

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

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	161201040005
District Name:	Salmon River Central School District
School Name:	Salmon River Middle School
School Address:	637 Route 1, Ft. Covington, NY 12937
Principal:	Angela Robert
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year 1) - Comprehensive
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts - All Students: American Indian Students, Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Date of On-site Review:	December 13 - 14, 2011

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“The Salmon River Middle School values academic achievement, cultural diversity, and celebrates individuality within a safe, supportive learning environment. The Salmon River Central School maximizes student achievement in a fair manner and respects cultural diversity.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- Instruction in the Mohawk language and culture is a model in the State.
- Up-to-date technology is available.
- There is evidence of strong instructional leadership.
- Educators are committed to making the middle school a quality educational environment.
- Students, parents, and staff are involved in the development of the middle school.
- There is a connection with community-based organizations.
- Staff continually evaluate schoolwide practices.
- The middle school values and embraces a strong inclusion process.

- There is good communication between staff and school leaders.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- The Instructional Support Team conducts an initial data analysis in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. The analysis is then rolled out to staff during grade level meetings. Grade level staff analyze the data at each grade level.
- The middle school has a process of sending letters home for students who have missed three days and/or have three tardies. The Attendance Office also calls students' homes for each absence. Students are awarded monthly for perfect attendance. The school has a practice of analyzing individual and grade level daily attendance. A school level analysis has not yet occurred (this is a newly formed middle school as of the 2011-12 school year).
- Suspensions are examined according to trends, such as location, and prevention plans are put into place. Data is also examined on an individualized basis and patterns are examined. Behavior data was reviewed after six weeks to identify trends. There is a school-wide discipline matrix to assist in guiding behavioral interventions prior to office referral. Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIPs) are created when patterns are noted. Efforts have been made to maintain students in their classrooms whereby students may attend In-school suspension (ISS) for one period versus a more traditional half- or full-day. The ISS room serves students from grades 6-12. Grade Level meetings include an analysis of behavior/discipline related data.
- There is a school-wide calendar for assessing students in grades 6 through 8. The Directed Reading Assessment II (DRA) is administered twice to all students in grades 6-8. In addition, Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System is administered to students in grade 6 and struggling readers in grades 7 and 8. On-demand writing prompts are conducted in grade 6 three times per year. The results are analyzed to assist in driving appropriate instruction.
- Interim assessments have not yet been developed, but will be initiated once the Regional Network Team provides related training.
- Student data are examined as a whole and individually, but not formally in the context of subgroups.
- The school has established a number of processes for monitoring student progress in reading and writing that include the use of Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) for grade 6, running records for grade 6; grades 7 and 8 – struggling readers only and writing conference sheets/rubrics. These data are used to create class profiles. In addition, they correlate to the ELA P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and assist in targeting standards-based instruction. Teachers in grades 6-8 also conduct reading and writing conferences at least once a week with students to discuss progress and set goals.

- Northeastern Regional Information Center (NERIC) will be replacing Data Mentor with NERIC Connect. This will enable the school to continue with its current data analysis practices.
- Progress monitoring procedures are strong in grade 6, but not implemented as systematically in grades 7 and 8 due to shorter instructional periods (39 minutes).
- The District does not have a Local Assistance Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The school should:

- Establish a process for examining school attendance data trends.
- Create an In-school Suspension (ISS) program for middle school students only.
- Administer on-demand writing prompts in grades 7 and 8. Initiate the use of interim assessments once training is provided.
- Establish procedures for examining subgroup related data.
- Explore establishing a literacy block in grades 7 and 8 that is longer than the current 39 minute period.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- The Board of Education (BOE) has a graduation rate goal of 91 percent.
- Students who are eligible for Academic Intervention Services (AIS) are grouped according to similarity of needs, as evidenced during the review team's walkthroughs and teacher interviews.
- Students are made aware of the code of conduct the first week of school. Bullying prevention is a priority. Bullying prevention professional development (PD) has been provided to staff and students. Peer mediation has been used in the past in the Jr. / Sr. High School.
- The school's Character Education program recognizes students' positive behavior.
- PD has been provided in the Circle of Courage, a program that supports belonging, acceptance, and related qualities.
- The school's Invitation Educational initiative encourages a feeling of belonging in all students.
- Walkthroughs conducted by the team provided evidence of positive school and classroom climates.

- Grade level collaborative teams are strong and are reflective of the elements in this subsection. Instructional Support personnel collaborate with grade level teams, parents, and inter-school (high school and elementary schools).
- The School-based Inquiry Team has been established and has attended each of the Regional Network Team trainings to date. The team has begun to roll out training content during grade level meetings.
- Evidence of CCLS related units were provided as part of the School Quality Review (SQR). Walkthroughs and Special Education District Data Profile reviews conducted by the review team provided evidence of students with disabilities receiving instruction in literacy and instruction in the general education classrooms. Pacing calendars exist across the board, but curriculum maps should be developed.
- Submitted evidence and walkthrough summaries reviewed by the team indicate strength in the context of evidence-based strategies, including critical thinking, problem-solving, relevancy to the real world setting, high expectations, and the use of data to guide supports for individual students. Although instruction is reflective of the standards, the standards are neither posted in all classrooms nor are they explicitly referenced during instruction.
- Some units have been aligned with the new CCLS. Curriculum maps are yet to be developed. Classroom visitations by the review team indicated that the standards are not posted, but instruction is reflective of the standards. Best practices are evident in some classrooms, but not consistent. The Regents Reform Agenda, the CCLS in particular, is being rolled out during grade level meetings.
- Students are challenged by accessing honors classes. Students are able to take high school credit bearing courses in middle school based on grades, recommendations, and work ethic. All students have access to Languages Other Than English (LOTE) in 8th grade. An annual trip to Boston for grade 8 students is tied to the grade 8 social studies curriculum and, in addition, provides students from this rural region an opportunity to experience a more urban setting. Students in grades 7 and 8, upon teacher recommendation, have access to Clarkson University Horizons summer program in mathematics and science. Classroom walkthroughs by the review team indicated inconsistencies with the delivery of evidence-based practices in lesson design, particularly with lesson introduction, active teaching, and closing.
- There is consistent access for students with disabilities to the general education through placement in the general education classroom. However, the Special Education District Data Profile Indicator #5 (Least Restrictive Environment) does not appear to be an accurate reflection of student placement. The longitudinal data indicates inconsistencies in meeting the State benchmark.
- Interim and classroom assessments are administered, but do not provide strong evidence of differentiated instruction. Differentiation does occur, with reading instruction in grade 6 and is reported to occur in grade 8 ELA classes.
- Specially designed instructional methodologies were not consistently evident in the general education classroom environment. Students with disabilities are grouped in special education classes according to similarity of need and instruction is adapted to meet individual needs. There is evidence that instruction is also provided in a manner that leads to increased independence from accommodations and supports.

- Not all classrooms have behavioral expectations posted.
- There is a District-wide BOE grading policy. There is no grading consistency between teachers or departments beyond the parameters established by the BOE.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The school should:

- Create curriculum maps reflective of the CCLS that are both vertically and horizontally aligned.
- Embed an explicit reference to CCLS and rubrics in lessons. Provide teachers PD in differentiated instruction. Consistently implement Reader's and Writer's Workshop best practices across all content areas. Ensure all lessons contain the elements of effective teaching, including lesson introduction, active teaching, guided practice, independent practice and a closing.
- Continue to align units and lessons to the CCLS. Continue PD for grade level teams and departments in the CCLS.
- Provide PD to all staff members to reintroduce effective learning principles and reading/writing best practices across all content areas.
- Examine Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and related data entry processes to ensure the least restrictive environment (LRE) data submitted to New York State Education Department (NYSED) is accurate.
- Review the Access to IEP Policy to ensure all teachers not only receive a copy of the IEP but also that the teacher role in the implementation of the IEP is explicitly reviewed in a timely manner.
- Review data regarding students with disabilities success upon transitioning to the high school in the context of meeting the BOE goal for graduation rate.
- Formalize differentiated instruction expectations. Place formalized practices in the Instructional Practices Handbook. Explore scheduling a Reading/Writing block and adjusting when AIS is provided.
- Provide general education teachers PD in differentiated instruction. Ensure teachers embed elements of specially designed instruction into their lessons as reflected in students with disabilities IEPs.
- Post behavioral expectations in all classrooms. Re-initiate peer mediation at the middle school level and provide staff and students with related PD.
- Extend Rachael's Challenge, a positive social skills program to the middle school level.
- Use the school resource officer to provide presentations on topics such as cyber-bullying and increase his involvement within the middle school.
- Extend AIS supports as funding permits.

- Establish schoolwide homework practices.
- Explore grading practices at both department and grade level.
- Establish department chairpersons as funding permits and initiate department meetings. In addition, consider establishing periodic meetings between middle school departments with the elementary and high school departments to ensure vertical alignment of practices.
- Establish inter-school Instructional Support team meetings.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- The new middle school has a mission statement that was developed with student and staff input. Lessons reflecting the school Mission Statement were implemented in classrooms in the beginning of the school year. The school is one of inclusion in which students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum in the general education classroom environment.
- All teachers in the school are highly qualified. There is only one ELA teacher at each grade level. These same teachers provide AIS in mathematics to eligible students. Students are grouped according to social and academic needs in an effort to create heterogeneous classroom environments. Teacher/student matching is made collaboratively between the Principal, the Director of Special Education and the Director of Instructional Services.
- There is a mentoring program for new staff as per the Commissioner's Regulations. In addition, there is a Union sponsored mentoring program.
- The District is waiting for the Regional Network Team to be trained to roll out training to the region. Current observations mirror language of the teaching standards.
- Staff and grade level meetings are focused. The agendas are reflective of curriculum and discussion about student needs.
- The Director of Special Education and the Principal meet to discuss students with disabilities progress and needs and problem-solve achievement issues. The Principal and the instructional support leadership regularly communicate Title I regulations to staff to ensure students in this schoolwide program receive program benefits.
- There is a year-long assessment calendar whereby data is compiled and analyzed and turned back to teachers so that instruction may be adjusted to best meet the needs of students. Interim assessments are not yet consistently in place.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The school should:

- Continue with current practices as well as provide parents with further education about the school's mission. In addition, continue to roll out the P-12 CCLS and have all teachers become proficient in CCLS for ELA and literacy.
- Continue the PD that was initiated during the summer that focused on adolescent development, brain research, motivation strategies, and invitational education.
- Initiate a mentoring program for new staff that are not subject to the mentoring requirements of Commissioner's Regulations.
- Certify school leaders when the teacher rubric is selected and training has been completed by the Regional Network Team.
- Use informal walkthroughs to assist in systems analysis of the implementation of school instructional priorities. Encourage teachers to invite the Principal to visit the classroom to see the implementation of instructional practices.
- Design and consistently implement Interim assessments in core classes.
- Embed action steps towards meeting the Board Goals into the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP).

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- There is strong support from Tribal and other outside resources, but the communication, coordination and capacity for consistent follow-through should be more closely defined.
- There is AIS available during the formal school day (periods one through nine) and period ten (after the first bus run) for students to attend. There is a 3:15 pm-5:15 pm tutoring program that is available for Native American students (Title VII). The Migrant Education program provides supports to migrant students after school, as well. Teacher schedules include grade level common planning time. A summer school support program is available.
- The creation of a middle school model has actualized a caring structure where students are well known. In addition, the creation and implementation of the school mission is reflective of an inclusive and caring environment.
- Currently, there is an orientation process for students transitioning from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school.
- Students enrolled in the Mohawk School have the option of attending middle school at a neighboring district or at Salmon River Middle School (SRMS). An overview of SRMS is provided to Mohawk School students to introduce them to the school and what it has to offer. Some students choose the neighboring school and after a short period of time request to transfer to SRMS, which is not permitted according to school policy until the beginning of the next school year.

- Guidance counselors meet with grade 7 and 8 students to familiarize them with Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs offered at Salmon River. In addition, they explain high school and career options when meeting with 8th grade students and their parents.
- In light of budgetary constraints, the allocation of resources is extraordinary. New initiatives are being met by staff. Strategic use of paraprofessionals has been initiated, e.g., when a student who is assigned a 1:1 aide is absent, the aide provides supports to others, thereby maximizing human resources.
- There are a variety of community-based organizations that provide enrichment and/or academic supports to students.
- The District is planning a coordinated summer program at the Salmon River campus. Community organizations will be provided District space during the summer to enhance the on-site coordination of supports between the school and community.
- Parental involvement was one of the key priorities in the development of the middle school. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) recommended restructuring parent/teacher conferences. This demonstrates the strong partnership between home and school.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The school should:

- Strengthen coordination between the school and service providers. Create a resource that summarizes the supports available for dissemination to staff, students, and families.
- Invite community service providers to the school's Open House. Provide them with a table for resources to share with families.
- As resources permit, consider extending AIS supports to four days a week from 3:15 pm-5:15 pm and establish department chairpersons. Explore establishing common planning time for departments. Explore adding in extended time for continuous professional learning.
- Review the middle school program implementation mid-year and/or during the summer and adjust implementation where necessary.
- Schedule a collaborative meeting process between both Salmon River elementary schools and the middle school to discuss students transitioning from grade 5 to grade 6 and coordinate related transition activities.
- Restructure the overview provided to Mohawk School students so that it provides an explicit and detailed introduction to SRMS to assist students in making the right decision when choosing between the neighboring middle school and SRMS.
- Seek funding from outside sources to enhance the already depleted funding sources.

- Examine the extent of parental involvement during the mid-course review of the middle school implementation. Establish additional strategies to increase parental involvement if the findings indicate the need.
- Include a statement in the student handbook that helps parents recognize their role regarding educational outcomes for their children. Also, include a “parent involvement” section in the middle school newsletter.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- Teachers complete an annual perceptual survey that provides a summary of their expressed PD needs. PD is offered to ensure staff are trained in the evidence-based practices that are used schoolwide, e.g., assessment administration, data analysis, Reader’s/Writer’s Workshop. Training on State initiatives is also provided, e.g., the Regents Reform Agenda. The analysis of State assessments has played a role in determining PD needs relating to evidence based practices for instruction in reading and writing.
- The Instructional Support Leader provides coaching in literacy to staff and will provide training in Reader’s and Writer’s workshop to ensure consistent implementation.
- Time is allocated for grade level collaboration during which student work is analyzed and instructional practices are discussed.
- There is evidence of staff choosing materials that relate to student interests and needs in an effort to motivate learning. This is consistent and intentional, particularly with the Mohawk population.
- Elements of shared internal professional accountability are evident, but not yet fully developed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The school should:

- Continue to use multiple measures to identify PD needs (perceptual, student outcome data, observations/walkthroughs, State and local initiatives, emerging needs).
- Continue to include systematic PD follow-up in grade level meetings and faculty meetings. Encourage teachers to visit other colleagues’ classrooms to observe their teaching strategies/ techniques.
- Establish a curriculum/professional resource library that supports the school’s priorities.
- Establish procedures for follow-up on PD initiatives to ensure staff proficiency and fidelity in implementation.
- Establish Department meetings, which will enable each department to fine-tune evidence-based practices (relating to both data and instruction).

- Develop accountability priorities for school staff and school leaders.
- Continue initiatives with the Mohawk Native American subgroup, but include more intentional strategies relating to the economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities.
- Continue to take responsibility for developing/honing skills related to the implementation of school instructional priorities.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- Most classrooms have multiple up-to-date computers and interactive SMART Boards. There are two computer labs, with an additional eight computer areas in the library. Printers are centrally located on each floor/wing.
- In this first year of Middle School Model implementation, sufficient quantities of texts/resources are not available in every class. For example, texts in social studies and science are shared between classes and teachers. There are insufficient texts for students to take home. Classroom leveled reading libraries are not sufficiently stocked.
- The library is newly established. As a result, book quantities are not yet at needed levels. Computers and Internet access, however, are available.
- The school is clean, welcoming, and safe. Classrooms are clean, orderly, and welcoming. Walkthroughs conducted by the review team indicate a need for students to learn orderly transitions in the hallway.
- Standards are not yet posted in all classrooms.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The school should:

- Secure funding to support classroom leveled libraries to ensure sufficient content area texts for each class.
- Continue to stay on the cutting edge of educational technology. More printers are needed and should be spread out to multiple areas on each floor/wing.
- Secure up to date, culturally relevant books for the library. Consider securing recording equipment (microphones, headphones) to enable students to create multi-media projects.
- Establish procedures and teach students how to pass safely and orderly in the hallways, thereby permitting all to pass in a safe and timely manner.

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.