

**NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability**

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	130200010001
District Name:	Beacon City School District
School Name:	J.V. Forrestal Elementary School
School Address:	125 Liberty Street, Beacon, New York 12508
Principal:	Wanda Gonzalez
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year 1) - Focused
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts - Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	December 7 and 9, 2011

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

"Enable All Students to Meet High and Challenging Educational Standards: We will enable all students to meet high and challenging educational standards through quality programs and support services which promote the intellectual, physical, and cultural well-being of diverse students and families in our community. We will provide a rich educational environment with a challenging curriculum and a dedicated staff. We will improve student learning at every level which will allow students to reach their maximum potential. "

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

The school leader and staff have begun to implement many of the critical elements necessary for improvement. School staff and school leadership are beginning to increase collaboration and work on curriculum development by:

- establishing a School Improvement Team (SIT);
- ensuring that leveled libraries are available in English as a second language (ESL) classrooms;
- offering Academic Intervention Services (AIS), Supplemental Education Services (SES), and extended-day programs;
- collaboratively creating mission and vision statements;
- establishing a new teacher-mentor program; and
- using the Response To Intervention (RtI) protocols.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- The school leader established a SIT; however, the team is still in development.
- Although there is evidence the school has access to multiple data sources, they are not readily available to school personnel. As a result, teachers do not all use the available data to promote maximum growth in student achievement.
- Teachers do not use the New York State Education Department (NYSED) assessment data and formative assessment data to inform instruction on a systemic basis. The review team saw little evidence that data were reviewed to adjust instruction.
- The review team found limited evidence that formative assessment data were collected and used to differentiate instruction in order to address students' diverse needs. There is no evidence to document that formative assessments are used to monitor student progress or modify the curriculum or the level of rigor or pacing of instruction.
- The review team found little evidence that subgroup data for students with disabilities, English language learners (ELLs), and economically disadvantaged students have been analyzed to plan interventions that address their academic needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The District should ensure teacher access to data sources and establish procedures for implementing and monitoring the effective use of data. The school leader should provide professional development (PD) on analysis and use of data in informing decisions about instruction and providing differentiated interventions.
- The SIT should engage in a thorough and comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the most recent ELA data for all students, and specifically for the students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students.
- Data analysis should be an integral part of grade-level meetings. Teacher focus should be on using their findings to improve instructional planning.
- Teachers should receive PD in the effective use of formative assessments and begin using formative assessments during instruction.
- School leaders should develop a plan for implementing formative and interim assessments to improve progress monitoring, standards-based instruction, and differentiated instruction. This plan should include clear expectations for all teachers, and instructional interventions should be a priority.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- The review team found no evidence of grade-level and/or cross-grade-level planning time or collaboration among all teachers, including teachers of students with disabilities and ESL students.
- In classes observed by the review team, students were only passively engaged during lessons. There were few examples of best practices for small group learning, critical thinking, and differentiation.
- Most lessons observed by the review team focused on recall and basic comprehension; there was little evidence of tasks requiring higher-order thinking skills.
- In classrooms visited by the review team, there was no evidence of the use of technology, such as desktop computers or the use of the computer lab.
- The review team observed no use of instructional rubrics.
- In many classrooms, the review team found that the instructional objective was not clearly articulated to students. When asked, students could articulate neither the directions for the task nor the objective of the lesson.
- Lesson plans did not align with the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and the review team found no evidence that the school is developing a curriculum aligned with CCLS.
- The school does not consistently use research-based instructional strategies in reading and English language arts (ELA) for all students, and particularly for students with disabilities.
- A uniform grading policy is in place; however, the review team saw little evidence that all teachers have uniform expectations as they define the levels of achievement.
- The review team observed limited evidence of teachers engaged in interactive teaching.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The District should work with the school on the development of curriculum in all core areas and ensure that it is clearly aligned with the current NYS Learning Standards. The curriculum must be aligned to the new P-12 CCLS in English language arts and mathematics. All curricula should be developed by knowledgeable and trained individuals (national, State or local) who understand the key elements of curriculum development. Curriculum across grade levels and literacy across content areas should be addressed. Strategies for specific subgroups should be incorporated and lessons should be aligned with the CCLS.

All teachers and administrators should participate in PD on how to plan and implement a curriculum with rigor, as well as on delivery methods that are student-centered. Curriculum maps should be aligned to the CCLS. The curriculum should be relied upon as the basis for assessing individual student mastery and

progress. Walkthroughs and formal evaluations should include how well the teacher knows and implements the curriculum for the subject being taught.

- ELA teachers should plan instruction specifically for their identified subgroups, and the SIT should measure the success of their outcomes.
- The school leader should ensure that instructional plans, pacing calendars, and units of study for ELA are developed. These plans should provide for differentiated instruction based on student needs and ensure that students performing at Levels One and Two on State assessments receive specific instruction and support.
- A common lesson plan template should be developed and used by all staff.
- PD on differentiated instruction and research-based teaching strategies should be offered to all staff.
- Teachers should be encouraged to integrate technology into instruction.
- The school leader should provide opportunities for staff to assess student work collaboratively in order to develop consistency in the implementation of the grading policy.
- Students should be involved in daily, extensive, teacher-directed authentic reading and writing activities.
- The co-teaching model should be revisited to ensure that teachers who work together have clear responsibilities and that both teachers actively engage with students.
- School leaders should create a flexible common planning schedule in which teachers can meet across grade levels and content areas. Protocols and expectations for the use of this time should be established.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- The school leader has begun working with staff to develop shared mission and vision statements. However, the review team saw limited evidence that these statements connect to a District-wide vision and mission.
- This is the school leader's first year in the position. The school leader is dedicated to improving student achievement; however, there has not been sufficient time to fully implement a new instructional plan. The review team was provided some evidence that monitoring, supervision, and the support of instruction is a priority of the school leader. The review team saw some evidence of initial development of a data-driven instructional improvement cycle.
- Although the school leader is investigating new programs and initiatives to improve student achievement, there is no system in place to provide continuous improvement of educational practices via

date-driven, collaborative instructional planning, and the continuous monitoring of progress of all students and subgroups.

- The current schedule does not always accurately reflect actual classroom practice.
- The SIT is newly constituted and has not developed into an effectively functioning unit.
- The review team was provided limited evidence that teachers are expected to complete weekly lesson plans.
- There is no system for teachers and leaders to share accountability for student learning and assess growth through measurable goals and objectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- District leaders should provide clear direction and PD for teachers on the effective alignment of the units of instruction with the CCLS.
- The school leader should ensure during formal and informal observations that instructional practices reflect an alignment with CCLS.
- The school leader should continue to ensure that sufficient time is allocated for instructional planning and encourage the use of available student data.
- The school leader should ensure that teachers more actively engage students in authentic learning activities and conduct frequent walkthroughs to monitor and provide feedback on progress. The data collected from the walkthroughs should be used during staff meetings and to focus PD sessions.
- The school leader and staff, and District staff should develop a Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) to create an effective plan to improve achievement. The school leaders and staff should articulate a clear vision and strategic plan that drives the school towards high student achievement and clearly outlines the responsibilities of staff and leaders. The plan should include goals, activities, and PD and should use all resources available through the District. The implementation of the plan should be carefully monitored and its impact on student achievement measured. The school leader should foster and encourage a culture of high expectations and success for all students, including an attitude of shared responsibility among all staff. Teachers should also incorporate cooperative learning and differentiated instruction in their classes.
- The school leadership should provide PD that addresses the establishment of team meeting protocols and outcomes, ensuring the structure necessary for the effective use of planning time.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- The school leader has primary responsibility for student discipline in the school.

- The school leader is working to rebuild a strong parent/school partnership and has established some community partnerships.
- High expectations and academic rigor were not evident to the review team; lessons observed by the review team did not encourage student-to-student interaction.
- Review team interviews with the primary grade teachers indicated that there are few early warning protocols prior to grade three to assist students at-risk of academic difficulties.
- Evidence made available to the review team indicates that the school does not provide adequate support for students with disabilities.
- Although a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model was referenced, the review team saw little evidence of its schoolwide implementation.
- Some students with disabilities are in co-teaching classes; however, the review team saw no evidence that the co-teaching model in this school is effective in improving student achievement.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The District should provide support for the school leader and the special education program staff to ensure the needs of students with disabilities are met.
- The AIS program should be restructured to address the needs and improve the academic performance of identified students in kindergarten and other grades.
- The Response to Intervention (RtI) model should continue to be implemented in the school, and support for the implementation of PBIS should be provided.
- An early intervention protocol should be developed to ensure that at-risk students receive adequate academic support prior to grade three.
- The school should provide ongoing, rigorous, and sustained PD that focuses on various research-based teaching strategies to address the needs of all students. The plan should include a strong focus on differentiated instruction, based on disaggregated data for all subgroups.
- The school leader should review the resources allocated to the school and work closely with District staff to better align resources with the school's needs, including teacher placement, instructional materials, and expanding the use of technology.
- The school should continue to pursue opportunities to increase parental involvement.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- The District PD plan includes some mentoring of new teachers. However, job-embedded technical assistance is not available.
- The school leader has begun to introduce PD in using data to inform instruction; however, this has not been fully implemented. Team meetings are not used to analyze student work, and staff is just beginning to explore the use of assessment data to determine students' instructional needs.
- The school leader is supportive of PD for all staff members. However, the review team found limited evidence that teachers currently receive PD designed to enhance their professional practice in working with students with disabilities and/or ELLs.
- Teachers have not received sufficient, consistent PD in the PBIS model that the school has adopted. This has resulted in uneven communication of the expectations for student behavior.
- The review team found no evidence of PD activities that include inter-visitation, common planning opportunities for teachers, workshops in core content areas, technology integration, and supports for ESL and students with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leadership should work with the District to develop a PD plan and calendar based on the school's specific needs. The calendar should span the entire school year.
- Assessment data, classroom observations, walkthroughs, teacher surveys, student surveys, and other pertinent information should be a part of the data used to determine PD offerings, e.g., co-teaching and differentiated instruction, that are needed in the school. A process should be developed to ensure that the PD offerings are tailored to individual teacher needs.
- The school leader should provide opportunities for sharing best practices across grade levels.
- Teachers should engage in PD on embedding higher-order, critical thinking skills in their lessons to increase the rigor and relevance of instruction.
- PD regarding the effective teaching of reading comprehension strategies and the development of written responses to literature should be provided. The District should explore the creation of a literacy coach position to provide job-embedded PD.
- The District should provide sustained PD to co-teachers to ensure the effective use of two educators in a classroom and facilitate differentiated instruction.
- Department and grade level meetings should include scheduled times for reviewing student work and analyzing assessment data to determine student skills and areas that need improvement. Both general education and special education teachers should be included in these meetings.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- The classroom environment is clean and orderly.
- Little student work was displayed that would indicate mastery or serve as a resource for reinforcement.
- The review team's observations revealed that teachers do not incorporate technology in instruction.
- There is only one computer lab in the school; the review team observed limited evidence of its use to improve instruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leader and District staff should review and revise the school's technology plan to address the current technological needs of the school. The use of technology should be incorporated into classroom instruction to provide more interactive lessons and to foster more student engagement. Appropriate technology, e.g., SMART Boards and computers and software applications, should be made available for teacher and student use. Teachers and the school leader should monitor the use and effectiveness of available software for different student subgroups, particularly for ELLs and students with disabilities.
- Students should be engaged in the learning process by:
 - setting of high standards;
 - posting of student work;
 - developing and posting rubrics for each assignment; and
 - having students take part in creating classroom rules.
- PD in the use of technology to improve instructional practice should be provided, and teachers should be held accountable for implementing these strategies in their classrooms.
- School leaders should review and revise current school standards to maintain an organized classroom environment. School leaders should monitor classes to ensure that each room is set up to foster and promote student learning.

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.