

## NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

## Office of Accountability

## Differentiated Accountability – School Quality Review (SQR)

## SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

<b>BEDS Code:</b>	530600010009
<b>District Name:</b>	Schenectady City School District
<b>School Name:</b>	Hamilton Elementary School
<b>School Address:</b>	1091 Webster Street, Schenectady, New York 12304
<b>Principal:</b>	Michelle VanDerLinden
<b>Accountability Phase/Category:</b>	Improvement (year 1) - Comprehensive
<b>Areas of Identification:</b>	English Language Arts - All Students; African American Students; and Economically Disadvantaged Students
<b>Dates of On-site Review:</b>	November 30, December 9, 2011 and January 6, 2012

**PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT****District Mission Statement****Mission/Vision Statement:**

“The mission of the Schenectady City School District, a nurturing progressive learning environment and a vital part of the larger community, is to ensure that all students achieve their fullest potential as responsible members of a society through a system characterized by:

- Creative leadership
- Challenging curricula
- Innovative, varied, and engaging methods of learning and teaching
- Integration of modern technology
- Strong partnerships
- A safe, healthy, and supportive climate”

**Vision:**

“To accomplish this mission, our dedicated, student centered staff, will provide a challenging, relevant curriculum in an environment that is safe, orderly and conducive to learning.”

**Beliefs:**

- “WE BELIEVE THAT Every individual deserves to be safe.

- WE BELIEVE THAT Every person is responsible for the actions he or she chooses to take.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Every individual needs the support of others to thrive.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Society can only be successful when its members serve each other.
- WE BELIEVE THAT All living things depend on other living things.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Every individual deserves to be treated with respect.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Family is critical to the development and well being of the individual.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Effective, honest communication is essential to mutual understanding.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Ensuring the care of children is the most responsibility of society.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Every person deserves an opportunity to achieve his or her potential.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Everyone needs valid praise and recognition.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Extra-ordinary expectations are essential for extra-ordinary outcomes.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Individuals have the right to form their own beliefs.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Responsibility is learned; therefore, it must be taught.”

Referenced on the Schenectady City Schools Website 2011-2012

**Hamilton Elementary Vision Statement:**

“Our vision, as a school community, is to expect and support everyone to achieve their individual potential.”

**Motto:**

“Success, nothing less at Hamilton.”

**PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS**

- There has been an increase in the time that English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher is assigned to provide direct service and professional development (PD) to staff to address the needs of English language learners (ELLs).
- The District has deployed several reading teachers to function as coaches and intervention specialists. They provide ongoing, job-embedded PD support and coaching in the areas of alignment of English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum with the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS).
- The new school leader has a distributive leadership style; one of her first projects was to develop a shared school vision statement and motto.
- The District has implemented an “Administrator in Residency” program to expose teacher leaders who are certified in administration to administrative tasks as a means to build their leadership capacity.

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

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

#### **FINDINGS:**

- Teachers have an understanding of what data are collected and available; however, teachers are at a developing stage in using the collected student data to modify or inform instruction.
- Although the District has implemented a daily morning meeting period for all elementary teachers to collaborate on using data to inform instruction, there is a lack of consistent protocols and practices.
- The District data collection system provides a structure to access both formative and summative assessments for all students. However, consistent use of data and effective adjustment of instruction across the curriculum students is lacking.
- A systematic process for monitoring student progress is lacking.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The school should:

- Formalize the use of formative, interim, and summative assessments.
- Design and implement a practice of monitoring student progress consistently and effectively in order to adjust instruction.
- Disaggregate, analyze, and use data to identify the learning needs of all students, and particularly English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

### **II. TEACHING AND LEARNING**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- There is evidence of initial PD to support implementation of ELA instruction that is aligned with the CCLS.
- The school is in the beginning stages of aligning instructional units of study with the CCLS at all grade levels.
- Teachers participated in Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) training.
- Direct instruction of targeted skills through the use of evidence-based strategies for students who are not meeting reading and writing grade level expectations is inconsistent.
- Teachers use morning meetings to discuss instructional practices; however, they have not developed protocols for monitoring these instructional efforts.

- There is no consistent procedure to review teacher practices to determine if the curriculum is being rigorously implemented for all students and subgroups.
- There is inconsistent use of formative assessment data to inform instructional practice for all teachers.
- Students do not use rubrics to review their work.
- Classroom teachers have not developed consistent instructional strategies for supporting ELLs.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The school should:

- Identify a consistent process to interpret data that is needed to modify classroom instruction.
- Provide PD to support teachers in defining proficiency and rigor and using curriculum maps to reflect student work.
- Design a consistent protocol for progress monitoring of all students, with a focus on students with disabilities and ELLs.

### **III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- The new, but experienced, school leader has initiated a School-Based Inquiry Team (SBIT).
- School leaders have been trained and certified to evaluate staff on the new teaching standards.
- The school leadership has not used the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle of continuous improvement of educational practices, so they have not pre-identified measurable targets, performed periodic monitoring of outcomes, or made revisions based on analysis of findings in key school areas.
- The system for shared accountability for student learning is not consistently monitored or assessed.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The school should:

- Involve the SBIT in the development and implementation of the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP), focusing the plan on sustainability and consistency.
- Provide PD opportunities to involve staff in understanding the plan-assess-adjust cycle of continuous improvement.

- Identify accountability indicators and regularly monitor and adjust the accountability indicators based on data.

#### **IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**

##### **FINDINGS:**

- Rezoning of the neighborhood school has increased and encouraged parental involvement and participation.
- A number of community organizations, as well as other supports and resources, are used by the school to promote the health and social-emotional well-being of the students and their families.
- Although there are transition activities for grade six students, the practices are inconsistent across all District elementary schools.
- The home/school partnership program includes materials for families of ELLs, parent surveys, and vertical grade expectations for parents.
- Grade level expectations are inconsistently applied at each grade level.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The school should:

- Include a plan in the CEP for fostering home/school communication for all students, including ELLs.
- Design an internal communication tool to alert all teachers of the opportunities and services available to parents and families in the community.

#### **V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

##### **FINDINGS:**

- PD needs are determined through a variety of strategies, including a teacher needs assessment.
- Professional Learning Communities (PLC) are active within the school, and there are shared instructional efforts between grades.
- Teaching and learning coaches provide job-embedded coaching and support to teachers for curriculum and instructional support.
- There is a formal District mentoring program that offers an in-school mentor for classroom teachers.

- PD is available for all teachers and based on teacher perceptions of what is needed by the students. However, actual data analyses to determine the needs of teachers or the effectiveness of prior PD has not been used to inform these decisions.
- PD is not differentiated, either by student subgroups taught or the developmental needs of individual teachers. Also, specific PD to support general education, special education, and ELL teachers in working towards common goals has been limited.
- There are daily morning teacher meetings. Although this structure offers support for teacher-to-teacher PD, i.e., development of instruction and the beginning of analysis of student work, data analysis to inform instruction to meet subgroup needs is inconsistent.
- There is little follow-up to determine the effectiveness of PD activities or hold individual teachers accountable for how they apply the PD to their instruction in the classroom.
- There is limited PD on Response to Intervention (RtI) for all teachers.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The school should:

- Provide PD on using data to prioritize student needs, particularly for students with disabilities, African American students, and economically disadvantaged students.
- Offer differentiated PD that is based on the identified needs of students and meets the needs of adult learners.
- Hold teachers accountable for their learning and the incorporation of differentiated learning strategies into practice.
- Monitor the effectiveness of PD, i.e., changes in teacher knowledge/skill and classroom use of the strategies and changes in student performance.

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

- There are a sufficient number of textbooks to support instruction in the classroom, and classroom libraries are established. Resources for ELLs are adequate to support student needs.
- A full-time librarian serves the students.
- The school library needs updating. It offers limited materials and resources for all subgroups.
- Although there are no science labs, science kits are used throughout the school.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The District and school should continue to seek resources to meet the diverse learning needs of students.

**PART 3: 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.