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NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	081200050003
District Name:	Norwich City School District
School Name:	Perry Browne Intermediate School
School Address:	89 Midland Drive, Norwich, NY 13815
Principal:	Jennifer Post
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year- 1) - Focused
Areas of Identification:	English Language Arts - Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	November 8-10, 2011

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

"Through the use of all available resources, it shall be the Mission of the Norwich City School District to produce productive citizens who can successfully collaborate and compete in a global society... to develop and provide for each enrolled student a program of experiences, activities and services designed to ensure maximum opportunities for life-long intellectual, psycho-social, personal and physical growth. It shall further be the Mission of the District to ensure the delivery of such experiences, activities, and services within an interpersonal atmosphere marked by order, warmth and genuine concern for each individual's well-being as well as appropriate physical environments which support and contribute positively to learning."

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The school has many structures in place to provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum, i.e., District blue prints, English Language Arts (ELA), Fountas and Pinnell, and mathematics benchmarks.
- The school is implementing collaborative teams and has provided a complete and detailed resource guide.
- The school has committed to balanced literacy as evident by professional development (PD) and resources.
- There was a strong sense of student ownership in most classrooms. Both teacher and student voices were heard.

- Overall, students understood what was expected of them and what they were supposed to be doing. Positive learning relationships were nurtured in many classrooms.

- A strong presence of the school leader in hallways, classrooms, the cafeteria, and the front doors of the school was observed by the review team. She was frequently engaged in informal conversations with teachers and students. She directed and redirected student behavior in a positive and friendly manner.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- The development of common writing tasks was a goal for 2011-2012.

- Classroom teachers regularly monitor progress, i.e., a modified "running record," and Sentios.

- The reading benchmark is the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark that was administered three times per year. For mathematics, a District created benchmark was used and will be aligned to P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS).

- Most teachers have individual meetings with the school leader focused on the data collected for this year.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- District benchmark data is important and significant. School leaders should ensure that structures are put in place so that all teachers working with the same students have equal access and understanding of this data and use this data to plan aligned instruction.

- School leader and teacher conversations regarding data are an important beginning. School leaders should ensure that a more explicit process for data analysis and instructional planning be developed, e.g., Data Driven Instruction (DDI). After a plan is agreed to, teachers should be supported with PD and coaching.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Coherent Instructional/Programmatic Roadmap:
  The LINKS Plan includes the following objectives: 85 percent of students will be at the District mathematics benchmark; CCLS will be implemented; 80 percent of students will be reading at or above grade level; and 50 percent of student writing will be non-fiction.

- Scientifically-Based Research/Evidence-Based Strategies.

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- The focus on Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (GRRM) appears to have lessened since the 2010 Literacy Audit.

- The purpose for content and/or strategies was provided in a few settings.

- Time for active processing of information was provided in less than half of the settings.

- Higher order questioning strategies were observed in less than half of the settings.

- Re-teaching of concepts or strategies occurred less than half the time.

- Students identified that they worked in groups. Most indicated they choose who they worked with. Only one student identified reading groups.

- It was noted that content/resources appeared to be driving instruction, specifically the use of *Time* and *Scholastic* as non-fiction texts, but the skills being taught were not apparent.

- Standards Alignment:
  - There were school documents that clearly articulate grade level expectations by tier and reading level three times per year (September, January and May).

  - District curriculum blue prints, pacing guides, and District mathematics benchmarks are aligned with the 2005 Learning Standards and work has begun on CCLS alignment.

  - School documents state "it is 'a must' that teachers read aloud." Read aloud was seen infrequently and only during snack time.

  - School documents state "the classroom teacher must hold guided reading groups for ALL students." Guided reading was not consistently following the model of a text Intro (where the learning goal, guiding question, and preview are all introduced), a reading of text where skills are monitored and prompted (students read individually, Round Robin style, with feedback limited to sounding out strategies), a discussion where students could deepen their understanding of the text, and an opportunity to process and demonstrate that they have met the learning goal.

  - It was noted that the skills being taught in classrooms within a grade level were inconsistent.

- Rigor and Relevance:
  - High expectations and relevance of work varied by classroom.

  - Some students reported that the work was hard, but others indicated it was easy. Students noted that the work gets harder as the year continues.

- Differentiated Instructional And Intervention Strategies:
  - School documents state that the "reading teacher works with Tier 2, 3 and 4 in the classroom based on data." Tier 2, Tier 3, and Tier 4 were seen as pull-out instruction and did not align to classroom instruction. The same students receive Tier 2, 3 and 4 instruction, and migrate to those pull-out settings together. It does not seem that remediation is linked to specific lagging skills; just that additional instruction was provided.

- School documents state that "literacy stations were available, differentiated, engaging and updated frequently to meet needs of students." The majority of literacy stations were unrelated to objective. The objective was relevant only to the station where the teacher was providing direct instruction. Literacy stations were not related to each other; little if any differentiation by student or skill level was observed.

- Several teachers noted that the number of times Tier 2, 3, and 4 students were pulled-out of the classroom for instruction interfered with the continuity of overarching classroom goals.

- Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) was used for Tier 3 students with the goal of bringing students to grade level achievement. Outcomes include: developing fluency and phrasing through re-reading; reading a new text; learning about letters, sounds and words; applying knowledge of phonics to word solving while reading; and extending comprehension through discussion, teacher's instruction, and writing.

- It is unclear how students are supported when they don't meet grade level reading expectations. Who and how placements were made was unclear, although the team heard/saw Tiers 1 through 4.

- Differentiated instruction was not often seen, and in several occurrences the differentiated content was "easier."

- Some teachers did not have instructional materials readily available and instructional time was lost while resources were collected.

- Safe, Disciplined Learning Environment:
  - Students reported staff and peers being kind and able to get help when needed.

  - Behavioral expectations were not observed being taught in any setting.

  - Tolerance for student behaviors was inconsistent.

  - Students reported what they were not supposed to do, i.e., run, hit and eat in the halls. They also indicated that there were consequences if you did, e.g., Principal comes to class or students stay after school.

  - Students generally reported feeling safe.

  - Parents/guardians reported the code of conduct was annually sent home.

- Extended Day/Year Activities:
  - Students mentioned activities they could do before or after school, e.g., read and draw, but did not indicate where this occurred.

  - Parents/guardians reported no available help before or after school. One parent/guardian reported that extra help was only available if requested by the student.

- Schoolwide Collaborative Teams:

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- Collaborative teams were only focused on CCLS ELA and writing. Individual student needs were not addressed.

- PD was limited to conference days.

- There was no evidence of a School Based Inquiry Team (SBIT).

- The District has a three person Network Team (NT).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Coherent Instructional/Programmatic Road Map:
  - While multiple data sources were provided, there did not appear to be a shared understanding how the school's data informs school initiatives, i.e., the LINKS, benchmarks, scheduling and teacher assignment. The school should make this process explicit as it is an important first step for a coherent instructional plan.

  - School leaders should support teachers in their understanding of the CCLS to ensure that they are teaching the skills associated with reading informational text.

- Scientifically-Based Research/Evidence Based Strategies:
  - School leaders should ensure additional training and support of the TEACCH philosophy and structures.

  - School leaders should ensure that literacy stations meet the standard identified. Additional PD and/or resources are needed..

  - The school should re-visit the expectations regarding reading aloud with staff. Additional PD and support will be needed to implement balanced literacy completely.

  - The school leader should ensure that all staff are trained in the use of Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessments and supported in its implementation.

  - The school leader should ensure that the grouping of students is purposeful and fluid. Students should be able to answer the two following questions: "What are you learning?" and "Why?"

  - The school leader, with the support of the District, should ensure that instructional resources are not driving the curriculum.

  - Teachers should have instructional materials ready for each group so as to maximize the learning time of students.

- Differentiated Instructional And Intervention Strategies:
  - The school leader should ensure that students receiving multiple tiers are receiving aligned support. This will require frequent communication between all providers and timely sharing of data.

  - The school leaders should ensure that the schedule of the ELA block out, i.e., pull-out, specials, breaks and snack, is examined to determine how much real time teachers and students have.

- The school leader should ensure teachers understand how the LLI intervention fills the learning needs of the student in order to support student learning in the classroom and with other staff.

- Safe, Disciplined Learning Environment:
  The school leader and teachers should ensure that there is direct instruction on behavior expectations with all adults regularly modeling these expectations. Students should be provided the opportunity to regularly practice these skills.

- Schoolwide Collaborative Teams:
  - The school leaders and teachers should ensure that collaborative teams grow to include discussion of student learning.
  - The school leader should Identify and communicate the plan, expectations, and timeline regarding the SBIT.
  - The school leader, with the support of the District should, ensure that the District NT meet with the collaborative teams to facilitate and provide support on the CCLS tasks assigned to the collaborative teams.
  - School leaders should ensure that there is a more directive and focused approach regarding the work of the District to ensure that District deliverables are being met.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- Clear, Shared Values, Mission And Vision:
  - The District/school mission, vision and values were not understood by all. Several reported a lack of connection between initiatives and the mission.
  - Teachers' perception of the school's mission was to ensure student success.
  - Teachers reported an improved atmosphere that is more cohesive and headed in a good direction.

- Match Between Skills/Experience and Student Learning Needs.
  - A rotation of students was reported; classes vary year-to-year resulting in reading and special education teachers needing to establish relationships with different classroom teachers each year.
  - One teacher reported holding certification in special education but had no students with disabilities in his/her classroom.
  - Teachers reported mentoring new teachers. It was expressed that the mentoring process was more formal in the past.
  - There seemed to be confusion among the staff about the difference between the New York State (NYS) Teaching Standards and the CCLS.

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- Instructional Leadership Is Important To The School's Administration.
  - Teachers receive a short commentary on specific focus criteria.
  - Teachers reported formal observations, walkthroughs, staff and department meetings about what should be occurring in classrooms.
  - Observations are a formal summary and a conference is optional.
  - Walkthroughs are defined inconsistently, i.e., time viewing instruction vs. check-ins.
- Plan-Assess-Adjust Cycle:
  - Fountas and Pinnell data was collected by the reading teacher and given to the classroom teacher.
  - Mathematics benchmark data is shared through an Excel worksheet.
- Leadership-For-Development:
  - The LINKS plan is clearly focused on the CCLS and students reading at grade level.
  - Collaborative time and PD are focused on the LINKS plan.
  - While there is a clear plan in place and multiple sources report the sharing of school information, the information is not known by all staff.
  - The review team observed misalignments between what is said and what is practiced, i.e., GRRM and guided reading. It seems that there is a misunderstanding that GRRM and guided reading are separate from CCLS, e.g., reading informational texts.
- Leadership-For-Growth:
  There are multiple overlapping and conflicting priorities.
- Leadership-For-Results/Accountability
  - Teachers reported that the LINKS goals were shared at staff meeting.
  - Teachers indicated that most teachers did not know the LINKS plan.
  - It was not known how the LINKS goals or other measurable goals were used to assess student learning and create a system of shared school accountability.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Clear, Shared Values, Mission And Vision:
  - Mission, vision and values cannot be over communicated, and the school leader should ensure that they are communicated whenever groups of teachers or staff come together.
- Parent/Guardian Notification:

The school leader and teachers should ensure that in addition to formal District notification, individual parent/guardian contact is made to assist with parental understanding.

- Match Between Teacher Skills/Experiences And Student Learning Needs:
  - The school leader should ensure that decisions regarding teacher assignments are consistently implemented and clearly communicated.
  - PD should be provided to teacher teams on how to work together and discuss instructional plans.
  - School leaders should recognize that the investment of time and resources with new teachers is invaluable in creating a positive and sustained culture.
  - School leaders and teachers should ensure the explicit sharing of NYS Teaching Standards and its connection to the revised Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR).
- Instructional Leadership Is Important To The School's Administration:
  - The expectation for walkthroughs should be clarified.
  - The process for sharing feedback after an observation should be defined and made consistent. Some teachers reported annual post observation conferences and others reported these as optional. The school leader and the District should review research regarding the importance of post observation feedback.
  - The school leader and the District should use the revised APPR regulations as an opportunity to ensure consistency and shared understanding regarding the teacher evaluation process, i.e., student learning and teacher PD.
- Leadership-For-Development:
  - The school leader and teachers should develop protocols for communication to ensure that all staff is knowledgeable about school information.
  - The school leader should explicitly communicate expectations for classroom instruction regarding GRRM, guided reading, and the CCLS.
- Leadership-for-Growth:
  All District and school leaders, i.e., superintendent, school Principal, director of special education, director of staff and curriculum development and NT and SBIT, should be focused on the school's initiatives and priorities.
- Leadership-For-Results/Accountability:
  The school leader, with the support of the District, should develop a clear system of shared accountability that is communicated to all staff. Progress on the LINKS goals may provide this data.

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IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- "Safety Nets" For Students And Families:
  Students reported teachers, counselors and the School leader are available to assist them.

- Conscious Use Of Time:
  - Some teachers reported that common planning time was not available, but others indicated planning time was available.

  - Some teachers reported working in multiple classrooms (five or more) and, therefore, not having adequate time to plan with multiple teachers and grade levels.

  - Two special education teachers provide direct consultant teacher services to three grade levels. Many students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) indicated 30 minutes of mathematics and 45 minutes of ELA daily.

- Pathways For Student Success:
  Teachers reported PD on differentiated instruction; however, there was a lack of differentiation during classroom instruction. There is also a lack of understanding of what is Differentiated Instruction (DI).

- Home-School Partnerships:
  - While some parents/guardians reported satisfaction with what and how information was shared, others reported frustration.

  - Parents/guardians reported being told that the availability of special education services varied by school.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Conscious Use Of Time:
  - The school leader and teachers should conduct an evaluation of how students are scheduled. This should address teachers' concerns that students are pulled-out too often for Tier 2, 3 and 4 services as well as that Tiers 2, 3, and 4 instruction are not aligned.

  - The school leader should ensure that teachers have time to collaborate regarding student instructional needs.

  - The school leader and teachers should re-visit school programming to ensure that classroom teachers, reading teachers, and special education teachers can provide services in the most effective manner.

- Pathways For Student Success:
  The school leader and teachers should re-visit the schools' focus on GRRM and how this model for instruction provides many of the structures to support differentiated instruction. Additional targeted PD may be needed to assist teachers with daily implementation. Teachers should be regularly supported

and receive feedback on how students' learning styles, needs, and instructional levels are being met. For this to occur there needs to be a shared understanding between the school leader and teachers on what DI is and what it should look like in the classroom.

- Home-School Partnerships:
  The school leader and teachers should continue and extend communication with parents/guardians.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- PD Needs, Continuous Professional Learning:
  - PD based upon the use of data and effective classroom observations was not present in the LINKS plan.
  - Some teachers believe that the LINKS plan drives the PD.
  - The LINKS plan identifies planned PD for the year, but it was not stated if the PD had occurred and/or the results.
  - The LINKS plan explicitly references CCLS, but there was no reference to DDI or Teacher/Principal Evaluation/Effectiveness.
  - DDI was evident in the school's Collaboration Team Resources, but this was not understood by teachers or the school leader.
- Communities Of Quality Collaborative Practice:
  - This year, the school implemented collaborative teams and created a resource guide to support this initiative. Teacher understanding regarding the purpose of this initiative varies.
  - Teachers reported having "no direction" regarding the unpacking of CCLS. They reported watching the videos, but felt this was insufficient and more direction and guidance were needed.
- Culture Of Shared Internal Professional Accountability:
  It was unclear if the LINKS team members are known by other staff.
- Motivation For Learning, Mentoring Of New Teachers:
  - Teachers consistently reported mentoring new teachers. However, it was expressed that the mentoring process was more formal in the past.
  - Teachers expressed frustration with the budget. PD activities were limited due to budgetary constraints, but some teachers have access to multiple opportunities. Access is not consistent.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- PD Needs, Continuous Professional Learning:

- If the LINKS plan is to be used as the foundation of school change/improvement and shared accountability for student success, it is essential that the plan is frequently communicated. The school leader and teachers should ensure that the plan is used as an introduction to PD and referred to during staff meetings and collaborative time, etc.

- The LINKS plan should be updated to reflect the recommendations of the School Quality Review (SQR) as well as other District initiatives, e.g., STAIR project.

- Explicit connections between CCLS, DDI and teacher and Principal effectiveness initiatives should be made.

- Communities Of Quality Collaborative Practice:
  - It is understood that collaborative time is new to the school this year, and a large amount of support is needed. The school leader should ensure that direct and clear protocols for accountability for this time are established. Regular facilitation for this time maybe necessary.

  - The school leader, with the support of the District, should ensure teachers are provided more support and DI regarding the CCLS and collaborative time.

- Culture Of Shared Internal Professional Accountability:
  The school leader should clearly communicate who the LINKS team members are.

- Motivation For Learning, Mentoring Of New Teachers:
  - The school leader should ensure that there is equitable access to PD.

  - The District should share with the school staff an understanding on what and why there are budget limitations.

  - The school and District leaders should invest time and resources with new teachers to create a positive and sustained culture.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- Teachers reported adequate supplies, but the need for more non-fiction texts.

- Some students felt more computers were needed in the classroom.

- Parents/guardians reported books, the 100 Book Challenge specifically, were available.

- Walls were filled with information; however, some information was outdated. The focus of the day/unit was not easily seen because of this.

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Due to the focus of the CCLS in ELA on non-fiction texts, an evaluation should be conducted to determine the need for additional materials.

- The school leader and teachers should ensure that homework is equitably distributed over the course of the week and can be completed at a student's level of independence. This should result in differentiated homework assignments.

- The school leader and teachers should develop a system for determining what materials are displayed on the wall.

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.