

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	441600010006
District Name:	Newburgh City School District
School Name:	GAMS(Gidney Avenue) Tech Magnet School
School Address:	300 Gidney Avenue, Newburgh, NY 12550
Principal:	Melinda Lamarche
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year 1) - Focused
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts - Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	November 15 and December 23, 2011

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“The mission statement of Gidney Avenue Magnet School (GAMS) is to produce inquisitive risk-takers by fostering student achievement and success. We will accomplish this by providing an integrated curriculum in a supportive, innovative and flexible environment utilizing our hands-on science museum and technology programs.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The leadership is experienced.
- Observations by the review team indicate a presence of committed school leaders and staff.
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) are implemented.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDING:

Data is being defined as "assessment."

RECOMMENDATION:

The school should develop a culture of data driven inquiry aligned with the District expectations.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- The special education classroom environments observed by the review team fostered literacy motivation and provided students with high-quality literature across a wide range of genres. In each special education classroom observed by the review team:
 - Students were given plenty of time to read in class, either guided or independently.
 - The lesson objectives and outcomes were presented in a manner that students could relate to and understand.
 - Writing was present and visible.
 - Balanced teacher- and student-led discussions of texts.
 - Students behaved and were cooperative.
 - When applicable, teaching assistants were present to fulfill teacher and student needs.
 - Teachers used various techniques to explain concepts to prompt understanding.
 - Writing was modeled for students out loud by teachers.
 - Classes were usually teacher-directed with the teacher in front of the room.
- Bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom schedules reflect the language allocation policy, with time for Native language arts (NLA), ESL, and English language arts (ELA).
- Bilingual/ESL teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to address the needs of their students.
- Bilingual/ESL teachers conducted whole group and small group instruction using reading programs in English and Spanish, as available/appropriate, based on the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS).
- In bilingual/ESL classrooms, the review team found evidence of:
 - direct instruction, followed by independent and group practice;
 - grouping for instruction;
 - peer teaching;

- teachers modeling think-aloud strategies;
 - discussion strategies that included full participation by students;
 - reading and writing in the content areas;
 - the use of centers;
 - culturally diverse classroom materials, including nonfiction text;
 - questions as a tool to elicit information and stimulate thinking;
 - student work, on a variety of topics, on display at different stages of production;
 - the use of technology as an instructional tool; and
 - a strong language foundation being established.
- One bilingual classroom displayed many multicultural titles in Spanish and English.
 - The Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and Response to Intervention (RtI) schedule reflect RtI time for grades one to five. During AIS, teachers provided whole group and small group instruction using readers, student journals, and Soar to Success materials. Cultural resources and materials, such as Spanish texts, were displayed and available in AIS classrooms.
 - AIS teachers used questioning strategies that required students to apply concepts. Questions were consistently used and, in some cases, created as the lesson evolved.
 - Behavioral expectations were posted in AIS classrooms. Some student work was displayed in AIS classrooms, i.e., dioramas, drawings, and student created posters.
 - In whole group AIS instruction, text was read aloud from the teacher's guide while students were seated at their desks:
 - students were listening but had no materials in front of them;
 - no other instructional provider was present; and
 - the pacing and sequencing of instruction was unpredictable, and lacked lesson structure and components.
 - A limited numbers of computer stations were available in AIS classrooms.
 - Science and social studies content was used in literacy instruction.
 - Classroom technology is not a feature in most classrooms.

- Observations by the review team indicated that teaching assistants are used inconsistently; their roles vary from co-teacher to security aide.
- Ongoing construction, and resultant classroom moves, may hinder the environment in some rooms as teachers relocate.
- ELA/Literacy block times are inconsistent in and among grade levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- For special education instruction:
 - Small group instruction should take place more than direct instruction for teaching literacy.
 - Teaching assistants should be used when placing students into small groups.
 - When emphasizing and modeling writing, teachers should ensure students understand the importance of the topic beyond the classroom.
 - Teachers should dedicate a portion of regular classroom lessons to explicit vocabulary instruction.
 - Students should be provided strategies to make them independent vocabulary learners.
 - Teachers should provide a task or discussion format that students can follow when they discuss text in small groups.
 - Teachers should create literacy experiences that are relevant to student interests, everyday life, or important current events.
 - Interventions should be selected to provide an explicit instructional focus to meet each student's identified learning needs.
 - More student work should be displayed with rubrics attached for student and peer understanding.
 - Text should be selected and assigned based on the reading levels of students.
 - Professional development (PD) skills should be provided in the areas of cooperative learning, peer tutoring, adaptive curriculum, and integrated service delivery.
- For bilingual/English as a second language (ESL) instruction:
 - Spanish speaking teaching assistants should be used to assist bilingual/ESL teachers for instruction and group work.
 - Teacher to teacher observations should be used to enhance instruction at all grade levels as vertical articulation is established.

- For Academic Intervention Services (AIS)/ Response to Intervention (RtI):
 - Assessment results should be used to identify student groupings and to support flexible groupings.
 - The school's schedule should ensure all instructional staff have dedicated RtI time to provide interventions for at risk students.
 - RtI strategies should continue when specialists are not present in the room. Whole group instruction is a Tier I strategy; Tiers II and III strategies should include dedicated time for small group and individual instruction and enrichment.
 - Rubrics and assessment criteria should be provided to students, who should use the criteria to evaluate their own work.
 - Teachers should use questioning techniques to promote students' critical thinking and to support students as they work to verbalize their thinking;
 - Academic expectations, in addition to behavioral expectations, should be posted.
 - More student work should be displayed.
- For English language arts (ELA)/literacy instruction:
 - Literacy initiatives, e.g., CReating Independence through Student-owned Strategies (CRISS) and 6 + 1 Writing Traits, should be used during literacy blocks.
 - During center time, students should receive consistent supervision, especially those groups not working directly with the teacher.
 - The aim/objective of lessons should be posted and clearly and consistently communicated to students.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- School leaders are visible in classrooms.
- Grade level meetings are scheduled.

RECOMMENDATION:

Learning communities and the work of the school leadership team should be further developed.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- Classroom routines and procedures are clear, evident, and understood by students.
- Transitions to the next activity or class were smooth, with no loss of instructional time.
- There was no evidence of a formal process for AIS teachers to meet with classroom teachers.
- Interviews that were conducted by the review team indicated that parent communication and involvement is sporadic.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The master schedule should be reviewed and analyzed to create opportunities for collaborations.
- The availability and use of additional technology should be explored to enhance teaching and learning.
- Teachers should be supplied with technology to infuse into classrooms and engage students.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- The District provides a PD plan.
- The school has a Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP).

RECOMMENDATION:

School leaders should create a PD plan based on the assessed needs of the school.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

There are no findings and recommendations for this category.

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.