



Questions and Answers 2011-2012 School Quality Reviews

The questions and answers below are divided into the following sections: School Quality Review (SQR)-Basic, SQR-Focused/Comprehensive, SQR-General, Students with Disabilities, Differentiated Accountability, School Improvement Grants, Comprehensive Educational Plans, and Title I. Thank you to all who have contributed by sending questions to Albanysit@mail.nysed.gov.

School Quality Review (SQR) – Basic

1. Who completes the Quality Indicators (QI) document?

The principal or school leadership team initially completes the QI document. The district's SQR team verifies the information.

2. Who might be considered to be a Content Area or Subgroup Specialist?

A Curriculum Coordinator and/or a Special Education Director may be considered content/subgroup specialists. In addition, the Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SEIS) and/or the Regional Bilingual Education Regional Network (RBE-RN) Specialist as assigned to the school by the State, also serve as subgroup specialists.

3. At the Focused and Comprehensive levels, the State Education Department (SED) will assign someone to be the lead for the on-site review in non-Title I schools. Is there any difference in the process for Basic schools?

In non-Title I schools, Focused & Comprehensive on-site SQRs are led by SED Liaisons, most likely someone from the Office of Accountability. A Basic SQR is conducted by the school district and does not require an on-site "external" SQR team.



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- 4. The Board Of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) District Superintendents (DS's) are responsible for ensuring the completion of the review for Title I schools, including reviewing the reports. Does someone else (e.g., an assigned SED staff member) review the reports from non-Title I schools?**

The BOCES DSs are responsible for ensuring the completion of the review for all Basic SQRs, Title I and non-Title I, which means the DS's would review all the Basic reports.

SQR Focused/Comprehensive

- 5. Who completes the QI document?**

The principal or school leadership team initially completes the QI document. The on-site SQR team verifies the information.

- 6. Who might be considered to be a Content Area or Subgroup Specialist?**

A Curriculum Coordinator and/or a Special Education Director may be considered content/subgroup specialists. In addition, the SESIS and/or the RBE-RN Specialist as assigned to the school by the State, also serve as subgroup specialists.

- 7. Is there any flexibility within the timeframes that were established for completing various steps in the process?**

According to the time lines, the due date for all SQR reports is January 31. With that in mind, it might be necessary to prioritize the on-site Focused/Comprehensive reviews so that those visits and reports are completed first. If an extension is needed, please request one.

SQR - General

- 8. Where can the forms needed to begin gathering the data necessary to complete the district's SQR be found?**

P-12 Program Offices - Office of Accountability – School Improvement Team – School Quality Reviews

http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/School_Improvement/SQR.html



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9. Do Assistant Superintendents have to do a walkthrough for SQR?

A walkthrough will be conducted by a SESIS, if assigned, as part of the onsite team review for Focused and Comprehensive SQR's with an identified subgroup of students with disabilities. Additional classroom observations will also be conducted as part of the onsite team review.

10. What are districts required to communicate to parents regarding the SQR?

Schools may develop and disseminate a letter informing parents that their school has been identified as in need of improvement (this is a requirement) and that a School Quality Review will be conducted.

11. Are documents that are provided as evidence returned after the report is completed?

The documentation that the school collects as evidence should be saved/ archived by the school district. The evidence that is submitted to SED is destroyed after the visit.

12. If a school had a Joint Intervention Team (JIT) last year, submitted the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP), and spent School Improvement Grant (SIG) money to implement recommendations, is an SQR required?

If school had a JIT, the school is further along the accountability continuum of interventions and supports and, therefore, would not be required to conduct a SQR which is at the beginning of the continuum.

13. What is the timeline for completion of the SQR reports?

All reports are due to the Department by January 31st, therefore District Superintendents will need Basic reports to review by December 31st so that the DS's have an opportunity to finalize and submit the reports by the SED deadline.

14. Who is responsible for writing the SQR report?



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- For Basic SQRs, the school district has the responsibility for writing the report. District Superintendents will check to ensure the Basic reports are completed and will review school districts' Basic reports.
- For Focused or Comprehensive SQRs in Title I schools, the DS or DS representative lead the SQR process and will write the reports. In non-Title I schools, SED Liaisons have the responsibility for working with the team to develop and submit the report. In cases of a Focused or Comprehensive SQR, which requires an onsite visit, all members of the SQR team will have an opportunity to be actively engaged in the development of the report prior to the report being submitted.

15. If a school has been newly identified as a school in Improvement, is an SQR required?

Yes. Please refer to the SQR webinar posted on the Office of Accountability (OA) website for more information. A link to the SQR webinar is posted at: http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/School_Improvement/SQR.html .

16. Is it recommended to have staff from an identified school on the SQR team?

It is not recommended to have staff from the identified school on the SQR team. It may be decided to have staff from a different school within the district on the SQR team.

17. If a school has an SQR and the area(s) of identification changes the subsequent year, does the school need to have a second SQR visit?

No. The school need only modify the CEP accordingly and submit the CEP to the Department. It may also be advisable for the school to conduct an internal SQR and use those findings and recommendations to amend the CEP.

18. If there are two schools in the same district that require an SQR, does the school have to establish two different teams and how many reports are required?

If two schools require an SQR, the district may establish one or two teams. However, one report per school building must be developed and submitted.



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19. If it is Limited English Proficient/English Language Learner (LEP/ELL) subgroup that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), who determines if a bilingual specialist, is needed for the SQR process?

It is required that a subgroup specialist for the subgroup that did not make AYP is a member of the SQR team, regardless of the category of intervention (Basic or Focused/Comprehensive). The Office of Bilingual Education/Foreign Language Studies will decide if a specialist from the RBE-RN will be assigned to the school. For more information, contact the Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies at 518-474-8775.

Students with Disabilities

20. Why would districts need to “do a Quality Improvement Process (QIP)” and a School Quality Review (SQR) if the school’s citation is for students with disabilities only?

By aligning the Differentiated Accountability requirements with those actions required as a result of an Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) determination that the school district “Needs Assistance” or “Needs Intervention” for the subgroup of students with disabilities, the State has reduced redundancy. The SQR process gathers essential information to inform the identification and implementation of school improvement activities.

The QIP led by SESIS, builds on the SQR identified information to inform the needs identification phase of the QIP. The QIP is not a report, but rather a process by which an individual trained in special education school improvement, particularly in the areas of literacy, behavioral supports and specially-designed instruction, facilitates, guides and provides professional development and technical assistance to a school to assist the school to make agreed-upon systemic changes to instructional practices.

21. When a student scores a proficiency Level One or Level Two on the state assessments, not in the area of that student’s disability, are the students considered to be in the “Students with Disabilities” cohort? Example: a student with a learning disability in mathematics scores a one or two on the state English Language Arts (ELA) assessment.

Yes.



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22. Are there mechanisms in place to account for other variables that may be the primary reason for a student's lack of success? Example: a student may have a visual impairment for which services and accommodations are in place, or may have excessive absences from school that appear to be the primary reason for not being successful on state exams. Is it reasonable to be counted in the, "Students with Disabilities Cohort" under these circumstances?

Yes. The school has the responsibility to provide the special education supports and services each student with a disability needs to ensure the participation of the student and progress in the general curriculum. The school must also consider and address the reasons for a student's chronic absences.

23. Several school districts are utilizing a single building to deliver comprehensive services to students with disabilities. These students are transported from the primary school of residence in order to maximize both services and funding. Is there a mechanism to disaggregate the scores for these students and account for these scores as part of the cohort in the primary school of residence?

The school in which the student is enrolled is the school which is accountable for student results.

24. Before being assigned to a subgroup such as "Students with Disabilities", is there a minimum amount of time services need to be provided prior to placement in a subgroup or cohort?

No.

25. Example: a student is classified as a student with a disability three months prior to a State assessment. Is the student counted in the cohort?

Yes

26. How will I know if a SESIS has been assigned to the school to participate in the SQR process?

Unless otherwise notified by a representative of the Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Center (RSE-TASC), one can assume that a SESIS will be participating in the SQR. For questions relating to the role of the SESIS and information as to whether the school has a SESIS assigned, contact the RSE-TASC Coordinator from the region of the State where the school is located. See <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/techassist/rsetasc/locations.htm>



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27. What if a SESIS is not available to participate in a Focused or Comprehensive SQR intervention?

The district should identify someone who understands the issues and needs relevant to students with disabilities who can provide objective input during the process. Examples include a district curriculum specialist or a special education teacher from another building. In such cases, training in the SQR process should be provided.

28. When a school is identified for Students with Disabilities, why is the school where the students are served the focus rather than the program (why not label the program and not the school)?

The focus of SQR visits has to be on the school where the students are enrolled. At the district level, all of the variables that impact the placement and support of students with disabilities across the district should be examined as well.

Accountability

29. If a school was identified for ELA and then didn't make AYP for Students with Disabilities the second year, is an intervention required?

It takes two years for a school to move out of the current accountability.

30. How accurate is the data reflected in the webinar on the "Tsunami of schools" for this year?

Although preliminary, the data is 99 percent accurate (see the overview of Differentiated Accountability on the SQR webinar posted on the Office of Accountability website).

31. If I am identified for Students with Disabilities only- and the subgroup cohort drops below 30 before two consecutive years, what happens?

If a subgroup cohort drops below 30, that subgroup is not counted towards AYP. However, two consecutive years are needed to become a school in good standing.



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32. Is "school" accountability based on the students that physically attend the school and does not include students that attend out of district placements (e.g., BOCES)?

According to the definition of enrollment on the School Report Cards: "... Enrollment counts are as of Basic Educational Data System (BEDS) day, which is typically the first Wednesday of October of the school year. Students who attend BOCES programs on a part-time basis are included in a school's enrollment. Students who attend BOCES on a full-time basis or who are placed full time by the district in an out-of-district placement are not included in a school's enrollment. Students classified by schools as "pre-first" are included in first grade counts."

33. For schools Identified for the ELA measure, but who also did not make AYP for one or more subgroups in mathematics, should the SQR focus on both ELA and mathematics or just ELA (the measure the building was identified)?

- In a Basic Review, the school should only be identified for one subgroup within one accountability measure, and therefore the SQR should focus on that accountability measure/subgroup.
- In a Focused School Quality Review, the SQR should focus on the Accountability Measure(s) and the subgroup(s) identified for that measure.
- In a Comprehensive SQR, the focus would be on not only the accountability measures and subgroups, but the systematic issues of the school since there is more than one accountability measure and/or the "all student" subgroup or all subgroups except the "all student" subgroup have been identified.
It may be that the school(s) did not make AYP for one or more subgroups for the first year in mathematics (as it takes 2 years to be in accountability) and the school may want to address this accountability measure as well.

34. Will there be revisions in the criteria for alternate assessment with the sunset of the statistical adjustment for students with disabilities and the change in cut points?

No.



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35. Has the Department considered additional supports for the districts that don't meet the 30 student rule?

The 30 student rule for identification may not be identifying the districts that need additional support and resources. Many of our larger school districts have support systems in place that have already begun to address the issues outlined in the school quality review process. However, several of our small school districts would greatly benefit from the assistance that is associated with the SQR identification process. As part of the Department's development of an ESEA flexibility waiver for Regents approval and submission to the United States Department of Education, SED will be reviewing the "30 student" N-size rule to determine whether it is appropriately identifying schools and districts for support and assistance.

36. Will the State Education Department offer mandate flexibility regarding course requirements for identified school districts in order to develop creative and meaningful program schedules that meet the individual needs of the identified students?

Procedures for seeking a variance from course requirements can be found in paragraph 100.2(n) of Commissioner's Regulations. Procedures for applying for flexibility for middle level programs can be found in paragraph 100.4(h) of Commissioner's Regulations.

School Improvement Grants

37. How will the SQR process be funded?

Title I schools are eligible for a school improvement grant (\$25,000 per building plus \$10.00 for each student enrolled in the identified school building).

38. Is the SIG application for Districts In Need of Improvement (DINI)'s different from the one for schools?

Yes. The SIG 1003(a) grants are for identified schools only; applications are posted and the deadline for submission is November 12th. These Title I funds can be used to pay for SQR planning and/or implementation. The application may be amended as needed after the SQR is completed.



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39. Does the SIG need to include recommendations from the SQR and when is the application due?

Yes, recommendations from the SQR visit may be addressed in the application which for this year is due on November 12. However, considering the SQR may not have taken place before the grant is due, the grant may be amended after the SQR is completed to include the recommendations from the SQR.

40. Will districts/schools be sanctioned if SIG funds that have already been awarded are not used?

No, there will be no sanctions. However, funds must be expended by August 31, 2012 as there is no carryover.

41. If a district has four schools identified as Schools in Need of Improvement and these schools have been identified for the students with disabilities subgroup, can the schools receive funding? Is the funding competitive?

The Title I School Improvement 1003(a) grant funding is not competitive among schools in the same district, but schools need to submit an application for approval. The grant application is posted on the Office of Accountability website at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/funding/2011-12-1003a/home.html> and includes the timelines as well as how to calculate the amount per school.

42. If a SIG grant has already been submitted to the Department, does the SIG grant need to be amended to cover implementation of common core standards in identified schools?

The grant may be amended to reflect implementation of the recommendations in the SQR report as well as implementation of common core standards.

43. What funding is available for non-Title I schools to implement the recommendations of an SQR?

Non-Title I schools should use funding from the general school budget as non-Title I schools are not eligible for Title I funds.

44. The school that is newly identified as a School in Improvement at the Basic level does not receive any Title I funds. Can the school still receive Title I School Improvement Funds?

The deadline has passed for the school to apply to be a Title I school. For more information, contact the Title I office at SIGA@mail.nysed.gov or (518) 473-0295.

45. When will the 2011-12 Title I School Improvement Grant be posted?



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Grants are posted. Grants will be due on November 12th. See grant for more information: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/funding/currentapps.html#1003a>.

46. What will be the amount of the grant?

The grant award will be \$25,000 for each identified school building plus \$10 for each student enrolled in the identified school.

47. How long are grant funds available?

Grant funds must be expended by August 31.

48. Are there criteria on what to include in the grant?

Funds must be used for required Differentiated Accountability interventions and school improvement activities from the following list:

1. Conducting School Quality Reviews (SQR), External School Curriculum Audits (ESCA) and Joint Intervention Team (JIT) visits,
2. Hiring an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) or Distinguished Educator (DE) to help implement plans,
3. Implementing a specific major recommendation of a SQR, ESCA or JIT report that was conducted during the 2010-11 school year (the application must identify the specific recommendation from the report and the page on which it can be found), or
4. Assisting identified schools to implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), develop Data Driven Inquiry Systems (DDI), or implement the new teacher and principal evaluation system (APPR).

Grants can also be amended to implement a specific major recommendation of a SQR, ESCA or JIT report that was conducted during the 2011-12 school year (the application must identify the specific recommendation from the report and the page on which it can be found).

49. Is there a contact person to assist districts with the submission of the school improvement grants?



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- The contact office for the 2011-12 Title I School Improvement Section 1003(a) Grant Application is the Title I office. The Title I office can be reached at SIGA@mail.nysed.gov or (518) 473-0295.
- The District Superintendent in the region where the school is located can also be contacted. A list of DS's is on the SED website at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ds/directory.html>.
- Regional School Improvement Liaisons can also be contacted. School Improvement Liaisons in NYC can be reached at (718) 722-2647 and in the Rest of State at (518) 474-5923.

50. The 1003 (a) Title I grant application states that funds may be used to implement a specific recommendation of an SQR from 2010-11. If there is a school in year 2 of Improvement and the school did not prepare an SQR last year, but rather, were required to update the CEP. Can the recommendation come from the CEP instead?

As stated in the grant application, funds can be used for: "3. Implementing a specific major recommendation of a SQR, ESCA or JIT report that was conducted during the 2010-11 school year (the application must identify the specific recommendation from the report and the page on which it can be found)." The recommendation needs to come from the report, not the CEP.

51. Will there be an opportunity to amend the School Improvement grant application and budget to implement recommendations that emerge from the 2011-12 SQR report?

Yes. The application may be revised upon completion of the review. Amendments can also be submitted until June 30, 2012.

Comprehensive Educational Plans

52. What is the timeline for submission of the Comprehensive Education Plans (CEPs)?

The implementation of the CEP should begin as soon as possible after the CEP is developed. CEPs for newly identified schools should be submitted to the Department within 90 days after schools receive official notification of identification (on or around January 31, 2012.)

53. Which schools are required to submit a CEP?

All schools in accountability status are required to submit a CEP.



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54. If the school's CEP has already been submitted and something changes, how should that be addressed in terms of the school's overall plan?

The CEP is considered a "living document" and schools should continue to update the CEP as needed and submit that information to the Department.

55. Will QIP goals be incorporated into the CEP?

Yes. The CEP must incorporate the school improvement goals and activities that, as applicable, have been identified through the QIP plan developed between the district and the SESIS.

56. When should the recommendations be put in the CEP?

Recommendations should be in the CEP for the 2011-12 and/or the 2012-13 school year, but should be implemented as soon as possible.

57. Do non-Title I schools also do a CEP?

All schools in accountability status must complete a CEP.

58. Where on the website is there information on the CEP?

The CEP is mentioned in the SQR webinar on slides 14, 16, 17, 21, 22, 26, & 27. The SQR webinar is located at: P-12 Program Offices - Office of Accountability – School Improvement Team – School Quality Reviews -

http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/School_Improvement/SQR.html

The CEP template is located at P-12 Program Offices - Office of Accountability – School Improvement Team – Comprehensive Educational Plans

http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/School_Improvement/cep.html

Title I

59. What should be done with Supplemental Education Services (SES) proposals that are coming in from providers?

Contact the Title I Office at 518-473-0295 or emscses@mail.nysed.gov .