NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

DBN:	20K227	
District Name:	District 20	
School Name:	Edward B. Shallow School	
School Address:	6500 16th Avenue, Brooklyn NY 11204	
Principal:	Brenda Champion	
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year-1) - Comprehensive	
Areas of Identification:	English Language Arts -	All Students, Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners; Asian Students; Hispanic Students; White Students; and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	March 20 – 21, 2012	

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

"The mission of this child-centered school is to provide each student with varied educational experiences in a safe, orderly and caring environment rooted in the values of self-esteem and self-discipline. In participation with parents, Shallow promotes hard work, commitment and creativity that can enable all students to achieve academic and physical excellence. We encourage students to appreciate and participate in the arts, to use and excel in technology and to think critically. At Shallow we achieve these goals by setting high standards for all the students in our three academies: The School of the American Experience, The Renaissance Project, and the School of Environmental Studies. These high standards are aligned with the Chancellor's Initiatives and NY State curriculum mandates, which place an emphasis on higher order thinking throughout all curriculum areas. Challenging curricula are presented to our students and supported through the use of technology."

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- Students are generally well-mannered and move in an orderly fashion throughout the building.
- The school is welcoming, safe, and clean.
- Parents and students are supportive of the school leaders and the school.
- The school has a number of community partnerships that provide students with extracurricular activities.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- School leaders use internal New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) and New York State (NYS) accountability data to analyze student performance trends. However, a document review by the review team indicates that there is limited evidence that data is disaggregated and analyzed by the staff. Consequently, there is limited evidence that teachers have a clear idea of the skills that students need to improve their academic performance in the identified subject areas.

- Teachers were not issued data binders. Instead, teachers are expected to access the data online. Observation of lessons by the review team showed that many teachers do not use data to plan lessons.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should provide professional development (PD) for teachers on how to disaggregate data and identify trends in student progress. The information should be used to develop a system for tracking the progress of individual students and subgroups. These trends should be shared with all staff so that they can identify the skills that students need to improve in all their classes.

- School leaders should provide PD for teachers regarding how to access and use data available online to improve instruction. This training should include the variety of methods that can be employed within the classroom to meet the individual learning needs of students. School leaders should identify this use of online data to improve instruction as a focus for observations.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Although the school has a literacy curriculum map and a more detailed curriculum from "Teaching Matters," there is no comprehensive, vertically and horizontally aligned, formal ELA curriculum. Consequently, teachers do not have detailed guidance for planning lessons that meet the needs of all subgroups in the school. Additionally, there is limited evidence of a specially designed reading instruction program for English language learners (ELLs).

- Documentation and interviews by the review team indicate that teachers have received PD on how to differentiate learning to meet the needs of individual students and subgroups. However, many lessons observed by the review team were entirely teacher-directed and did not use a range of strategies to accommodate the differing and diverse learning needs of students. There is little evidence that data was used to group students or to match tasks to students' differing ability levels.

- There was evidence that a small number of teachers were skilled at asking high level questions, but observation of lessons by the review team indicated that many teachers asked low level questions

that required students to recall facts and details. Many teachers did not ask students to extend their responses, and students were not challenged to analyze, evaluate or synthesize information. Consequently, many students did not develop analytical skills or develop their speaking and listening skills.

- There was evidence of a written grading policy. However, there was little evidence of a grading policy being used uniformly across the school and little evidence of rubrics being used to give feedback to students about how to improve their work. The feedback given by teachers to students during lesson observed by the review team was mainly complimentary, such as teachers saying to students "well done." As a result, students were not clear about what they did well or what next steps to take to improve their work.

- Review team interviews with teachers and evidence from observations of lessons and documentation indicate that English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction is done largely in isolation from ELA instruction. Teachers of ELLs and ELA teachers have little contact with each other and are given few formal opportunities to meet and collaborate. As a result, teachers are not aligning the curriculum or sharing strategies, and the expertise of the ESL teacher is not used fully.

- There is evidence that school leaders have increased the use of technology to support the instruction of students in grade 6 and this use of technology was observed by the review team. Teachers of this grade level are also provided with PD on the use of this technology. Observation of most other classes and interviews by the review team with students in other grades, however, found that although many classrooms have computers or computer carts, they are rarely used except to support AIS interventions and in classes of ELLs. This results in many students in non-grade 6 classes having only limited access to technology to support their learning. Where technology is used, students respond enthusiastically and are motivated to learn.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should provide a comprehensive vertically and horizontally aligned ELA curriculum for the school that utilizes and builds upon existing curriculum maps and "Teaching Matters" resources, as appropriate. A specialized reading program for ELL students should also be a part of this focus. All teachers and school leaders should participate in PD on how to plan and implement this 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 how well the teacher knows and implements the curriculum for the subjects being taught.

- 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 pedagogy. Strategies should focus on ensuring that tasks match the academic needs of identified subgroups. School leaders should regularly monitor teachers' planning and instructional practice in the classroom to check that differentiated activities are in place throughout the school. Ongoing PD should be provided for teachers who continue to struggle with using data to improve instructional practice.

- PD should be provided in supporting teachers in developing a variety of questioning techniques aimed at critical thinking and using problem solving skills appropriate to student development. These skills would specifically support teacher effectiveness with students with disabilities and ELLs. Teachers should ensure that strategies identified in training are implemented in their daily instruction. School leaders should make questioning techniques a focus of observations.

- The school should develop rubrics to assess academic learning that are aligned with the school report cards and the New York State Standards. The grading policy should be aligned with these rubrics, weighted appropriately, be uniform, and developed collaboratively. School leaders should monitor the implementation of the policy. Teachers should be trained in how to provide high quality feedback regarding student work and then quickly ensure that this becomes embedded in instructional practice. School leaders should regularly review student work that is displayed in hallways and classrooms to ensure that high quality feedback based on consistent rubrics becomes a regular practice.

- The school leaders should review the school schedule to ensure that all teachers of ELLs have regularly scheduled times to meet with ELA teachers and that all instructional teams are provided with protocols for recordkeeping and dissemination of plans.

- The school leadership should provide training and support to targeted teachers in all grade levels to ensure that they have the skills and competencies to effectively use technology for student centered instruction, including laptop computers and SMART Boards. School leaders should ensure that strategies learned in PD are fully implemented in the classroom so that technology is routinely integrated into teaching and learning.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- There is evidence that the school leaders and many teachers are trying to improve achievement in ELA; however there is not a clear, shared vision about how to raise achievement. Additionally, evidence was found that the school's relatively new leadership was not adequately focusing its resources on this subject area.

- A review of documentation by the review team confirms a schedule for both formal and informal visits to classrooms and written records of observations and feedback. The records show that often the comments provided did not include specific and differentiated feedback to help teachers to improve their teaching. Therefore, instruction did not change or improve because teachers were unsure about what specific steps needed to be taken and learning did not progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leader should consider reallocating the responsibility for ELA to an experienced ELA supervisor or coach. This person should work with the school leader and teachers of ELA, students with disabilities, and ELLs to develop a shared school vision and a roadmap for ELA improvement

that includes benchmarks and timelines. School leaders should monitor the progress along the roadmap and regularly review and update it in response to the monitoring.

- The school should seek support in developing lesson observation protocols, including training for school leaders in writing more specific, differentiated, and effective teacher feedback. Written feedback should be provided for all formal, informal, and walkthrough observations, including clear "step by step" targets for improvement. Follow-up observations should be included in the schedule to check on progress. The outcomes of lesson observations should also provide a focus for the school PD plan.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- There is evidence that students with disabilities, ELLs and students who attend Academic Intervention Services (AIS) are frequently pulled from core content areas for related services and ESL services. Interviews with teachers indicate that this intervention strategy is not effective and often results in a loss of instructional time in the content areas.

- The review team's observation of the extended day classes showed that small numbers of students attended. Additionally in some examples, the lesson began late because students were tardy.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leaders should review the current AIS support services "Pull-out" intervention program; assess its effectiveness for ELL students and students with disabilities, and its impact on classroom content area instruction for these students.

- School leaders should review the effectiveness of the current Extended Day Program's structure. The program should be modified as needed. School leaders should create uniform procedures and expectations. .

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- Although in previous years there has been an annual PD plan, this was not the case in the 2011-12 school year. There is little evidence to show that a comprehensive needs assessment, test data, and information from observation of classes are used to identify the PD needs of the school. As a result, there is limited evidence of a concerted, whole school drive for school improvement linked to a strategic and focused PD plan.

- A review of documentation by the review team revealed evidence that teachers have opportunities to attend a range of PD courses. Teachers are provided with a survey of offerings at the beginning of the year and school leaders recommend additional PD based on observation reports. Records of the weekly PD meetings show that attendance is very low, frequently only one or two people

attend. Observation of classes by the review team also indicates that many teachers do not apply in their classrooms what they should have learned in PD. As a result, the quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school, and the PD being offered has little impact on improving instruction.

- A review of documents by the review team found that there is evidence that all teachers are certified and are assigned to classes on the basis of their expertise. However, despite the fact that the school has a large number of ELLs and significant numbers of students with disabilities, PD on instructional strategies for these students is offered only during "lunch and learn" sessions, which teachers are not mandated to attend. This situation results in most teachers not taking advantage of this PD opportunity and of insufficient training being offered for meeting the needs of this student population.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should develop a comprehensive PD plan based on formative and summative data identifying student and teacher needs that is also closely aligned with the goals identified in the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP). The plan should have as its primary focus improving teaching and student achievement, particularly for ELLs.

- The school leader should ensure that PD sessions being offered are based on teacher interests and needs and explore best practices to increase attendance and teacher motivation. The school leadership should also conduct follow-up observations after PD sessions to ensure that teachers incorporate the strategies learned into their classroom instructional practice. School leaders should develop detailed recommendations and specific next steps in their observation reports related to these PD sessions.

- School leaders should develop a plan to use the expertise of specialist teachers through non-negotiable PD for general education teachers. The PD provided in ESL strategies to general education teachers should be incorporated into their programs rather than being just a "lunch-and-learn option." School leaders should then monitor how well general education teachers use the strategies they have learned.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- Classroom observations by the review team found that there are limited instructional resources in content areas to support the specialized learning needs of students with disabilities and ELLs. Students in these subgroups are limited in their access to the curriculum, diminishing their ability to improve at the necessary rates to reach proficient and advanced levels.

- The school has a full-time librarian. However, a review of the library by the review team showed that the library collection is not updated to appeal to the varied interests of students and the specialized needs of ELLs and students with disabilities. Students, therefore, have limited access to resources to develop study skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should reallocate funds to provide additional specialized instructional classroom materials and resources to increase the support being provided for the instruction of and to meet the needs of all student subgroups, with a focus on ELL students and students with disabilities.

- The school should reach out to the New York City Department of Education's Office of Library Services for support in developing the library into a full service multimedia center with specialized resources. The librarian should receive PD in the operation of the library to ensure that the services are fully accessed by students and teachers.

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 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.