

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	580512030021
District Name:	Brentwood Union Free School District
School Name:	South Middle School
School Address:	785 Candlewood Road, Brentwood, NY 11717
Principal:	Berge Escobores
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:	January 4, 5 and 25, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“The Brentwood South Middle School has a mission and vision statement that embodies the best principles of what a mission statement should be. It expresses high expectations of its students and espouses belief and practice values aimed to meet those ends.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS:

The school has:

- A vigorous and invested set of school leaders who are both open to change and willing to lead it.
- A caring and nurturing staff that works hard to meet student needs.
- Polite and friendly students who look to their teachers and school leader for guidance and support.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- The school leaders and staff appear to recognize the value of using data to inform programs and instructional direction and the need to more specifically disaggregate data to gain a clearer picture of the achievement trends and issues that are affecting the school’s children.

- The school does not effectively use data to determine the root cause of student performance in order to establish meaningful goals and create thoughtful operational and strategic plans.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should assemble an effective Data Analysis Team. This group could be the building's standing School Improvement Team (SIT) or a subgroup of that team. That team should actively obtain data from District and State sources, as well as from other normed and/or criterion reference sources. In addition to standard quantitative data sources, the team should also use perceptive data as appropriate. Once data are obtained, this same group, properly trained, should identify and analyze root causes, verify results, recommend goals and strategies, and suggest action plans to the school leader and School Improvement Team.
- The school data team should identify trends or commonalities among students not achieving proficiency. Issues for analysis might include:
 - examining program design to address student needs;
 - tracking students' longitudinal progress;
 - examining the impact of class sizes;
 - examining entry assessment systems for appropriate classification; and
 - reviewing data to make recommendations regarding individual students and programs.
- At the District level, data should be analyzed in order to make recommendations for subgroups, students and programs.
- English language arts (ELA) data findings should be shared with all content area teachers and used to determine how to adjust instruction in order to ensure consistency and rigor of expectations.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- There is only limited communication and collaboration among teachers, departments, and intervention service staff.
- Many of the students who have not met State assessment standards are both ELL students and students with disabilities.
- The teaching staff has difficulty exchanging information, strategies, and support in order to more successfully focus and coordinate their energies.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should review curricular programs to ensure that they effectively include all student needs.
- The school leader should schedule regular cross-departmental meetings and collaborations to review data, effective instructional strategies, social and family issues, and support for targeted students.
- Professional development (PD) should focus on constructive supervision and be devoted to exemplary lesson design and instruction that incorporates research-based strategies, e.g., NYSUT Rubrics, Marzano or Danielson models, in order to assure a consistent, high level of effective delivery of instruction for special education students, English Language Learners (ELLs), and all other students.
- As a part of transitioning to the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) the school should:
 - Ensure that the English as a second language (ESL) curriculum is aligned with content area classes.
 - Encourage all teachers to use language and content objectives in lesson design as an example of exemplary practice.
 - Communicate to all teachers each student's reading level, including language proficiency level and Individualized Education Program (IEP) requirement, in order to assure consistency of expectation.
 - Display and encourage the use of student learning artifacts.
 - Encourage the use of visual aids that are relevant to the lesson.
 - Explore vertical exchange of student skills and content expectations K-12 among all teachers.
- In order to support ELL students, the school should:
 - Provide PD for ESL teachers in effective use of small group, independent instruction.
 - Provide English language glossaries to ELL students in their content area classes.
 - Obtain Spanish translations of primary source documents.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leaders should foster the systemic use of data for instructional and programmatic decision making by establishing a Data Analysis Team.
- School leaders should encourage continuous dialogue about student needs and foster a consistent level of exemplary instruction for all children.

- The school leader should review and assess the efficacy of current special education models and make recommendations about ways to improve the program.
- School leaders should investigate the most effective strategies for establishing grades seven and eight teams in order to promote a culture and structure of consistent content and skills emphases.
- The school leader should explore the feasibility of more formal teaming structures in the upper grades in order to foster communication among teachers and promote their use of strategies to strengthen students' higher order thinking and engage in cross disciplinary activities.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leaders should establish consistent protocols for communication of grading policies in order to assure that parents are familiar with individual teacher practices.
- The school leadership should develop systemic structures and schedules to promote active exchange of strategies and information among teachers about their students' instructional needs.
- The school leader should consider creating a .25 intervention teacher. This teacher would use data sources and analyses and the recommendations of the Data Analysis Team to choose appropriate materials, adjust instructional strategies, and monitor identified students' progress.
- The school should rework the program for ELLs, including:
 - Explore the feasibility of changing bilingual programs as appropriate.
 - Investigate the feasibility of starting a Newcomer Center for bilingual learners.
 - Explore the feasibility of implementing a bilingual special education class.
 - Schedule and assign ESL teachers and specialists to specific grade levels in order to assure needs are communicated and interventions are appropriate.
 - Provide teaching assistants (TAs) for ESL classes.
 - To the extent possible, place ESL students with teachers who speak Spanish. These teachers could also employ ESL strategies in a "Sheltered English" model.
 - Request pull-out mathematics Academic Intervention Services (AIS) for bilingual students rather than the current practice where bilingual students receive push-in services with a consultant.
- Staff should explore scheduling and placement of AIS students with their content area teachers.
- The school should ensure proportionate placement of students with special needs in elective classes.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Leverage and assess the effectiveness of PD, particularly in the areas of:
 - Differentiated instructional techniques;
 - Higher order thinking skills; and
 - Teaching reading and writing in the content areas.
- Provide PD to teachers in the area of writing in the content areas under the “writing to learn” paradigm.
- Provide PD that introduces lesson design principles and reflective practices for teachers in order to ensure consistency of exemplary practice.
- Provide PD about the use of bilingual strategies, including strategies where teachers introduce and recap lessons in English.
- Provide PD in the use of portfolios across content areas with rubric systems as an instructional tool.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDING:

Building resources appeared to be adequate.

RECOMMENDATION:

The school should provide more resources, e.g., computers, for AIS classes.

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.