

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

DBN:	04M096
District Name:	District 4
School Name:	PS 96 Joseph Lanzetta
School Address:	216 East 120 Street, Manhattan, NY 10035
Principal:	Betty Lugo
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year -1) - Comprehensive
Areas of Identification:	English Language Arts - All students; African American Students; Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students Mathematics - All students; African American Students; Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	March 27-28, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“Our vision is to develop students who can read, write, speak and compute well, think critically and present themselves as human beings who are confident, humane, civic-minded, responsible, citizens of the 21 century.

The mission of the P.S. 96 community is to provide a child-centered and challenging learning environment that fosters critical thinking and is responsive to students' multiple needs and learning styles. We will raise students' literacy and mathematics levels to meet and surpass New York City and State Standards. Together we will develop positive interactions among parents, staff and students that encourage participation in school decision-making. This active partnership among parents and staff will promote a sense of self-worth and responsibility in our children, which will nurture their development as productive and successful individuals.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- Under the guidance of new leadership, there is evidence of several new initiatives.
- The physical environment of the school is well-maintained.
- Teachers across grades and content areas are able to meet during common planning time, which has been built into their schedules.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- The school collects a significant amount of data. However, there is limited evidence that the school consistently uses this data as a means for driving forward school improvement.
- The review team determined by review of documents and interviews that the school has a comprehensive testing calendar in place to administer summative, formative and teacher-made assessments. Although there is evidence that the school has begun to review the results of these assessments, school leaders have yet to incorporate within the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) strategies to address the causes of underperformance that are based on analysis of these assessment results.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should continue to build on the current system for data disaggregation and analysis to focus more closely on student-by-student, class-by-class and subgroup-by-subgroup deficiencies. School leaders should develop an improvement plan to ensure that all teachers use item skills analysis and predictive results to inform their instruction in all grades. In addition, school leaders should give particular attention to monitoring the development of student skills as they move from grade to grade to ensure that vertical alignment takes place in the curriculum program for each content area.
- School leaders should conduct a thorough item and subgroup analysis to determine the specific causes of student underperformance in both English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. The school leadership should create a strategic instructional plan to address concerns identified as a result of the data analysis. Additionally, the school leadership should review this data from year-to-year across grades and adjust instructional needs accordingly.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Classroom observations conducted by the review team indicate limited evidence that teachers consistently engage students with higher order thinking and problem solving opportunities. As a result, students are not regularly challenged to engage in more critical thinking activities to develop problem solving skills.
- Documentation review and lesson observations conducted by the review team indicate that for mathematics, the school follows a curriculum that is in alignment with the New York State Learning Standards. There is evidence of an introduction of the new P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). However, there is limited evidence that the implementation of the current curriculum plan has resulted in sufficient student academic progress. Additionally, a review of documentation indicates limited evidence that the school has a formal, written ELA curriculum. As a result, the school has made limited progress in improving student outcomes for the identified accountability subgroups.

- The review team determined (based on classroom observations and interviews with teachers) that students with disabilities receive appropriate content, aligned to that received by their grade-level peers. However, there is limited evidence that all teachers of students with disabilities implement differentiated instruction consistently to ensure that the individual and specific learning needs of all students are met.
- In classrooms observed by the review team, most teachers spend a significant amount of instructional time engaged in whole class instruction. Within small group settings, for example, observed instruction was primarily teacher-centered. As a result, many students were observed as disengaged from the learning process.
- There is inconsistent application of the whole school grading policy as evidenced from classroom observations and document reviews conducted by the review team. Additionally, there is limited evidence that rubrics are consistently and effectively used to support students in the development of their next step learning goals. As a result, many students do not know what are considered acceptable standards for achievement.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should assess the needs of teachers through classroom observations, walkthroughs and teacher surveys. School leaders should make use of these results to design comprehensive professional development (PD) that helps teachers plan lessons that better engage students in the development of higher order thinking skills. School leaders should regularly monitor teachers on skills learned and provide additional support to teachers requiring further encouragement and guidance.
- The school should seek the support of the Network to develop curriculum in all core areas and ensure that it is clearly in alignment with the current New York State Learning Standards. The curriculum must be aligned to the CCLS in English Language Arts and literacy to prepare for implementation in school year 2012-13. All teachers and school leaders should participate in professional development (PD) on planning and implementing a curriculum that is appropriately challenging for all students and that integrates instructional delivery methods that are student-centered. The curriculum should be relied upon as the basis for assessing individual student mastery and progress. School leaders should regularly monitor teachers' implementation of the curriculum through regular walkthroughs and formal evaluations, which should focus on how well the teacher knows and implements the curriculum for the subjects being taught.
- School leaders should provide ongoing PD specifically aimed at teachers of students with disabilities in the development and delivery of differentiated instruction based the results of formative, interim and summative assessment data. School leaders should regularly monitor teachers' implementation of learned PD strategies through regular formal and informal observations and provide support to teachers as needed.
- School leaders, in collaboration with the grade level teams, should ensure that instruction is student-centered and is focused on meeting the needs of all students, especially those in identified subgroups. The school leadership should provide PD to teachers on how to implement student-centered instructional strategies, such as hands-on learning activities, to ensure that students are regularly engaged in lessons.
- School leaders and teachers should collaboratively review and revise the school's grading policy across all grades. The Principal and each grade team should then develop a policy that is consistent with the overall guidelines. School leaders should ensure that the grading policy is communicated to both

students and parents as well as posted in classrooms. School leaders should regularly monitor that teachers are consistently implementing the grading policy.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- Interviews conducted by the review team reveal that members of the School Leadership Team (SLT) have limited knowledge and understanding of the goals of the school's CEP and do not participate fully in the creation of schoolwide improvement goals. Additionally, there is limited evidence that the monitoring and discussion of the CEP's effectiveness to improve student performance occurs consistently during SLT meetings.
- Document reviews and teacher interviews conducted by the review team indicate that there is little alignment between what teachers need to positively impact student achievement and behavior and the PD opportunities being offered. Document reviews also indicate that school leaders are conducting lesson observations. However, there is limited evidence that the observation process effectively monitors teachers' implementation of skills learned in PD to positively impact and improve teaching and learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should seek support from the Division of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) to work with the SLT to develop members' understanding of their responsibility for CEP goal setting. The CEP should be a regular item on the agenda of SLT meetings so that members can monitor the progress the school makes toward achieving school goals.
- The school leader should ensure that all PD is relevant, fully reflects needs identified to achieve school goals, and takes place as agreed, with ongoing monitoring to assess its overall effectiveness in raising achievement.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- Interviews and document review conducted by the review team indicate limited evidence that the school has adopted and/or implemented a written policy for school conduct and discipline. Therefore, coherent expectations and practices to improve learning outcomes are inconsistently provided to students. Additionally, the review team observed a loss of instruction time in some classes. During lesson observations, students were seen having sidebar conversations and engaging in off-task behavior, and teachers had to frequently manage these behaviors.
- Documentation and interviews show the school has a range of community based organizations (CBOs) that supports both students and their families. The school has not evaluated the impact of the CBO's services on student achievement.
- The CEP indicates that the school programs Academic Intervention Services (AIS) for its students. There was limited evidence that the AIS program is addressing students' individual academic needs.

Observations of AIS classes indicated that instruction was whole class and not targeted to the specific needs each student.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should adopt and implement a written school discipline policy designed to promote responsible behavior. The policy should include student rights, responsibilities, and a discipline code for student behavior. The school should publicize and explain its policy to all students and provide it in writing to all parents annually. This policy should describe the roles of teachers and school leaders and be on file and available for review. Additionally, school leaders, with Network support, should identify and implement an appropriate positive behavior management program across all grades to address student behavioral issues. School leaders should then provide PD to teachers as well as explicit instruction of program components to students. The school leaders should communicate the implementation of this program to all members of the school community, including parents. School leaders should regularly monitor the implementation of this program by all staff members and provide PD as necessary.
- The school leaders should review the role of the school’s CBOs in providing additional support to students and families to ensure that their work directly contributes to student achievement. Additionally, school leaders should regularly monitor the work of CBOs in the school to ensure that their work is aligned with and positively contributing to the school’s achievement goals.
- School leaders should review current AIS provisions to appropriately schedule and deliver services as outlined in the CEP. School leaders should also provide PD to teachers who are providing AIS to ensure that they have the strategies and skills to effectively provide these services to identified students.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDING:

A review of documents indicate that staff attends a variety of PD activities hosted by Network personnel. The Principal also indicates she has contracted an Australian United States Services In Education (AUSSIE) consultant to provide further curriculum PD in ELA and mathematics. However, there is limited evidence of a comprehensive PD plan in place to support teachers in addressing student achievement.

RECOMMENDATION:

School leaders, with Network support, should develop a comprehensive PD plan to address the school’s needs as indicated in observation reports, teacher surveys, and student data. School leaders should monitor the use of strategies learned through formal and informal lesson observations to ensure that teachers appropriately adjust their instruction to meet individual student needs. In addition, school leaders should evaluate PD activities as they collaboratively work with staff to raise student achievement and improve teacher effectiveness.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDING:

In a few classrooms, the review team observed teachers infusing technology into their instruction. Teachers indicate there are laptop carts available, but many laptops are old and not in working condition, therefore preventing teachers from making use of the available technology. As a result, there are limited opportunities for teachers to fully infuse technology into their daily instruction and for students to use technology to enhance their learning.

RECOMMENDATION:

School leaders, with Network support, should actively seek additional technology resources through all available means, including grants and additional funding sources. Technology resources should be available for all students to use on a consistent basis. School leaders should develop a comprehensive technology plan to allocate resources. This plan should include provisions for the prioritization of equipment replacement, procurement, and distribution.

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.