

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

DBN:	19K089
District Name:	District 19
School Name:	PS 89 Cypress Hills School
School Address:	265 Warwick Street, Brooklyn, NY 11207
Principal:	Irene Leon
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year 1) - Comprehensive
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts - All Students; Hispanic Students; English Language Learners and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	January 31, 2012 – February 1, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“Our mission is to educate every child to be an academically successful student, a socially responsible person and a lifelong learner. We will accomplish this mission utilizing a Dual Language Program and standards-driven instruction. We will nurture the appreciation of cultural diversity within a school that fosters excellence, mutual respect, creativity and a joy of learning. We will attain this through the collaboration among the school families and community.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The school attendance rate is 95 percent.
- Teachers, parents and students are supportive of the school. Parents indicated that they are involved with the school through volunteering and have a voice in decision-making. Students boast of strong and positive relationships with their teachers.
- The school has a well organized library/media center that meets the needs of all students.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- There is evidence that multiple data sources are available to school personnel. However, the process of disaggregating data and analyzing assessment results to inform instruction on a more comprehensive level is in the beginning stages. The staff is currently reviewing internal data such as running records and not focusing on or comparing the results with external data from the New York State (NYS) English language arts (ELA) assessment.
- There is no uniform schoolwide mechanism to examine, disaggregate and analyze collected student data to promote maximum student achievement growth in ELA.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should provide additional professional development (PD) opportunities for staff on the effective use of data and how to use data results to maximize student achievement. PD should include opportunities for developing teacher capacity using data to plan for and monitor student outcomes and improve student learning in all subgroups in ELA. Internal and external data sources, including data from the NYS ELA assessment, should be used to drive instruction.
- Inquiry Teams should be established to analyze data and to regularly conduct item analysis of formative and summative assessments. The results of the Inquiry Teams' work should be shared with all stakeholders. Teachers should be encouraged to use data to systematically inform their teaching practice and plan instruction.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- In a few observed classes, there was limited evidence of the development of higher-order thinking skills and differentiation in mathematics and ELA instructional practices. Questioning skills varied greatly among teachers, with a majority of questions requiring factual recall and one-word answers. It was noted that the expectations for students were not always challenging.
- Based on the review of documentation, interviews and classroom visits, there is some evidence that the school has begun to implement the ELA and mathematics instructional shifts of the new P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS).
- Although student work was displayed in visited classrooms, the work did not include rubrics with specific and concise feedback and did not clearly indicate what each student needed to do to improve to reach the next level.

- Although teachers articulated a grading policy, there was no evidence of a uniform schoolwide grading policy displayed in the classrooms or written and presented as evidence.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- PD should be provided to support all teachers in developing a variety of questioning techniques aimed at critical thinking and using problem solving skills appropriate to student development. PD should also be provided on data-driven instruction and planning for differentiated instruction, aligned to student entry levels. This PD should include monitoring and adjusting instructional strategies based on frequent, formative assessments. These skills would specifically support teacher effectiveness with all students, including the identified subgroups. Teachers should ensure that strategies identified in PD are incorporated into their daily instruction. School leaders should make questioning techniques a focus for observation and should organize inter-visitations and/or lesson studies in order to increase high expectations and performance for all students.
- School leaders, with the support of the Network, should continue to integrate the ELA and mathematics instructional shifts into the curriculum, lesson planning and instruction. PD and support from school leaders and the Network should continue.
- Rubrics should be used as an integral tool in planning and assessing assignments. Teachers should participate in PD activities that model the use of rubrics to provide teacher feedback, peer feedback and student self assessment. School leaders should monitor and evaluate the quality of feedback that is provided to ensure that it helps students improve.
- School leaders, in collaboration with teachers should create a written schoolwide grading policy. The policy should be communicated to students and parents and posted in each classroom. School leaders should monitor usage to ensure that this policy is consistently implemented.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- Although school leaders and teachers are working to find and create new programs and initiatives to improve student achievement, there was no system in place to monitor instructional best practices that have been identified through data analysis and have resulted in improved academic progress for the identified subgroups.
- There is no strategic plan that clearly and specifically outlines the roles of key staff members in supporting the identified area of ELA or how progress towards challenging and achievable goals are to be measured that will improve instruction for all subgroups.
- Although a formal observation process exists, interviews with teachers provided little evidence that informal instructional walkthroughs regularly occur at the school.
- The school offers many enrichment programs, afterschool and Saturday intervention programs; however, students are not making sufficient progress in the area of ELA.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should monitor the progress of all subgroups and support teachers in using both formative and summative assessment data to plan and adjust lessons and deliver content and curriculum to meet the needs of all subgroups in the identified area of ELA.
- The school leaders, with the support of the Network, should review and modify, if necessary, the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) to ensure the goals are focused on improving 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 CEP should include goals, action plans, and a comprehensive PD plan. The school should use all available resources from the Network to implement this plan and carefully monitor its impact on student achievement.
- The school leaders should develop a plan for regular, frequent informal walkthroughs that allow them to develop specific, actionable next steps for all teachers to improve their instructional practices, especially in ELA.
- The management of the school's organization, operations and resources should be reviewed by school leaders to maximize resources to create an effective learning environment where academics are the focus.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDING:

The school provides multiple programs and services for at-risk students. These programs include library and technology access for students and families, afterschool programs that target various student barriers to learning and an eight-week Saturday Program for students who have achieved high Level 2 and low Level 3 on the NYS assessment. Based on interviews and documentation, there is limited evidence that these programs and interventions have resulted in a significant improvement in student progress or performance.

RECOMMENDATION:

The school leader should ensure that there is a comprehensive student support service plan to identify all at-risk students. The plan should contain effective and research based strategies to eliminate barriers to success for all students in ELA. The school leader should establish protocols to provide all eligible students with the appropriate supports that are relevant to their individual needs. The school leader should carefully monitor these services to ensure that instruction is effective and participation within the programs is maximized.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- There was limited evidence that teachers were provided formal or follow-up PD that aligned to the focus of targeted informal observations. There was no evidence of how PD topics were strategically chosen, that teachers attend any external PD or that the Network provides PD in ELA or for instructional strategies that address the needs of the identified subgroups.
- The mathematics/literacy coach's schedule contains multiple periods dedicated to administrative duties. Teachers indicated a need for the literacy coach to provide in-class support to teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should develop a comprehensive PD plan designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning and student achievement based on student and teacher need. The school leader, with the support of the Network, should explore opportunities for teachers to participate in PD offered outside of the school to inform their pedagogical practice.
- The school leader should reevaluate the mathematics/literacy coach's schedule to provide more in-class support to teachers. This would enable the coach to meet with individual and groups of teachers to address their specific instructional needs in ELA.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDING:

Although the school is committed to the use of SMART Board technology in the classroom, it was observed that a number of teachers were not taking advantage of the intended purpose and capability of the technology.

RECOMMENDATION:

The school leaders should seek to provide teachers with advanced on-going PD in incorporating the use of SMART Board technology into their lesson plans to support interactive and hands-on learning. School leaders should monitor technology usage through observations and walkthroughs.

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.