

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

DBN:	10X360
District Name:	District 10
School Name:	PS 360
School Address:	2880 Kingsbridge Terrace Bronx, New York 10463
Principal:	Nancy Rodriquez-Lewis
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year-1) - Comprehensive
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts - All Students; African American Students; Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners and Educationally Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	March 5 - 6, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“P.S. 360 is a Circle of Learners. Our Circle consists of students, staff, families, and the neighborhood community at large.

For the circle to remain unbroken, we must 1- Set and build the foundation for a love of independent lifelong learning. 2- Strive to meet and maintain standards of excellence through consistent hard work. 3- Provide a nurturing and safe environment that celebrates all students, their achievement and diversity.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- Parents and students view the school as a safe environment that is responsive to student learning needs.
- The school secured a foundation grant to totally redesign and expand the library collection. The grant includes additional technology resources and a personal gift of seven books for each student.
- The school building is clean and well-maintained.
- School personnel received training in the Danielson Framework and the new P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and are in the process of implementing both.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDING:

Teachers have access to an extensive variety of formative and summative data and are expected to use that data to meet the needs of their students. However, there is limited evidence of a plan or process to monitor the use of data in the classroom.

RECOMMENDATION:

School leaders should develop a system to analyze and disaggregate English Language Arts (ELA) data for students in all identified subgroups. School leaders should assist teachers in using this data to plan and align ELA instruction to meet the specific needs of students. Teachers should use the data to set clear academic goals and interim benchmarks for their students. This benchmark data should be used to provide targeted academic interventions for individual students, as indicated, throughout the term. School leaders should provide professional development (PD) to ensure that teachers are able to use the data and should monitor its use during formal and informal observations.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- While teachers are using a combination of materials from the New York City Department of Education, the New York State (NYS) Education Department website and the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to develop units of study in ELA, there is limited evidence of a cohesive, research-based curriculum in ELA. There are no vertical or horizontal instructional curriculum maps to ensure consistency across content areas and grades.
- While sustained silent reading is used to build student reading stamina, this strategy does not provide teachers opportunities to be responsive to the developmental or individual learning needs of some students. In classes observed by the review team, students spent between 20 to 60 minutes on this task and were not consistently monitored by teachers to ensure that they remained focused. Consequently, many students were observed off task during this activity. Alternative activities were not available to meet the needs of students who cannot maintain attention for 60 minutes of silent reading.
- The use of differentiated Instruction was not consistently observed in ELA lessons. Many lessons did not use a range of strategies to accommodate the differing and diverse learning needs of students in the identified subgroups.
- In classes observed by the team, there was limited evidence of the use of lesson objectives to focus student learning. It took several minutes before students began the posted 'Do Now' activity. 'Do Now' tasks often exceeded the allotted timeframe. In one observed class, over twenty minutes was spent on the 'Do Now' activity. Frequently, teachers were unable to complete the objectives for their entire lessons.

- Although most transitions to classes were smooth and orderly, the team observed a loss of instructional time for students in grades 5 and 6 transitioning from the science and mathematics classrooms to the ELA and social studies (humanities) classrooms.
- The use of computers in classrooms was limited and, when used, student activities were not consistently monitored.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders with the assistance of the Network, literacy coach and grade teams should develop an ELA curriculum that includes detailed curriculum maps aligned with the NYS Learning Standards and the CCLS to provide an explicit roadmap for improvement in ELA instruction.
- School leaders should develop schoolwide expectations regarding the use of silent sustained reading. Teachers should use individual student data, including anecdotal observations of individual students, to determine the appropriate amount of time students should spend on this task. Stamina for students should be developed in smaller increments, and alternate literacy activities should be made available to ensure students remain on task.
- When planning lessons, teachers should reference the specific learning needs of students within the class and provide different entry points and instructional activities that are scaffolded to meet the needs of all students as identified through data analysis. School leaders should monitor the use of differentiated instructional strategies as part of the observation process.
- When planning lessons, teachers should include lesson objectives that are precise and delineate what the students will be able to accomplish at the end of the lesson. The school leaders should provide PD on effective pacing for lessons in addition to appropriate uses of ‘Do Now’ activities. School leaders should make the pacing of lessons a regular focus for walkthroughs and observations.
- The school leaders should consider, when programming the school, providing grades 5 and 6 an uninterrupted block of instruction on both sides of the transition to limit loss of instructional time.
- Targeted PD should be provided for teachers to ensure that available technology is used as an effective instructional tool in the classroom. Specific activities should be planned and monitored to ensure that the students stay challenged and on task.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDING:

Interviews indicated that school leaders conduct informal observations. However, no evidence was provided during interviews or in binders to indicate that informal observations are used to evaluate teaching and learning in all classrooms to improve ELA instructional practice. Formal observations were usually limited to new teachers and teachers with unsatisfactory ratings.

RECOMMENDATION:

School leaders should develop a classroom observation schedule to monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the school, which includes formal observations of all teachers, as well as informal observations and focused walkthroughs. The observations should assist school leaders in identifying teacher needs and provide a focus for the development of a comprehensive PD plan and future follow-up support for individual teachers.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**FINDING:**

The time available for mandated and transitional services provided to students is limited due to the school guidance counselor working only three days per week. When interviewed, parents who had children that attended other schools noted that these schools began the transition process to middle school earlier and provided workshops to aid parents in school selection.

RECOMMENDATION:

The school leaders should review the current allocation of financial resources and consider hiring a full-time guidance counselor. This will provide additional time for the counselor to provide counseling services as indicated on Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). In addition the counselor could provide general counseling services for all students and information and support for students and parents during the transition to middle school. If current or future budget allocations preclude hiring a full-time counselor, school leaders should monitor the work of the counselor and make adjustments in his/her schedule of activities to ensure that he/she provides all counseling services indicated each year on IEPs and builds in time to work with parents and students during the transition process to middle school. The guidance counselor should work closely with the parent coordinator to maximize impact and effectiveness.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**FINDINGS:**

- PD was provided to the staff by the ELA coach and consultant; however, there was limited evidence in the documentation that there was a structured, comprehensive year long PD plan that addresses the needs of the staff.
- In most of the observed English as a second language (ESL) classes, there was a lack of scaffolding strategies to promote comprehension in the content areas and language acquisition.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should work collaboratively with the ELA coach, literacy consultant, and teachers to develop a comprehensive PD plan with a focus on improving instruction in ELA for all students in the identified subgroups. The plan should identify areas in need of support through teacher surveys and school leader observations in addition to those outlined in this report.

- School leaders should develop and implement a plan that ensures that all teachers are provided PD in ESL strategies across all content areas, as well as in the four modalities of the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) exam, i.e., listening and speaking and reading and writing, to address each student’s individual academic needs and to develop overall language proficiency.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- As a policy, the school doors are unlocked at 7:00 AM for teachers, and there is no security or other personnel present in the building until 7:30 AM.
- There were limited native language books in the classroom libraries.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should review current entry practices and make adjustments to ensure the safety of those arriving early. Strategies might include staggering the school leaders and/or the school safety agents start time to accommodate staff requiring early access to the building.
- Classroom libraries should be expanded to include books written in the native languages of students that are appropriate for their reading levels and 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.