

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	590901060006
District Name:	Liberty Central School District
School Name:	Liberty Middle School
School Address:	145 Buckley Street, Liberty, N Y 12754
Principal:	Jack Strassman
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year- 1)- Focused
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts- Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students,
Dates of On-site Review:	May 7-9, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“Inspire all students to pursue their dreams and to contribute and thrive in a diverse community.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The school and District are aware of the diverse student population and strive to place them within the most compatible classroom possible.
- The school and District have many initiatives to involve parents in the learning process with a strong emphasis placed on reaching out to parents whose children are English language learners (ELLs).

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- Data analysis in English language arts (ELA) is not consistently used as a tool for driving forward school improvement.
- Teachers do not use ELA data to inform their instructional planning or to modify instruction. They implement the existing curriculum with fidelity, regardless of the needs of the students for differentiated instruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should revisit the current system for ELA 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. All teachers should incorporate item skills and predictive results to inform their instruction in all testing grades. Particular attention should be given to monitoring the development of ELA student skills as they move from grade to grade to check for vertical alignment in curriculum programs in each content area.
- Teachers should use student ELA 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 Hispanic students, students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students. The school, with the support of the District, should provide professional development (PD) for teachers in using data to improve instruction. This should include a variety of methods that can be used within the classroom to meet the individual learning needs of students. School leaders should identify this as a focus for observation and monitoring.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Few examples of differentiated instruction were observed in 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 was inconsistent evidence to suggest that ELA data is effectively being used to address the academic barriers that impact student achievement. There was limited evidence that classroom teachers used medial assessments, such as running records and conferences, to determine student progress and to appropriately adjust their instructional planning.
- Much of the instruction for ELA students is teacher directed, with little variety of instructional strategies. Students have few opportunities to engage in conversations about topics such as working in pairs or talking with different groups of students.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leader should provide PD opportunities for ELA 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 teacher 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.
- School leaders should set clear expectations for ELA teachers regarding a system for collecting, recording and analyzing data from student work. There should be a range of the types of formative assessment

data that are collected, such as conferring notes, running records, and notebook assessments. Teachers should be trained in using formative assessments to differentiate instruction. Lesson plans should incorporate the implementation of flexible grouping based on the results of the assessments. School leaders should meet with teachers to review student performance and set goals for student progress toward meeting shared learning goals. This data should be used to plan lessons, with particular attention to student grouping and differentiation. Informal and formal observations should include feedback for teachers on the effectiveness of their use of data to inform instruction and implement grouping.

- School leaders should provide PD to introduce teachers to a wider range of instructional strategies that can be used in the classroom to promote greater student participation in the learning process, especially for students with disabilities. Teachers should be expected to incorporate these strategies into practice, and school leaders should monitor the effectiveness and provide additional PD for teachers when necessary.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- School leaders do not ensure that PD is planned and effectively used to bring about improvement in student achievement.
- There is some evidence of established procedures, visits and information shared between elementary and middle schools; however, there is a need to increase opportunities for dialog to address concerns regarding the transition of students and continuity of learning.
- Some teachers are using looping for a two year period as a way to establish relationships with transient students, especially students with disabilities, to provide a more consistent learning environment for them.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders, with support from the District, should design a comprehensive PD plan to address the needs of teachers to improve their delivery of instruction. School leaders should closely monitor the delivery of ELA instruction by reviewing lesson plans, providing feedback on lesson plans and conducting informal and formal observations with written feedback that includes recommendations for improvement. School leaders should conduct follow-up observations in a timely manner to ensure that these recommendations are being implemented.
- Communication between elementary and middle school teachers should be increased. Time and classroom coverage should be granted to allow middle school teachers to spend time in elementary classrooms and elementary teachers to visit middle school classes to create an awareness of student learning needs when transitioning between grade levels.
- The use of looping as an instructional approach should be expanded, given the potential positive impact on transient students.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- There is evidence that the teachers make themselves available to students for extra academic support during their free periods, but not all students take advantage of these opportunities.
- Parental involvement is limited. Language barriers and work schedules prevent parents from supporting student learning to the degree that the school recommends. This especially affects the students with disabilities. There is some evidence of community resources being accessed to support the health, social and emotional well-being of students with disabilities and their parents.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leaders should consider developing a schedule of the times when specific teachers are available to provide students with extra help. Students would then have an opportunity for teacher support during the day.
- The school and District should explore and implement additional strategies to involve parents and emphasize the parental role as an important aspect in student achievement. The school may be able to interface with some of the community-based organization to provide the students with greater support.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- The current PD provided for staff has had little focus on the development of effective teaching strategies for students with disabilities. Some teachers are not using differentiated instruction or incorporating the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) or using data to drive instruction.
- PD offerings are not part of a strategic plan that focuses upon identified subgroups, including students with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- With the support of the District, school leaders should review the PD program and include sessions on how teachers can more effectively meet the specific learning needs of students with disabilities, including sessions on the CCLS, differentiated instruction and data driven instruction. The individual with responsibility for special education at the school should monitor and evaluate the teaching and learning of classes with students with disabilities. Clear guidelines for all teachers of this group of students should be developed.
- A comprehensive PD plan should be created to give teachers the tools to meet the needs of all students.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- The building and classroom environment was orderly and clean, but student work was not displayed in many classrooms and hallways. Class objectives and expectations were only posted in a few of the classrooms that were visited.
- The use of technology in the classrooms, such as SMART Boards was evident. However, only some classrooms encouraged the students to use the SMART Boards. Most teachers worked at the SMART Boards as the students looked on.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Classroom objectives and expectations as well as student work with rubrics that include teacher feedback for improvement should be posted in every classroom.
- Students should be encouraged and expected to work on the SMART boards to allow for student directed instruction.

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.