

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

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

DBN:	10X342
District Name:	District 10
School Name:	International School for Liberal Arts
School Address:	2780 Reservoir Avenue, Bronx, New York 10468
Principal:	Francine Cruz
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (Year 1) - Comprehensive
Area(s) of Identification:	English Language Arts - All Students; Hispanic Students; Limited English Proficient Students; and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Date(s) of On-site Review:	May 15 - 16, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“Our mission and primary goal is to prepare our students to graduate from high school, attend college and be equipped for the challenges of the 21st Century. We are building a community of bilingual learners who are academically and linguistically strong in both English and Spanish. The ISLA community, which includes the families of our students, will sustain excellence by creating an environment of life-long learners who develop a belief of bilingualism as being an asset of academic excellence. ISLA students are bilingual students who believe they can and they will succeed.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The students are welcoming and respectful. Students generally relate well to their teachers and other adults in the building.
- There is an environment of respect and professionalism in the school that is exhibited in the way that school staff, school leaders, and students speak with, and relate to, each other. During interviews with members of the school community, the review team found that the most commonly used words were always family and community.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDING:

- A review of documentation by the review team found that there is a wide range of data available to teachers in the school, including Regents results, New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) data, Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS), diagnostic assessments results, teacher observations, teacher-made assessments, and interim assessments. However, based on classroom observations and interviews with teachers and school leaders, the review team found inconsistent use of assessment data to develop instructional plans that are differentiated for identified student learning needs in English language arts (ELA).
- Based on classroom observations, the review team determined that some student groupings are based on random selection by teachers or by student choice, rather than on individual student skills and learning needs as identified through data analysis.

RECOMMENDATION:

- School leaders should provide professional development (PD) on the use of data to inform daily instruction and long-term planning. School leaders should also monitor the implementation of learned strategies and the use of data for classroom grouping and differentiation of instruction, especially in the identified area of ELA.
- School leaders should provide PD on strategies that will enable teachers to develop flexible grouping based on formative, interim, and summative data. All students should be provided with tasks and activities that address their specific learning needs in all lessons. School leaders should monitor lesson planning and instruction to ensure that the use of data to group students becomes common practice in all classrooms. Additional PD should be provided for teachers who continue to need support with this strategy.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- A schoolwide grading policy requires teachers to display student work in order to celebrate accomplishments and use a four-point rubric to evaluate student work. However, student work displayed was not always accompanied by a rubric that clearly explains what students need to do to reach the next level of proficiency.
- Several ELA lessons observed by the review team were mostly teacher-directed and did not use a range of instructional strategies to accommodate the differing and diverse learning needs of students.
- Based on classroom observations, the review team found that in many ELA lessons there is a lack of questioning strategies that enable students to develop higher order thinking and problem solving skills. Students are often asked to recall facts and details and are not always challenged to analyze, evaluate, or synthesize information.

- Based on classroom observations, the review team concluded that pacing and sequencing in some classrooms is inconsistent, and instructional time is not always used effectively. For example, in some lessons, the review team observed that the “Do Now” activity took up to 25 minutes to complete. In these lessons, the slow pace had a negative impact on student attention and motivation. As a result, some students were off task.
- In some lessons observed by the review team there is little evidence of the use of formative assessments to determine student understanding of the learning objectives and to provide targeted, supplemental instruction.
- A review of documents, classroom observations and interviews with staff by the review team indicated that there is limited evidence of a standards-based curriculum or of pacing calendars in ELA being used by some teachers.
- Although the school has a Language Allocation Policy (LAP) and students are supported in their native language during instruction, the review team's classroom observations and staff interviews indicated that the balance of Spanish and English instruction in ELA lessons is not clear or consistent. Many teachers often revert to teaching lessons mostly in Spanish, regardless of the students' English proficiency.
- All classrooms have SMARTBoards and in most lessons, teachers were observed using them during instruction. However, the SMARTBoards are largely used to display lesson plans, Power Point presentations and student tasks. As a result, opportunities are missed to use available technology to enhance instruction and support students' learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should ensure that teachers consistently post student work to celebrate accomplishments and that all student work is accompanied by student-friendly rubrics that show how to reach the next level of proficiency. Additionally, school leaders should monitor student work and rubric-based feedback through walkthroughs and the observation process.
- School leaders should provide PD to teachers on a variety of instructional strategies that can be used to engage students in the learning process and meet diverse student needs. School leaders should ensure, through monitoring and evaluation, that teachers integrate the strategies learned in PD into their classroom practice.
- School leaders should provide PD to support teachers in developing a variety of questioning techniques, including the development of students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Techniques provided should include how to phrase 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. Lesson plan guidelines provided by school leaders should specify the inclusion of pivotal questions that require students' critical thinking and promote student discussion. Teachers should incorporate strategies addressed in PD into daily instruction. School leaders should monitor the implementation of these strategies through the observation process.

- School leaders should provide teachers with PD to ensure appropriate pacing and sequencing of lessons in order to maximize instructional time and improve student engagement and involvement in their learning. School leaders should conduct focused walkthroughs to monitor the effectiveness of the teachers' use of pacing and sequencing techniques.
- School leaders should provide PD to enable teachers to be more effective when assessing students' mastery of lesson objectives. This training should ensure that teachers build a wide range of assessment strategies and effective closures into lesson plans and instruction to enable checking of students' understanding. School leaders should monitor and evaluate to ensure implementation through reviews of lesson planning and through lesson observations.
- School leaders should ensure that standards-based curriculum and pacing calendars are developed and implemented for each ELA course offered. School leaders, through formal and informal observations, should ensure that all teachers adhere to the curriculum and follow the delineated pacing calendars.
- School leaders should establish clear guidelines and expectations regarding the use of native languages during ELA classes. School leaders should monitor the implementation of the LAP through classroom observations and walkthroughs.
- School leaders should provide PD for teachers on the effective use of classroom technology to enhance instruction and raise students' achievements. School leaders should also monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of provided PD through the observation process.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- Discussions with teachers and school leaders by the review team indicate that the school has adopted the instructional model "Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol" (SIOP) to support students' language development needs. However, a review of lesson plans and some lesson observations by the review team show inconsistent implementation of the school's adopted instructional model.
- A review of documentation and interviews with school leaders by the review team indicate that teachers have developed professional goals. However, the goals neither follow a plan-assess-adjust cycle nor are they supported through the observation process.
- A review of the informal and formal teacher observation reports by the review team indicated that many of the recommendations for improvement are not consistently supported through timely PD, inter-visitations or mentoring.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should provide supplemental PD for teachers in lesson planning and in using the school's SIOP instructional model. School leaders should formally and informally observe classes

and lesson plans to ensure that schoolwide instructional protocols are consistently implemented. Additional PD should be provided for teachers who continue to require support with the implementation of this instructional model.

- The school leaders and teachers should develop clear professional goals with plan-assess-adjust cycles for each school year. School leaders should provide on-going support to teachers to enable them to achieve these professional goals through targeted PD and specific constructive and instructive feedback based on formal and informal observations. Additionally, a needs assessment survey regarding the formation of a PD plan should be conducted to support teaching and learning of the school staff.
- The school leaders should develop a detailed plan for formal and informal observation reports that includes a process to provide feedback that is timely and collaborative, supports the PD needs of the teachers, and ultimately supports the learning of students.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- Observations by the review team indicated that some students arrived to class late or were in the hallways after the start of class.
- The school offers after-school programs as well as a Saturday Academy. However, the review team's interviews with parents, teachers, administrators and students demonstrated that there are insufficient programs to engage all students in extra-curricular activities that target the students' social and emotional needs and development.
- Based on a review of documentation and discussions with parents, the review team found that the school uses a range of strategies to inform parents about students' achievements. However, based on documentation review and interviews, the review team concluded that student progress is not always communicated to parents in their home language. As a result, some parents are unable to access timely and relevant information to support their child's academic progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leaders, working with support staff, other administrators and teachers, should develop a plan and related policies and procedures to address student lateness to classes. These policies, procedures and corresponding sanctions should be clearly outlined in the student Code of Conduct and shared with parents and students. The lateness policy and procedures should be consistently implemented and reinforced regularly.
- The school leaders should review the existing afterschool programs and determine which student needs are currently not being met. Based on this assessment, school leaders should then explore opportunities, including collaborations with other campus schools and outside agencies, to enable them to offer a wider range of extracurricular activities to all students.

- School leaders should develop and implement consistent procedures for communicating with parents in their home languages and monitor that all teachers and school staff follow the policies. Additionally, the school leadership should ensure that regular and frequent feedback is provided to students and parents. Professional development for teachers as well as student and parent training should be provided to allow access to the online student management system for all stakeholders.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDING:

A review of documents and teacher interviews revealed to the review team that classroom teachers received insufficient PD to meet the specific learning needs of English language learners (ELLs) and at-risk students.

RECOMMENDATION:

School leaders should design a comprehensive, systematic plan for ensuring that all staff members receive on-going, sustained, research-based PD that targets strategies for educating ELLs and at-risk students. This should include sessions that provide teachers and school leaders with the scaffolding techniques to allow the simultaneous development of literacy and content as well as to address the other PD recommendations listed in this report.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- The school does not have a school librarian. The space designated as the campus library has not been opened. The number of nonfiction and beginner-level books for ELL students in classroom libraries is insufficient for the number of students in the school.
- Based on classroom observations and interviews, the reviewers found that students have limited availability and access to computers for research. As a result, students lack opportunities to develop technology and research skills that will allow them to be college and career ready and participate in the global economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should inventory current classroom resources and purchase additional nonfiction and beginner-level books to provide supplemental resources to promote student independence as learners. Additionally, school leaders from the campus should hire a librarian/library media specialist to support and reinforce reading, allow all students to conduct research, and explore opportunities for grants and supplemental funding in order to acquire additional books and re-open the school library.
- School leaders should identify high performing schools that have embedded instructional technology in the classroom and use successful models as a basis to inform and develop a

technology plan for the school. School leaders should prioritize the implementation of the technology plan in order for students to develop technology and research skills. PD should be provided to all staff to enable successful implementation. School leaders should monitor technology usage through observations and walkthroughs.

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 Common Core Learning Standards, Data Driven Instruction and the Annual Professional Performance Reviews for teacher effectiveness.