

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

<b>DBN:</b>	09X163
<b>District Name:</b>	District 9
<b>School Name:</b>	Arthur A. Schomburg
<b>School Address:</b>	2075 Webster Avenue, Bronx, NY
<b>Principal:</b>	Dilsia Martinez
<b>Accountability Phase/Category:</b>	Improvement (year-1) - Comprehensive
<b>Areas of Identification:</b>	English Language Arts- All students; Students with Disabilities; Hispanic Students; English Language Learners and Economically Disadvantaged Students
<b>Dates of On-site Review:</b>	March 27 – 28, 2012

**PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT**

“We the staff, students, and families of PS 163 are committed to creating a high quality and safe learning environment for all.

We will continually work to improve ourselves and contribute positively to our community.”

**PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS**

- Teachers are mutually supportive and collaborative.
- The school provides a safe, nurturing, and welcoming environment for students.

**PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA**

**FINDINGS:**

- Based on a review of documents and staff interviews, the review team confirmed that the school collects multiple sources of data, including gap analysis, Fountas and Pinnell running record levels, periodic assessments, New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) and nySTART assessment results. However, the review team's classroom observations revealed that in-depth analysis of data to match tasks to the differing ability levels of students is not occurring consistently schoolwide.

- Based on a review of documents, classroom walkthroughs, and interviews with teachers, the review team confirmed that teachers have access to students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). However, discussions with support personnel staff and a review of IEPs indicated to the review team that learning goals are not always aligned with individual student needs. There is also limited evidence that teachers routinely use IEP goals to drive instruction based on student needs.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- School leaders should provide support for teachers to be able to disaggregate data to improve teaching and learning. School leaders should consider identifying a data specialist to attend grade level meetings, guide data inquiry teams, and work with teachers to build teacher capacity in using student achievement data to make targeted instructional decisions for diverse learners.
- School leaders should create a professional development (PD) plan so that staff members can learn to develop and use IEP goals more effectively. The schoolwide expectation should be that teachers use IEP goals to inform planning as well as differentiate instruction in order to be able to meet individual student learning needs. School leaders should provide differentiated support for teachers to ensure IEP goals are consistently addressed.

## **II. TEACHING AND LEARNING**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- The review team's classroom observations and review of documentation, including students' work in notebooks, folders, and displayed on classroom and hallway bulletin boards, indicated that teachers use rubrics for assessing student work. However, this practice is inconsistent. Rubrics in student-friendly language are not regularly provided, so opportunities for students to evaluate their own work are limited. Similarly, written feedback is not always sufficiently detailed for students to know what they need to do to improve and move on to the next level.
- Based on interviews with the school leader and teachers, observations of lessons and a review of lesson plans, the review team found limited evidence of differentiation. Many lessons were predominantly teacher directed and did not include a range of strategies to accommodate the diverse learning needs of students or match tasks to students' differing ability levels.
- The review team observed teachers who frequently used questioning to check students' knowledge and understanding. However, the majority of questions were low level, requiring factual recall and one word responses. In lessons that the review team observed, students were not consistently challenged to analyze, evaluate, or synthesize information. As a result, students have limited opportunities to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- Based on discussions with the school leader, review of documentation, and lesson observations, the review team confirmed that teachers are using a balanced literacy approach to English language arts (ELA) instruction. However, few teachers provide explicit reading and writing strategies to address the learning needs of at-risk students. Classroom observations by the review team also found that teachers do not consistently use specific instructional strategies or accommodations to support instruction and impact achievement for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 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 to evaluate the quality of feedback provided and ensure that the rubrics provide detailed next steps for improvement.
- The school leaders should provide ongoing PD to ensure that teachers differentiate planning and instruction to address the diverse needs of all students in their class, including ELLs and students with disabilities. School leaders should regularly monitor to check that differentiated strategies are being implemented effectively and consistently throughout the school and provide further support to teachers who need additional support as necessary.
- School leaders should provide teachers with PD to use higher level questioning to promote students' problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. Questions should require students to think critically by answering in complete sentences, supporting answers by elaborating on the answers of other students, and summarizing and rephrasing new information.
- School leaders and coaches should work with teachers to identify students' needs and develop specific instructional strategies that will support and accelerate student learning in ELA. Coaches should support implementation of these strategies by modeling and facilitating lessons with teachers to modify their planning and instruction in response to assessment outcomes.

## **III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

### **FINDINGS:**

- There is evidence (review of the documentation and staff interviews conducted by the review team) that members of the instructional leadership team visit classrooms to provide feedback and support. The review team determined there was evidence of a classroom observation schedule memorializing when and how often each teacher received support. However, there is limited evidence of the effectiveness and impact of the support and feedback provided by the instructional leadership team.
- Documentation review and classroom observations conducted by the review team provided limited evidence of actionable feedback given to teachers to improve instruction. School leaders interviewed by the review team indicated that this is an area they are planning to address with the instructional leadership team.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school leader should increase efforts to monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the school, including the support and modeling provided by the instructional team. Written feedback should include targets for improvement of instruction, especially for ELA, and be provided for all formal, informal, and walkthrough observations. Follow-up observations should be conducted to monitor progress, including implementation of research-based strategies learned during PD, and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the instruction.
- The school leader should consider developing lesson observation protocols and include training for the leadership team in writing effective teacher feedback. The outcomes of lesson observations

should be used to inform the school's PD plan. The PD plan should include training for the instructional leadership team and be designed to increase the range of PD supports, including modeling, co-teaching, and lesson development as well as the identification of appropriate resources and effective strategies.

#### **IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**

##### **FINDINGS:**

- Based on the review of documents and interviews, the review team found evidence that the school provides multiple methods to communicate with parents who speak languages other than English. Although the school has identified several languages spoken within its community, such as Soninke, Twi, and Fulani, the school has not consistently provided translated documents in these languages.
- Interviews with school leaders and teachers and review of teacher schedules conducted by the review team indicate that the school provides daily Academic Intervention Services (AIS) support in ELA for students in grades 3–5. Currently, targeted students receive a half a period of AIS support each day. The school has a Saturday program that is used to support ELLs.
- There is evidence of strategies in place to address the needs of ELLs. However, there is little evidence that the school's written language allocation policy is being implemented in all bilingual classes. Some charts posted in bilingual classrooms were not color coded. As a result, ELLs cannot rely on color-coding as a means to differentiate between written English and Spanish on charts in bilingual classrooms.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- School leaders should seek the support of the New York City Department of Education's (NYCDOE) Translation and Interpretation Unit. School leaders, in conjunction with the parent coordinator, should regularly utilize these services to ensure that school documents are translated into all of the native languages of parents and guardians.
- School leaders should review the process for identifying students to receive AIS. The school leaders should ensure that all students, including those in the identified subgroups, are supported effectively with specific strategies, supplemental programs, and materials. School leaders, in collaboration with teachers, should analyze student performance and progress data to monitor and evaluate the efficacy and impact of the current AIS program to improve student achievement.
- School leaders should institute a program-wide policy for the allocation of written charts in bilingual classrooms. School leaders should monitor the implementation of the policy to support the literacy development of ELLs within the school's bilingual program.

#### **V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

##### **FINDINGS:**

- The review team determined that a range of PD opportunities are offered by the school and the Network. Teachers meet regularly in teams to plan and review instruction and to share best practices. However, there is limited evidence of a long-term, strategic, comprehensive whole-school

PD plan in place for teachers to acquire and refine the strategies and skills necessary to meet whole-school goals and individual PD needs.

- Based on observations and staff interviews, the review team found evidence that paraprofessional staff are active participants in the classrooms. However, the paraprofessionals have limited PD opportunities to enhance their abilities to provide effective support.
- The review team confirmed that strategies are in place to address the needs of students with disabilities. However, teachers do not consistently provide explicit vocabulary instruction, recall strategies, and appropriate assistive technology to ensure students with accommodations have full access to the curriculum.
- Instructional coaches provide guidance and support to teachers in all grades. However, the coaches indicated a need for support in using formative reading, writing assessment data, and New York State (NYS) accountability data. In addition, the coaches have limited experience in matching their support to teachers' different developmental needs based on a comprehensive data analysis.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- School leaders should design a comprehensive PD plan that is aligned with the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) goals and takes into account the differentiated needs of the staff and the students. School leaders should monitor the implementation of PD strategies to ensure they address the goals in the CEP and lead to improvements in the quality of instruction and student performance.
- The school's PD plan should include training for teachers on effective planning to maximize the support of the paraprofessional staff. The PD plan should also include opportunities for paraprofessionals to participate in a PD program to increase their knowledge and further develop their skills to enhance their support of student learning.
- School leaders should ensure that all members of staff who work with students with disabilities receive PD in using effective instructional practices that meet their individual learning needs. Additionally, the school leaders should monitor the schoolwide implementation of these practices and evaluate their impact on student achievement.
- The school leader, with the support of the Network, should provide PD for the coaches on using data to improve instruction. Differentiated PD opportunities for teachers should be developed based on a comprehensive needs assessment, which may include teacher surveys, student performance results, or item analysis of formative, interim, and summative assessment data.
- Coaches should customize support for teachers and include topics such as gathering and utilizing data to inform instructional planning when grouping students, selecting instructional strategies, and re-teaching skills.

#### **VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

##### **FINDINGS:**

- Through classrooms observations, the review team confirmed that instruction is routinely supported by technology. Students regularly use laptops and teachers use SMART Boards. However, there was

insufficient evidence that the curriculum integrates technology into the instructional program in order to support the diverse needs and interests of learners.

- The school does not have a library because the building is currently undergoing construction. Students have access to books in their classrooms, including leveled reading books. However, the range of leveled books in the classrooms is limited, and in some classes, there are not enough texts to support all instructional levels.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- School leaders should ensure that curriculum programs include specific strategies for using technological resources, such as SMART Boards and laptops, as instructional aids for differentiated learning. School should develop a technology plan detailing how technology can be used to support curriculum delivery and learning for all students. School leaders should ensure that teachers are trained to use these resources.
- School leaders should ensure classroom libraries contain a range of texts that support the diverse range of students' interests and reading levels. School leaders should conduct a meta-analysis of the schoolwide reading level trends to ensure there are a sufficient number of books on each instructional level. The school leaders should ensure that all classrooms have a variety of books to support the development of students' reading skills.

#### **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 for school year 2012-13. The school should also continue its efforts in the implementation of the following Regents Reform Agenda initiatives: the new P-12 Common Core Learning Standards, Data Driven Instruction and the Annual Professional Performance Reviews for teacher effectiveness.