

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

DBN:	04M155
District Name:	District 4
School Name:	PS 155 William Paca
School Address:	319 East 117th Street, New York, NY 10035PS 155 William Paca
Principal:	Ms. Ortiz-Raimundi
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (Year-1) - Comprehensive
Areas of Identification:	English Language Arts– All Students; Hispanic Students; English Language Learners; and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	March 20-21, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“Through the collaborative and collegial efforts of the parents, teachers, students and community-at-large, the educational needs of all children are met. This is accomplished in a child-centered, creative and nurturing environment, which focuses on teaching and learning that meet high performance and content standards, and the criteria evident in effective schools. Through a standards-based curriculum, utilizing appropriate technology to support instruction, all students will develop the skills, values, habits and knowledge that will ensure their successful participation in a diverse and democratic society.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- Classrooms and hallways are print-rich, and student work samples are displayed throughout the school.
- The school leader is highly visible and accessible to the community.
- The building is welcoming and clean.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- Based on a review of documents, the review team found evidence that the school collects a significant amount of data, including skills analysis from Acuity, periodic assessments, and reading levels derived from Teachers College Running Records. However, there is limited evidence that these data are being used consistently to inform daily instruction in all classrooms. As a result, some teachers do not consistently implement targeted instructional strategies based on the specific skills needed by students.
- Based on a review of documents and interviews, the review team found evidence that many teachers in the school use Teachers College Running Records to assess the reading levels of students. Persons interviewed by the review also revealed that these reading levels inform Academic Intervention Support (AIS) programming as well as some grouping of students in classrooms. In some classes, teachers are using assessments from the Accelerated Reader program alongside, or in place of, the Teachers College Running Records. As a result, there is inconsistency in identifying and providing at-risk students AIS services.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should facilitate professional development sessions that provide teachers with the skill base and professional knowledge to understand and use data to inform daily instructional practice. School leaders should monitor the use of data by teachers through regular formal and informal observations,
- School leaders, in collaboration with the staff, should identify and select a consistent, whole-school reading assessment program that is aligned with the New York State Standards and P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). The school leaders should provide professional development on the assessment system and monitor its implementation based on student outcomes. Additionally, the school leaders should evaluate the alignment of internal formative systems to the New York State English Language Arts Assessment.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Based on interviews and classroom observations the review team determined that there are elements of various English Language Arts (ELA) curricula and assessment materials, such as Teachers College Units of Study and Running Records, as well as Accelerated Reader, being implemented throughout the school. However, there is limited evidence of a cohesive ELA instructional plan that is moving towards alignment to the CCLS). The inconsistent horizontal and vertical alignment of the curriculum results in the inconsistent delivery of instruction within classes.
- Classroom observations conducted by the review team indicated that most teachers' questioning is limited to the basic recall of facts. Additionally, observations by the review team showed that some teachers do not provide sufficient wait time to allow students to reflect on a question and then respond. As a result, students are not routinely challenged to apply high order thinking skills to the content or provided with sufficient time to mentally process the question and formulate a response.

- Classroom observations conducted by the review team indicated that most classroom instruction is whole group and teacher-directed.
- Based on a review of the documentation and observations, the review team found that during the AIS period and regular classroom instruction there is limited evidence of a systematic approach to identifying at-risk students and providing them with explicit skill remediation.
- The review team in its classroom observations found that although there is evidence that some teachers' lessons include provisions for differentiation based on student needs, assessments for learning and assessments for mastery, there is limited evidence that these provisions are consistently present across all lessons or in all classrooms. As a result, all lessons are not consistently developed and delivered to meet the identified individual learning needs of students.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders, in collaboration with teachers, should review the current ELA curriculum to ensure that it is comprehensive, used school-wide, and vertically and horizontally aligned. Additionally, school leaders should provide regular professional development to support the implementation of this curriculum. School leaders should continue to support teachers by conducting formal and informal observations of instruction.
- School leaders should set guidelines for instructional planning and incorporating the teaching of higher order thinking skills within daily instructional practice. Teachers should allow wait time for students to think and collaborate before responding to questions. School leadership should monitor the use of questioning techniques by teachers through formal and informal observations. Professional development should be provided in questioning techniques to support teachers as needed.
- School leaders should develop guidelines for lesson development and deliveries, ensuring that lessons are delivered that promote opportunities for students to engage in collaborative learning in order to increase student engagement.
- School leaders should provide professional development to enable teachers to understand how to use item-skill analysis data to identify students who are in need of additional support. School leaders should consider using common planning time to examine student data and collaboratively plan how to individualize instruction to target at-risk students for both Response to Intervention (RTI) and AIS. School leaders should monitor through formal and informal observations of instruction the outcomes of teacher planning time as well as the delivery of individualized instruction and provide support as needed.
- School leaders should provide professional development to enable teachers to use data from multiple sources, including item skills analysis from the New York State English Language Arts assessment and TCRWP running records, to understand the specific skills that students need to improve. Lesson plans should incorporate strategies for differentiation based on student needs.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- Based on a document review, which included a review of teacher schedules and interviews, the review team found time is allotted for grade-level common preparation. However, there is limited evidence that school leaders have established clear expectations for teacher teams and the use of this allotted time. Planning time is not always used to plan and prepare coherent instruction related to student performance and progress in English Language Arts.
- Based on interviews and the documentation reviewed, the review team found that the school leader dedicates significant amounts of time to building relationships with the community. The school leader teaches English as a Second Language classes for parents, and these efforts are increasing the home-school connection. The school leader also maintains an open door policy for parents and participates in other community events. However, these extensive community-building activities affects the time available for the school leader to identify and focus on the instructional needs within the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should develop guidelines for common planning time and articulate to teachers the expected outcomes for this time. School leaders should ensure that these plenary sessions are used to set goals related to student achievement and that outcomes from these sessions are documented and implemented in the classroom.
- School leaders should collaboratively develop an instructional focus for the school that takes into account the needs of identified subgroups. With a team of other school leaders, the principal should develop a plan that includes measurable goals, timelines with interim benchmarks, and specific individuals responsible for implementing the components of the plan. The plan should be regularly monitored and revised as needed.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- Based on classroom observations, the review team found that there are multiple adults in most classes, including teachers, co-teachers and paraprofessionals. Many classes have fewer than 25 students. The review team found limited evidence of consistent planning by teachers to use the additional adults in the classroom to improve and differentiate instruction. As a result, human resources are not used effectively to improve student achievement.
- The review team observed limited evidence that technology is used consistently to support student learning and enrich instruction. As a result, students are limited in their ability to conduct independent research and engage in activities to enhance their learning experiences.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should assist teachers in developing a plan for the use of support staff who push-in during daily instruction. Teachers' plans should include explicit instructions for support staff to ensure that their work aligns to individual student learning needs.
- The school leaders should develop a comprehensive technology plan. The plan should include a timeline with rationale for hardware and software procurement and detail how the technology resources will support instruction in all classrooms. The school leaders, in collaboration with the school community, should apply for technology grants and approach existing partners for support in acquiring additional technology. The plan should include professional development opportunities for teachers to enable them to use classroom technology to support the varied interests and learning needs of students.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDING:

Based on document reviews and interviews, the review team found that school leaders surveyed teachers about their individual professional development needs and developed a professional development calendar based on those results. However, the school leaders report that the plan has not been fully implemented.

RECOMMENDATION:

School leaders should ensure that professional development offerings are based on student data and classroom observations in addition to those self-identified by teachers. The school leaders should consult with the Network in providing the professional development required. School leaders should monitor the implementation of skills and strategies learned in professional development to ensure that PD has a positive affect on student achievement.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDING:

Based on classrooms visits, as well as visits to the library, the review team found there is some literature available for students in their native languages. Interviews and data show that there is a growing population of Arabic-speakers; however, there is limited literature in the native language available for these students and families.

RECOMMENDATION:

The existing library should be expanded to include selections in the native languages of ELLs to support the language and literacy needs of students and families.

PART 4: CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The School Quality Review Report provides information about the school that could be used to provide focus and guidance for future school improvement planning. The report indicates findings and recommendations based on classroom observations, interviews of various stakeholders and a review and analysis of school documents.

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.