

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code :	140600010031
District Name:	Buffalo City School District
School Name:	PS 31 Harriet Ross Tubman School
School Address:	212 Stanton Street, Buffalo, NY 14212
Principal:	William Boatwright
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year 1)- Comprehensive
Areas of Identification:	English Language Arts - All Students; African American Students; Students with Disabilities; and Economically Disadvantaged Students Mathematics - All Students; African American Students; Students with Disabilities; and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	January 23-24, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“The mission of Harriet Ross Tubman School is to build a partnership between school, parents and community which encourages and enhances academic, emotional and social growth. Inspired by the perseverance and courage of Harriet Ross Tubman, *‘We will never give up’.*”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

PS 31 Harriet Ross Tubman School is a pre-kindergarten through grade 8 school. The school leaders share responsibilities for student success and express high expectations for all students. Parents state that the school leadership is approachable, with an open door policy for all parents, and that school leaders go above and beyond what is required to assist students. Some parents are involved in the life of the school and would like to have many more parents get involved.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- Although there is a substantial amount of data collected and available regarding student achievement, the data that is collected is not always used effectively to group students and address instructional needs.

- Formative, interim, and summative assessments are not consistently applied to gauge student learning and improve student outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should revisit the data analysis process to focus closely on student-by-student and class-by-class deficiencies in addition to the whole school monitoring of students. They should also develop an improvement plan to ensure that all teachers incorporate item skills analysis to inform their instruction. School leaders should monitor the discussion at grade level meetings as well as ensure that data driven instruction is making an impact on student learning.
- School leaders should formalize a procedure that would enable teachers to analyze data quickly and use the results to plan their lessons. Professional development (PD) should be provided on differentiated instructional methods for teachers and how to use the tools learned to drive instruction for students.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Many lessons observed by the review team were entirely teacher-directed and did not use a range of strategies to accommodate the diverse learning needs of students.
- There was limited evidence of the development of higher order thinking skills in instructional practices. Questioning skills varied greatly among teachers, with a majority of questions requiring factual recall and one-word answers.
- Although some teachers have had an introduction to the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core learning Standards (CCLS), the majority of teachers are not ready to implement these instructional principles and understand how the new standards will affect teaching and learning in the future.
- The co-teaching model was not effectively implemented in classrooms that were visited.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should provide PD to support teachers in developing differentiated instructional classrooms. Teachers should develop strategies in questioning techniques aimed at developing critical thinking and innovative problem solving skills, rather than increasing the number of facts students memorize.
- The school leaders should seek to provide PD that will support teachers in developing a variety of questioning techniques aimed at critical thinking and using problem solving skills appropriate to student development. They should also ensure that rigor prevails throughout each lesson in such ways as use of “cold calls,” and allowing students to respond to each other, and then prolonging the dialogue by asking further questions.

- District and school leaders should ensure that all teachers participate in professional development (PD) on how to plan and implement a curriculum, aligned with the CCLS, as well as on delivery methods that are student-centered. The curriculum should be relied upon as the basis for assessing individual student mastery and progress. Walkthroughs and formal evaluations should include how well the teacher knows and implements the curriculum for the subjects being taught.
- Co-teaching teams should be provided with support and guidance and given opportunities to visit successful co-teaching classrooms. School leaders should schedule collaborative planning time to ensure best practices in co-teaching instruction. School leaders should closely monitor co-teaching classroom practices and provide constructive feedback to teachers.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- PD does not focus precisely enough on the issues that will make the greatest difference in raising student achievement.
- School leaders do not monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in an effective manner to bring about sustained improvement in classroom practice.
- There is a need for school leaders to be trained in changes in curriculum that is aligned with the CCLS as well as to become familiar with the requirements in the new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leaders should ensure that all PD is planned based on student data and fully reflect needs identified to achieve school goals. School leaders should also require teachers to work through and challenge students with complex materials as they learn how to manage and scaffold that material.
- School leaders should implement a classroom observation schedule to monitor more closely the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Written feedback should be provided for formal, informal and walkthrough observations, including clear targets for improvement. Follow-up observations should be included in the schedule to monitor progress.
- The District should ensure all school leaders participate in training on the CCLS and APPR.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- Parents express the need for more help with understanding student work and ways to stimulate students' desire to learn.
- The use of technology was limited in some classes observed.

- Vertical articulation among elementary and middle school staff needs to be addressed to improve transitioning among schools within the District.
- Many parents are not aware of what is happening at the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should provide a full range of programs and services for students, such as after school programs run by outside agencies. The Department of Funded programs should explore the possibility of training the parents of Title I students in order to enhance their capacity to help their children with homework.
- School leaders, with the support of the District, should investigate the use of appropriate technology that can be integrated into the curriculum and develop a comprehensive technology plan for implementation.
- School leaders, in collaboration with the District, should create transition teams, including special education and regular education staff. These teams would plan for improved transitions of students within the school and to other schools within the District.
- School leaders should seek ways to improve communication between the school and parents. Different methods of consistent communication should be used that will invoke parents' attention, e.g., classes conducted by community leaders.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- The PD offered was not based on student needs identified through assessment data, teacher needs, or the lesson observation process.
- Teacher common planning time is not always used as a PD opportunity to bring about improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leaders should develop a comprehensive PD plan based on student and teacher needs that is also closely aligned with a data driven instructional model. The plan should have as its primary focus improving teaching and learning for all students.
- School leaders should observe common planning meetings and ensure that strategies discussed that have the potential for improving student achievement are consistently incorporated into classroom practice.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDING:

Technology, including SMART Boards, is not being used to full capacity to enhance teaching and learning.

RECOMMENDATION:

School leaders should provide training for staff to be able to fully use the technology provided to enhance teaching and learning for students. Students should be encouraged to use available technology in whole class discussions and demonstrations.

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.