

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code	130200010005
District Name:	Beacon City School District
School Name:	Beacon High School
School Address:	101 Matteawan Road, Beacon, NY 12508
Principal:	John Sieverding, Interim Principal
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year - 1) - Comprehensive
Areas of Identification:	English Language Arts - Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students Mathematics - Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students Graduation Rate - All Students
Dates of On-site Review:	November 28-30, 2011

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

The school did not provide a mission statement to the review team before, during or after the visit, as requested.

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The building is clean and safe and the school environment is friendly and conducive to learning.
- There is an art gallery to display student art work. It is evident that students take pride in their art projects.
- Students are respectful to peers and adults.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- Although data are available, there was little evidence that teachers and administrators were using data to inform instruction, specifically for the identified subgroups, e.g., students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students.
- There was little evidence that teachers were using formative assessments to monitor student progress.
- There was no evidence of a standardized approach for the assessment of student work. Student work was displayed, but there was no evidence of the use of rubrics.
- The school is currently identified for graduation rate, which is currently 79 percent. Little evidence was available that the school is collecting, disaggregating and interpreting data to address this identified area.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A system of data analysis should be implemented to analyze subgroup data and set expectations for the use of data to inform instructional practices. The establishment of a schoolwide data team should be considered.
- School leaders should provide training to all staff on the use of data, including formative and interim assessments to monitor student progress. Staff should participate in regional trainings on Inquiry Teams and other professional development (PD) within the region.
- An expectation for the use of rubrics should be developed to assess student work, specifically for students with disabilities, and students should be taught to self-evaluate their growth. The rubrics should be explained to students and parents and monitored for effectiveness.
- A thorough analysis to identify root causes should be conducted and a Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) developed to address the identified causes and the subgroups in need of improvement.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Much of the instruction in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics observed by the review team was teacher directed. There was limited evidence that instruction was differentiated for students with disabilities to address individual learning needs. The curriculum did not always foster rigorous and engaging instruction and there was insufficient instruction in higher order thinking skills, problem solving or lessons based on project based learning. There was little evidence that students were provided with explicit strategies, e.g., metacognitive strategies, independent learning skills, needed to become independent learners.

- The co-teaching model was not effectively and consistently implemented in classrooms observed by the review team, and teaching assistants were not effectively used to support instruction.
- There was little evidence of a formally articulated curriculum aligned to the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Few curriculum documents were provided for review.
- Students seldom were aware of the learning goals. Goals were neither posted nor articulated during lessons.
- Students with disabilities do not have access to the full curriculum in all content areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leaders, with District support, should provide PD to staff on the use of differentiated instruction, student engagement, higher order thinking skills and co-teaching models. Teachers should provide regular opportunities for students to work cooperatively using differentiated instructional strategies and include project-based learning, inquiry based learning and higher order thinking skills as they plan their lessons and units. Lessons should include opportunities for students to develop strategies to become independent learners. School leaders should participate in all PD so they have the knowledge needed to monitor classrooms for best practices.
- School leaders should provide teachers with support, guidance, and PD opportunities that enable them to implement a more effective co-teaching model. Common planning time should be scheduled and structured so that co-teachers can equally share in the planning and delivery of effective instruction. School leaders should closely monitor co-teaching classroom practices and the use of teaching assistants to support effective instruction and should provide constructive, timely feedback to teachers during walkthroughs and observations.
- The District should work with the school on developing curriculum in all core areas, and ensure clear alignment with the current NYS Learning Standards. The curriculum must also be aligned to the new CCLS in ELA and mathematics. All curricula should be developed by knowledgeable, trained individuals who understand the key elements of curriculum development.

All teachers and school leaders should participate in PD on how to plan and implement a curriculum with rigor, as well as on delivery methods that are student-centered. The curriculum should be relied upon as the basis for assessing individual student mastery and progress. Walkthroughs and formal evaluations should include how well the teacher knows and implements the curriculum subject.

- School leaders should ensure that teachers explain learning goals to students and incorporate those learning objectives into their lessons. Teachers include a “Do Now,” “Essential Question” or other anticipatory set activity linked to the learning goal for each lesson. Teachers should begin to develop model lesson plans aligned with the CCLS, and school leaders should review lesson plans for alignment to the CCLS and ensure that lesson development is uniform and rigorous across grades and content areas.
- All students should have access, with appropriate modifications, to the same curriculum and Regents level courses, with rigorous and engaging instruction and high expectations.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- There has been a lack of consistent sustained leadership that has resulted in varied beliefs and expectations among staff. As a result, there is a lack of a clear vision or mission for all staff and students.
- Although a formal Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) exists, minimal time is spent on informal instructional walkthroughs to monitor and drive instructional practices. Schools leaders reported that minimal time is available during the school day to address instructional issues.
- Although there is evidence that teachers meet informally with inter-departmental peers in the “pods,” the current master schedule does not allow for formal common planning time with colleagues (co-teachers, departmental and/or interdepartmental). There are no clear directions or protocols for vertical and horizontal articulation among teachers.
- Class sizes and the number of adults in each room varied across all areas. Effective use of staff and teacher delivery models were inconsistent, especially in the co-teaching setting.
- There was no evidence of a formal system to involve parents in school improvement efforts. Although a newsletter is sent to parents, it is not sent on a regular schedule. Parents who were interviewed requested more information on the parent portal, especially information specific to student progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A clear school and District mission and vision, with a belief that all students can learn, should be developed and articulated. The school should establish clear expectations for all students and those expectations should be used to improve student achievement. The school leadership should clearly define academic expectations for staff and students. A focus on academic progress and achievement should become the school’s mission and vision and be monitored in the classroom and linked to measurable expectations.
- The school leadership should implement a classroom observation schedule that enables them to closely monitor the quality of teaching and learning within the school and provide written feedback or staff discussion about all formal, informal and walkthrough observations, including clear targets for improvement. Follow-up observations should be a regular part of the monitoring schedule.
- The schedule should be revised to plan for sufficient flexibility to permit common planning, and protocols and expectations established for use of this time.
- The current master schedule should be reviewed to ensure the effective use of resources, staff and space. Data should be collected and reviewed to ensure that the schedule meets the needs of all students, including students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students.
- A plan to include parents in school improvement efforts via membership on the school improvement team, the school website, newsletters and the parent portal should be developed and implemented.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- There is no shared decision-making team.
- There are few programs that recognize positive student behavior and performance.
- Teachers and school leaders voiced concerns about the current master schedule, i.e., whether or not it provides ample time for instruction, both during and after school, and sufficiently addresses teacher mobility concerns.
- Although Academic Intervention Services (AIS) are now being provided, AIS is not available in all core areas. The lessons observed by the review team were not differentiated.
- Teachers reported that substitute coverage was an area of concern, and that often teaching assistants are left to instruct special education classes.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leader should institute an active shared-decision-making team to support school improvement initiatives. The team should include all stakeholders, including representatives from staff teams, parents, and community supporters.
- A system to support positive behavior, address cultural diversity and provide character education should be developed. Incentives and rewards that exemplify the school vision should be designed. Regular, frequent opportunities should be provided to celebrate students who embody the vision of the school. Student achievement targets and goals should be posted and displayed to serve as reminders of the expectations for high performance.
- The school leadership and the shared decision-making team should review the master schedule and evaluate its effectiveness to ensure ample instructional and common planning time and minimize the level of teacher mobility.
- AIS should be made available in all core areas. The criteria for AIS should be reviewed and communicated to staff, students and parents. Exit criteria based on multiple measures should be developed. School leaders should monitor its successful implementation through observations and walkthroughs.
- The current substitute coverage for classrooms with students with disabilities should be reviewed to ensure that teaching assistants are working under the direct supervision of a teacher. The school and District should work with local colleges and community-based organizations to recruit substitute teachers. Data on the effectiveness of the current master schedule should be collected and other options considered as needed.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- The school PD plan has not been updated since 2009. The existing plan is neither comprehensive nor aligned with current school goals..
- There is no process or clear expectation for sustained, embedded PD and little or no monitoring of implementation by the school leadership.
- Although there is a mentoring program for teachers, there is no formal mentoring program for school leaders.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leaders, with District support, should develop and design a comprehensive PD plan that is aligned with school goals and needs and ensures the involvement of teachers. The plan should be developed based on the highest priorities identified by the leadership team and focus on no more than four to five priorities. Depth of implementation is critical. School leaders should use an evidence-based observational process to ensure teachers are held accountable for incorporating all the skills developed within PD activities into their instruction.
- The school leaders should consider ways to ensure that PD is embedded and supported. The school might consider hiring a literacy coach, using professional learning communities (PLCs), book talks and incorporating PD into department and staff meetings.
- The District should develop a mentoring program to support new and existing administrators in developing their skills as instructional leaders.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDING:

Technology is available but is not used to enhance learning opportunities and student engagement.

RECOMMENDATION:

The school and District leadership should provide training and support to staff to ensure they have the necessary strategies for integrating technology into lessons. Teachers should be provided with on-going PD in using technology and integrating it into lesson plans to support interactive learning and improve instructional practice. School leaders should monitor technology use 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 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.