

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

DBN:	20K220
District Name:	District 20
School Name:	JHS 220 John J. Pershing
School Address:	4812 9 th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11220
Principal:	Loretta Witek
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year-1) - Comprehensive
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts – All Students; African American Students; Hispanic Students; White Students; Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	March 6-7, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“At Pershing we build a foundation for success one student at a time.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTH

The faculty and staff are supportive of each other and the school leadership.

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- The school collects data, including Acuity, Predictive exams and end of unit tests; however, in many of the classes that were visited, the review team observed that the use of data to plan for and modify English language arts (ELA) instruction to meet the individualized needs of all identified students was limited.
- Based on classes reviewed by the review team, there was limited evidence of the use of formative assessments to determine student understanding and modify ELA instruction.
- The school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) does not identify or address the causes of low student academic performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leaders should monitor the use of data and how it is used to improve classroom instruction. Teachers should use student performance data, summative, interim and formative, to create instructional groups, design skill-based activities for small groups of students with similar needs and adjust the planned ELA curriculum with a special focus on the identified subgroups.
- The school leaders should seek Network support to provide professional development (PD) for teachers in incorporating formative assessments into everyday lesson planning and instruction. School leaders should monitor teacher use of data to improve classroom instruction via formal and informal observations.
- A thorough item analysis and subgroup analysis should be conducted to determine the causes of low student academic performance. The CEP should be modified to address the causes of low student academic performance. Data should be reviewed from year-to-year across cohorts with instructional needs accordingly adjusted.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- In many of the classes observed by the review team, much of the instruction was teacher directed, with little variety of instructional strategies. Students have few opportunities to engage in conversations about topics such as working in pairs or talking with different groups of students.
- There were few examples of differentiated instruction in classrooms observed, especially within English Language learner (ELL) classrooms. There was little evidence that data was used to group students or to match activities to the differing ability levels of the students.
- According to interviews by the review team with teachers and school leaders, the school has two different ELA curriculum programs. School leaders and teachers indicate that one curriculum program does not foster rigorous and engaging instruction, while the other is new and is not aligned across content areas as of yet.
- In classes that were observed by the review team, there was insufficient application of higher-order thinking skills, problem solving and project-based learning to stimulate and engage the students.
- The ELA curriculum is not rigorous, i.e., the English as a Second Language (ESL) curriculum consists of elementary level work with the same concepts, skills and strategies for each grade level.
- The written curriculum does not include a technology plan outlining teacher and student expectations, student engagement and technological integration across content areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should provide PD to introduce teachers to a wider range of instructional strategies that can be used in the classroom to promote greater student participation in the learning process. Teachers should be expected to incorporate these strategies, and school leaders should monitor effectiveness.
- The school leader should provide PD opportunities for teachers on a variety of instructional strategies to promote differentiation of instruction. The focus of the PD should be on the use of data to drive lesson planning and instruction. Strategies should focus on ensuring that tasks match the academic needs of identified subgroups. School leaders should regularly monitor teacher planning and instructional practice in the classroom to ensure that differentiated activities are in place throughout the school. Ongoing PD should be provided for teachers as necessary.
- School leaders, with input from all teachers, should select one ELA curriculum and modify and align the curriculum to meet the needs of the student population. The school leaders and teachers should participate in PD on how to plan and implement the curriculum with rigor, as well as on delivery methods that are student-centered. The curriculum should be relied upon as the basis for assessing individual student mastery and progress. Walkthroughs and formal evaluations should include implementation of the curriculum for the subjects being taught.
- The school leaders should seek ways to improve/increase the rigor of curriculum outcomes so that a wide range of instructional strategies can be used to promote students' higher level thinking, problem solving and research skills in all content areas.
- School leaders should work collaboratively with the ELA teachers to develop specific goals that are differentiated for each grade level and all subgroups. The school leaders should use Network personnel to assist in developing a specific curriculum for ESL students. School leaders should ensure that a rigorous curriculum is implemented that meets the needs of all students.
- A technology plan should be developed and implemented that identify expected teacher and student outcomes and highlights a range of effective applications to be used in classrooms.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- Parent representatives on the School Leadership Team (SLT) have limited knowledge and understanding of the goals of the CEP and do not participate fully in the creation of schoolwide improvement goals.
- The expectations for ensuring that teachers implement strategies learned in PD are low, and there is no formal follow-up to monitor implementation in the classroom.

- School leaders do not set high enough expectations for the academic performance of all students and staff in ELA. A culture of high achievement in ELA is not fully embraced by all staff and school leaders.
- The Inquiry Team’s first meeting was in January. The team identified 56 students to track; however the focus and strategies of the team are not well defined.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leadership should seek Network support to work with the SLT to develop parents’ understanding of their responsibility for setting goals for the CEP. The CEP should be a regular item on the agenda for SLT meetings so that all members of the team are fully aware of school goals and the progress being made towards them.
- School leaders should use the observational process to ensure that teachers are held accountable for incorporating all the skills developed within PD activities into their instructional delivery.
- The school leadership, with the support of the Network, should review and modify if necessary the CEP 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 implementation of the plan should be monitored and its impact on student achievement measured.
- The Inquiry Team should be provided with PD to assist them in developing a clear and concise focus on strategies designed to address the identified weakness of the targeted group.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDING:

The school does not provide sufficient Academic Intervention Services (AIS) support to meet the needs of the student subgroups, including students with disabilities and ELLs identified for AIS.

RECOMMENDATION:

School leaders should use student performance data to create student groupings for AIS. The school schedule should be adjusted to include AIS during the day. AIS instructional support should align with classroom instruction. School leaders should evaluate the program for effectiveness.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- The school has not developed and implemented a comprehensive PD plan for ELA.

- A review of available documentation indicates that teachers are not held accountable for incorporating PD practices into their instructional practice. There is no mention of PD in the observation reports.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should develop a comprehensive PD program in ELA. School leaders should seek support for PD from the Network and other sources to help develop a detailed plan that focuses on improving teaching and learning to better meet the needs of students and teachers in ELA. School leaders should closely monitor the delivery of instruction and provide feedback that includes recommendations for improvement.
- The school leadership should conduct follow-up observations after PD sessions to ensure that teachers incorporate the strategies learned into the classroom instructional program. The school leaders should develop detailed recommendations and specific next steps in their observation reports and focus on these in their next observation.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- Available technology in many classrooms, including SMART Boards and laptops, were underutilized and not effectively integrated into instruction.
- Common planning time has not resulted in improvement in teaching, learning and student achievement.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leader should seek the assistance of the Network to provide teachers with on-going PD in incorporating the use of SMART Boards and technology into their lesson plans to support interactive and hands-on learning. School leaders should monitor technology usage through observations and walkthroughs.
- School leaders should ensure that the purposes and outcomes of each common planning meeting are fully recorded. In addition, these meetings should be monitored to ensure that the focus of the meeting is central to improving instruction and student outcomes.

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.