NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	261600010046
District Name:	Rochester City School District
School Name:	Charles Carroll School No. 46
School Address:	250 Newcastle Road, Rochester, NY 14610
Principal:	T'Hani Pantoja
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year- 1) - Focused
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts - African American Students and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	March 26-28, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

"Our mission at School No. 46 is to develop students who have a positive attitude toward learning and are committed to acquiring the skills necessary to become independent and responsible adults. Our students will be provided with the necessary academic and social scaffolds so that they can learn, access information, and apply knowledge in decision-making and problem-solving endeavors, both individually and cooperatively with others. We will develop students who exhibit strong sense of self and personal heritage, while acknowledging and appreciating cultural diversity and responsible citizenship."

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The teaching staff, parents, and children who were interviewed expressed strong support for the school.
- The majority of students observed by the review team in classes, hallways, and boarding buses were polite, respectful, and cheerful. Most staff members consistently implement schoolwide positive behavior supports.
- A cadre of teachers at the school has leadership, technology and instructional skills and can serve as resources and models for other teachers.
- The school has many active community partnerships, including businesses and educational institutions.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- Data analysis is not consistently used as a tool for supporting school improvement.

- Teachers are not effectively using data sources, i.e., summative, interim, or formative, to inform instructional planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should revise the current system for disaggregating and analyzing data to focus more closely on student-by-student, class-by-class, and subgroup-by-subgroup analyses, in addition to the whole school and grade-level monitoring. The school's improvement plan should require all teachers to include item analysis and predictive results to inform instruction. Particular attention should be given to monitoring the development of student skills as they move from grade to grade, checking for vertical alignment in curriculum programs in each content area.

- School leaders should ensure that all teachers maintain accurate and systematic assessment data. The data should be used regularly during team meetings to evaluate student growth, plan and guide instruction, and collaboratively plan effective lessons that address student needs. School leaders' walkthrough observations should focus on how effectively data analysis is used by teachers to inform instructional planning and delivery.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Classroom observations and a review of lesson plans reveal a lack of effective planning for the systemic teaching of content, a lack of rigorous instruction, minimal use of engagement strategies, and no formal planning for instruction in higher order thinking skills.

- Most lessons plans in classes observed by the review team do not have a systematic structure that builds upon a related set of learning goals. For example, the "Do Now" activity, which should begin the lesson, was often not closely aligned to the lesson that followed.

- The majority of classroom instruction is teacher-directed, with little variation of instructional strategies.

- Lessons often do not include explicit teaching points, so students are frequently unsure of what they are expected to learn during a lesson. Teachers also do not provide practice sessions for independent work in order to ensure that students have mastered a concept before moving on to the next teaching point.

- Learning time is often not used effectively. Pacing and sequencing of activities is often weak and negatively impacts student attention span, causing some students to disengage from learning. Also, in many instances, the teacher does not supervise students in small group centers. While working with one group, the other students are allowed to socialize rather than complete assignments. The result was that students spend significantly more time socializing than working on a learning task.

- Loss of instructional time is evident as students transition from one activity to another and from room to room.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leadership should ensure that a major component of the professional development (PD) plan focuses on ensuring that all teachers become expert at creating hands-on lesson and unit plans aligned with New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS.) This should enable teachers to create rigorous, engaging instructional units that directly teach students strategies that promote student higher level thinking, problem solving, and research skills in all content areas. Once teachers have learned to develop effective lessons, they should ensure that students are actively involved in the learning process.

- The school leadership should also review various lesson planning templates, identify the various components of each, and select one for general use. During the selection process, teachers should learn to identify the major components found in most templates and identify the underlying structure of instruction. Collaborative lesson and unit development and sharing of plans can also foster discussions about effective instructional strategies and focus planning on developing the craft of unit design.

- The learning expected by the CCLS requires a hands-on, inquiry-based, student-centered approach to learning. Students are required to learn complex skills, such as analysis of important concepts that are taught most effectively through small group or, sometimes, individual work, gathering, analyzing and organizing information. The teacher, in these instances, designs the challenge, but does not "tell" students the answers. Teachers should, as a part of their unit development, plan for and implement a wide range of instructional activities and challenges that create engaging and varied tasks.

- All lessons should be designed around a specific set of related learning goals. Lessons should begin with an introduction to the goals, which are discussed throughout. Students and teachers should also review their understanding at the lesson's end through a closure activity that assesses the degree to which students understand the learning experience.

- Effective classroom management strategies, combined with effective lesson planning, are essential. Many of the difficulties related to ineffective pacing and sequencing are related to ineffective lesson planning. A second aspect of ineffective pacing is often a lack of urgency on the part of the teacher, combined with ineffective classroom management strategies. The school leader should set an expectation that every teacher uses time wisely and with a sense of urgency. The school leaders, with District support, should provide PD for teachers in effective classroom management strategies and ensure that students learn to follow procedures routinely. Students need to learn to work independently, and teachers need to develop strategies that ensure independent work time is productive. Pacing and classroom management practices should be a regular part of the school leaders' regular walkthrough observations and should be discussed during school meetings. Timely feedback

should be provided to teachers, and all teachers should be held accountable for incorporating strategies learned in PD into classroom practice.

- The school leadership should explore alternate scheduling that allows longer instructional blocks and more time-on-task for students, e.g., block scheduling, and decreases the number of breaks between classes. In order for block scheduling to work effectively, teachers should have strong lesson planning strategies and understand effective classroom time management.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- While school leaders attempt to introduce best practices through PD, some teachers do not hold themselves accountable for implementing the instructional strategies learned.

- School leaders offer PD to teachers; however PD needs a more precise focus on the issues that will make the greatest difference in raising student achievement.

- School leaders do not have a structured walkthrough process or participate regularly in leader-led team meetings that focus on continuous improvement of instructional strategies, use of technology, or data-driven assessment of individual student needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders, with District support, should work toward developing a more collaborative leadership process within the school, with staff and parents helping to develop the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) and agreeing that once decisions are made, everyone is responsible and accountable for implementation.

- The School Leadership Team (SLT) should ensure that the school PD plan incorporates student data, fully reflects identified needs, takes place as agreed upon and is monitored to assess its effectiveness. Teachers and school leaders should plan together for application of new skills and the timeline for implementation.

- The school leadership should implement a classroom observation schedule to monitor more closely the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Written feedback should be provided for all formal, informal and walkthrough observations, including clear targets for improvement. Follow-up observations should be included in the schedule to check on progress. The school, with District support, should develop lesson observation protocols, including training for school leaders in writing effective teacher feedback. The outcomes of lesson observations should provide a focus for the school PD plan.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- Some classroom environments are not conducive to learning, as teachers do not organize their classrooms effectively to promote collaborative learning and student participation.

- Some school staff have low expectations for the academic achievement of students and cite external factors such as student apathy, disinterest, and lack of parental involvement as the root causes of the school accountability status.

- Teacher collaboration is minimal, and common planning time is not used effectively to bring about improvements in teaching, learning, and student achievement.

- The co-teaching model is appropriately implemented in only one classroom.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leadership should provide PD in classroom management strategies, emphasizing how the physical organization of the classroom impacts student learning. School leaders should provide practical support as teachers transition to an organization that supports active learning and implementation of a curriculum aligned to the P-12 CCLS.

- The school leader, with District support, should identify high performing schools that serve similar student populations to observe students in effectively structured and supported classrooms. PD should be provided to enable successful implementation of clear behavioral and academic expectations for all staff and students. These expectations should be a central part of school activities and be written, monitored in the classroom, and linked to actions that focus on high expectations and academic rigor. All staff should cease citing external factors as excuses for underperformance and focus on improving the school's effectiveness for all students.

- School leaders should ensure that the school schedule includes daily common planning time for teacher teams that include all teachers working together with the same student groups or grade levels. Expectations for the use of that time should be explicit, with reporting to the school leader of agendas and work completed.

- Teachers should be provided with support, guidance, and, where appropriate, professional development (PD) to implement a more effective co-teaching model. Teachers should be given opportunities to visit successful co-teaching classrooms. The co-teachers should be given scheduled collaborative planning time to ensure best practices in co-teaching instruction. The school leaders should closely monitor co-teaching classroom practices and provide constructive feedback to teachers. Co-teaching should be expanded to more classrooms as teachers develop expertise.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- Current PD activities are neither an integral aspect of the CEP nor based on data-driven analysis. In addition, PD is not structured in a way that provides strategies that are practical for teachers to implement or scaffold to develop teacher competencies over time. There is little follow up or support for implementation.

- The school leaders and teachers acknowledge that increased collaboration and team building efforts are essential if the school is to progress. Some teachers candidly report that a lack of trust among colleagues affects the school climate and progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leadership and teachers should work together to create a structured and detailed PD plan that is aligned with the school CEP goals and addresses the differentiated needs of the staff and the students.

- The school leadership should develop ongoing PD that introduces and reinforces strategies that support improved instruction and student achievement. If funding allows, the District should provide a school instructional coach with the skills to support implementation through ongoing, embedded coaching. Teachers should work collaboratively to implement a wider range of instructional strategies and formative assessment strategies, as well as developing lessons that promote greater student engagement in the learning process and encourage development of higher order thinking skills. School leaders should support and monitor progress.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- The technology in many classrooms, including SMART Boards and laptops, is underutilized and not effectively integrated into instruction. Technology is not always used to its best advantage for motivating students and creating student-centered instruction.

- There is a lack of hands-on and cross-curricular instruction that would provide opportunities for students to experience real world learning that would expand their horizons. For example, in the past the school had a project led by General Electric (GE) that engaged students and provided rigorous cross-curricular instruction. This project has lapsed and no comparable programs currently exist. Teachers do not currently develop engaging, rigorous units that would provide the types of real-world learning that the CCLS supports.

- Some classrooms walls are so cluttered with print that it is difficult to determine the focus of instruction. Displays that are meant to assist students in recalling facts are overwhelmed by the number of items on the walls and instead distract and confuse students.

- The District provides only limited assistance in response to the school leader's requests for extra support from ELA and mathematics coaches. Currently, the number of hours that librarians and content area coaches provide at the school has been reduced.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leadership, with District support, should provide practical, hands-on training and support to all teachers to ensure that they have the skills to integrate technology effectively into lesson development and to use technology, such as laptop computers and SMART Boards, effectively during instruction.

- The school should, as a part of transitioning to CCLS, build the capacity of staff for developing rigorous cross-curricular instructional units, e.g., by creating a single schoolwide unit around a single theme, with each grade and class designing a specific component.

- Teachers should update or rotate materials posted on classroom walls and remove items that are not currently being applied to instruction.

- The District should re-evaluate the resources provided for the school program and ensure that the school has equitable resources based on the specific needs of the school.

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.