

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	62 09-01-06-0006
District Name:	Rondout Valley Central School District
School Name:	Rondout Valley Middle School
School Address:	PO Box 9, Accord, NY 12404
Principal:	William Zimmer
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year 1) - Focused English Language Arts - Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Areas of Identification:	
Dates of On-site Review:	January 9, 11, 12, 23, 31 and February 2, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

Note: The current Rondout Middle School is part of the Rondout Valley Central School District (RVCS D) school reconfiguration plan scheduled for implementation in September, 2012. (One elementary school is being closed.) The current building will house a junior high program (grades seven and eight) and an intermediate elementary program (grades four through six). Each school has a newly assigned school leader who will be working with the staff and community to develop an updated mission statement.

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- There is a strong, well-respected music program with lessons offered to grade four students.
- Languages Other Than English (LOTE) and Library/Media and Technology instruction begin in grade five.
- A Math Olympiad is available for interested students.
- There is an active student council that focuses on community service.
- The school yearbook is supported by parent volunteers.
- The exploratory courses (art/music/home and careers) annually provide a "Building Bridges with Seniors" event.
- Modified sports are available for students; however, some co-curricular activities have been eliminated due to budget cuts.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- The staff does not systematically use multiple sources of data, but data are used on an individual basis by some teachers.
- Quarterly formative assessments have begun to be used for grades five and six mathematics. Other assessments are in development by district-wide teams.
- Some Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) data has been collected, but it is not used.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- An inquiry model for the use by teachers of multiple sources of data should be formalized and implemented.
- The school leader should create schoolwide systemic processes to monitor the student achievement.
- The District should continue the development of common assessments through the District-wide content mapping cabinets.
- The school PBIS initiative should be revived, using a range of data to inform the program.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- The District has provided all staff professional development (PD) to give them awareness and overview of the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). The District is leading the required development of units aligned to CCLS.
- The school has many supports for students with disabilities, i.e., extended time, crisis specialists, integration and mainstreaming.
- The District is exploring a diagnostic tool to provide teachers with information about students' reading, writing, and mathematics strengths and weaknesses.
- Peer to Peer walkthroughs have begun, but the school lacks a regular schedule for implementation.
- There is inconsistent use of evidence-based instructional strategies, and none are implemented consistently across the school.
- Expectations and objectives for student learning are not explicitly stated in all classrooms.

- Lesson plans do not consistently reflect components for differentiation in instruction.
- In some, but not all, grades the curriculum alignment and mapping with the CCLS are in place and consistently used.
- The Academic Intervention Services (AIS) program lacks written procedures and offerings in science and social studies.
- There are no common agenda items for team, grade level, or staff meetings that focus on data to inform differentiated instruction and intervention strategies.
- The school lacks an agreed upon, common set of schoolwide rules, causing inconsistent implementation of behavioral expectations.
- Budgetary constraints have caused many after-school supports and enrichment activities to be eliminated.
- There is limited use of common rubrics and grading practices across the school.
- The school committees and teams are not effectively organized to support the success of students and the school community.
- Although the school has a School Improvement Team (SIT), data inquiry is not an embedded practice across the middle school.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The District should facilitate and ensure the alignment of District curriculum maps with the CCLS. The school leader should ensure that the teachers embed the CCLS within the lesson design for all courses.
- The school leader should ensure that data are routinely used to inform instructional decisions.
- The school leader and teachers should identify a set of instructional strategies that effectively meet the needs of students and develop a plan to implement them schoolwide.
- The school leader should consider including common planning time for special education and core teachers as a part of master schedule development.
- Teaching and learning objectives should be explicitly stated in all classrooms to facilitate student learning.
- Differentiated instructional strategies should be an expectation in all lesson design.
- The school leader, in collaboration with the elementary and high schools, should identify and implement screening tools that will provide teachers with baseline data on student learning.

- There should be shared District and school expectations for the implementation of the CCLS and administration of aligned assessments for all students.
- The school and District leaders should ensure that AIS is implemented as required, including that it be provided and scheduled within the school day.
- The school should establish common agenda items that address data-informed instructional decision-making.
- The school leader and staff should revisit the PBIS model to ensure successful implementation and alignment with the programs at the elementary and high school.
- The school leader and staff should establish a common set of rules and expectations to be adhered to by all staff and students to ensure a safe and disciplined learning environment.
- The District should develop a vertical articulation plan to ensure a seamless transition between grades three and four (elementary to intermediate), grades six and seven (intermediate to junior high) and grades eight and nine (junior high to high school).
- As the school leadership develops the master schedule, additional time should be designated for students to receive extra help and enrichment.
- The English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics mapping cabinets should develop kindergarten through grade eight units and assessment rubrics.
- The school's leadership and staff should, as a part of their visioning process, develop a well-planned organizational structure that is purposeful and inclusive of all staff and that meets the school community needs.
- The school leader should develop a model to ensure that Data Inquiry Teams are in place and have a written purpose, process, and expected outcomes.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- There are many opportunities for PD available to staff.
- The District special education staff provides appropriate services to identified students.
- There is English as a Second Language (ESL) program in place.
- Some teachers stated that they lack confidence in their ability to manage the new literacy across the content area requirements.

- Interviews conducted by the review team indicated that curriculum documents were not provided to new teachers by the school leader.
- Mentor programs are inconsistently implemented.
- Management issues and decreasing District supports often interfere with the school leader’s ability to focus on improving instruction.
- The school improvement team (SIT) does not review data.
- Teacher leaders report that sometimes they meet with resistance because the position is not considered an “official” assignment.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leader should articulate a vision for the school and collaborate with the school staff to develop a mission statement that focuses on improving achievement for all students.
- The school leader should ensure that staff identifies a specific lesson design and that instructional practices that best solve the identified gaps in student performance data are implemented.
- Data teams should be implemented and organized and focused on instructional and management solutions.
- The District and school leaders should assess the capacity of staff to use data to analyze, interpret, plan and assess in order to inform instruction and provide support for learning at both individual and group levels.
- The school, with District support, should provide PD and support to enhance the skills necessary for all teachers to provide sound literacy instruction.
- A plan should be developed and implemented to support the professional growth and development of new teachers and those with developing/ineffective ratings on the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR).
- The District should work with the school leader to develop a plan to support and collaboratively implement the walkthrough observation and evaluation process.
- The PBIS model that is implemented to improve the climate and culture of the whole school should be consistently implemented. The PBIS initiative should be aligned with District directives.
- Data study should become a common agenda item for professional learning communities (PLCs), common planning time, and monthly meeting times, with focused expectations for individual teacher and group work.
- The school, with District support, should establish easy, routine access to classroom and school data for teachers.

- A culture of cooperation and collaboration that allows for peer leadership opportunities to develop and be respected should be established.
- The school leader should ensure that the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) plan goals are communicated to all staff and that teachers have sufficient time to study, understand, and implement the plan.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- A number of community agencies have a relationship with the school.
- The master schedule and scheduling process is completed by guidance counselors in grades seven and eight and by the school leader in grades five and six.
- Much of the school PD has focused on the development of curriculum maps.
- There appears to be a strong student support program in place.
- A transition plan for students moving to the high school was implemented in 2011 and will be continued.
- Instructional resources, including technology, manipulatives, and corresponding PD, are evident.
- The staff serves as mentors for high school students, and high school students mentor and work with middle school students as part of a District program. The middle school student council also provides food, clothing, and holiday presents to community based organizations (CBOs).
- The Parent School Compact is presented at Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) meetings, the school Open House, on the website and in monthly school and classroom newsletters.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leader should assume overall responsibility for the master schedule.
- AIS should be scheduled within the school day.
- The master schedule should include regular common planning time for staff to ensure collaboration between general education and special education teachers.
- The school leader should consider scheduling alternatives that provide extra time for student support and enrichment in addition to AIS.
- Staff should be provided with regular updates and follow-up on District-wide curriculum initiatives and their implications at the school level.

- The school leader should consider creating an organizational plan that provides for inclusion of staff in collaborative leadership.
- The school leader and staff should develop opportunities for regular contact with families to inform them of positive events and celebrate achievements.
- Families should be provided with workshops to enable them to support the skills their students are learning.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- The school has many PD offerings and opportunities for staff. This year most focused on the continued development of curriculum maps, assessments, and unit development aligned with CCLS.
- The school schedule provides a PLC time and a third monthly after-school meeting time for PD.
- The District office participates in Curriculum Mapping Cabinets K-8 in ELA and mathematics in order to develop the process of vertically aligning the curriculum and to support unit development and assessments.
- **All** staff have been trained on the P-12 CCLS at either the District or BOCES.
- The school uses the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) and is aligning it with the CCLS.
- The ESL teacher provides information and support to the general education teacher as appropriate.
- There are three regularly scheduled after-school meeting times for teachers, including one for staff, one for department meetings, and a third designated for mapping work.
- There is PLC time within the school day.
- Co-teaching training has been provided to teams of teachers; however, when team members change, additional, ongoing training is not provided.
- Some staff do not participate in PD.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leader should champion District initiatives within the building.
- Communication of PD expectations should be clearly stated and measured by the school and District leadership.

- Walkthroughs, observations, and formal and informal conversations should focus on the implementation of agreed upon instructional strategies presented in PD.
- A plan should be developed, with District and staff input, to organize “adult time” to ensure that PD is processed and successfully implemented.
- School and District leaders should clarify for all staff the expectations and outcomes for the curriculum mapping initiative and its relationship to improving student achievement.
- The school and District leadership should determine what evidence they will collect to ensure full implementation of the TCRWP.
- All teachers should become skilled in data study, and PD should be provided and differentiated to meet individual needs.
- The school leader should identify co-teaching teams that best meet student academic and support needs.
- The school leader should consider using all three after-school meeting times for professional growth, with standing agenda items, guiding questions, and minutes with actions.
- The structure and expectations for the PLC time should be revisited to specifically identify expectations, purpose, and outcomes.
- The school leader should consider team-building activities to create a more collaborative and respectful environment.
- The school leader should consider developing strategies that focus on adult and student engagement.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- The school has a well-equipped and supported instructional program.
- Students with disabilities have access to technology, manipulatives, books on tape, CDs, and the Rosetta Stone software program for teaching Spanish and reading.
- All classrooms have computers and SMART Boards.
- The Committee on Special Education meetings (CSE) include any specialists working with students, and all student needs are met.
- PBIS data indicated there were some behavior issues in the hallways.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should explore having library access before and/or after school.
- The library could use additional technology.
- The school leader and staff should explicitly identify examples of displayed student work that are aligned with the CCLS and performance indicators.

PART 3: CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The findings and recommendations noted in this report are intended to guide the school's inquiry, planning, and the development of the CEP for school year 2012-2013. 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 Performance Review.