NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

REVISED

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	140600010072
District Name:	Buffalo City School District
School Name:	Lorraine Academy Elementary School # 72
School Address:	71 Lorraine Ave., Buffalo NY 14220
Principal:	Jacquelyn Bavaro-Phelan
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year-1) -Focused
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts - African American Students and Students with Disabilities
Dates of On-site Review:	February 14-15, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

"Our mission is to collaborate with parents and the community to assure that all students acquire knowledge and skills to function successfully in society. This will include reading with comprehension, communicating effectively through spoken and written language, computing accurately, using information to solve problems, thinking and reasoning."

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- As a newly renovated school, Lorraine Academy presents a warm, safe environment where technology is available to support teaching and learning.
- Both administrators and teachers expressed concerned for the best interests of students and the school uses many opportunities to showcase students' achievements.
- Parents expressed the belief that the Lorraine Academy staff know their children, and that the school is a safe part of their community.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- Subject matter and grade level teachers meet weekly to discuss individual student data and discuss ways to change instructional presentations to increase student learning. By contrast, special education teachers are not able to meet as a group and thus are unable to compare and contrast data for students that are in each of their subject matter classes.

- Evidence indicated that most teachers are found to be emerging in their ability to use data to inform instruction.

- There is no evidence that available data is being used to determine if students in each of the subgroups not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) are the same students.

- Data indicates an academic gap exists between students with disabilities and general education students, and also between the performance levels of African-American students. There is no evidence of a strategic instructional plan with measurable goals and objectives to meet the needs of these subgroups.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- One of the monthly meetings devoted to subject matter and grade level meetings between special educators and their cooperating teachers should be organized to allow the grade level special educators to meet with each other rather than their subject matter teachers. This would allow them to discuss the progress of students that are common to each of them across different subjects.

- School leadership should provide professional development (PD) for teachers centered on the use of data to improve instruction. This 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 as a focus for their classroom observations.

- The school leadership should examine the necessary data base required to determine what percent of the school population identified as not making the required AYP for English language arts (ELA) are also African-American and special education student. Validation of a percent of students common among the two groups could help target improvement and Response to Intervention (RtI) efforts.

- Identify academic issues that are having a negative impact on the performance of the students with disabilities and African-American subgroups. The Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) should be developed with a focus on continuous improvement of educational practices via data-driven instructional planning and continuous monitoring of student progress. Set goals for enhancing the student academic performance of those subgroups, and monitor the implementation of the CEP.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- There is evidence in ELA classrooms of the need of a common, shared understanding of the writing process and that some staff do not understand the difference between the curriculum and the District pacing guide.

- Reviewers noted through observation and interviews that in general expectations for students with disabilities are lower and subsequently some classroom lessons reflected a lack of rigor and student engagement.

- Adequate student work was displayed, however the rubrics designed to assess the work and provide feedback to students were not displayed. Many papers did not include specific and concise feedback and did not clearly indicate what each student needed to do to improve and reach the next level.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should provide staff development regarding the writing process in ELA for both general education and special education teachers. The school leaders should also provide staff development to targeted staff to resolve the misunderstanding between the curriculum and the pacing guide.

- All teachers and administrators should participate in PD on how to plan and implement the ELA curriculum with rigor, as well as delivery methods that are student-centered. The curriculum should be the basis for assessing individual student mastery and progress. Rigorous grade-by-grade units of study should be based on grade level standards and core competencies. These units of study should be horizontally and vertically aligned to avoid gaps and redundancies and should integrate goals and objectives for both teachers and students. Walkthroughs and formal teacher evaluations should include how well the teacher knows and implements the curriculum for the subjects being taught.

- 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 student work on display and evaluate the quality of feedback that is provided to ensure that it helps students improve and move to the next level.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- Some teachers do not look to the school leader as an instructional leader. An academic gap exists between students with disabilities and general education students, but there is no evidence of a strategic instructional plan with measurable goals and objectives to meet the needs of this subgroup.

- School leaders are not yet functioning as a cohesive team and have not communicated to the staff that schoolwide standards are to be upheld. They have not addressed staff inconsistencies in following school

policy for student discipline, classroom management, implementation of the new Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) and use of the Student Support Team.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The District should develop the school leader's ability as an instructional leader. The school leadership, staff and District should develop a Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) and create an effective schoolwide plan 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 plan should include goals, action plans, professional development (PD), and should use all resources available through the District. The implementation of the plan should be carefully monitored and its impact on student achievement measured.

- The school leaders should receive PD to build a cohesive administrative team and establish schoolwide high expectations for the performance of all staff and students. The administrative team should monitor implementation of school rules and policies, addressing inconsistencies and constantly working to uphold the PBIS.

III. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- Support and use of the PBIS is inconsistent.

- The role of the school's Student Support Team is not clearly defined, i.e., the school psychologist did not have clear job performance expectations. Staff interviews indicated the Student Support team is perceived as unwilling or unable to assist classroom or self contained teachers.

- There was evidence that for students with disabilities, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) were rigidly adhered to for compliance, but lacked progress monitoring and follow-up for necessary changes as students met goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Since it is the first year of implementation for the PBIS, administrators should schedule PD and in-service training to foster teacher participation and buy-in to ensure program success.

- The role of the Student Support Team must be clearly defined and expectations made clear by the administration to all staff.

- The school leaders responsible for overseeing the school's special education processes should work with the Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SESIS) to ensure that the progress of students with disabilities is adequately monitored and IEPs are adjusted as warranted by law.

IV. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDING:

There is evidence that teachers in the co-teaching, inclusion model classrooms receive PD; however, the PD may not focus precisely enough on the issues that will make the greatest difference in raising student achievement.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Principal should ensure that all PD is relevant, fully reflects needs identified to achieve school goals, takes place as agreed and is monitored to assess its effectiveness.

V. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDING:

The school has great technological resources to aid instruction; however, the review team observed that this technology is seldom used to its full advantage to support teaching and learning.

RECOMMENDATION:

The school leadership and the District should ensure that training and support is provided to teachers to ensure that they have the skills and competencies to effectively use technology, including laptop computers and SMART Boards, in instruction. 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.

PART 3: 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 Common Core Learning Standards, Data Driven Instruction and the Annual Professional Performance Reviews for teacher effectiveness.