

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability – School Quality Review Report (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

<b>BEDS Code:</b>	14-06-00-01-0074
<b>District Name:</b>	Buffalo City School District
<b>School Name:</b>	Hamlin Park School #74
<b>School Address:</b>	126 Donaldson Road, Buffalo, New York 14208
<b>Principal:</b>	Faye Walton
<b>Accountability Phase/Category:</b>	Improvement (year 1) - Comprehensive
<b>Areas of Identification:</b>	English Language Arts - All Students and Students with Disabilities Mathematics - All Students; African American Students; Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students
<b>Dates of On-site Review:</b>	January 12-13, 2012

**PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT**

“The mission of School #74 is to provide a supportive and challenging environment, rich in English Language Arts and Mathematical concepts that will bring students to a high level of proficiency in literacy and numeric skills, in a safe, nurturing atmosphere that fosters respect of self and others.”

**PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS**

- The Principal is in her second year at the school and the staff indicated that the climate of the building has become calmer during her tenure.
- Staff attendance has improved to ninety percent this school year.
- Student attendance has improved this year and is above average for the District.
- There has been an improvement in parent and community involvement this school year.

**PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

**FINDINGS:**

- Data analysis is not consistently used as a tool for driving forward school improvement.

- Teachers do not use data to inform their English language arts (ELA) and mathematics instructional planning or to modify the instruction. They implement the pacing plan with fidelity, regardless of the need of the students for differentiated instruction to address their specific learning requirements.
- Currently, there is no system in place to analyze mathematics and ELA data and transform the results into an action plan.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school should revisit the current system for data disaggregation and analysis to focus more closely on student-by-student, class-by-class and subgroup-by-subgroup deficiencies in addition to the whole school and grade monitoring. An improvement plan should be created to ensure that all teachers and coaches incorporate item skills analysis and predictive results to inform their instruction in all tested grades. Particular attention should be given to monitoring the development of student skills as they move from grade to grade to check for vertical alignment in curriculum programs in the ELA and mathematics content areas.
- Teachers should use student performance data, 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.
- Teachers are strongly encouraged to conduct an interim assessment analysis worksheet delineating the error and distracter analyses of the mathematics and ELA assessment data and to develop, implement, and monitor action plans to instructionally address learning deficits as indicated by the analysis of the assessment data.

## **II. TEACHING AND LEARNING**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- Many ELA and mathematics lessons observed were entirely teacher-directed and did not use a range of strategies to accommodate the differing and diverse learning needs of the students.
- Classroom observations conducted by the review team found few examples of differentiated instruction in ELA and mathematics classrooms. There was little evidence that data was used to group students or to match tasks to the differing ability levels of the students.
- There are a total of 144 students, or 26 percent of the student population, with IEPs. However, the co-teaching model in ELA and mathematics is not effective and is not skillfully implemented. Classroom observations conducted by the review team showed that for the majority of the instructional time, one teacher is primarily responsible for the delivery of instruction and the other teacher plays the much less significant role of a teacher's assistant. Students are not fully benefiting from having two certified teachers in the classroom. The teachers are not effectively distributing their time or attention to provide additional support to students or to work with small skill-based groups in ELA and mathematics. Co-teachers are not consistently planning together, which negatively impacts the effectiveness of the co-teaching model.
- There is a lack of rigor in questioning strategies; higher order thinking and problem solving is absent from the school. Students are asked to recall facts and details. Students are not challenged to analyze, evaluate or synthesize information. Further, in many ELA and mathematics classrooms, either the objective of the lesson was not on the board or the teacher did not conclude the lesson by determining if the students had learned or could meet the objective.

- Student attendance has improved since the last school year; however it is still an issue, with 180 students being at risk, 117 students being chronically absent, and 40 students being severely absent.
- Classroom misbehavior has increased, with 528 referrals between September 1, 2011 and January 12, 2012. Students have not been informed about and do not fully understand the school's behavior expectations. Some students seem unaware of appropriate classroom routines, and others are resistant to following the rules and completing the assigned tasks. Many of those suspended were students with disabilities.
- Available technology in many classrooms, including SMART Boards and laptops, was underutilized and was not effectively integrated into instruction. There was a lack of student involvement in any lessons.
- Teacher developed units of study and pacing calendars for ELA in each grade are available in the school. These units are aligned to the previous New York State (NYS) Standards, but are not rigorous and are not inclusive of the grade level standards in the new P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for ELA and literacy.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school leaders should rigorously monitor classroom instructional practices and give on-going quality feedback to teachers. They should ensure that teachers are held accountable for implementing strategies to address identified areas for improvement. The school leaders should also ensure that teachers implement differentiation strategies, learned through professional development (PD), into their classroom practice.
- The school leader should provide PD opportunities for ELA and mathematics 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 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 match work to the individual needs of students.
- The school should provide on-site training for the full implementation of co-teaching model strategies. Scheduled common planning time should be provided so that co-teachers can equally share in the planning and delivery of effective instruction. School leaders should monitor for implementation of effective co-teaching strategies, especially in ELA and mathematics, through the formal and informal teacher observation process and ensure that best practices are shared across the school. Where teachers are not effective, further PD should be provided. Department meetings should be used to review lesson plans for the incorporation of State Standards and to ensure that learning goals are aligned with planned instruction. School leaders should regularly monitor the incorporation of learning goals in direct instruction and should highlight good practices in sharing learning goals as the focus of an inter-visitation schedule.
- The school should move from teacher posed questions in ELA and mathematics that require one-word answers or are recall and comprehension based to questions that require students to support answers by citing text, by elaborating on the answers of other students, and by summarizing and rephrasing new information. Teacher lesson plans should include pre-created questions that require critical thinking and discussion. Teachers should use wait time and not allow students to opt-out of class discussions. Teachers should use random selection and/or avoid calling exclusively on willing student volunteers and involve students with disabilities. Teachers should require students to answer in complete sentences.
- The District has recently hired an attendance officer for the school who will work with the school psychologist. Additionally, teachers and school leaders should make a concerted effort to get students to school through

PBIS incentives, with understanding that all staff have a shared responsibility for student success and encouraging student involvement in their education.

- Teachers of students with disabilities should be provided with Sheltered Instruction and Observation Protocol (SIOP) training. Additionally, the school leaders should review the School Wide Information System information (SWIS) data and determine what types of student behavior are most predominate at what time of day. They can then pinpoint where they need extra coverage and where there is a need for classroom management training and behavior modification techniques. The teachers should understand that consistency of application of the classroom rules has to occur. Once they are seeing a reduction in behavior problems in one area they can focus on another.
- The school leadership, with District support, should provide training and support to ELA and mathematics 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 and students are more engaged.
- The District is rolling out the common core learning standards. All teachers and administrators should participate in PD on how to plan and implement an ELA and mathematics 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 evaluations should include how well the teacher knows and implements the curriculum for the subjects being taught.

### **III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- The Principal does not effectively communicate to staff the mission and vision for school development and improvement. Strategies are not adequately defined to achieve the school's goals.
- The school leadership's management of the organization, operations and resources does not translate into an effective and efficient learning environment. This is evidenced by inadequate science and social studies resources, underutilized technology in ELA and mathematics classes, and lack of appropriate systems for the monitoring and evaluation to determine effectiveness of classroom activities.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- There is a need for the school leadership and staff to develop a new mission statement or reconnect with the existing one since they do not have a clear understanding that the mission statement embodies the purpose of the school and needs to be embraced by all. Also, the staff should clearly understand the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) and how they are involved in implementing it.
- The school leadership's management of the school's organization, operations and resources should be urgently addressed in order to create an effective learning environment. There should be increased accountability by all staff towards continuous improvement.

### **III. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- Although the school has SMART Boards in the classrooms, a number of teachers were not taking advantage of the intended purpose and capability of the technology.
- The District has rolled out the Response to Intervention (RtI) process, and the school is starting to implement it; however, the RtI process as implemented does not adequately meet each student's needs.
- Students were not fully aware of the expectations made of them in terms of consistently improving their learning. Goal setting processes were not in place for ELA and mathematics content areas to guide student progress and achievement.
- There was no student work, art, or welcoming signage that indicated that the school is academically oriented and student-centered.
- Eight teachers left the school this school year for reasons such as long-term illness, retirement or transfer to other schools. The teacher loss coupled with the increase of one hundred students and the subsequent increases in class size have negatively affected student academic performance.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school leader should seek the assistance of the District in order to provide teachers with on-going professional development in incorporating SMART Board use into lesson plans to support interactive and hands on learning.
- The school leader should use the District RtI protocols to determine specific skills and strategies for each student, place the student into appropriate interventions based on diagnostic results and monitor improvement on an on-going basis. Within the plan there needs to be a process for students to demonstrate proficiency in a subject and to exit Academic Intervention Services (AIS) if it is no longer needed.
- The goals set should be discussed with students and their parents so that next steps are understood by all and should include timelines and checkpoints to enable ongoing progress monitoring. Rubrics to support this process should be explained carefully in age-appropriate language to engage students in self-monitoring processes against the standards.
- The school leader along with the school staff should establish an academic environment that is welcoming and reflects a culture that values student work and achievement.
- The District should consider the loss of teachers at the school and determine if there is any way to provide other teachers or assistant teachers to reduce the class sizes.

### **IV. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- Teachers are not held accountable for incorporating strategies learned in PD into their instructional practice.

- The District has used the PD time to roll out a number of State initiatives, which has limited the school's ability to follow the CEP PD actions.
- There is no evidence that there is a culture of shared internal professional accountability among the school staff.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school leader should conduct follow-up observations after PD sessions to ensure that teachers incorporate the strategies learned into the classroom instructional program. The school leaders should develop detailed recommendations and specific next steps in their observation reports and focus on these in their next observation.
- The school should use the summer and after school opportunities to meet its internal PD needs.
- The staff should focus on the development of a professional learning community that allows all to be involved in school improvement efforts. Staff should work together as peers during grade level meetings to improve the educational practices affecting student outcomes. This can be done by sharing best practices and what they have found to be successful in engaging students in the classroom.

**V. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

**FINDINGS:**

- The school does not have a full-time librarian, as required in middle schools.
- The use of technology was limited in observed classes.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The District and school leader and should seek to hire a librarian/library media specialist to encourage and reinforce reading and research for all students.
- School leaders should investigate the use of appropriate technology that can be integrated into the curriculum and develop a comprehensive technology plan for implementation.

**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.