

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

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	280517030011
District Name:	Hicksville Union Free School District
School Name:	Hicksville Middle School
School Address:	215 Jerusalem Avenue, Hicksville, NY 11801
Principal:	Mara Jorisch
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year- 1) - Focused
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts – Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners
Dates of On-site Review:	February 28- March 1, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“Hicksville Middle School is a safe school community dedicated to helping each student reach his or her fullest potential - academically, creatively, emotionally, physically, and socially. We are committed to assisting students in becoming productive citizens who value learning and respect themselves and others; they will embrace the diversity of their community. Students will learn to be effective communicators, problem solvers and decision makers using a variety of tools including technology. Our mission recognizes the development needs of each child and respects each individual’s worth.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- Mutual respect is a tenet of the school and is observable in classrooms, hallways, and larger settings.
- Academic rigor is evidenced throughout the educational program. The same core curriculum is provided to students with disabilities, English language learners (ELLs) and general education students. Students with disabilities, except for students who take the alternate assessments, access the general education curriculum through an integrated co-teaching model and complete inclusion.
- Literacy folders have been instituted in English language arts (ELA) grades six through eight classes to standardize and support instruction in writing and provide students with guided practice in applying meta-cognitive evaluations to their written work in accordance with the implementation of the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for ELA.
- There is evidence of a strong home-school partnership; parents indicated that the school provides “the right education in the right way at the right time” to meet the individual needs of all students.

Translators are used to provide written parent communication in Spanish and Urdu. Interpreters for Spanish, Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, and American Sign Language are available to facilitate parent conferences.

- Secondary chairpersons for guidance and special education provide support and facilitate articulation of ninth graders between the middle and high schools. To develop content-area knowledge and articulate the needs of students with disabilities in core content areas, special education teachers attend select core subject department meetings and staff development sessions.
- Computer technology, in multiple forms including web-based programs, is available for student and teacher use throughout the day and is also used by the District twice a year to conduct progress monitoring.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- Interim assessments are scheduled only for science classes for the 2011-12 school year. All staff is working on meeting the Regents Reform Agenda to incorporate interim assessments for other content areas during the 2012-13 school year.
- Student “Goal Setting Worksheets” are completed in ELA and mathematics classes in a collaboration between students and teachers and are then copied and distributed to teachers of reading, Academic Intervention Services (AIS), and English as a Second Language (ESL).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Interim assessments should be developed for all content areas to inform instructional decision-making. Teachers’ use of formative assessments should be expanded to better inform instructional decisions.
- Student Goal Setting Worksheets should be expanded to include an additional goal dedicated to strengthening literacy in the content areas, to be incorporated into instruction by content area teachers. Students should be provided with the Student Goal Setting Worksheets, to be placed in student agenda books and used by students as a guide to self-assess progress toward meeting individualized academic goals.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- At the beginning of the 2011 school year, not all lessons incorporated measurable and achievable learning objectives, as noted in the Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SEIS) walkthrough. In January 2012, the school began implementing an initiative to increase the use of measurable and achievable learning objectives across the curriculum.

- Weekly articulation forms that identify instructional skills are prepared by ELA teachers. The distribution of these forms is limited to ESL, reading, AIS, and special education teachers.
- The master schedule limits structured common planning time between and among ESL, special education, and general education teachers. The current use of team preparation periods limits opportunities for structured common planning due to scheduled meetings with parents, school leadership, and curriculum supervisors.
- Literacy folders have been instituted only in ELA classes in grades six through eight to standardize and support instruction in writing and provide students with opportunities to apply meta-cognitive evaluations to their written work.
- *Fast ForWord* has been introduced as an evidence-based computer program to improve student reading skills and monitor progress toward instructional goals.
- The ESL program is currently based on a model whereby English language learners (ELLs) daily receive either one or two classes of ESL and are integrated into general education classes for the remainder of the school day. School and District leadership are proposing a co-teaching model be instituted for the 2012-13 school year.
- Analysis of assessment data in ELA indicates that at-risk students need to improve their skills in reading for information and understanding.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Measurable and achievable learning objectives should be incorporated in all lessons across the curriculum and benchmarks established to monitor progress.
- The distribution of and access to weekly articulation forms should be expanded to include all subject areas across the curriculum. An electronic method for distribution of articulation forms should be identified and communicated to school staff.
- School and District leadership should identify increased opportunities for structured common planning time between and among special education, ESL, and general education teachers.
- Literacy folder requirements should be refined to articulate a continuum for writing across grade levels in ELA and aligned to the CCLS. The expansion of literacy folders into other core subject areas should be explored.
- A comprehensive data analysis to assess the effectiveness of *Fast ForWord* in improving student reading skills should be completed.
- A co-teaching instructional model for ESL and ELA for targeted ELLs who do not reach proficiency on the April 2012 NYS ELA assessments should be developed and implemented for the 2012-13 school year.

- The use of informational text in literacy instruction across the content areas should be increased to promote skills in reading for information and understanding, in alignment with the CCLS.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- Discussion of best practices and instructional strategies occurs during single-subject departmental meetings and staff professional development (PD) sessions, but not typically during schoolwide staff meetings.
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) strategies are used to promote appropriate social-emotional student behaviors, but have not been evaluated for effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Cross-curricular collegial discussions on best instructional practices should be included in schoolwide staff meetings.
- The effectiveness of PBIS initiatives should be systematically evaluated.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- While membership in both the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) and Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTA) is active, the school has identified a goal to maximize participation in both associations.
- Bi-weekly meetings of the school “Academic Intervention Team” reflect an under-representation of teachers from core academic classes.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Participation in the PTSA and SEPTA should be increased in order to further strengthen the home-school connection.
- Academic Intervention Team meetings should be scheduled on a rotational basis to allow greater representation of core academic teachers in the review of student progress.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- The mechanism for job-embedded turnkey training during staff or department meetings for teachers participating in out-of-district PD is underutilized.
- PD on best practices for ELLs and former ELLs is not being provided to the extent it was in past years.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School and District leadership should ensure that teachers attending out-of-district professional conferences share information and best practices with staff at monthly staff or department meetings.
- PD on the implementation of best practices to support instruction for current and former ELLs across the curriculum should be reintroduced and regularly reinforced.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDING:

The school has introduced the integration of SMART Board technologies and iPADS into instruction and has provided PD to support this integration using mounted and portable SMART Board units and class sets of iPADS. PD has been introductory and has not yet focused on advanced interactive features of this technology and how it can be aligned with CCLS goals.

RECOMMENDATION:

PD in the use of advanced interactive features of newly introduced technology should be continued and expanded to support the implementation of CCLS.

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.