

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

<b>BEDS Code:</b>	280100010008
<b>District Name:</b>	Glen Cove City School District
<b>School Name:</b>	Robert M. Finley Middle School
<b>School Address:</b>	Forest Avenue, Glen Cove, NY 11542
<b>Principal:</b>	Anael Alston, Principal
<b>Accountability Phase/Category:</b>	Improvement (year- 1) - Focused
<b>Area of Identification:</b>	English Language Arts - Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners
<b>Dates of On-site Review:</b>	January 17-19, 2012

**PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT**

“Our mission is to develop the intellect and character of **EVERY** student in measurable ways.”

**PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS**

- The school began re-evaluating programs and structures in school year (SY) 2010-11 and instituted the following new initiatives in the fall of 2011:
  - the use of standardized academic progress monitoring in grade six, and Academic Intervention Services (AIS) in grades seven and eight;
  - the restoration of a period of AIS every other day;
  - the replacement of the Reading and Writing Workshop with a targeted approach to literacy;
  - the introduction of 90 minutes of literacy daily for grade six students;
  - a shift in the scheduling of professional development (PD), lessening the need for substitute teachers; and
  - the identification of a computer-assisted English language arts (ELA) intervention program to support students with disabilities in self-contained settings and students in English as a second language (ESL) programs.

- Teachers and supervisors are participating in on-going training in the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and curriculum writing.

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

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

##### **FINDINGS:**

- There are students who are identified as belonging to both subgroups for which the school was identified, i.e., students with disabilities and English language learners; however, an analysis of data to determine trends for these students has not been conducted.
- Data has been analyzed quarterly to identify students who have failed more than one subject; however, the data has not been analyzed by student subgroup.
- The school has moved to an eight period day and eliminated an Assistant Principal (AP) position and formal common planning time. No structure was put in place to allow for common time to discuss students or interventions.
- Entering students who are not native English language speakers did not received initial diagnostic screening in Native Language Arts (NLA) and mathematics skills in their native languages.
- Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA) is used to monitor student progress and growth in ELA and mathematics; however, the tools were available in English only.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- A comprehensive analysis of ELA and mathematics data for students who are both students with disabilities and ELLs should be conducted to inform instruction. Student performance on the ELA and mathematics NWEA should be included in this analysis.
- Student data should be tracked each marking period by subgroup to identify trends and modify instruction for students at-risk, particularly students belonging to identified subgroups.
- An alternative scheduling of the eight-period day should be implemented to allow for common planning time.
- Reliable screening tools should be employed for entering students to assess their functional level in mathematics and their native language.
- Testing venues that will optimize accuracy and reliability of performance data regarding ELA and mathematics skills for non-English speaking students, i.e., 1:1 testing for beginner ESL students should be investigated and implemented.

## **II. TEACHING AND LEARNING**

### **FINDINGS:**

- There is no content specialist in ELA at the District or school level, resulting in a lack of coordination of instructional strategies in ELA.
- There is no consistent approach to reading, writing, listening and speaking across the content areas for the school and District.
- Differentiated instruction was not consistently used in all classes visited by the review team.
- The level of instructional rigor and student performance expectations varied in classrooms visited by the review team.
- Evidence of alignment of ESL and core curricula for teaching language through content was neither documented nor demonstrated in the classrooms that were visited by the review team.
- The AIS Program lacked comprehensive guidelines that identify best practice and skills needed to increase student success. Progress monitoring assessment data is not extensively used to guide classroom instruction in the AIS Program.
- In some classes visited by the review team, interactive whiteboards were used to display text, but not to provide visuals and manipulatives. The wall space in many classrooms was not used to support instruction.
- Content and language goals and objectives for ELLs in general education classes were not clearly articulated and documented in the lesson plans used by teachers in the classrooms visited by the review team.
- The beginner ESL class serves all beginner students. This structure makes it difficult to differentiate instruction by grade level across content areas and meet the needs of students who are new entrants and/or Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) students.
- In some instances, when a student completed work, there was no additional work provided. In several instances, students were asked to help other students in the class.
- Before and afterschool extra help was not systematically scheduled for students or teachers.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The District should ensure there is expertise available to the school in the area of ELA and that ELA leadership works with directors of ESL and special education to scaffold differentiated instruction, employ best instructional strategies, and establish benchmarks to monitor progress in mainstream, ESL and special education classrooms.

- School and District leadership should investigate the effectiveness of the current reading program in kindergarten through grade eight. Leaders should create the infrastructure to develop and execute a systematic and consistent approach to reading, writing, listening and speaking across the content areas for the school and District and ensure its alignment to the CCLS.
- Differentiated instruction should be implemented consistently across the curriculum and benchmarks established to monitor progress.
- A common understanding of what constitutes instructional rigor should be established schoolwide. The inclusion of higher order thinking skills and questioning techniques should be incorporated across the curriculum, which should be aligned with the CCLS.
- An aligned ESL and core curricula should be developed and implemented to ensure the teaching of language through content. ESL teachers should be included in the development of the comprehensive ELA and mathematics curricula to provide strategies and best practices that promote language acquisition and establish benchmarks to monitor progress.
- Comprehensive AIS guidelines that identify best practice and the skills student need to increase their success should be developed and implemented. On-going progress monitoring and other formative assessment data should be used to guide classroom instruction in the AIS Program.
- Teachers should receive additional support and training in the implementation of the effective use of whiteboard technology and classroom wall space.
- Lesson plans should include content and language goals and objectives for students in identified subgroups.
- The school should explore the use of a bilingual teaching assistant in the ESL beginner class to enable greater differentiation of instruction and support.
- When a student completes a classroom assignment prior to the end of a class period, there should be additional opportunities for student learning available.
- The school should schedule additional opportunities for teachers to provide targeted extra help before and after school. Ideally, the extra help sessions should be posted in the classroom.

### **III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- The elimination of a full-time AP position resulted in the increase in management responsibilities for the school leaders; this impacted the time available for instructional leadership and the implementation of new initiatives.
- School leadership participation in PD was limited to mandated CCLS trainings.

- There was a lack of clarity and documentation of the responsibilities of the content area specialists. This lack of formalized structure created gaps in the implementation and supervision of curricular initiatives.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The District should ensure school leadership capacity to fulfill school level instructional leadership and management responsibilities.
- To maximize the capacity of instructional leaders, the District should ensure access to relevant PD for school leadership.
- The District should document and clearly articulate roles and responsibilities of content area specialists. School leadership should be included in all meetings with central office and content area specialists that include matters relevant to the middle school.

#### **IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**

##### **FINDINGS:**

- School in-service and department meetings did not focus on promoting the best strategies for student achievement.
- The same level of instructional support was not available to all intermediate level ESL students in general education classes.
- The eight period day schedule has resulted in a loss of instructional time for students and a decrease in the provision of additional programming to address individual student needs in ELA and mathematics within the course of the school day.
- No common planning time for push-in teachers was formally scheduled.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school leadership should focus in-service time to promote the best strategies and instructional methodologies needed to support special education students and ELLs.
- The coordinator of ESL, in consultation with the ESL and general education teachers and school leadership, should review various ESL instructional support models and make a recommendation to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction as to the best model for implementation to support intermediate level students in general education classes.
- Sufficient instructional time should be provided for students in the areas of ELA and mathematics to address individual student needs within the course of the school day.
- Common planning time should be scheduled for ESL and core curriculum teachers.

## **V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **FINDINGS:**

- Teachers using the newly introduced progress monitoring/data processing program were not fully familiar with the data and curriculum modules of the program or how to use the data to inform instruction, especially for use with students in identified subgroups.
- PD provided to general education staff did not focus on meeting the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs in general education classrooms.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Additional PD in progress monitoring and the use of this data to inform instruction across the curriculum should be provided for teachers and school leadership. The role and responsibilities that content area specialists and school leadership play in supporting this initiative should be clearly articulated.
- General education staff should be provided with PD in the areas of instructional strategies for students in identified subgroups who have been mainstreamed into general education classes.

## **VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

### **FINDINGS:**

- Not all classrooms observed by the review team were equipped with the same technology – interactive whiteboard technology was not available in all special education and ESL classrooms.
- A needs analysis was conducted to identify instructional and training needs of the staff.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- White board technology should be made available for all students. Participation in requisite interactive whiteboard training, especially for teachers who provide instruction for students with disabilities and ELLs, should be encouraged.
- Outstanding needs identified for staff development and technology should be addressed.

## **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.