

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

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	662200010006
District Name:	White Plains City School District
School Name:	Ridgeway Elementary School
School Address:	225 Ridgeway, White Plains, N.Y. 10604
Principal:	Tashia Brown
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:	December 5 and 6, 2011

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

"To educate and inspire all students, while nurturing their dreams, so they learn continually, think critically, pursue their aspirations and contribute to a diverse and dynamic world."

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The school leadership team (SLT) has a clear vision for the school. School leaders demonstrated a willingness to look at their programs to address gaps and needs regarding student performance.
- Teachers support all aspects of student learning and development. Teachers consistently talked about their instructional program using the same terms and processes to describe student engagement in the instructional process.
- The school is safe and has routines that nurture students in a caring environment. The classrooms, although small, are welcoming and inviting for students.
- Parents are supportive of the programs and staff.
- The school is involved with Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) that are being developed.
- Classroom technology is available and used to assist in instruction, e.g., SMART boards and computers.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- The District is developing its own CFAs that are aligned with the New York State (NYS) assessments and P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to gather data that is predictive and can be used proactively for programmatic decisions.
- There is evidence that multiple data sources are used to collect information on student performance and progress, e.g., Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Diagnostic Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2), Self Regulated Learning (SRL), CFAs, New York State English language arts (ELA) assessments, the literacy team, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), NYS mathematics assessments, the NYS English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). Many of these data sources are new to the staff and have not been used systematically by teachers to inform daily instruction.
- The data sources have been used to evaluate program development and for student placement. The process for data analysis is evident; however, there is no true system, and staff interviewed indicated that staff do not have confidence that the assessment results can be predictive of future performance.
- The District has software that can store and manipulate data to develop reports; however, staff is not well-trained in its use, and it is a work in progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A system should be developed for data collection and analysis. The data should be collected, stored, and analyzed to impact daily instruction, review programs and identify students in need of support. Data that can predict future performance should be identified and shared with staff.
- Staff should receive professional development (PD) to develop skills in the analysis and use of data.
- Common data reports should be developed to facilitate data analysis and the implementation of common practices by staff so that students and programs receive support.
- A regular schedule for analysis and review of data should be developed.
- Student progress should be monitored, so that plans and common actions are developed that foster proactive practices and student success.
- Interim and formative assessments should be used to re-focus instruction that is aligned with District and State curriculum objectives. Instructional practices should relate to high standards of performance. Information should be collected using formative assessments in class, especially at the end of class.
- Analysis of subgroup data for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities should allow the school to re-focus instruction and reallocate resources prior to assessments.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Staff use "Reading and Writing Workshop" techniques for ELA instruction; staff is able to articulate common practices.
- Curriculum maps are available to guide instruction in all subjects and grade levels. The school and District recognize that the maps should be revised to align with the CCLS.
- Many new programs have been introduced to serve the subgroups, especially in ELA. Staff Interviewed by the review team indicated that the staff feels unsure about their ability to implement the programs, and cite limited time for PD.
- There is limited use of differentiation, enrichment, focused subgroup instruction, and formative assessment to focus instruction.
- Interviews conducted by the review team indicated that articulation among teachers is limited because of lack of time and scheduling issues. .
- Student performance in reading is decreasing in grades 4-6.
- Staff Interviewed by the review team indicated that instructional expectations are not communicated clearly, including how new programs will be implemented and applied meaningfully at the classroom level.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- There should be a District/school plan to revise and update curriculum maps that are aligned with the CCLS. This plan should include the CFAs and other assessments that will inform instruction, student support, and programs.
- There should be coordination of the PLC process, e.g., common instructional practices for differentiated instruction and closure to foster high standards to meet the needs of the ELL and students with disabilities subgroups.
- All changes should be aligned with the vision of the school and the District. The implementation of changes should be monitored to ensure consistency and prevent fragmentation in order to provide in-depth PD.
- The reading program should be reviewed vertically for grades K-6 to establish benchmarks that will help identify the need for early intervention and foster student achievement in grades 3-6. Reading should be viewed as a systemic process.
- There should be a focus on PD that aligns the school's program to the CCLS.

- The schedule should be reviewed to foster articulation and improve the alignment of goals and objectives. Common planning time, as well as fewer grade levels in the special education and ESL classes are major considerations. The establishment of teams and looping may allow for more focused instruction and time-on-task.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- The school leader is organized, aligns instruction to District initiatives, and has developed a professional environment to support student learning.
- Parents Interviewed by the review team revealed that parents view the school leader as an advocate for students; they support the school with an active parent association.
- School leadership has a clear plan to involve the staff; the expectation is to help students become successful.
- The SLT is positive and knowledgeable and is making research-based decisions regarding instruction and what is best for students.
- The District is currently revising a Strategic Plan that was originally developed in 2007.
- Interviews revealed that decisions related to new programs, PD, and the allocation of resources, are predominantly made at the District level.
- Staff Interviewed by the review team indicated that the management of all of the changes is a challenge. There is limited time for PD and a limited number of faculty meetings, i.e., five during the school year. Preparing for new initiatives with limited resources is a challenge for school leaders.
- The lack of a Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) makes it difficult to manage these improvement changes. Implementing PD as well as aligning it to the needs of the staff and the vision of the District is challenging.
- Limited time is spent on helping staff to "buy-in" and understand their role in the change process and to see how the changes can and should improve student performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A CEP should be developed that will clearly communicate the school's priorities, goals, and expectations within a realistic time line.
- There should be communication and support of high expectations for all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities.

- Programs should be developed that reflect high expectations and incorporate best practices to achieve instructional goals.
- Data should be made available so that analysis and decision-making can be done with school staff as a group project.
- PD focus should be centered on the implementation of differentiated instruction, student performance, formative assessment and best practices.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- There are many new assessments and programs to support students and involve parents.
- The Instructional Support Team (IST) is a new component that is developing a program for high needs students.
- There are multiple classroom settings for ELLs and students with disabilities that are designed to meet the learning and developmental needs of students.
- The school has extended time for ELA and has an "I" period for remediation and enrichment.
- The school schedule does not facilitate communication among multiple teachers who work with a student. This is especially true for some students with disabilities and ELLs who receive help outside the classroom.
- The staff show a general ability to identify student needs; however, there is limited time to develop coordinated action for the IST.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A "community of support" system should be developed that coordinates staff and enhances communication and PD activities to align State assessment results with the instructional program.
- An analysis of the use of time and resources should be completed.
- Additional instructional time should be provided to enhance experiences for ELLs.
- The assessment process should be used to focus on how to make students successful. All assessment data should be analyzed to help staff diagnose learning needs and gaps.
- Communication with parents should be improved to expand the home-school relationship and support system.
- The PLC process should be aligned to the needs of students and District goals.

- The implementation of new schedules to better coordinate support for students should be investigated.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- Staff interviewed by the review team indicated that PD should provide more classroom support and clear staff performance expectations.
- There are many new programs that need follow-through and support to become highly effective, e.g., the I-block and new assessments. The DRP2, CFAs, and "Performance Plus" are some of the initiatives that should have ongoing support and PD.
- The PLCs are not always aligned to areas of high needs and are not coordinated to improve results on State assessments.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The CEP should focus PD on programs that will have the greatest impact on student results and success.
- There is limited time for PD, therefore, the activities should be prioritized and staff informed of how they will be expected to demonstrate mastery of the knowledge and skills provided in the PD.
- A system for PD should be developed that gives some flexibility for emerging needs while focusing on Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), Data Teams, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and/or "Responsive Classroom" for behavior management and the needs of specialized groups.
- Staff should be involved in the planning of PD.
- The PLC experiences should be developed into a coordinated program that focuses on data collection, analysis, and new curricula that allows the school to provide focused support and resources for student improvement.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- The school is well-maintained, clean and pleasant.
- All classrooms have SMARTBoards.
- ELLs and students with disabilities need additional academic support. The Dual Language Program for ELLs is not available at the school.

- There is a need for technology programs for high need students, e.g., students with disabilities to enhance their learning experiences.
- Interviews indicated that parents would like to have a larger role in daily activities, e.g., lunchroom support. They would also like more programs and materials to assist them in helping their children.
- A great deal of technology is available, but no Technology Plan was provided to the review team.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Technology curriculum plans should be redeveloped to reflect updated requirements and best practices.
- The faculty should be trained in technology as needed.
- Technology access should be increased so that students can use technology to support learning and develop their skills in the use of technology, e.g., research, data collection, and graphical representation.
- The use of interactive software via the internet or other means should be investigated to extend learning time for ELLs.

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.