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Dear Principal:

The School Self-Evaluation Form (SSEF) is designed to focus on how your school systematically organizes around improving student achievement and teacher practice, with specific regard to the five quality statements described in the Quality Review rubric. It serves as an essential artifact of evidence for the reviewer, offering insights into how you and your school community approach the ongoing study and development of organizational and instructional coherence. The SSEF also allows you to capture some of the successes in your work as well as surface some of the challenges you collectively face.

Please copy this information into the QRTS system: <http://www.nycdoe-qualityreviews.com/login>  
(You will receive a correspondence that states your account name and password.)

**Guidance on completing the form:**

- Use evaluative language; focus the response on how these practices impact student outcomes and improve teacher practice;
- Include specific references to where evidence of the self-evaluation can be found;
- **When possible, use bullet points to list multiple evaluative points;**
- Limit the response to 4-5 pages (excluding this cover page);
- Refer to the Quality Statements when possible.

**A highly effective SSEF will:**

- Draw on a wide evidence base and take the views of staff, students and parents into account;
- Be honest, reflective and analytical, explaining the basis for actions and the resulting outcomes;
- Be evaluative, using selective examples to support the summary and link cause and effect clearly;
- Explain succinctly how the school has tackled the areas for improvement, what impact these actions have had on teaching, learning and student progress;
- Provide a real picture of your school that allows the reviewer to see evidence and artifacts of the work you have been doing in creating an effective and coherent educational experience for your students and faculty.

## **I. Development of the School Self-Evaluation Form**

Briefly describe how this SSEF was created.

- What process did you use to collect multiple perspectives?
- Who was involved and what were their roles?

The initial overview on Quality Review was held with GNSS staff in collaboration with coaches from the Academy for Educational Development. Individual teacher and team surveys were distributed for collection at a later date, thus ensuring response from individuals and teacher teams.

## **II. Instructional Goals**

Describe your school's instructional goals and then respond to the following prompts:

- How do they relate to your previous year's goals and longer-term goals (past this year)?
- In what ways, if any, do they relate to previous Quality Review Areas of Improvement?
- NOTE: If your school has a restructuring or transformation plan, please give a one paragraph description of the plan and explain the alignment with your overall instructional goals.

The GNSS goals were established in response to short-comings noted on the 2010 NYC Progress Report. The Progress Report showed that GNSS student performance lagged as compared to Citywide and Peer indexes, especially in ELA. The Progress Report and other data analyses on behavior (i.e. OORS and VESID) noted concerns regarding student culture and discipline. It should also be noted that the 2010 Quality Review recommended expanding and fine-tuning our data-based decision making practices in order that we may establish "interim goals and benchmarks across the curriculum to measure progress, to make adjustments, and to evaluate success." In order to vigorously address these gaps, GNSS established the following goals:

**Implement school-wide curricular alignment with the National Common Core Standards across the classrooms and grades with a specific focus on customizing periodic assessments to establish and maintain a culture of high expectations and academic rigor for all students.**

- All teachers develop and implement standards-based instructional curriculum maps and corresponding units.
- ELA/Humanities, Math and Science teams develop, implement and assess instructional practices and modify instruction accordingly.

**Increase Student Performance in English Language Arts and Mathematics as monitored by Periodic Assessments test and GNSS Report Cards and ultimately measured by the ELA and Math Standardized Tests:**

- Improve the percentage of students at Proficiency in ELA and Math by 65% as measured by New York State Standardized Test.
- Implement Performance Series and Acuity Periodic Assessment as well as other assessment tools that are aligned to the new Core Standards curriculum in order to support individual student progress

**Develop school wide common practices that support academic practices and students' social emotional learning.**

- School-wide focus via Grade Level Meetings on identifying struggling students, developing intervention strategies and assessing and modifying interventions.

### III. Areas of Celebration and Promising Practices

Describe 1-3 school practices, initiatives or projects which are exemplary in evidencing organizational and/or instructional coherence. Feel free to reference any of the goals above without repeating the descriptions. If there are specific terms or definitions of practices that your staff uses in regard to curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and/or teacher teams, include them here.

Through on-going professional study inquiry group meetings (PSIGs), GNSS is establishing a school culture that relies on data to inform adult learning, professional development, and decision-making. Teacher and administrative teams meet to analyze school capacity, plan for school-wide change, and to foster academic rigor and social-emotional wellness for the entire school community. In particular:

**See addendum 1**

### IV. Relating Practice to the Quality Review Rubric

Select one of the three practices described above and go deeper:

- What are the intended outcomes of this practice, initiative, or project?
- How do you know this initiative is on target to achieve the stated outcomes within this school year and beyond?
- Making specific links and references to Quality Statement indicators in the rubric (e.g., 3.2), describe how the reviewer will know this initiative is having an impact.

As per Quality Statement 1, GNSS established instructional and organizational coherence (school-wide curricular alignment) by utilizing the National Common Core State Standards in order to increase student performance in English Language Arts and Mathematics. In other words, teachers aligned Common Core Standards with their curricula and developed effective instructional strategies and assessment tools to meet students' diverse learning needs. Specifically, GNSS ELA/Humanities, Math, and Sixth Grade Teams developed and implemented Common Core tasks and assessments to establish, maintain, and monitor a culture of high expectations and academic rigor for all students, as per Quality Statements 2, 3 and 4. Results per ELA/Humanities, Math and Grade Level Teams are indicated in Addendum 1. Atlas-based curriculum maps and GNSS involvement in the NYCDOE Middle School Performance-based Assessment Pilot (MSPBA) and the Math in the Middle Program serve as documented and verifiable evidence of this practice effecting all Math classrooms and the entire Sixth Grade; specifically through Common Core Assessments, student work, teacher rubrics, meeting minutes, etc. Writing DYOs and Running Records serve as evidence of practice effecting ELA/Humanities classes. Also of note:

- Math and ELA Team have set measurable goals for student achievement using an agreed-upon common assessment tools (DYO rubrics and Running Records for ELA/SS, Constructed Response rubrics for Math) to capture student progress towards these goals.
- Math and ELA Team demonstrate the ability to use or analyze data from multiple sources to identify student learning trends, set goals, monitor, and modify instruction in order to increase student achievement.
- Lessons emphasize rigorous habits, academic tasks, or higher thinking order skills, and reflect planning to engage a diversity of learners.
- Engagement and thinking is evident in student work products and processes.
- Grade-level teams have a shared responsibility for a common group of students.

## **V. Classroom Visits**

Describe the curricular, pedagogical, and/or assessment practices the reviewer will see and hear across classrooms.

- In what ways do these classroom practices and/or routines align with your school community's beliefs about how students learn best?
- How do professional development activities and opportunities support these practices?

As noted above, professional development activities (weekly department meetings for ELA/Humanities and Math, as well as external Math team meetings for implementing Common Core) focused on Quality Statement 1 (especially 1.1: *Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State Standards*).

Teacher curricula and lessons emphasize rigorous habits, academic tasks, higher order thinking skills, and reflect planning to engage a diversity of learners. This is manifested in classrooms by students being actively engaged in learning tasks which, in itself, provides ample opportunity for gauging learning. Learning is also gauged via Running Records, Writing DYOs, and performance-based assessments in Math.

Teacher and student time is structured to respond to the learning needs of all students so that they engage in challenging academic tasks and develop higher order thinking skills. Specifically, teachers and students are engaged in project-based learning and group work. Grouping of students is purposeful and is based on their learning needs and strengths. Similarly, extended time (37.5) is structured for all students based on their learning needs and is reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Prior to end of each quarter, Grade Level teams and administration review student academic performance and provide ample opportunity (through flexible scheduling, pull-out academic counseling and extended time) for academic enrichment.

## **VI. Data-informed Decision Making and Capacity Building**

In reviewing your accountability tools, other information sources, and action planning documents (Progress Reports, past Quality Reviews, LES, CEP, PPR, classroom observations, school-based surveys etc.), describe how you have used data to develop a coherent approach to the professional development of your faculty and administrative team so that all students are achieving at high levels. Two prompts to consider:

- How have you used this data to inform, improve, and/or expand the collaborative inquiry work of teacher teams across your school?
- Taking into consideration the evolving State standards what systems and/or structures have you put in place to monitor and adjust your plans to increase student understanding and performance?

GNSS faculty and coaches reviewed data from the 2009-2010 New York State ELA and Math tests and targeted the Constructed Responses as the area of common need and focus. A Literacy-Across-the-Content Areas retreat was provided to support the incorporation of literacy strategies in Math, Science and Social Studies.

In ELA, coaching for Humanities Team meetings focused on the use of Acuity and Performance series assessments, writing rubrics, running records, and biweekly academic reports to refine instructional focus on reading and writing.

In Math, weekly team meetings assured continuity across grades. This included training on using Acuity to create individualized custom assessments (based on the student's strengths and areas of growth) and using the acuity predictive as a mid-year benchmark. The Math Team also implemented videotaping of both students and classes, as a professional development tool. Specifically, this allowed the Math Team to get feedback on teaching and learning from critical friends outside of the GNSS school community.

As noted above, the GNSS Math Team was also involved in the NYCDOE Middle School Performance-based Assessment Pilot and the Math in the Middle Program. These professional development opportunities supported the development of:

- Curriculum Maps aligned with Common Core;
- Math school wide grading policy was implemented to assure fairness and transparency with students progress and achievement;
- Differentiated instruction for students with various learning styles and executive function capabilities;
- Pre and Post assessments for each unit in the math curriculum to assist in the assessment of student progress as well as a weekly constructed response analysis of students writing in mathematics.

Finally, as per QR 3.3 and 5.4, administration and Teacher Teams monitored and revised professional development and student interventions based on formative assessments. These revisions, included but are not limited to:

- Regrouping of students in classes;
- Coaching and ramp up in Acuity-based interventions;
- Coaching and ramp-up in Guided Reading strategies.

## **VII. Optional**

If there is anything else you want to add to help the reviewer better understand your school use the space below. If space allows, some schools may want to add something about how the inquiry teams function within their schools.