

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	261600010036
District Name:	Rochester City School District
School Name:	Henry Longfellow School 36
School Address:	85 St. Jacob Street, Rochester, NY 14621-4951
Principal:	Paul Montanarello
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year 1)- Comprehensive
Areas of Identification:	English Language Arts -All Students; African American; Hispanic Students; Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	November 28-30, 2011

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“The mission of School #36 is to create a school through which involvement and commitment develops the student's sense of belonging, a spirit of community and a desire for excellence. We will accomplish this in a safe, nurturing, and pleasing environment where a competent, cooperative, and collaborative staff provides a challenging program for all students”.

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTH:

Parent and community involvement in the school is well developed and effectively implemented.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

Findings:

- Data analysis is not consistently used as a tool for driving forward school improvement. The data that the school collects is not being analyzed in a rigorous manner to identify precisely what aspects of ELA need to be the specific focus for improvement. The analysis of data is not focused sharply enough to identify the key changes required in programs and delivery to bring about urgent improvement in student performance.

- Teachers are not consistently monitoring student progress records and student academic needs. Many teachers did not have data binders to assist them in grouping and designing instruction to meet students' individual needs. As a result, not all students who are eligible for Academic Intervention Services (AIS) are receiving these services.
- There was inconsistent evidence in teacher data binders to suggest that data is effectively being used to address the academic barriers that impact student achievement. There was limited evidence that classroom teachers used medial assessments, such as running records and conferences, to determine student progress and to appropriately adjust their instructional planning.

Recommendations:

- The school should revisit the current system for data disaggregating and analysis to focus more closely on student-by-student, class-by-class and subgroup-by-subgroup deficiencies in addition to the whole school and grade monitoring. An improvement plan should be created to ensure that all teachers incorporate item skills analysis and predictive results to inform their instruction in all testing grades. Particular attention should be given to monitoring the development of student skills as they move from grade to grade to check for vertical alignment in curriculum programs in each content area.
- The school leadership should request professional development (PD) support from the District/Network in developing the essential teacher skills needed to implement a more rigorous and systematic analysis of data. The school should hone these skills to identify precisely the aspects of ELA that are causing greatest concern. Plans should then be put in place to address these issues on either a school, grade or class level and to ensure that these areas are a focus for teaching and learning. The school administration should monitor the analysis down to classroom practice and hold staff accountable to ensure that improvements are made.
- The school leadership should create a plan and a format for collecting student data. All student data should be reviewed to identify all students in need of AIS. Administrators should closely monitor teachers to ensure that all staff members are following the agreed-upon plan.
- School leaders should set clear expectations for teachers regarding collecting, recording and analyzing data from student work. There should be a range of the types of formative assessment data that are collected, such as conferring notes, running records, and notebook assessments. The ongoing assessments and recordkeeping should be kept in assessment binders. Administrators should review the assessment binders regularly during walkthroughs, informal observations, etc. The binders should include plans for modifying instruction and next steps for developing more rigorous curriculum that meets the needs of students. Teachers should be trained in using formative and interim assessments to differentiate instruction. Lesson plans should incorporate the implementation of flexible grouping based on the results of the assessments to differentiate instruction. Administrators should meet with teachers quarterly to review their students' performance and set goals for student progress toward meeting shared learning goals. Informal and formal observations should include feedback for teachers on the effectiveness of their use of data to inform instruction.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

Findings:

- The English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum as it is implemented is not rigorous. The curriculum consisted of the same concepts, skills and strategies for each grade level. The same concepts were listed for each grade without specific goals for each grade level.
- Quality lesson planning is not in place throughout the school. The school handbook includes examples of model lesson plans, but there is no evidence from the lessons observed that teachers are following this guidance.
- In the self-contained classes, learning resources were insufficient to deliver an effective instructional program.
- Teachers do not use technological resources, such as SMART Boards and laptops, as instructional aids for differentiated learning; instead, they are used as note taking or communication devices.
- Much of the instruction for all students is teacher directed, with little variety of instructional strategies. Students have few opportunities to engage in conversations about topics such as working in pairs or talking with different groups of students. This was especially evident in ELA instructional blocks.
- The co-teaching model is not effective and is not skillfully implemented. Teachers and leaders report that for the majority of the instructional time, one teacher is primarily responsible for the delivery of instruction and the other teacher plays a much less significant role of a teacher's assistant. Students are not fully benefiting from having two certified teachers in the classroom. The teachers are not effectively distributing their time or attention to provide additional support to students or to work with small skill-based groups. Co- teachers are not consistently planning together, which negatively impacts the effectiveness of the co-teaching model.
- There is a lack of rigor in questioning strategies; higher order thinking and problem solving is absent from the school. Students are asked to recall facts and details. Students are not challenged to analyze, evaluate or synthesize information. This was especially evident in the ELA lessons observed.
- Student engagement in meaningful instructional activities was limited. There were many lessons where instructional activities lacked challenge and did little to attract the interest of students. These same lessons did not provide students with opportunities to interact or work collaboratively. In these lessons, students were not active participants in the learning process.
- Displayed student work did not include specific and concise feedback and did not clearly indicate what each student needed to do to improve and reach the next level.

Recommendations:

- School leaders should work collaboratively with the ELA teachers to develop specific goals that are differentiated for each grade level. The school leaders should use District/Network personnel to ensure curriculum rigor for all students. School leaders should monitor curriculum planning and observe classrooms to ensure that a rigorous curriculum is implemented that meets the needs of all students.
- School leaders should ensure that teachers use the model lesson plans that are available in the school handbook so that lessons are consistently planned around specific learning points and are aligned with standards. School leaders should regularly monitor teacher planning to check that all teachers are following the expected guidance.
- The Principal, with district support, should ensure that sufficient funds are available to provide instructional resources to support an effective learning environment for all students. This should include a particular focus on the provision of resources to support and enhance the learning of students with disabilities.
- The school leadership should ensure that curriculum programs include specific strategies for using technological resources, such as SMART Boards and laptops, as instructional aids for differentiated learning. The District/Network should identify exemplary practices and create a technology plan that fully describes how technology can be used to support curriculum delivery and learning for all groups of students. The plan should ensure that teachers are trained to appropriately use these resources.
- School leaders should provide professional development (PD) to introduce teachers to a wider range of instructional strategies that can be used in the classroom to promote greater student participation in the learning process. Teachers should be expected to implement these strategies, and school leaders should monitor the effectiveness and provide additional PD for teachers when necessary.
- The school should provide on-site training for the full implementation of co-teaching model strategies. Scheduled common planning time should be provided so that co-teachers can equally share in the planning and delivery of effective instruction. School leaders should monitor the implementation of effective co-teaching strategies through the formal and informal teacher observation process and ensure that best practices are shared throughout the school. Where teachers are not effective, further professional development (PD) should be provided. Monthly department meetings should be used to review lesson plans for incorporating State Standards and ensuring that learning goals are aligned with planned instruction. School leaders should regularly monitor the incorporation of learning goals in direct instruction and should highlight good practices in sharing learning goals as the focus of an inter-visitation schedule.
- Teachers should move from teacher posed questions that require one-word answers or are recall and comprehension based to questions that require students to support answers by citing text, by elaborating on the answers of other students and by summarizing and rephrasing new information. Teacher lesson plans should include pre-created questions that require critical thinking and discussion. Teachers should use wait time and not allow students to opt-out of class discussions.

Teachers should use random selection and/or avoid calling exclusively on willing student volunteers. Teachers should require students to answer in complete sentences.

- Through collaboration during common planning time and professional development (PD) opportunities provided by the District/Network, teachers should ensure that all student work is appropriately challenging and demanding. Teachers should provide regular opportunities for students to work cooperatively and to discuss issues so that they become more proactive learners. The school leadership team should carry out regular observations of lessons to monitor that this is consistently occurring.
- Rubrics should be used as an integral tool in planning and assessing assignments. Teachers should participate in PD activities that model the use of rubrics to provide teacher feedback, peer feedback and student self assessment. School leaders should monitor student work in books and on display and evaluate the quality of feedback that is provided to ensure that it helps students improve and move to the next level.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Findings:

- School leaders do not set high enough expectations for the performance of all students and staff. There is no strategic plan that clearly and specifically outlines how the roles that key staff are to play or how progress towards challenging and achievable goals is to be measured. A culture of high achievement is not fully embraced by all staff and administration.
- Although a formal Annual Professional Performance Review process exists, there are limited informal instructional walkthroughs.

Recommendations:

- The school leadership team and the District/Network should create a school wide plan to improve achievement. The school leaders and staff should articulate a clear vision and strategic plan that drives the school towards high student achievement and clearly outlines the responsibilities of staff and leaders. The plan should include goals, action plans, professional development (PD) and use all resources available through the District/Network. The implementation of the plan should be carefully monitored and its impact on student achievement measured.
- School leaders should develop a plan for regular informal walkthroughs that result in data to drive instructional practices.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Findings:

- Communication between professionals within the school and the community-based organizations is not consistent.
- The overall master schedule contains gaps during the day.
- The building lost one instructional coach due to budget cuts. The current RTI coach does not spend a significant amount of time on data analysis.

Recommendations:

- The school leader should review the lines of communication that exist among professionals and establish protocols to ensure that all staff are aware of these reporting expectations.
- The school leadership should revise the master schedule to reduce the amount of non-academic time for students.
- The principal should reallocate resources to try and recover a .5 building instructional coach. The current RTI coach should have time reallocated to data analysis and professional development for instructional staff.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Findings:

- The school's professional development (PD) plan is not comprehensive or aligned with school goals and has had little impact on improving student performance. Although there is a great deal of data in the school, there was little evidence indicating that it was used to inform the plan.
- There is no indication in lesson evaluations, observations or feedback to teachers that they are held accountable for incorporating strategies they acquire through professional development (PD) into their daily instruction. The Principal and Assistant Principals do not, through their classroom observations, check for implementation of initiatives or training.

Recommendations:

- The school should develop a comprehensive PD program that aligns with school goals by using the data available in the school. School leaders should seek support for PD from the District/Network and other outside specialists to help them develop a detailed plan that focuses on improving teaching and learning to better meet the needs of students and teachers.

- The Principal and Assistant Principals should be more rigorous in their classroom observations and should hold teachers accountable for implementing strategies and skills acquired through PD offerings into their instructional practice.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

Finding:

The building shows signs of age and a need for improved maintenance.

Recommendation:

The school leader should seek the support from the District/Network in carrying out a site evaluation to remedy the many building deficiencies that are present to help provide a safer and more welcoming environment for students and staff.

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 Common Core Learning Standards, Data Driven Instruction and the Annual Professional Performance Reviews for teacher effectiveness.