

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	580232030012
District Name:	William Floyd Union Free School District
School Name:	William Paca Middle School
School Address:	240 Mastic Beach Road, Mastic Beach, NY 11951
Principal:	Edward Plaia
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year 1) - Focused
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts - African American Students and Students with Disabilities
Dates of On-site Review:	December 12, 19, 2011 and January 5, 18, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“The goal of William Paca Middle School is to promote the social, emotional and intellectual growth of all of our students. Our focus is to provide a school setting that is safe and responsive to the educational and developmental needs of our students. Our vision is shared by administrators, students, parents, community members and all faculty and staff members. This vision will enable all of our students to become good citizens and life-long learners.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS:

- The school leadership expresses great interest in engaging staff in ensuring all students’ success.
- Staff appear similarly invested in and concerned about all aspects of student well-being.
- Resources and technology appear to be readily available and in use.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- The District and the school appear to recognize the value of using data to inform instruction and adjust programs for students with disabilities and African-American students.

- There appears to be a need to conduct structured data analyses of the root causes of the school's failure to make Adequate Yearly Progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should establish a school improvement data inquiry team. This team should be trained in data analysis and root cause and goal identification for schoolwide intervention purposes. This team, in collaboration with school leadership, should develop schoolwide goals that target all students, including the identified subgroups. School leaders should involve appropriate stakeholders in creating and implementing a Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP).
- The school should develop a plan for ensuring that all teachers are trained in self-reflective and analytical practices, with a focus on what fosters student success. This plan is recommended for concurrent implementation by the data inquiry team. The school should engage in developing or choosing a lesson plan design that includes the use of interim, formative, and summative assessment practices. This will enable teachers to adjust instruction for all children based on assessment results.
- English teachers should use the benchmarking system that has been developed to adjust instruction consistently for all students.
- As the data inquiry team's activities begin to take root and are aligned with individual teacher professional development (PD) in exemplary lesson practices, the school leaders and staff should engage in continuous dialogue about these activities. This ongoing dialogue should be fostered by school leaders and by teacher-coaches in grade level and departmental meetings, common planning periods, PD and during staff meetings. Documentation of these conversations should be kept and periodically reviewed.
- The data inquiry team in tandem with the school leaders should engage in assessing the efficacy of Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and make adjustments as appropriate.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The team's recommendations about teaching and learning at the school focuses mainly on three themes: P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) curriculum development and implementation; strengthening literacy and reading in grade six; and continuous, sustained dialogue and PD about reading across all content areas schoolwide.
- All curricula should be assessed for the extent to which lesson activities and assessment strategies reflect the CCLS. School leaders should implement new supervisory approaches and ongoing PD exchanges among teachers, such as collegial circles.
- The school leadership should develop a school inquiry team to assist teachers so that the analysis of data informs instruction.

- The school leadership should strengthen grade six reading and literacy programs. The school leadership should assess the feasibility of adopting consistent approaches to teaching reading that are aligned with grades seven and eight expectations. Technology based intervention programs are particularly recommended for the school's review.
- School leaders should be mindful of the need to shift mental models about the teaching of reading across content areas. The paradigm of teaching reading across content areas has often been a particularly difficult model to embrace in many middle and secondary school settings. It is necessary, nonetheless, for school leaders and teacher coaches of all disciplines to work hard to promote a new vision for all staff, where teachers of all subjects recognize their responsibilities to use literacy-based strategies appropriate to their subject. Teachers should consistently assess for student mastery and, most importantly, adjust their instruction for all students.
- In order to remove teacher anxiety concerning PD, school leaders should consider offering short- and longer term PD. Staff should be supported to embrace the practices taught in PD through workshops, modeling, and coaching as well as supportive supervisory strategies.
- The review team observed a need for focus on students with disabilities. The need for differentiated instructional practices and training were evident in the review team walkthroughs and interviews. The team also noted that scheduling of students with disabilities should occur with the assistance and expertise of special education leaders.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- School leaders interviewed by the review team indicated a strong desire to reshape programs and assist teachers to ensure mastery by all students.
- School leaders interviewed by the review team also indicated a possible misalignment between what they perceive their responsibilities to be in terms of supervising students with disabilities' behavioral issues and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders and teacher-coaches should receive PD about the needs of students with disabilities, expectations and levels of services, strategies for teaching reading across content areas, and exemplary supervisory practices.
- School leaders should champion and mentor the establishment of an effective data inquiry team to support their vision. Doing so would develop a cycle of plan, assess, and adjust.
- School leaders should allocate their time to collaborate with teacher-coaches to supervise all teachers and promote collegial dialogue among staff in as many venues as possible. In view of the fact that resources are limited, school leaders should identify interim, formative and summative assessment

strategies as the supervisory focus for the coming year, instead of a more general set of lesson observation expectations.

- The District should assign a mentor to the relatively new school leaders to assist them in effectively matching their vision with school needs.
- The District should engage school leaders in discussions about their roles and responsibilities for supervision of students with disabilities who present behavior management issues.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should review the communication alternatives available to them to promote understanding of the school's activities and priorities. Websites, blogs, twitter feeds and email should be reviewed for feasibility as communication mechanisms.
- The school improvement data inquiry team should engage staff in action research on parental involvement concerns.
- The school leadership should consider restoring the double period for English and explore other options for increasing instructional time in reading. Additionally, the review team recognizes the use of teacher assistants as an excellent form of teacher and instructional support. To maximize their effectiveness, PD should be planned for them, and teachers should receive PD in using teacher assistants.
- Inasmuch as the student mobility rate is very high, the District should consider developing a Newcomers' Center. The center could be established for the purposes of assessing new student needs and identifying appropriate interventions and transitional strategies.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Based on the review team' analysis, the school leadership should develop a school improvement data inquiry team. The data inquiry team should develop and continuously monitor PD based on student and teacher needs. The school and District should implement the following:
 - thorough disaggregated analysis of the performance of the identified subgroups;
 - development of a data inquiry team charged with data analysis, root cause identification, goal formulation and strategic and operational action plan design;
 - PD for teachers in assessing higher order thinking skills is aligned with the new P-12 CCLS.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

RECOMMENDATION:

The District and school should review and assess all services and support and realign those not working optimally and reinforce those working well.

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 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.