

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	430700010005
District Name:	Geneva City School District
School Name:	Geneva Middle School
School Address:	101 Carter Road
Principal:	Carmine Calabria
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year 1) - Focused
Areas of Identification:	English Language Arts - Hispanic Students, Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	December 8, 9, 16, 2011

PART I MISSION STATEMENT

“Geneva Schools will educate and graduate all students with essential skills and knowledge to live lives of consequence.”

PART 2 SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The review team noted that the overall behavior of the student body before, during, and after school was calm and appropriate. Between class periods, student movement through the halls was quiet and safe, and students demonstrated mature behavior. The learning environments in the observed classrooms were safe, orderly, and disciplined. The teachers and students have an awareness of consistently applied expectations for behavior.
 - School leadership has done a very effective job in training, implementing, and reinforcing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Teachers and students were seen demonstrating their knowledge of and commitment to the program. Teachers were observed positively reinforcing good behavior and pointing out inappropriate behavior in line with the goals and practices of PBIS.
 - Some staff members interviewed by the review team made positive comments about the PBIS initiative and behavior in general. Interviews included comments about behavior improving every day and negative behavior decreasing as a result of the program.
- The adult-to-student ratio was reasonable in the observed classrooms. Co-teaching was occurring in some classrooms, and teaching assistants were in most classrooms. The number of adults in classes provides frequent opportunities for students to interact with adults. The classes have clearly defined expectations for student behavior, and classroom rules and routines appear to be set in place.

- The staff appears to be well matched with the middle school student population. Teachers are highly qualified and exhibit a knowledge and understanding of adolescents. Students interviewed by the review team positively commented on their teachers.
- The District has identified strong Network Team Members who have attended New York State Education Department's (NYSED) training sessions and have been successfully turned into key training initiatives such as the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), Data Driven Instruction, and Student Learning Objectives.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- There is evidence of large amounts of data being collected, e.g., Acuity, Fontas and Pinell, and Response to Intervention (RTI) Direct.
- The school leadership uses data to inform decisions such as the master schedule.
- There is evidence that data meetings have taken place, but little evidence that data analysis has reached the classroom level.
- It does not appear that data drives daily lesson planning or instructional practices.
- Data analysis appears to take place more at the school leadership level.
- There is not sufficient data collected on English language learners (ELLs), which would help staff understand these students' needs and performance at a deeper level.
- There were no formative assessments being used to provide data about student performance and inform instruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should continue to roll out training in data driven instruction to prepare for classroom level dialogue.
- School leaders should engage staff in a dialogue about data driven instruction to move data analysis to the classroom level.
- The school leader should move ahead with professional development (PD) and articulate expectations that teachers will learn to analyze data to impact instructional decisions.
- A mechanism for collecting and analyzing data regarding ELLs should be established.
- The school leadership should provide support for teachers to create and effectively use formative assessments that are rigorous.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- The learning environment was safe, orderly, structured, and conducive to learning.
- Many lessons observed lacked rigor or relevance and higher order questioning.
- In some cases, co-teaching was occurring, but it was evident that the teams are not using best practices.
- There was little evidence of teachers using best practices in instructing ELLs. In some cases, practices do not qualify as English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction.
- Neither general education nor special education teachers use formative assessments.
- All classrooms had objectives for the lessons posted; however, in a few cases, the lessons were not congruent to the objectives.
- There was differentiated instruction taking place in most classrooms, but teachers do not appear to have many strategies in their repertoire.
- In special education classes, students have access to content aligned with that of their peers. However, students with disabilities were observed as passive listeners rather than active learners and were not responding to higher order questions.
- Teacher talk is prevalent in the majority of observed classrooms.
- Classes for students with disabilities reviewed by the team did not include the use of basic principles of lesson design, such as checking for understanding, explaining lesson purpose, giving a rationale for the learning, or doing closure activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Teachers should plan lessons that cognitively engage students and give them opportunity to work collaboratively.
- Teachers should receive training and support in what constitutes effective instruction of ELLs.
- Teachers should be trained in co-teaching and given support and feedback.
- An instructional model should be selected and implemented that includes differentiation, guided practice, formative assessments, and elements related to the Race to the Top initiative.
- Special education teachers should receive support in lesson design and receive PD on higher level thinking skills and formative assessment.

- The District should develop a philosophy and determine practices for instructing ELLs.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- The school leaders are very well organized, knowledgeable in accessing data from numerous sources, and using data in their decision-making and planning.
- The leaders are confident and enthusiastic about using data to influence decisions such as master scheduling.
- The leadership does not exhibit high expectations for students or staff with regard to lesson rigor, relevance, or cognitive engagement, or the new demands of 21st century skills.
- There was no evidence of data-driven dialogue between teachers and school leadership.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should visit multiple classrooms to gather data on the cognitive levels of instruction.
- School leaders should analyze assessments, including mid-term exams, to determine their rigor.
- School leadership should determine strategies for taking data analysis to the teacher and classroom level to inform instruction.
- School leadership should articulate expectations to staff regarding rigor, relevance, and active student engagement.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- There is evidence of outreach to community based organizations, such as Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Finger Lakes Community College, and the Boys and Girls Club of Geneva.
- The school leadership uses data to help with planning, placement, and scheduling for student success.
- Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and RtI are in place to help with student success.
- There is no formal process of communication and outreach for helping parents and guardians of ELLs to become part of the school community.
- The District has a strategic plan that can help the school to increase student success.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should continue outreach efforts to community and educational agencies.
- The school should align the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) goals and activities to goals articulated in the District Strategic Plan.
- The school leadership and staff should develop a plan to formalize communication and outreach to parents and guardians of ELLs.
- The school leadership, with District support, should identify best practices in teaching and supporting ELLs.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- There is a literacy/mathematics coach from the Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) assigned to the District
- The Aussie Consulting group has been retained to provide job-embedded PD.
- There is a schoolwide PD calendar that includes early release days for PD.
- There is little evidence of PD initiatives translating into classroom practice.
- There is no evidence of classroom observations and data driven dialogue influencing decisions about PD.
- It does not appear that there is a direct link between what students have not learned well and what PD provided to staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should plan for increased support from the mathematics/literacy coach to support the shifts in instruction in ELA and mathematics required by the CCLS and provide coaching on instructional strategies and differentiation.
- The school should explore ways to maximize the support of teachers provided through Aussie.
- School leadership should provide follow-up and support for teachers after specific PD training.
- Decisions regarding the provision of PD should be based on student performance data gleaned from formative assessment.
- PD and support should be provided in the area of formative assessment.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDINGS:

- Hallways, stairwells, and bathrooms were clean and safe.
- The Library Media Center is welcoming and organized. Students were appropriately engaged and well managed in the library.
- There is sufficient access to technology in the Media Center.
- There are currently 20 SMARTBoards in the classrooms.
- The review team did not observe the use of technology as part of the instructional process.
- There was little student work displayed in classrooms or hallways that were examples of rigorous academic work.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school should continue to acquire SMARTBoards so students have equitable access.
- Student work, which reflects the rigor of the CCLS, should be posted throughout the school.
- Data on technology integration into curriculum as opposed to teacher use of technology as a presentation tool should be reviewed and presented to staff to support more rigorous integration of technology in instruction.
- Technology integration training should be included in the District's Professional Development Plan (PDP).

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.