

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

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	270100010019
District Name:	Greater Amsterdam City School District
School Name:	Marie Curie Institute of Engineering and Communication
School Address:	9 Brice Street, Amsterdam, NY 12010
Principal:	Mary Mathey
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year - 1) - Focused
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts - Hispanic Students, Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	November 9 and December 8, 2011

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

"The mission of Marie Curie Institute is to create students who will be successful, critical thinkers and real world problem solvers, who can effectively communicate their thoughts and ideas. We believe that problem solving is an essential skill children need in order to adapt to their environment. Engineering is the science of problem solving, and communication is the tool needed to express discoveries and conclusions."

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The school leader shows pride in the school and expresses high expectations for students and staff.
- Interviews indicated that staff has a sense of school pride.
- Resource room and special education staff work well in the inclusion classes to support students with disabilities.
- There is a one-hour common planning time scheduled weekly to implement the direct consultant teacher model for the 15:1 class structure.
- Classrooms and hallways are orderly; the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program is being implemented at the school.
- The Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) team is knowledgeable about the school planning process.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- There is evidence that substantial data is available regarding student performance on State assessments and on the Fountas and Pinnell levels of reading. This data is disaggregated for the subgroups, and the student performance information in English Language Arts (ELA) has been interpreted by the teams to identify the areas of reading that are of most concern in the performance of the subgroups.
- Formative data is used to guide instruction in all general education classrooms. In the primary grades, word attack, fluency, and comprehension are regularly monitored.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should celebrate the attainment of the benchmark achievement goals set by the CEP team, staff and school leader.
- The School leader and teachers should examine the present system of formative assessment in kindergarten through grade five. The staff should build on its strengths in the use of formative assessment and ensure that it is consistently used and periodically administered throughout the school. This system should allow the teachers and the school leader to follow the progress of individual students, especially students in the identified subgroups.
- The school leader and teachers should implement instructional problem-solving to address student reading needs by using evidence-based interventions to inform instruction. The effect of these interventions should be monitored through subsequent formative and interim assessment and progress monitoring.
- Interim assessments should be analyzed for student progress in key skills essential to student success.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- The school has completed the development of a curriculum map in ELA using a computer-based recording program for structure and guidance.
- Most teachers demonstrated some knowledge of research-based strategies to increase student reading comprehension.
- Most teachers use the *A-Z Reading Series* that includes a supplementary computer-based program to implement the ELA program. This reading series is aligned with the P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and includes research-based strategies.

- Teachers noted that the *Reading Street* series requires differentiation to accommodate the various student reading skill levels. Most of the teachers observed by the review team implemented some form of instructional differentiation.
- Teachers collaborate with resource room and consultant teachers during ELA lessons. Small group instruction is led by resource room, co-teachers, or consultant teachers.
- The school has purchased *Rosetta Stone* to help English language learners (ELLs) learn English and staff learn Spanish. This will assist students in classroom learning and teachers in interacting with the students and their families.
- The primary grade teachers are trained in "Reading First" methodology, the "Reading Academy," and the monitoring of student progress. Teachers in grades four and five are aware of the essential elements of this program.
- After-school tutoring is available for students who are not at proficiency level.
- The related *Reading Street* program, *My Sidewalks*, is being used in the AIS program. In addition, the AIS staff are using the Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) program for students with more significant reading problems.
- The Response to Intervention (RtI) process is being implemented in the Academic Intervention Services (AIS) program. It includes recommendations for the instruction of students in the AIS program.
- The review team noted that the grade-level curricula and assessments for ELLs is not fully aligned with the CCLS.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Research shows that there is a relationship between the amounts of time spent reading and writing in school and the progress that at-risk students make in acquiring essential ELA skills. Teachers should examine how much time students devote to reading and writing activities during ELA and other content-area lessons each day.
- Common grade-level meetings should be reinstated.
- The use of the *Reading Street* series should be reviewed to ensure that it is effective in helping students reach appropriate achievement levels in key ELA skills.
- Teachers in kindergarten through grade five should focus on vocabulary development and syntactical understanding in reading and writing for English language learners, students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students as appropriate to meet the individual needs of these students.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDING:

The staff uses curriculum maps, compiles student data, and demonstrates a knowledge of research-based practices in instruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leader and staff should develop a school improvement model that is data-driven, uses collaboration to plan instruction, and involves the continuous monitoring of student progress. These elements should be implemented to develop a coordinated, efficient, and effective Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP).
- There should be clear, periodic benchmark goals for ELA student achievement in each class, especially for students in the identified subgroups. Student performance should be regularly reviewed by staff. These benchmark goals should include clear models of desired student achievement.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- A 90-minute ELA block has been scheduled in the primary grades.
- The school has developed linkages with various social and economic support agencies in the community.
- There is a school social worker on staff.
- School resources are allocated according to need.
- Home-school partnerships are weak, especially with the families of Hispanic and/or economically disadvantaged students. Interviews conducted by the review team indicated that although several attempts have been to increase parent involvement, it is difficult for parents to come to the school for conferences or to follow-up on homework or other academic needs.
- During interviews by the review team, staff indicated that at-risk students do not have sufficient reading material at home, and the school library is not as accessible as staff would like.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders and staff should develop and enhance communication with the families of Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students. Best practices should be explored and/or revisited, since there

has been some PD regarding this issue in the past. A method of measuring progress in this area should be devised.

- The school should have more translators available to assist in communicating with Hispanic families.
- Local television and radio programming should be used to communicate with Hispanic families.
- A schoolwide effort should be made to obtain or locate reading materials for at-risk students to take home. The school should ensure that every child has a public library card.
- The school leader and staff should explore ways to make the school library more accessible.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDING:

It is evident that the teachers have consistently participated in past PD activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Teaching assistants and aides should be provided with PD regarding how to support the work of teachers and students.
- The school should develop a comprehensive PD plan that focuses on the interpretation of data and research-based practices in the following areas:
 - how to collect and use interim and formative data in ELA;
 - teaching the economically disadvantaged student;
 - teaching Hispanic students;
 - research-based strategies for teaching ELA, particularly vocabulary development, fluency and comprehension;
 - how to use the current reading series to meet the needs of all students
 - instructional models in ELA and alignment with the CCLS; and
 - strategies for increasing student ELA performance on State assessments.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- The school is bright, clean and inviting; it includes science laboratories and a well-equipped computer lab to aid instruction.
- The review team observed that in the general education classes, texts and materials on various reading levels are insufficient to accommodate the needs of the lower-performing ELL, Hispanic, special education, and economically disadvantaged students. Interviews by the review team indicated that the teachers supplement their lessons with materials drawn from websites.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should acquire sufficient texts and materials on a variety of levels to meet the instructional needs of all of the students.
- Materials and books should be provided for students to take home.

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