

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability – School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	421800010013
District Name:	Syracuse City School District
School Name:	Salem Hyde Elementary School
School Address:	450 Durston Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13203
Principal:	Octavia Wilcox
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year 1) - Comprehensive
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts – All Students; African American Students; Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	January 4-6, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“We are a School of Promise where all members work together to learn and care for our children and each other. We ensure that all children apply academics and life-enriching skills as they become lifelong learners and responsible citizens. This is accomplished through a commitment to high standards and providing a culture of learning in a nurturing, inclusive, diverse setting supported by a community of caring philosophy.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- Parent participation is strong, with parents involved in both day-to-day school support and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) assisting the school in providing needed computer technology.
- There is a strong, positive school culture that includes staff, students and the community. Students are thoughtful, respectful, and positive both to adults and each other, and teachers and school leaders work collaboratively with each other. The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program is effectively implemented.
- The afterschool *Say Yes* program director is a member of the School Leadership Team (SLT). The program is effective, and the school has begun discussing the possibility of linking the regular school day program with the afterschool program.
- As a School of Promise, a partnership program with Syracuse University, the school has developed a strong inclusive program where all students are fully integrated into regular classroom instruction.

- Teachers from special areas of instruction, such as physical education, art, and music, work closely with core academic area teachers, integrating aspects of core instruction into their programs.
- The school has daily, dedicated instructional time for content area instruction in science and social studies, with a focus on hands-on and problem-based learning.
- Teachers frequently provided positive feedback to students for working hard, explaining how they reasoned through a problem, and for working with each other.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDING:

Although the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) outlines an action plan for improving use of data to drive instruction, teachers do not demonstrate an in-depth understanding of how to “dig deep” in using data. The school’s plan focuses on “looking at data” rather than learning how to identify and analyze specific data needed to improve student performance. In addition, the evaluation section of the CEP is not sufficiently strong to be able to evaluate progress in this and other areas.

RECOMMENDATION:

The school, with District support, should identify a teacher-friendly data handbook to guide teachers in learning how to use data effectively and to focus on in-depth analysis as part of their ongoing, embedded professional development (PD). Teachers should collaboratively work with their instructional support teacher (IST) to identify strategies that will help them more effectively use data. Specifically, the school should:

- update the CEP Action Plan for data improvement to reflect a focus on effective selection of critical data and a greater in-depth analysis of those data to answer critical questions;
- identify specific strategies that will help in “digging deeper” and analyzing data in multiple ways: by individual student, by subgroups and by other groups they identify, i.e., by attendance;
- identify ways to use data to evaluate and change instruction, including identifying growth, determining what might need re-teaching, and identifying especially effective instructional or management strategies; and
- monitor and evaluate agendas, meeting notes, and action plans to analyze team work and provide ongoing support and coaching via instructional leaders.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Lesson plans ranged in quality from strong to unacceptable. Specifically:

- A significant number of lesson plans had no deliberate opening or closing activities, such as developing an anticipatory set or a discussion of what would be learned, or closure activities, such as reflection on what was learned. They also lacked formative assessments and/or links to prior or upcoming lessons.
 - General education teacher lesson plans seldom indicated specific modifications or specially designed instruction for students with disabilities.
 - Several teacher lesson plans were incomplete. Teachers were instructed to have lesson plans on their desks; a few chose to display only the current day's plans, and one did not have any plans available. Some plans were simply a list of activities; others lacked clear, student-friendly learning goals linked to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) or lacked major instructional components.
 - Although learning objectives were typically displayed in classrooms and usually written in student friendly language, they typically were not referred to or integrated into the lesson.
- While some classrooms used strong, evidence-based instructional strategies, graphic organizers, small group instruction, scaffolding, manipulatives, and Functional Behavioral Analysis (FBA), these practices were not pervasive across the school. There was also inconsistent achievement of a level of rigor and/or relevance to real-life applications.
 - While there were a wide range of displays of student work throughout the building, few identified the learning task, posted rubrics with criteria or identified the learning standards/goals for the task.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leadership, including the SLT, should focus on consistent, high-quality instructional preparation, planning, and delivery by:
 - following through on the CEP to develop and implement a specific lesson template for all teachers to use;
 - ensuring that teachers receive specific training in the writing of lesson plans, including unit development;
 - monitoring the quality of written plans and their implementation through walk-throughs and reviews of lesson plans; and
 - ensuring that strong objectives, based on the CCLS, are written as statements of what students will learn during instruction.
- Teachers should be trained to deliberately consider how best to support student learning and carefully select evidence-based instructional strategies that support rigor and relevance. For example, they should:
 - pre-identify questions that promote higher order learning , and use a wide range of effective questioning strategies (wait time, reaching consensus, probing, encouraging prediction, mediated learning, etc.);

- use strategies that maximize rigor and focus on in-depth conceptual development for all students;
 - develop learning activities that focus on active learning to extend conceptual understanding, such as use of graphic organizers, manipulatives and project-based activities;
 - focus on supporting students in becoming active problem-solvers and to monitor/assess their own learning; and
 - build in formative assessments (ticket out the door, informal observations during class, use of rubrics) and teach students how to self-assess.
- Teachers should use bulletin board displays as learning opportunities for students, involving them in creating the displays and explaining their work. Both student-scored and teacher-scored rubrics, plus other information about their task should be a part of each display.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- While school leaders do walkthroughs, they have not established a focused walkthrough and observation schedule and do not regularly collect, review and provide feedback on lesson plans on a regular basis.
- While the school's CEP describes the activities needed to continuously improve instruction in core academic areas, the CEP description of how these activities will be evaluated does not describe measurable actions and does not focus on how they will determine progress. The school leaders and SLT also do not routinely evaluate effective implementation of the plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leaders should develop a system for monitoring, supervising and supporting instruction and building an expectation of consistent implementation of best practices in all classrooms. There should be regularly scheduled time for review of lesson plans and observations to ensure effective implementation of those plans, as well as provision of closer supervision and supports for those teachers who do not provide effective instruction.
- The school leaders and SLT should identify specific evidence that will prove that progress is being made in the effective use of data and to implement a regular routine of evaluating evidence to determine if progress is being made.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- The school-day program and the afterschool *Say Yes* program are just beginning to develop a strong working relationship. The *Say Yes* program operates within a District-wide contract and is independent of the schools, so the afterschool program, while housed in the building, operates separately, hiring its own staff and developing its own programs. The program director is new this year, but is a member of

the SLT and is working with the school leadership to forge stronger links between the programs.

- The current schedule does not have consistent beginning and ending times across grade levels (for example, fifth grade begins at 9:15, while second grade begins at 9:30 and third grade begins at 9:00), does not allow for transition time for classes where students must travel a distance to another room, and has more time than needed at the end of the day for dismissal. Observations during the review indicate that some teachers take a significant length of time to transition from one task to another during instructional periods as well.
- Although most teachers typically use common planning time for planning and data meetings, the length of each meeting is no more than half an hour, resulting in insufficient time for teachers to become involved in more than brief tasks.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The District should research promising practices in extended learning time to determine how to make the most productive use of their afterschool programs, with a goal of creating effective links between the regular school day program and the after school program, as well as determining how best to use that time to engage students and extend learning. The U.S. Department of Education's Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students and Massachusetts 2020's Extended Learning Time Initiative are possible starting points, as are resources on project based learning. At the school level, school leaders and the SLT should develop links between the school day and the Say Yes program, identifying basic goals for students and developing strategies for achieving those goals.
- The SLT should work with school leaders and grade level teams to build a workable schedule that ensures instructional time is maximized. In addition, staff should ensure that instructional time on task is maximized consistently across all classrooms.
- Teachers in this school typically work collaboratively during their regular planning time. However, longer planning times would enable them to work more efficiently and effectively. Their critical work is such that trying to complete useable "chunks" of work in half-hour segments is extremely difficult.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- Teachers have a half-hour daily period during which to work collaboratively on unit development or focus in-depth on learning more about data. These brief periods do not permit the in-depth time needed for such work.
- As noted earlier in this report, while teachers regularly focus on reviewing their data and use test data to identify next steps with students, they would benefit at this point from an PD time to study in-depth how to use data to identify and solve both classroom and schoolwide issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The District and school leaders should work with teachers to identify specific tasks that would improve student achievement (such as co-planning with the *Say Yes* after school staff, development of hands-on, rigorous CCSS units, and/or learning in-depth data analysis) and find ways to allocate extended periods of time for those activities, with set goals and monitoring of implementation.
- As noted earlier, teachers are ready to learn and implement data based planning at a deeper level. There should be a systemic introduction to the identification of the problems that most impact student engagement and learning, followed by collection of information and in-depth analysis/problem-solving.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- The school recently received a few SMART Boards, but is unable to use them effectively as they do not have compatible computers to use with them. The District was notified, but the problem has not been resolved.
- While the school has marginally adequate computer labs, they do not have a sufficient number of computers or other technology to support student research or tech-based learning. Much of their technology was purchased through grants; some is so old that it is no longer supported by District Instructional Technology (IT).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The District should investigate why Instructional Technology (IT) has not resolved this issue and ensure that appropriate computers are promptly provided.
- The lack of technology at the school and classroom level across Syracuse City School District is pervasive. The District should formulate clear criteria delineating guidelines for schools that wish to pursue grants or apply for recycled computers. NYSED has a Computer Recycling for Educational Technology Enhancement (CREATE) program, which donates computers excessed by New York State agencies (<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/ssae/AltEd/create/home.html>).

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 (CCLS), Data Driven Instruction and the Annual Professional Performance Reviews for teacher effectiveness.