

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

BEDS Code:	662300010019
District Name:	Yonkers City School District
School Name:	Eugenio Maria de Hostos MicroSociety School
School Address:	75 Morris Street, Yonkers, NY 10705
Principal:	Elda Perez-Mejia
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year- 1) - Comprehensive
Areas of Identification:	English Language Arts - All Students; Hispanic Students; English Language Learners and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	January 9-10, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“The staff, students and parents who compose the community at the Eugenio Maria deHostos MicroSociety School are dedicated to providing an atmosphere in which excellence and equality in education are valued and achieved by every student so that they become productive members of our multicultural society.

The theme/philosophy is as follows:

- The MicroSociety program infuses business and government concepts through all aspects of academic instruction and social skills.
- Student-run businesses include a bank, courtroom, publishing center, government, library/media center and marketplace with student manufactured items for sale.
- Like a real community, the school has its own constitution, government, elected legislative representatives, and a municipal court that helps students to understand how our government functions.
- Student citizens create the school economy and currency; each student has a personal bank account to manage their MicroSociety money.
- Students write, edit and public their own newspapers and magazines.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

Eugenio Maria deHostos MicroSociety School in Yonkers is reported to be the only one of its kind in the Westchester region, designed with business and government management in mind. The late Dr. George Richmond designed this program for students from economically disadvantaged families to receive training in out-of-school activities and learn the business principles that would be useful to them later in life. The following are a few of the additional strengths of this school:

- Students are orderly, well-mannered and engaged in the classes visited by the SQR team.
- Students are very business-like, especially during the periods for MicroSociety. They understand and follow all the rules even when a lower grade level student is authorized to enforce these rules.
- There is a wealth of community based organizations that share space at the school so that many of the social, physical and mental health issues of students and their families can be attended to at school.
- There is a foster grandparent program to assist struggling readers in the lower grades.
- The Junior Achievement program brought MasterCard International to Hostos along with laptops for all teachers to use with SMART Boards in classroom instruction.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- The data that the school collects is not being analyzed in a rigorous manner to identify precisely what aspect of English language arts (ELA) needs to be the specific focus for improvement.
- The analysis of data could be more effectively used to drive instructional practices in the core subjects, ELA and other academic subject areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leadership and staff should seek further training in the effective disaggregation, analysis and use of data in focusing more closely on student-by student, class-by-class and subgroup-by-subgroup deficiencies in addition to the whole school and grade level monitoring.
- The school should provide professional development (PD) for staff in using of formative, interim and summative assessments as well as implementing a more rigorous and systemic analysis of data. The school should hone these skills to identify precisely the aspects of ELA that are causing greatest concern. In addition, the following should be considered:
 - establishing or redefining inquiry focused teacher teams and benchmarked deliverables for each team;
 - dedicating time in teacher schedules for regular team meetings;

- developing an interim assessment calendar;
- creating and administering interim assessments aligned to the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS); and
- developing, implementing, and monitoring action plans to address learning deficits as indicated by the analysis of the assessment data.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Although some teachers are aware of the CCLS, the majority of teachers are not yet ready to implement these instructional principles and school leaders have not provided the instructional roadmap to guide a whole school action plan.
- There is not enough being done to provide the appropriate instruction in literacy across the grade levels for students with disabilities as reported by teachers and observed by the review team.
- There is a need for on-going training on how to differentiate instruction to meet the instructional needs of all students.
- The review team observed limited evidence of the development of higher order thinking skills in instructional practices. Questioning skills varied greatly among teachers, with a majority of questions requiring factual recall and one-word answers.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- All teachers and school leaders should participate in PD on how to plan and implement a curriculum aligned with the CCLS with rigor. School leaders should ensure that walkthroughs and observations of classroom lessons include how well the teacher knows and implements the curriculum for the subjects being taught. The MicroSociety theme of the school should be a major consideration in the planning and implementation of new strategies aligned with the CCLS and the foundational elements of the MicroSociety philosophy.
- School leaders should seek to ensure that all students, including students with disabilities, are provided with appropriate scaffolding materials that would assist the slower learner to grasp content materials for their grade levels.
- School leaders should provide PD on implementation of flexible grouping based on formative, interim and summative data. All students should be provided with tasks and activities that address their specific learning needs in all lessons. School leaders should monitor teacher planning and instruction to ensure that the use of data to group students becomes common practice in all classrooms. On-going PD should be provided to teachers that emphasize differentiated instructional strategies, especially for teachers who are struggling with these strategies.
- The school leadership should seek to provide PD that will support teachers in developing a variety of questioning techniques aimed at critical thinking and using problem solving skills appropriate to student development. Teachers should ensure that rigor prevails throughout each lesson in such ways as: use of

“cold calls,” avoiding just calling on students with hands raised and getting students to respond to each other.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- There is a need for school leaders to be trained on the new teaching standards as well as to become familiar with what will be expected in the new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) regulations. .
- Although teachers are encouraged to integrate many of the subjects taught in the classrooms with the experiences students are having in the MicroSociety, there is a need to increase the rigor of instruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should be trained in the new teaching standards and in implementing the new APPR.
- The school leadership does meet the required District goal of monthly walkthrough observations; however, the school leadership should implement a classroom observation schedule that monitors more closely the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Written feedback should reflect a common understanding about what constitutes effective teacher practice.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- Although some plans articulate a pathway for student success and a base for horizontal classroom planning, the vertical planning for higher standards is missing. The expectations for students moving into the upper grades are not formally articulated within this school or with other schools above grade 6.
- Due to recent cutbacks in funding, there is no full-time guidance counselor, social worker or psychologist at the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should arrange for teachers to formally meet with teachers from the grade above and the grade below the grade that they are teaching to discuss student progress. This would assist in the elimination of gaps in student learning and address what teachers should teach at the next level. If possible, this same process should be used for the feeder schools within the District. Students that show specific aptitudes in the MicroSociety setting should be directed to the high school that could continue their field of study.
- School leaders should collaborate with outside agencies within the school setting and encourage discussion of student behavior before that behavior becomes a potential problem for the student as well as for the immediate school community and agencies. In addition, the leadership team should survey parents on what

they can do for the teaching and learning process for their children and how they can become proactive voices to support the positive school community culture.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- Although PD activities around the CCLS are taking place at this time, there is a need for all teachers to be fully trained and experience practice lessons that are aligned with the CCLS.
- While reading workshops are being provided for Title I parents, there is still a need to provide more workshops for parents that focus on specific needs of students, such as the different aspects of the MicroSociety that could increase the use of mathematics and English language arts.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leadership should create a structured, detailed PD plan that is aligned with the CCLS and the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) school goals. This plan should take into account the differentiated needs of the staff and students as reflected in the school's data regarding student performance and quality of teaching and learning.
- Additional workshops for parents that enhance their ability to assist their children with homework and schoolwork should be provided. Parents should be shown how they can help their children at home by reinforcing concepts that they learn at school as well as how to apply every day transactions with businesses and individuals. The monthly Parent Workshops supported by WJCS, the Parent Center, Adult Basic Education and Title I/Title III teachers should focus on homework, academic motivation, and parent literacy/numeracy skill development.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDING:

Although there are six SMART Boards in this school, this number is not sufficient for the 20 classrooms that could benefit from updated technology.

RECOMMENDATION:

District leaders should consider reallocating funds to purchase laptops and SMART Boards over a period of time until all classrooms are adequately equipped with the necessary technology. PD should include specific strategies for using technological resources, such as SMART Boards and laptops, as instructional aids for differentiated learning.

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.