

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

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| <b>BEDS Code:</b>                     | 580224030011   |
| <b>District Name:</b>                 | Patchogue-Medford Schools  |
| <b>School Name:</b>                   | Saxton Middle School   |
| <b>School Address:</b>                | 121 Saxton Street, Patchogue, NY 11772   |
| <b>Principal:</b>                     | Manuel Sanzone   |
| <b>Accountability Phase/Category:</b> | Improvement (year 1) Focused<br>English Language Arts – Hispanic Students, Students With<br>Disabilities, English Language Learners and<br>Economically Disadvantaged Students |
| <b>Area of Identification:</b>        |  |
| <b>Dates of On-site Review:</b>       | January 11 – 12, 2012  |

**PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT**

“Saxton Middle School’s mission is to empower and inspire all students to apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to become creative problem-solvers, to achieve personal success, and to contribute responsibly to our diverse, dynamic world.”

**PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS**

- The school provides opportunities and resources and support to students during and beyond the school day, including:
  - the same opportunities for all students to obtain credits towards a Regents diploma;
  - tiered reading instruction for all grade six classes and for grades seven and eight students with disabilities’ “Special Classes”;
  - a tutoring program for all students and an English as a second language (ESL) tutorial for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics;
  - targeted after-school instruction for students in multiple subgroups, a homework club, and summer school; and
  - a bilingual social worker.
- The District maintains many strong community-school partnerships to address student and family needs, including, but not limited to, Kiwanis, Rotary, and Lions Clubs; support for family programs in Spanish;

support outside of school by the Brookhaven Youth Bureau; and support in and out of school by the public library and Patchogue-Medford Youth Services.

- The school provides instruction and behavioral supports for students during and beyond the school day, including:
  - technology that supports technology-based academic programs, i.e., Castle Learning;
  - anti-bullying programs;
  - student access to multicultural materials in the classrooms that promote celebration of diverse cultures within the school/District. The Culture Club promotes celebration of diverse cultures within the school/District, and the school hosts bilingual education nights; and
  - positive reinforcement programs, i.e., *Turn Around Stars*, *Battle of the Books*, and *Homework Challenge*.

### **PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

##### **FINDINGS:**

- Although data was used to inform instruction, data was not collected and reported in ways that enabled it to be examined easily by multiple school personnel.
- Data was reviewed with staff at both staff and department meetings, but cross-departmental data analysis was not in place.
- The establishment of data teams was in its beginning stages, as was the development of structures to identify areas of focus.
- Summative and interim assessment data from feeder elementary schools were reviewed and used to make placement decisions, but additional data points were identified as being needed to better-inform instructional decision making.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Easily accessible and more user-friendly data should be provided to school personnel for use in the analysis of student performance by subgroups and the identification of areas for instructional focus. The school should create more streamlined data reports that are easily read and interpreted by all stakeholders.
- School leadership should facilitate joint departmental meetings so that District and school leadership work together to review formative, interim, and summative data and share it with their departments.

- Areas of focus for data teams should be identified, and the teams should create a regular schedule of meetings with objectives.
- Additional data on student achievement and behavior should be analyzed to further inform placement decisions and resource allocation.

## II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

### FINDINGS:

- Instructional leadership has begun educating teachers about the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to facilitate the transition to the new standards and allow for alignment of curricula.
- A written curriculum does not exist for the ESL program.
- The current ELA and mathematics written curricula are not yet aligned with the CCLS.
- All students in grades six through eight began the use of steno notebooks to explore all areas of academic vocabulary; however, no differentiation was made for English language learners (ELLs), i.e., the incorporation of a native language component. Bilingual glossaries were not used in content area classes. Evidence-based strategies for raising levels of student vocabulary were not observed by the review team in some classes.
- Rigorous instruction was evident in most, but not all, classes visited by the review team. Challenging vocabulary was part of instruction in all classes visited. The use of manipulatives and multiple modalities was evidenced in mathematics classes.
- Although special education and ESL staff received training in strategies for differentiating lessons to meet the needs of students, a mechanism does not exist to regularly share these strategies with all teachers.
- ESL and remedial reading class sizes were too large to support optimal learning.
- In some classrooms, teachers presented students with learning objectives at the beginning of each lesson, but framed them as activities, rather than learning objectives.
- Closure activities in some classes did not appear to generate data on whether students achieved desired learning objectives to inform instruction.
- Local quarterly interim assessments existed for mathematics, but were not yet in place for ELA, science, or social studies.
- Students reading below proficiency who attended computer-based classes of foundational reading and phonics instruction were able to learn and practice specific phonics skills; however, the program did not include sufficient comprehension instruction.

- Native Spanish speakers taking Spanish as a foreign language were in a course taught in English that was neither differentiated for student prior knowledge nor aligned with the high school Spanish for Native Speakers course.
- Regent's credit for languages other than English (LOTE) was not awarded at the middle school level in cases where students might have been eligible to receive this credit.
- Many students were long-term English language learners (ELLs), having not tested out of this designation over a prolonged number of years. Students not testing out show deficits in the area of reading and writing.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- School and District leadership should implement a schedule to introduce components of the CCLS at staff and departmental meetings.
- Instructional leadership should create an ESL curriculum in alignment with the CCLS.
- Content area curriculum documents should be redesigned to include all components of content area curricula to meet the needs of all students and align with the CCLS.
- Instructional leadership should investigate the addition of a native language component to academic vocabulary notebooks of ELLs, and bilingual glossaries should be made available in core content classes. Instructional leadership should also review the most effective strategies for supporting all students in their attempts to use more sophisticated vocabulary.
- Instruction should be adjusted to incorporate higher order thinking skills and maintain access to rigorous instruction for all students across the content areas.
- Instructional leadership should create a mechanism so that all staff can regularly observe, implement, and share strategies for differentiating instruction and evaluate the impact of these strategies on student performance outcomes.
- Instructional staffing and scheduling should be adjusted to provide more optimal class sizes in ESL and reading remediation.
- Teachers should be provided with professional development (PD) in lesson planning to ensure that teachers and students understand the larger learning objectives that guide lesson activities.
- Lesson closure activities should be designed to measure student achievement of learning objectives and provide formative assessment data to inform instruction.
- Local quarterly interim assessments should be developed and administered to benchmark student progress and evaluate programs in ELA, science, and social studies to inform instructional decisions.

- The ELA program should be adjusted to ensure that all learning standards are addressed in alignment with the CCLS, i.e., System 44 instruction could become a four day per week intervention with the fifth day devoted only to balanced literacy and test prep.
- A Spanish for Native Speakers course should be instituted at the middle school level. The course should be designed to be consistent with the high school program and promote better outcomes for native Spanish speakers.
- The transcripts of non-English speaking students should be reviewed to ensure that students who were educated in their home countries receive appropriate Regents' credit for LOTE.
- The causes of why some ESL students are not testing out of the ESL program should be investigated and addressed. Instruction should be provided to close gaps in reading and writing achievement.

### **III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- At the time of the review, there was no shared mission statement for the District and school. It was determined by District and school leadership that a shared, cohesive mission should be in place for the District and all schools.
- Some parents and staff have expressed a belief that more students need to be identified for special education services and more students need a greater frequency of related services and more restrictive instructional environments in order to succeed. This is directly contrary to Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies.
- Teacher observation notes were not consistent across District and school leadership. Instructional leaders were participating in training in the Danielson Model to ensure consistency in teacher observations and meet new State requirements for teacher evaluation (Annual Professional Performance Review [APPR]).
- There has been a significant drop in student performance for students in special education self-contained classes when these students transition from middle to high school.
- Although the school has made efforts to increase communication to parents in Spanish, the leadership has expressed a desire to further improve communications.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The District and schools should develop a shared mission statement for the District and all schools that is aligned to Regents goals for student achievement.
- Special education and general education leadership should continue to provide information and PD to the educational community to clarify the special education service delivery system and promote an

- Instructional leadership should ensure the consistency of written evaluations in alignment with the Danielson Model and APPR requirements.
- School instructional leaders should work with academic directors to explore the reasons for the drop in student success for students in self-contained classrooms when they transition to high school, and accordingly adjust instruction.
- School and District leadership should expand the ways in which the school supports and communicates with limited or non-English speaking parents.

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

##### **FINDINGS:**

- The school provided regularly scheduled extra help before school, but not all students were able to attend due to the fact that transportation was not provided.
- Some students demonstrated a pattern of chronic lateness.
- Special education co-teachers in the inclusion program were assigned to co-teach up to four different subject areas. They were not able to attend all departmental PD and did not always have scheduled common planning time with their co-teachers.
- Grades seven and eight skill classes were taught by the inclusion class special education teacher, in a combined skills class to cover both instruction in classroom skills and Individualized Education Program (IEP) skill-based goals.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The District should review the possibility of adjusting school scheduling, bus schedules or instituting new bus routes to ensure equal access to and sufficient time for early morning extra help.
- School leadership should analyze and address causes of chronic lateness.
- The inclusion program should be based on a revised model that allows for more co-planning time and the development of subject area expertise by limiting the number of content areas special education teachers assigned to co-teach.
- The school should adjust inclusion teacher assignments to allow sufficient time for students to receive both skill instruction and IEP skill-based goal instruction.

## **V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **FINDINGS:**

- The District has supported ongoing PD; however, the major focus has not been on providing strategies for differentiated instruction or meeting the needs of students in identified subgroups in ELA and mathematics.
- General education teachers noted that they would benefit from additional PD in order to implement the most appropriate instructional strategies to promote literacy for all students across content areas.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Instructional leadership should provide PD and support that promotes the use of evidence-based strategies for differentiated instruction and meets specific areas of need for identified student subgroups.
- PD and support should be provided for all teachers in the area of literacy to support all students.

## **VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

No findings or recommendations were noted.

## **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 CCLS, Data Driven Instruction and the Annual Professional Performance Reviews for teacher effectiveness.