

**NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability**

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	580413030008
District Name:	South Huntington UFSD
School Name:	Birchwood Intermediate School
School Address:	121 Wolf Hill Road, Melville, NY 11747
Principal:	Anthony Ciccarelli
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year-1) - Focused English Language Arts - African American Students; English Language Learners and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Area of Identification:	
Dates of On-site Review:	December 13 and 19, 2011

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“Empower all children to maximize their potential by:

- teaching them the necessary academic skills;
- enabling them to develop the positive social and moral skills necessary to become contributing members of society; and
- providing them with a safe and secure environment where everyone is treated with respect.”

“Safe, respectful and responsible” has been adopted as a motto by all school leaders in the District.

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The team noted a positive, collegial, student centered atmosphere in the school building. The school leaders are visible in the hallways, classrooms, and cafeteria. The leadership team meets with every student at the beginning of the year, and it is evident that they know each student personally. Parents and students indicated that the school is welcoming and is the epitome of a home-school partnership. Parents described the school leaders as responsive, approachable, and receptive and noted that the staff goes above and beyond expectations to ensure that students are successful.
- The dual language program is held in high regard. Students are presented with a challenging curriculum designed to push all students to achieve their potential while providing needed support. The inclusion program is designed to support all students, not just the included special education students. Teacher

professional development (PD) time is used to target needs. Teachers are often presented with a collaborative task that requires grade level or whole-school discussions.

- The students indicated that they feel safe and that the anti-bullying initiative is working. The students stated that they can go to an adult and that they feel confident that the adult will help them and make their situation better.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- The District office has provided universal access to data at every school in the District. The school provides teachers summative data through access to BARS (Eastern Suffolk BOCES data warehouse). The school leadership provides teachers with data folders at the start of each school year. There is evidence that teachers and school leaders are using BARS to delve deeper into subgroup data.
- The school is working with the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) to pilot interim assessments. This collaboration should provide an excellent tool for monitoring student growth and evaluating program effectiveness.
- Teachers use Google Docs to import test results and share this information during data meetings in order to monitor student progress. Teachers indicate that it is a “user-friendly” way to share data across the school.
- The school has created a new Tier 2 team to discuss strategies and give support to students before a student is referred to the school review team.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should focus on tracking of interventions to develop a more effective use of specific interventions to raise student achievement. The school should build this into their pilot of the NWEA English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics assessment tool as it is implemented.
- On-going use of data to drive instruction should become an integral part of lesson planning that includes differentiating instruction and focusing on English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Teachers are posting and using learning objectives in the classroom.

- Teachers work together to create curriculum documents and pacing guides. Congruence documents are shared with the school leadership team.
- Tenured teachers share plan books with the leadership team every two weeks. Non-tenured teachers share every week.
- There is evidence of teachers participating in schoolwide collaborative teams, including building inquiry teams, departmental teams, and collegial circles.
- The school's "three pillars" are "safe, respectful and responsible." This expectation was evident in classrooms, the lunchroom, and hallways.
- There was evidence during teacher, parent, and student interviews conducted by the review team that the curriculum is challenging and that students are encouraged to achieve their potential.
- There is evidence that recent PD for grade five teachers in classroom instructional strategies for differentiated instruction has resulted in sharing across teachers and grade levels. Practices have changed as a result of this PD and have enabled teachers to tier lessons and better meet the needs of their lowest achieving students.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- PD should be continued to assist with differentiated instruction, especially in grades three and four. This is especially needed as class sizes increase. Teachers need evidence-based strategies that work with large groups. Lessons should be structured to address all levels of student abilities. In addition, specialized staff development should address the academic needs of ELLs in mainstream classes; one such program is Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). PD should be provided in terms of focused literacy instruction for ELLs and students with disabilities, with strategies for programs such as Academic Intervention Services (AIS). Differentiated instruction should be used to ensure all learners are exposed to rigorous instruction.
- The ELA curriculum should be analyzed for alignment with the CCLS. Curriculum writing should be supported where gaps are found and alignment issues noted. Ways to incorporate writing and academic vocabulary for all should be investigated and infused across content areas. Literacy and writing PD should be continued. There is evidence that the current model is working and support should be ongoing.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- The school leadership has created a welcoming environment for students and parents. One parent stated that, "the leadership team truly cares about the entire family beyond the school doors."
- Parents indicate that the school leadership and teaching staff are responsive to parent calls and e-mails.

- The school leaders are visible in all areas of the building. They meet with each student at the beginning of the school year to discuss goals and expectations. It was observed by the review team during a walkthrough that each student is greeted by name.
- Teachers indicated that they are comfortable stopping by the school leader's office to ask questions and discuss issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

There are no recommendations.

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

- The school has several outreach programs to community-based organizations and has established community partnerships to provide additional supports to students.
- The school provides numerous supports for students and parents. Parent involvement workshops have been offered in ELA and mathematics content and assessment support in the home.
- The schedule includes "sacred time" – two, daily 40-minute blocks where students do not leave the classroom for other supports. This was created based on PD discussions last year.
- Students indicated that they feel safe in school and that there is at least one person in the school to whom they can talk if they have an issue or concern.
- The school schedules a "family reflection night" once a month. The only homework assignment for students that night is to discuss an assigned topic with their family. That topic is then part of the next day's classroom curriculum.
- Translators, and translations of information sent home, are available when needed to ensure that all parents can participate in school events.
- Parents indicated that not all parents in the community are able to attend parent trainings or help with homework and curriculum projects. They spoke of working together to provide support for all students.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should hold several parent informational meetings (Title I supported) during the school year that cover such topics as the CCLS and formative and interim assessments. Specific events and/or strategies should be planned to address the needs of parents of students in the identified subgroups.
- The school should ask for parent volunteers to assist students with curriculum projects during the school day. This would serve to further strengthen the school-to-parent partnership that already exists in the school.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- School leaders have fostered a culture of shared accountability for all students.
- The staff has established teacher collegial circles in partnership with the South Huntington Teacher Center.
- PD is being provided to teachers on CCLS in mathematics and ELA through regional workshops, in District sharing, Inquiry Team trainings, and collegial circles.
- Exit cards are used at the end of in-District PD to assess teacher needs and to plan for additional support. Online surveys have been used to solicit candid feedback from teachers on PD opportunities. The surveys have addressed specific practices that have changed based on the PD opportunity.
- The school staff has worked hard to maintain afterschool clubs and activities, such as SCOPE and Bricks4Kidz, despite the loss of funds for these activities.
- The District has worked to infuse SIOP training for ESL and content area teachers to support direct instruction with ELL students. Many teachers from the District's middle school have been included in this training over the past two years. SIOP will ensure lessons are developed that infuse content and language objectives into daily instruction.
- Teachers expressed interest in additional PD on strategies to work with ELLs and additional SIOP training for other special needs students.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Teachers should be encouraged to implement SIOP strategies in the classroom. School leaders should continue to encourage staff to attend the SIOP training provided by the District. The SIOP Model was developed to facilitate high quality instruction for ELLs in content area teaching and has been proven to be an effective protocol across subject areas and for all students.
- School leadership should request assistance from the Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Center (RSE-TASC) and the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBE-RN) to provide additional PD for evidence-based strategies that support learning for ELL and students with disabilities.
- The school leadership team should create a coaching model of PD, allowing job embedded support, i.e., teachers informally observing or modeling for other teachers after in-house PD sessions as well as demonstrating other research-based strategies in the classroom.
- PD in CCLS should include elements centered on adapting/creating materials for ELLs.
- Enrollment in the Intensive Teacher Institute (ITI) through Eastern Suffolk BOCES should be encouraged for both general and special education staff in order to meet the requirements for a Bilingual Education

- Research-based balanced literacy training for special education staff should be encouraged and supported.
- A learning objective should be posted during each lesson so students can focus on learning goals and understand the objectives for learning.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- The District has been working towards 100 percent coverage of SMART Boards in classrooms and has established a PD program to support SMART Board use. Teachers who have this technology in their classroom are integrating its use into the curriculum.
- The school building is well-maintained and safe for students and staff. The library/multimedia center and classrooms have appropriate instructional materials for students.
- Technology is infused into instruction and assessment. Students are engaged in using technology in the classroom curriculum.
- Classrooms observed by the review team were clean, orderly and well organized. There was little student work displayed in the classrooms; however, there was student work displayed on bulletin boards throughout the building.

RECOMMENDATION:

Teachers should be encouraged to display annotated exemplars of student work in the classroom and use them to support learning. These pieces should coincide with the current unit(s) of study in the curriculum.

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.