

## NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

## Office of Accountability

## Differentiated Accountability – School Quality Review (SQR)

## SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

<b>BEDS Code:</b>	530600010014
<b>District Name:</b>	Schenectady City School District
<b>School Name:</b>	Academy of Culture and Communication at Pleasant Valley Elementary School
<b>School Address:</b>	1097 Forest Road, Schenectady, New York 12303
<b>Principal:</b>	Joseph DiCaprio
<b>Accountability Phase/Category:</b>	Improvement (year- 1) - Comprehensive
<b>Areas of Identification:</b>	English Language Arts - All Students; African American Students; Hispanic Students White Students and Economically Disadvantaged Students
<b>Dates of On-site Review:</b>	November 30, December 7, 2011 and January 4, 2012

**PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT****District Mission Statement****Mission/Vision Statement:**

“The mission of the Schenectady City School District, a nurturing progressive learning environment and a vital part of the larger community, is to ensure that all students achieve their fullest potential as responsible members of a society through a system characterized by:

- Creative leadership
- Challenging curricula
- Innovative, varied, and engaging methods of learning and teaching
- Integration of modern technology
- Strong partnerships
- A safe, healthy, and supportive climate”

**Vision:**

“To accomplish this mission, our dedicated, student centered staff, will provide a challenging, relevant curriculum in an environment that is safe, orderly and conducive to learning.”

**Beliefs:**

- “WE BELIEVE THAT Every individual deserves to be safe.

- WE BELIEVE THAT Every person is responsible for the actions he or she chooses to take.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Every individual needs the support of others to thrive.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Society can only be successful when its members serve each other.
- WE BELIEVE THAT All living things depend on other living things.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Every individual deserves to be treated with respect.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Family is critical to the development and well being of the individual.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Effective, honest communication is essential to mutual understanding.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Ensuring the care of children is the most responsibility of society.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Every person deserves an opportunity to achieve his or her potential.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Everyone needs valid praise and recognition.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Extra-ordinary expectations are essential for extra-ordinary outcomes.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Individuals have the right to form their own beliefs.
- WE BELIEVE THAT Responsibility is learned; therefore, it must be taught.”

Referenced on the Schenectady City School District Website 2011-2012

## **PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS**

- The District in the 2011-12 school year deployed a number of reading teachers to function as teaching and learning coaches and interventions specialists to provide on-going job embedded professional development (PD) to support and coach teachers in aligning the English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum to the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS).
- The District has implemented an “Administrator in Residency” program to expose teacher leaders certified in administration to administrative tasks as a means to build their leadership capacity.
- The District has implemented a daily morning meeting period for all elementary teachers in order for them to collaborate on student teaching and learning needs by using data to inform instruction.
- The school has been a Magnet School since 2001.

## **PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND USE OF DATA**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- Although the staff has multiple data sources for all students, consistent access to and analysis of data for understanding or modifying classroom instruction for all students or for subgroups is limited.
- Disaggregation and interpretation of data for all subgroups in order to plan interventions that address the academic needs of all students is lacking.
- A systematic process for monitoring student progress is lacking.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The school should:

- Develop and begin to implement a plan for regular and consistent use of formative, interim, and summative data in order to plan for improvement in the academic area of ELA.
- Disaggregate, analyze, and use data in ways that support the learning needs of all students and subgroups in daily classroom instruction offered by special education, English as second language (ESL), and general education teachers.

**II. TEACHING AND LEARNING****FINDINGS:**

- Initial PD to align and implement ELA instruction and units of study at each grade level to the CCLS is at the beginning stages.
- Most students with disabilities participate in the general education instructional programs in integrated co-teaching programs.
- Use of evidence-based strategies during direct instruction for students and subgroups not meeting grade level expectations in reading and writing is inconsistent.
- Teachers use morning meetings to discuss instructional practices, but have no agreed upon protocols for progress monitoring of instructional efforts.
- There are no consistent procedures to review teacher practices and determine whether the curriculum is rigorously implemented for all students and subgroups.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The school should:

- Identify a consistent process to analyze and interpret data in order to modify classroom instruction for all subgroups.
- Determine a level of proficiency that aligns with the CCLS definitions and design a consistent protocol for progress monitoring of all students.
- Design and implement PD that provides general and special education teachers with evidence-based instructional strategies to meet the needs of all learners.

### III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

#### FINDINGS:

- The school leader has been trained and certified to evaluate staff on the new teaching standards.
- The plan-assess-adjust cycle of continuous improvement of educational practices in order to guide instructional practices and program modifications has not been implemented.
- Ongoing development of distributive instructional and administrative leadership to guide the school's improvement is limited.
- The system for shared accountability for student learning is not consistently monitored or assessed.
- Ongoing, sustained PD activities to support and empower teachers as leaders on the School-Based Inquiry team are inconsistent.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

The school should:

- Involve the schoolwide Inquiry Team in the development and implementation of the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) goals.
- Involve the staff in PD in order to understand and implement the plan-assess-adjust cycle of continuous improvement.
- Identify accountability indicators and regularly monitor and adjust actions so that together the school leaders and staff can accomplish agreed upon objectives.
- Task the school leader to work with the team, using consensus, to develop teacher leaders to support and sustain the plan.

### IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

#### FINDINGS:

- A number of community resources are focused on the health, social and emotional well-being of students and their families.
- The School-Based Inquiry Team leadership is conscious of the need to schedule and program learning opportunities for students; however, communication with staff is inconsistent.
- Although there are transition activities for students at grade 6, the practices are inconsistent across all District elementary buildings.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The school should:

- Design and implement PD for the School-Based Inquiry Team.
- Develop collaborative goals to support and monitor the implementation of the CEP.

**V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT****FINDINGS:**

- Although there are daily morning teacher meetings, and teacher-to-teacher PD, consistency and protocols are lacking.
- PD is not differentiated to focus on either student subgroups or the needs of individual teachers.
- Although PD is available to teachers, there is little follow-through to determine whether it is effective and to hold individual teachers accountable for learning and implementation of the new knowledge.
- A Teacher Center grant has supported the design of PD for co-teaching classrooms; however, these strategies are inconsistently implemented.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The school should:

- Provide focused PD for teachers on using formative data to inform instructional practice, the impact of curriculum maps and the CCLS, and evidenced-based and progress monitoring strategies.
- Hold teachers accountable for their learning and for application of differentiated learning strategies, and monitor the effectiveness of the PD through changes in teacher knowledge/skill, evidence of teacher use of those strategies, and changes in student achievement related to the PD.

**VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES****FINDINGS:**

- There are sufficient quantities of textbooks to support instruction in the classroom, and classroom libraries are established. A leveled reader book room is available for all staff.
- The school library provides ample access to all students and subgroups.
- Science kits are available to support the elementary science curriculum.

- A full-time librarian serves the school.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The District and school should continue to seek resources to meet the diverse learning needs of students.

**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 Reviews for teacher effectiveness.