NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	2616000100003
District Name:	Rochester City School District
School Name:	Nathaniel Rochester Community School No.3
School Address:	85 Adams St., Rochester, NY 14608
Principal:	Connie Wehner
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year - 1) - Comprehensive
Areas of Identification:	English Language Arts - All students; African American Students; Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students Mathematics - All students; African American Students; Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	March 5-7, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

"It is our mission to educate, collaborate, and prepare. Nathaniel Rochester Community School as a place for your child to grow from a young child to a young adult in an environment of caring. Students are part of a positive educational, social and emotional community where they can continually grow to be responsible and respectful. Our students, from age 4 to age 16, coexist in an atmosphere of support, encouragement and success."

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS:

- Relationships among staff and students are generally respectful, and students are friendly and responsible as they move throughout the building.

- The school offers many opportunities for parents to become involved and participate in activities and events. There is a dedicated core group of parents who volunteer and are very involved in the school, providing a positive sense of community.

- The school has a parent liaison, a social worker, and a school psychologist who all contribute to student support in the building.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDING:

There is evidence that most teachers are increasing their use of data to inform instructional planning and modify instruction.

RECOMMENDATION:

The school data coaches should continue working with teachers, providing professional development (PD) in using of student performance data to create instructional groups, design skill-based activities for small groups of students with similar needs, and focus on identified student subgroups. Data should be used as a focal point for driving school improvement. Discussion about data should be the basis for meetings at every level and should be at the core of all school improvement efforts.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- There is evidence that lesson planning is not a priority for most teachers, and teachers are inconsistent in their ability to differentiate their instruction to improve student learning outcomes.

- There is evidence that the District curriculum framework is not followed consistently by a majority of teachers; consequently, some content and instructional practices lack rigor.

- Many lessons observed by the review team were entirely teacher-directed and did not use a range of strategies to accommodate the differing and diverse learning needs of students. Many students were not engaged in learning.

- Available technology in many classrooms, including SMART Boards and laptops, was underutilized and not effectively integrated into instruction.

- There is evidence, based on both student achievement results and classroom observations by the review team, that some of the co-teaching classes are not effective.

- In the majority of lessons, student learning goals based on standards were neither developed nor displayed. Few students were able to articulate what they were supposed to be learning. Teachers did not routinely refer to learning objectives or check that students had achieved them.

- Few examples of differentiated instruction were observed by the review team. There was some evidence in some classrooms that data was used to group students or match tasks to the differing ability levels of the students, but this was not consistent across grade levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders and instructional coaches should continue to provide professional development (PD) opportunities for teachers on a variety of instructional strategies to promote differentiation of instruction, especially in co-teaching classrooms. Strategies should focus on ensuring that tasks match the academic needs of identified subgroups. School leaders should regularly monitor teachers' planning and instructional practice in the classroom to ensure that differentiated activities are in place throughout the school. PD should also be provided on the use of data to drive lesson planning and instruction. Ongoing, individualized PD should be provided for teachers who continue to struggle with using data to match work to the individual needs of students.

- School leaders, including instructional coaches, should ensure teachers are familiar with and use the District's curriculum frameworks. The District should ensure that the District curriculum is aligned with the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for ELA, literacy and mathematics.

- The School Leadership Team and instructional coaches should rigorously monitor classroom instructional practices and provide on-going, quality feedback to teachers. School leaders should ensure that teachers are held accountable for implementing strategies to address identified areas for improvement and that teachers incorporate differentiation strategies learned through PD into their classroom practice.

- Training and support should be provided to targeted teachers to ensure that they have the skills and competencies to effectively use technology, including laptop computers and SMART Boards. School leaders should ensure that strategies learned in PD are fully implemented in the classroom so that technology is routinely integrated into teaching and learning.

- Ongoing training and support should be provided to teachers using the co-teaching model. School leaders and coaches should ensure general education and special education teachers who are co-teaching have adequate time to plan together and that special education teachers participate in team meetings and receive targeted PD in areas of need, such as differentiation, formative assessment strategies, and use of data to drive instruction, as well as in any other areas determined by observation or teacher requests.

- Through collaboration during common planning time and PD opportunities, teachers should ensure that all student work is appropriately challenging and demanding. Teachers should provide regular opportunities for students to work collaboratively and to become more proactive learners. School leaders should regularly observe lessons to monitor for rigorous, intentional learning.

- School leaders should continue to provide PD opportunities for teachers on a wide range of instructional strategies to promote differentiation of instruction. The focus of the PD and teachers' work with data coaches should emphasize the use of data to drive lesson planning and instruction. Strategies should focus on ensuring that tasks match the academic needs of identified subgroups. School leaders should regularly monitor teacher planning and instructional practice in the classroom to ensure that differentiated activities are in place throughout the school. Ongoing PD should be provided for teachers who continue to struggle with using data to match work to the individual needs of students.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- Although a formal Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process exists, there are limited informal instructional walkthroughs.

- The responsibility for discipline in the school, assigned primarily to a single school leader, takes nearly all of that leader's time, leaving no time to act as an instructional leader or to assume other duties.

- School leaders do not monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in an effective manner to bring about sustained improvement in classroom practice.

- School leaders do not set high expectations for the performance of all students and staff. They have no strategic plan that clearly and specifically outlines the roles for key staff or how progress towards challenging and achievable goals will be measured. A culture of high achievement is not fully embraced by all teachers and school leaders.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should ensure that the monitoring of teaching and learning is a high priority. They should develop a plan for regular, frequent informal walkthroughs that are shared with teaching staff and result in data that drive instructional practices.

- School leaders should review the assignments of their team members to ensure an appropriate balance of responsibilities.

- 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 should seek support from the District in developing 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's PD plan.

- The school leadership, with the support of the District, should create a rigorous Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) to improve achievement. School leaders should articulate a clear vision and strategic plan that drives the school towards high student achievement and clearly outlines the responsibilities of staff and leaders. The plan should include goals, action plans, and PD, and should use all resources available through the District. The implementation of the CEP should be regularly monitored and its impact on student achievement measured.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- There is evidence that Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program is not used consistently by all staff throughout the school.

- There is evidence that the rate of teacher turnover and or transfer negatively impacts many improvement efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should ensure that the PBIS program is implemented consistently across the school and should evaluate its impact on improving student behavior. The behavior policy should be displayed and regularly discussed across the school, including in classrooms, in order to promote positive behavioral expectations. Targeted training on use of PBIS should be provided as needed to ensure this occurs.

- The District should review policies regarding teacher transfers in order to minimize the impact of transfers in schools identified for improvement.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDING:

A summary of PD needs in this report include:

- effective implementation of the co-teaching model;

- using data to drive instruction; and

- use of differentiation, high level questioning techniques, formative assessment, PBIS, and technology.

RECOMMENDATION:

School leaders should create a structured and detailed PD plan that is aligned with the school CEP goals and promotes improved quality of teaching and learning. The plan should consider the differentiated needs of the staff and students. Implementation and monitoring of both the PD Plan and CEP by the school and District should focus on improving student performance and the quality of instruction and learning in the classroom.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDING:

There are no findings in this area.

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.