

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

<b>BEDS Code:</b>	140600010094
<b>District Name:</b>	Buffalo City School District
<b>School Name:</b>	PS 89 Dr Lydia T. Wright School of Excellence
<b>School Address:</b>	106 Appenheimer St., Buffalo, NY 14214
<b>Principal:</b>	Fatima Morrell
<b>Accountability Phase/Category:</b>	Improvement (year-1)- Comprehensive
<b>Area of Identification:</b>	English Language Arts - All Students; African American Students; Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students
<b>Dates of On-site Review:</b>	January 25-26, 2012

**PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT**

"The Mission of the Dr. Lydia T. Wright School of Excellence is to develop self-motivated, reflective learners capable of reading on grade level. The students will be exposed to a back-to-basics, data driven curriculum based on the New York State standards. All students will graduate from the eighth grade fully prepared to successfully master a rigorous high school curriculum."

**PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS**

- The students are happy to be in school and treat each other with respect.
- The school is a safe, disciplined learning environment.
- The school leadership and staff had training in the Response to Intervention (RtI) initiative and in the shifts in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS).

**PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA**

**FINDINGS:**

- The data that the school collects is not being analyzed in a rigorous manner to identify precisely what aspects of ELA need to be the specific focus for improvement. The analysis of data is not focused sharply

enough to identify the key changes required in ELA programs or the delivery needed to bring about urgent improvement in student performance.

- Teachers do not use data to inform their ELA instructional planning or to modify instruction. They implement the curriculum with fidelity, regardless of the need of the students for differentiated instruction to address their specific learning requirements.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school leader should request professional development (PD) support from the District in developing the essential teacher skills needed to implement a more rigorous and systematic analysis of data. The staff should hone these skills to identify precisely the aspects of ELA that are causing greatest concern. Plans should then be put in place to address these issues on either a school, grade or classroom level to ensure that these areas are a focus for teaching and learning. The school leaders should monitor the analysis down to classroom practice and hold staff accountable to ensure that improvements are made.
- Teachers should use student ELA performance data, both summative, interim and formative, to create instructional groups, design skill-based activities for small groups of students with similar needs and adjust the planned curriculum with a special focus on at-risk students and identified subgroups.

## **II. TEACHING AND LEARNING**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- Many ELA 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.
- Few examples of differentiated instruction were observed in ELA classes. There was little evidence that data was used to group students or to match tasks to the differing ability levels of the students.
- The co-teaching model was not effectively implemented in all ELA classrooms that were reviewed. It did not appear that student Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) were being followed with fidelity.
- There was a lack of student engagement in meaningful instructional activities. Many ELA lessons lacked challenging instructional activities and did little to attract the interest of students. These same lessons did not provide students with opportunities to interact or work collaboratively. In these lessons, students were not active participants in the learning process.
- Instructional time was not maximized in most ELA classes. Too much time was spent on 'Do Now' activities and lesson preparation work. This did not allow the teachers to complete the objectives for their entire lessons.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school leaders should rigorously monitor ELA classroom instructional practices and give on-going quality feedback to teachers. School leaders should ensure that teachers are held accountable for

implementing strategies to address identified areas for improvement. School leaders should ensure that teachers implement differentiation strategies.

- 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 ELA 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 who continue to struggle with using data to match work to the individual needs of students.
- Teachers should be provided with support, guidance, and, where appropriate, PD to implement a more effective co-teaching model. Teachers should be given opportunities to visit successful co-teaching classrooms. The ELA co-teachers should be given scheduled collaborative planning time to ensure best practices in co-teaching instruction and to implement balanced literacy to support students with disabilities. Training should be provided to ensure that student IEPs are followed with fidelity. The school leaders should closely monitor co-teaching classroom practices and provide constructive feedback to teachers.
- Through collaboration during common planning time and PD opportunities provided by the District, ELA teachers should ensure that all student work is appropriately challenging and demanding. Teachers should provide regular opportunities for students to work cooperatively and to discuss issues so that they become more proactive learners. The school leaders should carry out regular observations of lessons to monitor that this is consistently occurring.
- With the assistance of the District, the school should provide PD on effective pacing. The students should clearly understand expectations and should be expected to be self-directed and personally accountable. For example, students should start and complete the Do Now within the first few minutes of class. Teachers should plan effective closures so that students summarize the day's lesson and the teacher is able to assess the degree to which students mastered the day's content. School leaders should make the pacing of lessons a regular focus for walkthroughs and observations.

### **III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- Much of the PD offerings are voluntary during 'lunch and learn' sessions, after school and on Saturdays. Despite the need for PD for teachers of ELA and students with disabilities, the school leadership has not developed a plan that ensures all teachers will receive the necessary training.
- Although the school staff clearly likes the students and makes sure that their social and emotional needs are cared for, staff do not have high academic expectations for students as observed in the classroom visits and teacher interviews by the review team.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school leadership should seek to hire substitutes or arrange coverage so that all teachers of ELA and students with disabilities receive the necessary PD. The workshops should take place at times that ensure that designated teachers attend. The school leadership should communicate the expectations that strategies learned in the PD sessions are incorporated into teacher practice. Timely feedback should be provided to teachers through observations and walkthroughs.
- The school leadership should focus their efforts on raising the academic expectations by developing a Comprehensive Educational Plan (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 plan should include goals, action plans, professional development (PD), and use all resources available through the District. The implementation of the plan should be carefully monitored and its impact on student achievement measured.

## **IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**

### **FINDING:**

ELA students were not fully aware of teacher expectations in terms of consistently improving their learning. Goal setting processes were not in place to guide student progress and achievement.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

The school leader should develop goal setting processes for all ELA students in the content area. PD should be organized to enhance teacher ability to create clear improvement goals to move all students forward in their learning. Students should be aware of the goals and what they need to know and do to attain them.

## **V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **FINDINGS:**

- The establishment of inquiry teams and subject content teams has had only a superficial effect on teacher development and instruction.
- The current PD provided for staff has had little focus on the development of effective teaching strategies for students with disabilities.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- School leaders should ensure that the work of the inquiry team filters into the classroom and positively impacts student learning and achievement. There is a need for high-quality, continuous standards based PD with multiple approaches that promotes enhanced staff proficiency in ELA practice and further develops teachers' knowledge of content.

- School leaders should review the PD program, with the support of the District, and include sessions on how teachers can more effectively meet the specific learning needs of students with disabilities. The school leader responsible for special education should monitor and evaluate the teaching and learning of classes for students with disabilities. Clear guidelines for all teachers of this subgroup should be developed.

## **VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

### **FINDING:**

There was little evidence of the white boards being used as more than a blackboard or overhead projector. The use of this technology should be expanded in order to engage students more fully in their learning.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

PD for the advanced use of white board should be provided for the teachers that would allow them to bring the subject matter into the classroom and empower the students to manipulate the technology.

## **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 CCLS, Data Driven Instruction and the Annual Professional Performance Reviews for teacher effectiveness.