of Identification:</b>	English Language Arts - African American Students; Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students
<b>Dates of On-site Review:</b>	December 16, 2011 and January 9, 2012

**PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT**

“The mission of the Niagara Falls Board of Education is to guarantee educational excellence by creating strategic goals which we will monitor, analyze, assess, and evaluate utilizing the quality process and ensuring customer satisfaction.”

**PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS:**

- There is a clean, modern, well-equipped and safe school environment.
- Relationships are strong and respectful between special education and general education staff.
- Student Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are easily accessible to staff.
- The Principal has the respect of the faculty, and staff and has worked diligently to establish a culture of mutual trust and support.
- The staff is empathetic to students needs.
- Classroom space is abundant and spacious. Each room is equipped with a SMART Board and Red Cat audio system.
- The staff is hard working, dedicated and eager to succeed.

## **PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

#### **FINDINGS:**

- There is evidence of student data to which the staff has access. The process of disaggregating data and analyzing assessment results to inform instruction on a more formative basis is limited to subgroup rather than individual performance.
- The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) has just been initiated, and its effectiveness is yet to be determined.
- A variety of assessment performance data are collected and analyzed three times annually.
- The school leadership has attempted to allocate end-of-the-day common planning time to analyze individual student performance.
- AIMS Web is used to as a screening tool to determine at-risk students but not to identify the specific skills needed by students to achieve proficiency on the State English language arts (ELA) assessment.
- There is a lack of skills based, common formative assessments aligned to the ELA curriculum.
- There was little evidence of transition planning from elementary to preparatory school.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Time should be allocated for disaggregating data and assessment results to inform instruction.
- Individualized item analysis should be conducted and appropriate strategies provided to students in the targeted subgroups.
- The result of the NWEA should be used formatively to adjust instruction in ELA.
- School leaders should create Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to focus on the students in the identified subgroups.
- Multiple sources of data should be “triangulated” for all students in the identified subgroups:
  - ELA performance levels;
  - Item analysis by performance indicators;
  - Summative assessment data – ELA grades 7 and 8 snapshots at 10, 20, 30 and 40 weeks, including curriculum components and test prep aligned to NYSED ELA;
  - Suspension data;
  - Office referrals;
  - Attendance; and
  - Students with disabilities – services provided according to the Part 200.6 continuum.

- School leaders should increase transition planning opportunities for students from elementary to preparatory.

## II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

### FINDINGS:

- The District provides opportunities for professional development (PD) in its annual calendar, including early student dismissal and use of half days for teacher meetings. After school opportunities for PD (for individuals and/or groups of teachers) are coordinated by the District's Teacher Resource Center. Regular faculty meetings are held to share information regarding schoolwide programs.
- The school uses Niagara's Choice (America's Choice-Pearson), Literacy Navigator, Read 180 and KidBIZ. Corrective Reading has recently been introduced.
- Classroom observations by the review team indicated a lack of direct explicit instruction to individual students in the targeted subgroups on skills that are aligned with ELA.
- Review team walkthroughs noted that the following lesson closure components are of low frequency:
  - the objective of the work being restated by teacher either verbally or visually;
  - the teacher conducting a short formative assessment of students' level of understanding, e.g., exit cards, collection of independent work, self-check or peer check of work; and
  - the teacher explicitly connecting prior and upcoming lessons.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should individualize the delivery of Academic Intervention Services. (AIS), particularly for students in the identified subgroup.
- School leaders should consider the reallocation of staff resources, i.e., teaching assistants, paraprofessionals and the substitutes on special assignment (SOSA) to deliver focused support for the individuals in the identified subgroups and support common planning time for individual student review.
- Providing time for general education teachers, special education teachers, and related service providers to meet and plan should be explored.
- IEP goals should be written in S.M.A.R.T. format (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-based) and monitored for progress.
- School leaders should implement a program for explicit, direct instruction in reading and writing.

### III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

#### FINDINGS:

- The school leader has expressed his commitment to establishing a culture of collaboration and support.
- School leaders provide frequent instructional feedback in the form of focus walks.
- School leaders have begun to correlate suspension data, discipline referrals, and attendance to identify patterns that may be inhibiting student success.
- Data analysis has not been drilled down to an individual student level.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leadership, in conjunction with District staff and the Committee on Special Education (CSE), should review the continuum of special education services in the school.
- School leaders should ensure that teachers are held accountable for using formative assessment data to plan and adjust lessons, content, and curriculum to meet individual student needs.

### IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

#### FINDINGS:

- The school leadership has established a number of community partnerships.
- A review of documents by the review team indicates that there are opportunities for parent/families to attend school events and PEG (Parent Education Group) meetings: however, these are not often well attended.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

School leaders, with District support, should develop goals and implement a plan to improve parent participation.

### V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### FINDINGS:

The District provides opportunities for PD in its annual calendar, including early dismissals and use of half-days for meetings.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- School leaders should allow staff time to coordinate work on student assessment issues.
- Staff should be provided PD on the use and analysis of data to effectively differentiate instruction and improve student learning. PD should move toward analyzing and using data to inform instruction aligned with skills assessed on the ELA assessments.
- School leaders should provide literacy PD specifically for special education teachers.

**VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES****FINDINGS:**

- The school building is safe, inviting, and well-maintained for its age. Students and staff were both friendly and respectful.
- Twenty-first century technology can be found in every classroom and throughout the building.
- Students have limited access to text in alternate formats, i.e., digital.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The school should create a plan to ensure that all instructional materials are available in usable formats for students with disabilities.

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