

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	641701060001
District Name:	Whitehall Central School District
School Name:	Whitehall Elementary School
School Address:	PO Box 29, Whitehall, NY 12887
Principal:	David St. Germain
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year 1) - Focused
Area of Identification:	Mathematics - Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged
Dates of On-site Review:	November 3, 2011 and January 6, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“The goal of the Whitehall Central School is to educate successful citizens. Successful citizens are individuals who possess the knowledge and skills to solve problems effectively, make responsible choices, and meet challenges. They have learned to work individually and cooperatively to achieve personal success and contribute to a global society.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The school has been proactive in implementing improvement plans. A school team prepared professional development (PD) on implementing a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system, and the entire staff was trained to use this system.
- The school has established a committee to select a new mathematics textbook series. Committee members have begun reviewing materials, and a timely decision will be made.
- The amount of time regular education, special education, and remedial teachers spend collaborating has been increased.
- The school has been proactive in developing a Response to Intervention (RtI) plan. As a result, the review team found evidence that teachers are using data, e.g., New York State (NYS) School Report Cards, quarterly grades, Achievement Improvement Monitoring System (AIMSweb) data, and local assessments, to monitor student progress in English language arts (ELA).

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- The review team found evidence that the school is using student data (NYS Report Cards, AIMSweb data, and local assessments) to monitor student progress in mathematics. However, the use of formative assessment data has not been formalized throughout the school. As a result, the use of student generated mathematics data is not used appropriately to guide instruction in every classroom.
- While the school's average daily attendance rate is 95 percent, the attendance for students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students is much less. The majority of students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students missed more than nine days of school in 2009-10 and 2010-11.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leader, in collaboration with staff, should develop a mathematics RtI plan. The plan should include:
 - which teachers are responsible for administering assessments;
 - how each teacher is to use data to guide instructional decisions;
 - who is responsible for providing remedial instruction, what form this instruction should take, and the duration before reevaluating student progress: and
 - the assessments (summative and formative) to be employed at each tier.
- The school leader should collaborate with the staff to revise the attendance policy. This new policy should require "alert" letters be generated promptly and timely meetings be held with parents of students with excessive absences.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Observations of instruction by the review team revealed that many appropriate instructional strategies are being employed.
- Students with disabilities have regular access to the general education curriculum and, where necessary, these students are provided appropriate accommodations and supports to achieve high standards.
- All students have access to learning opportunities that reflect high expectations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Responsibilities for coordinating the educational needs of all students should be clearly defined.
- Pertinent information regarding individual student skills, abilities, and educational needs should be made available to appropriate teachers. Teachers should adapt content and methodologies to meet individual student needs.
- Classroom instruction should include accommodations to address specific skills, abilities, and educational needs of individual student groups including, but not limited to, students with disabilities.
- Teachers should provide engaging models of instruction for students with disabilities, such as individual and group summarizing, exploring multiple perspectives, and techniques for building upon prior knowledge.
- Individualized interventions should be planned and implemented for students with disabilities as needed. Such interventions should be based on functional behavioral assessments and behavioral intervention plans as well as on academic needs.
- The implementation of PBIS should include:
 - behavioral expectations that are formalized between and across grade levels;
 - rewards for good behavior;
 - clearly defined expectations for student and staff behavior and conduct defined in advance and positively stated;
 - fairly and consistently reinforced expectations applied for students and staff in all school settings;
 - teachers teaching and modeling the expected behaviors; and
 - opportunities available for students to meet behavioral expectations.
- The school should ensure that structured and predictable school and classroom environments are implemented throughout the school.
- There should be consistency in the expectations for grading students, as evidenced by a uniform grading policy across all grades and content areas.
- Teachers should receive PD in the area of direct and explicit instructional strategies, e.g., how to:
 - introduce lessons and present the lesson objective;
 - increase rigor in questioning;
 - differentiate to meet the needs of specific learners;

- use formative, interim, and summative assessments to guide instruction;
 - present and reinforce behavioral expectations;
 - inform parents of their child's progress; and
 - present and reinforce vocabulary instruction.
- Teachers should receive PD on the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and be provided time to develop lesson plans aligned to the CCLS.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- The review team found no evidence that the school's core purpose reflects the following: shared responsibility for student success, a results-orientation, a culture of quality professional practice, accountability for performance, and a belief that special education is a service and not a place.
- The review team found no evidence that strategies are in place for supporting and mentoring new teachers, uncertified teachers, or teachers who have been rated either developing or ineffective through the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR).
- The review team was provided no evidence that the school leader has been trained and certified to evaluate staff on the new NYS teaching standards.
- The review team found no evidence of data-driven, collaborative, instructional planning and continuous monitoring of progress of all students and subgroups, e.g., four- to six-week improvement targets; clearly-defined timeframes to adjust practice during the school year; or clearly defined milestones for progress.
- There is no shared accountability system for student learning, with measurable goals and objectives that are assessed regularly.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leader should conduct regular walkthroughs of every classroom to ensure lesson objectives and explicit instructional strategies are being implemented.
- The school leader should ensure that curriculum maps reflect the CCLS.
- In collaboration with staff, the school leader should develop a system for teachers to analyze assessment data to make instructional decisions and monitor progress of all students. The school leader should also arrange for PD in the use of student data as a means for making instructional decisions.

- The school leader should develop an annual schedule of meetings between special education, regular education, and remedial teachers for coordination of instruction.
- The school leader should know how to evaluate the delivery of specially designed instruction for students with disabilities.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDING:

There was no evidence presented to the review team of outreach to Community-Based Organizations (CBO) to have them provide students with additional enrichment and academic success opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION:

The school leader, in collaboration with teachers, should formalize an outreach plan to CBOs.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- Job-embedded technical assistance is available to support effective academic programs.
- PD needs for staff members based upon data and classroom observations have not been identified.
- The review team found no evidence that the schoolwide PD calendar is based on the differentiated needs of staff.
- There is neither research-based PD offered that strengthens teacher content knowledge and pedagogical skills nor evaluations conducted to determine the impact of PD activities.
- The review team found no evidence that the schoolwide PD program calendar addresses training in the CCLS, School Based Inquiry Process, or teacher/school leader Evaluation/Effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leader should develop a PD calendar specific to training for the implementation of the CCLS in mathematics.
- The school leader should continue to facilitate the implementation of PBIS.
- High-quality, standards-based PD should be provided that improves staff's instructional practice and further develops their knowledge of content.

- PD should address the needs of students with disabilities, including providing information to general education teachers on specially designed instruction.

V1. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- There is evidence that adequate numbers of textbooks, instructional materials and resource materials are available in: English; languages other than English; and in alternative formats, as appropriate for students with disabilities, to ensure all students receive high quality instruction.
- To ensure that all students receive equal access, students with disabilities receive instructional materials in alternative formats, as appropriate, and at the same time that general education students receive their instructional materials.

RECOMMENDATION:

The District should continue to pursue the purchase of a mathematics textbook series that is aligned with the CCLS. This new series should include:

- materials for different levels of learners within each grade level;
- resource materials for English as a second language (ESL) and students with disabilities;
- Rtl resources;
- information about each lesson that teachers can share with parents;
- formative and summative assessments; and
- NYS test prep materials.

PART 4: CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The findings and recommendations noted in this SQR Report are intended to become the basis for the planning, development and revising of the school's CEP for school year 2012-13. The school should 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.