

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

DBN:	23K184
District Name:	District 23
School Name:	PS/IS 184 The Newport School
School Address:	273 Newport Street, Brooklyn NY 11212
Principal:	Lamson Lam
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year-1)- Comprehensive
Areas of Identification:	English Language Arts – All Students; African American Students; Hispanic Students; and Economically Disadvantaged Students Mathematics – Students with Disabilities
Dates of On-site Review:	May 15 – 16, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“Our mission is to raise student achievement, improve instructional practices and optimize school progress by providing all members of the school community with the necessary professional learning to create effective change. We believe that in order to continue to improve student progress we must: target student achievement by improving instructional practices, continue to improve student progress by analyzing data and working with small targeted groups, use data and teacher feedback to customize and monitor professional development, demonstrate best practices in all classroom instruction, build sustainability by providing ongoing professional learning opportunities for all members of the school community, plan engaging and differentiated lessons which include hands on activities and the use of technology where possible and maintain a strong partnership between home and school to ultimately ensure student growth.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The school has a library that is well stocked with books and is open to students at lunchtime. The library’s flexible schedule supports teaching and learning and provides open access to library resources.

- The school leader has developed a number of partnerships to support students' socio-emotional development.
- The facility is clean and well maintained; hallway displays add to the welcoming tone of the building.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDING:

There is evidence that the school collects summative and formative data. School leaders, along with the data specialists, review the data to set priorities for the school. Teachers are expected to analyze the data for their classes. However, in some classroom observed by the review team there was minimal use of data to inform instruction.

RECOMMENDATION:

School leaders should provide professional development (PD) for all staff on how to use data for lesson planning and delivery of instruction. School leaders should review the school's current collection of summative and formative data to ensure consistency grade by grade and across the school. The progress of individual students should be regularly monitored and intervention strategies used to support all students' instructional gaps based on data analysis.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Observations of some general education classrooms by the review team indicate that Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are infrequently used to modify instruction for students with disabilities.
- The document review and classroom observations by the review team found that the implementation of the English language arts (ELA) curriculum was inconsistently aligned within and across grade levels.
- Observation of lessons by the review team showed that teachers do not consistently develop students' higher order thinking skills. Students are given few opportunities to reflect or ask questions, and the majority of teachers ask questions that are low level and require one-word answers. Additionally, a number of teachers intervene too quickly, not allowing students to respond in full. As a result, there are limited opportunities for students to extend language skills or be challenged to analyze, evaluate, and summarize the content of the lesson.
- Some lessons observed by the review team were teacher-directed and used a limited range of instructional strategies to engage students within the learning process. Few opportunities to engage in conversation about topics, work in pairs or on project based group activities, or talk with different groups of students were observed by the review team.

- School leaders have identified the use of rubrics and feedback to students as an area for development, and analysis of examples of feedback on display indicate that some teachers are writing feedback that gives students clear next steps to improve their work. However, classroom observations by the review team and a review of bulletin boards in hallways found that this practice is inconsistent. Different styles of rubrics are used. Some students told the review teams that they set goals for ELA and mathematics, but there is limited evidence of students receiving guidance as to how to achieve these goals.
- Based on classroom observations by the review team and a review of samples of mathematics work, the review team found that students are not regularly encouraged to write during their mathematics classes.
- School leaders have established goals for whole school achievement, suspensions, and attendance, and there is evidence that some of the goals are being met. However, there is little evidence of goal setting based on grade level benchmarks for individual students.
- Analysis of documentation by the review team and discussions with teachers and school leaders indicate that the feedback from teacher observations provide useful recommendations to all teachers. However, the review team's observation of lessons shows that a number of teachers need additional support in integrating the recommendations from their observations into their instructional delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should provide PD on the effective use of IEPs in general education classes. School leaders should ensure through observation of lessons that all teachers use IEP related data to differentiate instruction for students with disabilities and provide further PD for those who need additional support.
- School leaders should work with a representative group of teachers to implement a plan that will assure that curriculum for ELA is vertically and horizontally aligned and includes curriculum maps and pacing calendars. The curriculum should be aligned to the new P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). The curriculum should be the basis for assessing individual student mastery and progress. Walkthroughs and formal evaluations should monitor the teachers' implementation of the curriculum.
- School leaders should provide PD to assist teachers in planning lessons and asking questions that result in higher order thinking on the part of students. This training should enable teachers to build a range of effective questioning techniques so that students become more active participants in the learning process and improve their analytical skills. School leaders should ensure that teachers build effective questioning strategies into lesson plans and then observe lessons to monitor implementation.
- School leaders should provide 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, such as working in pairs or talking with different groups of students. Teachers should be expected to implement these strategies, and school leaders should monitor their use and effectiveness and provide additional PD for teachers when necessary.

- School leaders should provide teachers with PD on the use of rubrics to provide high quality student feedback with next steps that promote specific learning goals. School leaders should ensure that when teachers use rubrics to evaluate student work, the feedback to students is task specific, grade appropriate, and in student friendly language. All teachers should ensure that students are given guidance as to how to achieve their goals in ELA and mathematics. Further PD should be provided for teachers who need additional support.
- School leaders should provide PD to content area teachers on “writing across the content areas.” This PD should support at-risk students when solving mathematical problems and assist in the development of mathematics related literacy and writing skills. School leaders should monitor the use of writing across the content areas through formal and informal observations.
- School leaders should work with all staff to establish individual student goals based on grade level benchmarks. These goals should be monitored by teacher teams and school leaders and reviewed regularly to ensure that students are meeting the goals and that they reflect high expectations exemplified in the CCLS. PD should be offered to teachers who need additional support and training in developing and using individual student goals to improve instruction and promote student achievement.
- School leaders should use the observational process to ensure that all teachers are held accountable for incorporating all the suggestions for improvement from lesson observations into their instructional delivery. School leaders should provide PD to those teachers who need additional support in implementing the suggestions for improvement and monitor the implementation of this training upon instructional practice on an ongoing basis.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- The school leader is clear about the needs of the school and what needs to be done to raise student achievement. These goals are outlined in their school Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP). However, there is evidence from classroom observations by the review team and meetings with staff that this understanding is not part of a shared vision that is being systematically adopted by all staff.
- The Principal appointed two teacher leaders for ELA, who cover grades 3-8. However, there is no identified leader for ELA for grades K-2.
- Discussions with school leaders and teachers by the review team indicate that the principal has begun to establish structures, such as Cabinet member goals and teacher leader teams, as part of a strategic plan to support the school’s improvement. However, these initiatives are new and have not been evaluated to determine their impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the school. In addition, a number of teachers do not follow with fidelity the guidelines and structures put in place. As a result, instruction as part of the improvement plan is inconsistent across the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should work with all stakeholders to develop a shared vision based on the CEP for the school so that there is a collective drive for improvement. School leaders should develop a timeline

to ensure that the entire staff can regularly review the CEP to ensure that the school is on track to achieve its improvement goals. The timeline should include benchmarks so that the staff can measure progress towards these goals.

- The school leader should review the teacher leader support structure to assure that all ELA classes and teachers at all grade levels are receiving needed instructional support. The school leader should identify an instructional leader for all content areas at each grade, make certain that there are no gaps, and then monitor the effectiveness of the teacher leader support to assess its impact upon improving instruction.
- In order to bring consistency to the school and measure progress towards raising achievement, school leaders should put specific procedures in place so that staff with leadership roles work effectively with their teams to follow with fidelity the school leaders' guidelines and structures. School leaders should monitor the teams' work to determine if these procedures and structures result in specific gains in student achievement.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- There is limited evidence of targeted Academic Intervention Services (AIS) across the school to support reading and literacy development for at-risk student, including those in the identified subgroups. In addition, there is limited evidence of AIS to support students with disabilities to meet or exceed their IEP goals in mathematics as reviewed by the team.
- The school has a core of dedicated family volunteers who are committed to the school, and the school offers a number of social events for families. However, the review team's discussion with parents and staff indicates that due to the number of personal demands placed upon parents, few parents attend these events and the overall parental involvement in the school is in need of improvement.
- An observation by the review team of the extended day program shows that there is inconsistent instruction across the grades. Some of the lessons begin late, thus time allocated for instruction is lost. In some classes the review team observed, teachers did not complete objectives of the lesson.
- A number of lessons reviewed by the team started late because students linger in the hallways or on the stairs. Students arriving late frequently interrupted lessons. This reduces the time for learning and, in many instances, disrupts the learning environment, as teachers need to take time for students to settle and ready themselves for learning.
- Observations by the review team indicate that there are many behavior incidents during the school day. This affects the school leaders' time to observe teaching and learning and participate in group meetings.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should review their budget and allocate funds to provide AIS programs. These services should target all students who are at risk of not meeting their instructional goals.

- School leaders should build upon the core group of parents to develop and create increased parent involvement. The school leader should work with the Parent Coordinator to provide workshops and meetings at times and in locations that are more accessible for parents. School leaders should seek the support of the Network to reach out to similar schools that have developed effective methods to increase parent engagement.
- School leaders should regularly observe the extended day program to monitor and ensure that instruction meets the needs of all students and the time is used fully. School leaders and all staff should develop a plan with related policies and procedures to improve student punctuality to class. These policies and procedures should be clearly outlined in the student Code of Conduct and distributed to parents and students annually. School leaders should ensure that all teachers follow the policies with fidelity.
- School leaders should provide schoolwide PD on behavior management strategies and supports. In addition, school leaders should also review disciplinary data and adopt procedures to monitor and support behavior in and out of classes.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDING:

School leaders have used data to identify areas of need for PD, and this is the basis of the schools PD plan. The Network provides the PD. However, classroom observations by the review team reveal little evidence of the integration of methodologies learned during these sessions into classroom instruction.

RECOMMENDATION:

School leaders should ensure that the PD plan is aligned to CEP goals and takes into account the differentiated needs of the staff and the students. The plan should be implemented and monitored to ensure that all teachers use their PD when planning and delivering instruction in order to improve teaching quality across the school.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- A review of classroom libraries by the review team indicates that many libraries do not have a wide range of leveled books to support the development of students' skills in reading.
- Discussion with students by the review team and observations show that students regularly use the two technology labs. There are computer in some classes. However, there is little evidence the computers that are in some classrooms are being used to support the learning and motivation of students.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should inventory the books in class libraries. As funding permits, the school libraries should be increased to include nonfiction books and materials that support a range of student interests and reading levels.
- School leaders should develop a technology plan to infuse technology throughout content area curriculum. School leaders should ensure that technology is being incorporated within instruction to support varied student learning modalities and student interests.

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.