

**Bragaw Avenue Elementary School**  
5-2-2005 to 5-5-2005

**Introduction**

The New Jersey Department of Education conducted a CAPA (Collaborative Assessment for Planning and Achievement) review of Elementary School on 2-14 to 2-16-2005. This school is designated as “in need of improvement” for four consecutive years as defined in the *NJ Accountability Workbook. No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) §1117: School Support and Recognition requires that the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) create and maintain a statewide system of intensive and sustained support for those Title I schools designated as “in need of improvement” for four consecutive years. As part of this required support system, the NJDOE developed the CAPA review process, which assigns teams of skillful and experienced individuals to provide schools with practical, applicable, and helpful assistance, increasing the opportunity for all students to meet the state’s Core Curriculum Content Standards. CAPA is required for all Title I schools in corrective action.

The CAPA review team activities included:

- A review of the documents collected for the school portfolio and data profile;
- 29 classroom observations;
- General observations, such as morning and afternoon arrival and dismissal, lunch in the cafeteria, and student restrooms;
- 15 interviews with teachers;
- 13 interviews with building leadership and administrators;
- 0 interviews with district administrators;
- 24 interviews with students;
- 19 interviews with school and student support staff; and
- 22 interviews with parents.

Following the study of documentation, and the conducting of interviews and observations, the team discussed each standard and its indicators. Based on these findings, the team offered its recommendations.

Team members and their affiliation included:

<b>TEAM POSITION</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>AFFILIATION</b>
Team Lead	Keisha Smith-Carrington	New Jersey Department of Education
Principal	Jill Watkins	Educational Consultant
Language Arts Literacy Specialist	Sandy Winick	Educational Consultant
Mathematics Specialist	Susan Hinkle	Educational Consultant
Mathematics Specialist	Valerie Miller	Newark Public School District
Special Education Specialist	Joseph Jakubowski	Educational Consultant
Parent	Shirley Johnson	
District Liaison	Pam Morgan	Newark Public School District
DOE Liaison	Janice Gabbidon	New Jersey Department of Education

### **Academic Performance Standards**

The following Academic Performance Standards address curriculum, classroom evaluation/assessment, and instruction.

- Standard 1:** The school develops and implements a curriculum that is rigorous, intentional and aligned to state and local standards.
- Standard 2:** The school uses multiple evaluation and assessment strategies to continuously monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work.
- Standard 3:** The school's instructional program actively engages all students by using effective, varied, and research-based practices to improve student academic performance.

### **Learning Environment Standards**

The following Learning Environment Standards address school culture; student, family and community support, professional growth, development and evaluation.

- Standard 4:** The school functions as an effective learning community and supports a climate conducive to performance excellence.
- Standard 5:** The school works with families and community groups to remove barriers to learning in an effort to meet the intellectual, social, career, and developmental needs of students consistent with 6A: 10A-3.6 Supports for Parents and Families and NCLB §1118 Parental Involvement.
- Standard 6:** The school provides research based, results driven professional development opportunities for staff and implements performance evaluation procedures in order to improve teaching and learning.

### **Efficiency Standards**

The following Efficiency Standards address leadership, school culture and resources and comprehensive and effective planning.

- Standard 7:** School instructional decisions focus on support for teaching and learning, organizational direction, high performance expectations, creating a learning culture, developing leadership capacity.
- Standard 8:** There is evidence that the school is organized to maximize use of all available resources to support high student and staff performance.
- Standard 9:** The School Leadership Council and district planning team develops, implements, and evaluates a three-year operational plan/school improvement plan that communicates a clear purpose, direction and action plan focused on improving teaching and learning.

### **Summary Findings in: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE (QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION)**

**STANDARD 1-CURRICULUM: The District K-8 curriculum is rigorous and aligned to state standards.**

**1.1b The district initiates discussions among schools regarding curriculum standards and frameworks to ensure they are clearly articulated across all levels (K-8).**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of three-year operational plan, lesson plans and non-instructional professional staff end of year report
- SLC, principal, vice principal, literacy coach, teacher and non-instructional professional staff interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

The school partially implements internal discussion to ensure horizontal and vertical articulation. While the master schedule and administrator interviews provide evidence of scheduled weekly horizontal articulation, teacher interviews provide evidence that this time is neither consistently maintained nor focused. There is insufficient documentation for vertical collaboration efforts. There is no evidence of vertical articulation pre-kindergarten programs. There is some evidence of vertical articulation with receiver schools. None of the special education teachers interviewed indicate that they have attended or know of any SLT or district level articulation meetings or structures regarding curriculum standards and frameworks. There is on-going training and discussions with all teachers in the building regarding the implementation of the literacy curriculum, through the literacy coach, including special education staff. However, there is little evidence that the curriculum is adapted to meet the diverse needs of the special education population.

**1.1e The curriculum requires all students to take courses with sufficient academic rigor to prepare for college preparatory courses and pass the statewide assessments, and provides specific links to life and career options.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of three year operational plan and lesson plans
- Principal, vice principal, literacy coach, teacher, student and non-instructional professional staff interviews
- Review of student writing portfolios, student reader's notebook and end of year guidance report

**Findings:**

The implemented curriculum provides some intentional connections to postsecondary education and career options for students in the middle grades. These are facilitated by individual teachers as well as the non-instructional professional staff. There is evidence that the materials and resources currently used in the school are not fully aligned to the district curriculum. Interviews and student documentation provide evidence that there is a career program in the school. Opportunities for the application of learning and preparation to become self-sufficient, productive citizens are evident in school-wide daily routines,

classroom activities, and multiple interviews. The general education curriculum is offered to all students, including special education students. This is a literacy program in language arts, consisting of Trophies and McDougal Little, supplemented by teacher selected supplemental materials. The math program for all students consists of the Everyday and Connected Math. Although the lower levels of the Trophies program does provide phonics practice, it does not offer systematic, developmental instruction in reading, in terms of phonemic segmentation, sound symbol relationships, decoding, encoding, advanced word analysis, fluency, etc. The building principal, CST and all special education teachers report a need for this kind of reading program.

**1.1f The district works with supervisors and faculty to systematically monitor, evaluate and adjust the curriculum based on the evidence of student achievement.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of SLC meeting minutes and grade level minutes
- Review of GEPA, NJASK3 and 4 assessment results and three-year operational plan (2004-2005)
- Principal, vice principal, literacy coach and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

There was limited documentation of the school leadership's procedures to address curriculum issues. There was evidence of the formation of a Curriculum and Instruction subcommittee on the SLC; however, no minutes or agendas are available to document their efforts. There was evidence of district-provided professional development in the Harcourt Trophies CRP. While numerous interviews state the effectiveness of the job-embedded trainings offered by the literacy coach, there was no available written documentation. There is no evidence that this occurs specific to the special education program.

**1.1g The curriculum provides access to a common academic core for all students including, but not limited to, special education and ELL students.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of disaggregated student assessment data and lesson plans
- Principal, vice principal, literacy coach and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

There is evidence that the school's implemented curriculum provides limited access to a common academic core for all students. The classroom observations and assessment data, interviews, lesson plans, and curriculum guides document that this implementation is sometimes challenging, does not always elicit higher order thinking and problem solving skills, and does not differentiate instruction. This evidence documents that there are low expectations for students, although teacher interviews would indicate the opposite. Although most classrooms had clearly defined learning centers, classroom observations provide evidence that their use is not a part of daily LAL instruction. The standards for proficient performance on statewide assessments are clearly identified for and internalized by the majority of the students although the NJCCCS are not always communicated.

There are four self-contained classes, two BD and two LD classes. There are also two students who are attending general education classes, with out of class support, via a teaching tutor. The students attending self-contained classes have little opportunity to interact with non-disabled peers in their academic programs, although they receive the same curriculum. These classes serve 5 to 12 students on two to three grade levels with a teacher and personal assistants. There are no in class support or replacement classes in this building. All special education teachers and CST personnel interviewed stated that there are students who could be placed in ICS classes within this building.

## **STANDARD 1**

### **NEXT STEPS**

1. (1.1b) School leadership should fully develop and monitor the consistent use of a format, including an agenda, for recording attendance and minutes during meetings for both vertical and horizontal articulation.
2. (1.1b) School leadership should survey its current kindergarten population to ascertain the feeder programs.
3. (1.1g) School leadership should monitor lesson plans and classroom instruction to ensure full alignment to the NJ CCCS and daily utilization of centers.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. (1.1b) School leadership should develop articulation agreements with those preschool programs identified as feeder programs for Bragaw Avenue.
2. (1.1f) The Curriculum and Instruction subcommittee of the SLC should be fully implemented as to ensure that the implemented curriculum clearly and consistently links all LAL resources (e.g., textbooks, decodable and leveled texts, technology, etc.).
3. (1.1g) School leadership should schedule ongoing professional development for SY05 that includes job-embedded training in differentiated instruction, Bloom's taxonomy, and multiple intelligences.
4. (1.1g) School leadership should monitor the rigor of instruction against the NJ CCCS to ensure that all staff consistently demonstrate high expectations for student learning.
5. (1.1g) Teachers should build a portfolio of exemplars to serve as a guide for assessment and be encouraged to use nontraditional means of sharing information (e.g., ePals).

**SPECIAL EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The district's Office of Special Education should ensure that reading accommodations for classified students are possible through either the district series or supplemental programs. All special education staff should be required to participate in related training during SY06 and implement it in all special education and classes, in which the child is removed from the general education class for Language Arts.
2. More special education students should gain direct access to the general education curriculum in a manner that allows them to interact with non-disabled peers as academic and behavioral models. More training should be required of staff, particularly in general/special education teams.
3. CST, special education staff and general education staff should be trained together in inclusionary practices so that a full range of program options can be offered to special education students. A greater effort should be made to providing a greater level of integration of special education students into the general education program with supplemental aids and services. The IEP team should apply the required Oberti test which presumes a general education placement with supports and only deviates from that assumption within the context of that test. All school personnel should be apprised that according to IDEA 97, special education is not a place, but a system of services, and that a referral to the CST and classification will not necessarily result in the removal of that student from the general education classroom.

**STANDARD 2 -CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION: The district and school use multiple evaluation and assessment strategies to continuously monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work.**

**2.1a Assessments created by teachers, school and district are frequent, rigorous, aligned with NJ CCCS, used to gauge student learning and adjust teaching to individual needs.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of lesson plans, master schedule, grade level meeting agendas and samples of classroom assessments and student work
- Literacy coach, teacher and student interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

While assessments created by the district are frequent, rigorous, and aligned with the NJ CCCS, there is little evidence that teachers use all assessments to gauge student learning or adjust their teaching to address individual needs. Lesson plans document inconsistent monitoring and alignment to the NJ CCCS. Observed instruction provides evidence that there is not a consistent link to planning. While the district administers the Statewide Proficiency Assessment (SPA) for off-year testing in grades five through seven, there is not a summative assessment administered in grades Kindergarten through second grade.

## **2.1b Teachers collaborate to design authentic classroom assessments aligned with the CCCS.**

### **Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of lesson plans, grade level agendas, student portfolios and professional resource materials
- Literacy Coach and teacher interviews

### **Findings:**

There is no available evidence that teachers collaborate to design authentic assessment tasks. While teachers have weekly opportunities to collaborate, the use of this information in the classroom is not evident. Writing folders and classroom research samples are used for assessment. Observed oral assessments neither required nor developed critical thinking skills. Interviews and documents provide evidence that lesson plans are monitored with little substantive feedback.

## **2.1c Students can articulate the academic expectations in each class and know what is required to be proficient. Academic expectations are clearly communicated, evident in classrooms and observable in student work.**

### **Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Literacy Coach, teacher, and student interviews
- Review of grade level agendas, classroom displays and rubrics
- Review of student portfolios, journals, and notebooks
- Classroom observations

### **Findings:**

Some students can articulate the academic expectations in each class and know what is required to be proficient. Academic expectations are frequently communicated, evident in classrooms, and observable in student work. There was little evidence that teachers collaborate to develop clearly defined rubrics and routinely communicate this knowledge to students. Many students interviewed were able to articulate the requirements for proficiency on state assessments. There was limited evidence of either teacher or student reflection/evaluation beyond basic grading.

## **2.1d Test scores are used by the district and school to identify curriculum gaps.**

### **Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of three year operational plan, SLC meeting and grade level meeting agendas
- Review of three-year comparative data

### **Findings:**

Documentation reveals that there is incomplete identification of curriculum gaps or instructional implications by school staff members. There is limited development of data analysis for the purpose of modifying curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. The school does not have a sub cluster analysis of state assessment data for NJASK4 to provide areas of focus.

**2.1e Multiple assessments are designed and used to gauge student learning and to adjust teaching to meet individual student needs.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of three-year operational plan, lesson plans and student portfolios
- Open-response questions
- Principal, vice principal, literacy coach, teacher and student interviews

**Findings:**

There is little evidence of the use of multiple assessments designed and used to gauge student learning and to adjust teaching to meet individual student needs. There is no available evidence of opportunities for students to choose ways in which they demonstrate learning based on multiple intelligence and preferred learning styles. The use of classroom assessment analysis to modify instruction is only evidenced in the implementation of guided reading in some classrooms. While the district requires the use of the DRA as a screen for potential reading difficulties, there is no evidence that teachers facilitate progress of identified students through frequent guided reading instruction.

**2.1h Samples of student assessments are shared among teachers and analyzed to inform instruction and to revise curriculum and pedagogy.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Literacy coach, teacher and student interviews
- Review of grade level meeting minutes regarding analysis of student work
- Review of professional development documentation analyzing student work, samples of classroom assessments for LAL, and student portfolios

**Findings:**

While there is some evidence that student assessments are frequently shared among middle grade teachers and analyzed to inform instruction and revise curriculum and pedagogy, there is no available documentation of this occurrence in the lower grades. All teachers have received training in protocols for analyzing student writing. Some are implementing these policies. There is some documentation that student portfolios are beginning to be used to measure student growth over time in some classrooms.

**STANDARD 2**

**NEXT STEPS**

(2.1c and 2.1e) School leadership should monitor lesson plans and classroom instruction to ensure that academic expectations are clearly communicated, evident in classrooms, observable in student work, and include opportunities for student and teacher reflection.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. (2.1a) The district should select a summative assessment for kindergarten through second grade.
2. (2.1b) School leadership should ensure that opportunities for teacher collaboration include the design of a variety of assessment tasks that require students to provide varied and appropriate demonstrations of knowledge and ability.

3. (2.1d) The school and district should collaborate to ensure that training on data analysis for the purpose of modifying curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices should be provided for all staff in SY05.
4. (2.1d) The school leadership should utilize the office of Planning, Evaluation, and Testing to provide workshops on data analysis for school staff.

**STANDARD 3 -INSTRUCTION: Instruction engages all students by using effective, varied and research-based practices to improve academic performance.**

**3.1a There is evidence that effective and varied instructional strategies are used in all classrooms.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of lesson plans, student portfolios and three-year operational plan
- Principal, vice principal, literacy coach, teacher and student interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

There is minimal evidence that effective and varied instructional strategies are used. The school's Three-year Operational Plan requires a 90-minute block for Language Arts Literacy (LAL). This is not being fully implemented. Language Arts Literacy instruction occurs in fragmented portions throughout the day for some grade levels. Current practice has preparation periods scheduled at times inappropriate for some students' developmental ability. Whole class, teacher-directed instructional strategies are the most observed practice, although lesson plans listed varied instructional strategies. Observed instruction does not equip students with decoding strategies. Observed classroom instruction rarely, if ever, accommodates various learning styles, multiple intelligence, and brain research. Observed activities do not require or develop higher order thinking or problem-solving skills.

**3.1b Instructional strategies and learning activities are aligned with the district, school and state goals and assessments.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of lesson plans
- Principal, vice principal, literacy coach and student interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

The implemented instructional strategies and learning activities are not fully aligned to the district and state goals. While the district-adopted Comprehensive Reading Program (CRP) calls for the use of multiple grouping formats for instruction, observed classroom instruction is concentrated on teacher-centered activities. Learning centers were not used in the majority of the classrooms observed. There are no English Language Learners. The current literacy time totals ninety minutes; however, the majority of the grade levels do not have a contiguous, uninterrupted block. LAL instruction is interrupted for lunch, specials, and bathroom breaks. The school leadership has no policy for the use of time during the block

but relegates that responsibility to classroom teachers. Classroom observations revealed lack of appropriate time management. A few classrooms use guided reading and shared reading.

### **3.1c Instructional strategies and activities are continuously monitored and aligned with individual student needs.**

#### **Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of lesson plans, student portfolios and sample teacher evaluations
- Principal, vice principal, literacy coach and teacher interviews
- Review of disaggregated state assessment data and disaggregated student enrollment
- Classroom observations

#### **Findings:**

Instructional strategies and activities are infrequently monitored and aligned with individual student needs. There is limited development to monitor classroom instruction via plan books and formal observations. The documentation shows feedback that does not always provide teachers with assistance to modify instruction to meet the needs of the diverse learning styles of the student population. Instructional strategies and activities are not always planned to accommodate the learning needs and learning styles of students. While the CRP calls for explicit and systematic instruction in phonological awareness and phonics, observed instruction shows little implementation.

### **3.1d Teachers demonstrate the content knowledge necessary to challenge and motivate students to high levels of learning.**

#### **Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Number of staff vacancies and number of substitutes
- Review of lesson plans, master schedule, and teacher assignments
- Principal, vice principal, literacy coach, teacher and student interviews
- Classroom observations

#### **Findings:**

A limited number of teachers demonstrate the content knowledge necessary to challenge and motivate students to high levels of learning. While the majority of the teachers are appropriately certificated, less than half meet the NCLB standard. There was an indication that possible confusion over HOUSE accounted for the low number; however, there was no evidence that efforts to appropriately assess staff were underway. Teachers participate in the required hours of professional development; however, there is little evidence that knowledge acquired is informing practice. Displayed artifacts, classroom observations, and interviews provide evidence of teachers' efforts to develop interdisciplinary units of study. Some teachers either do not demonstrate the necessary literacy skills or content knowledge consistent with the NJCCCS to properly model them for students (e.g., use of vernacular English in written or verbal communication, use of NJ CCCS standard with the broad indicator as opposed to use of the specific strand).

### **3.1e There is evidence that teachers incorporate technology in their classrooms.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of the school website and eBoard and technology plan
- Administrative team, SLC, technology coordinator, parent, teacher and student interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

There is evidence that teachers incorporate technology in their classrooms. All classrooms have at least two networked computers (more often three or more) computers. There is a full time technology coordinator who offers both technical and curricular support to staff and students. The school technology plan is based upon a needs assessment that used multiple measures of data, and provides infrastructure to the school as to the implementation of technology in the school. Professional development delivered by the technology coordinator is ongoing, in both large group (mandated by the principal) and small group instruction. From displayed student work in hallways, and interviews with students and staff, there is some evidence that computers are used for instruction. However, there was no evidence of this in the classrooms observed. Although computers were powered on in most classrooms, students were working on computers in one classroom. Computer generated student work was not evident inside many classrooms. The lab was fully utilized, and students in the lab were observed completing assignments across curricular areas using a variety of software applications. Outside of the lab, teachers were not observed using technology as an instructional or managerial tool.

**3.1f The district and school ensure that instructional resources are sufficient and that all instructional materials are aligned to the curriculum.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of textbooks and instructional resources
- Principal, vice principal, literacy coach and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

The school has some classrooms in which there is a limited variety of instructional resources to meet the needs of the learners. Classroom libraries do not meet state mandates in all classrooms. There are sufficient quantities of decodable books and leveled texts; however, use thereof was not observed for guided reading in the majority of the classrooms. In addition, the levels present were not appropriate for all readers in all classrooms.

**3.1g Teachers examine and discuss student work collaboratively and use this information to inform their practice.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Grade level meeting and classroom observations
- Principal, vice principal, literacy coach and teacher interviews
- Review of lesson plans and grade level meeting minutes

### **Findings:**

While most general education teachers have the opportunity to meet collaboratively to inform their practice by analyzing student work, evidence indicates the practice takes place more often in the upper grades. There is insufficient evidence that lower elementary general education and special education teachers frequently analyze the work of their students and use the results to inform instructional practice. There is evidence that job-embedded training on the use of rubrics has been a priority this year.

### **3.1h There is evidence that homework is frequent, evaluated and tied to instructional practice.**

#### **Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of lesson plans, district homework policy and samples of homework
- Principal, parent, teacher and student interviews
- Classroom observations

### **Findings:**

The district and school have a homework policy. There is some evidence that homework is frequent, monitored, and consistently tied to instructional practice. Instructional feedback often is not specific. Many students and some parents interviewed can articulate the relationship between class work and homework. Workbook pages and writing assignments are the primary source of homework.

## **STANDARD 3**

### **NEXT STEPS**

1. Provide primary teachers with intensive technology based staff development in the content areas.
2. School leadership should document staff credentials that meet the requirements of HOUSE to accurately ascertain the number of highly qualified staff.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. (3.1a) School leadership should fully develop and monitor the implementation of policy on the use of effective and varied instructional strategies in all classrooms.
2. (3.1a) School leadership should develop a schedule of LAL instruction that adheres to the state mandates for all grade levels and addresses students' developmental needs .
3. (3.1c) School leadership should ensure that feedback to lesson plan books and classroom observations provide teachers with assistance in the modification of instruction to meet the needs of the diverse learning styles of the student population.
4. (3.1e) School administration should develop and begin implementing an intentional, focused and rigorous plan for implementing and monitoring strategies in the **classroom use** of technology as a tool for teaching and learning, across grade levels and content areas. Teachers should be required to have evidence of the infusion of technology in their instruction in their lesson plan books.
5. (3.1e) The Teacher Self Assessment Application (TSAA), a district-developed online tool, should be utilized to help teachers self-monitor learning in the area of technology integration.
6. (3.1e) Special emphasis for technology based staff development should be placed on the lower grade teachers who recently received networked computers in their classrooms. In addition, (3.1e) The district should provide support to enable all teachers to receive substantial staff development

on software that accompanies district texts in all subject areas with an emphasis on mathematics and LAL.

7. (3.1f) School leadership should collaborate with central office Special Education designee to develop a plan to ensure that classified children are placed according to the timelines set forth by IDEA.
8. (3.1f) School leadership should review the SY06 budget and collaborate with the Office of LAL to ensure the allocation of funds for the purchase of leveled texts and tradebooks to achieve the quantity of classroom library materials in all classrooms as per Abbott rules and regulations.
9. (3.1g) School leadership should ensure that opportunities for horizontal teacher collaboration are consistently monitored and that opportunities for vertical articulation occur regularly.

**STANDARD 4 -SCHOOL CULTURE: The school functions as an effective learning community and supports a climate conducive to performance excellence.**

**4.1a The principal and school leadership are responsible for and support a safe, orderly, and equitable learning environment.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Administrator, non-instructional professional staff, teacher and student interviews
- Cafeteria, classroom, hallway, arrival, dismissal and recess observations
- Review of principal's presentation and non-instructional staff end of year reports
- Review of Student/Parent handbook, school safety plan and, incident and suspension reports

**Findings:**

There is a sign-in policy for all visitors and this policy is enforced by school security. School administration in collaboration with the SLC created a student/parent handbook that outlines the discipline policy for students and the consequences for non-compliant behavior. Teachers have developed class rules that are posted in most classrooms. Although behavioral standards are made clear to students (e.g. posted class rules, policies, verbal reinforcement by staff), there is evidence that students are not included in the process for establishing the rules to govern classroom behavior.

School leadership has established a school safety committee. Additionally, there is evidence that the SLC established a school climate committee. Although there was evidence of surveys created for parents, there was very little evidence to suggest that these surveys were used to inform the decisions of the school. There was no evidence that students and staff were surveyed regarding school climate. Students interviewed were able to express school rules and consequences for non-compliance. Observations of lunch periods and recess revealed more discipline problems in the lower grades. Many school staff interviewed stated that the neighborhood was unsafe and cited vandalism to cars and older students (from Weequahic High School) hanging around the building and fighting with some of the students. There is no evidence of walkie-talkie usage by security personnel although this equipment is mentioned in the security plan as available. Observations and interviews revealed that security communicated with one another via personal cell phones. Observations also revealed that teachers sent students to alert security

of classroom needs. It should be noted that not all teachers have access to the PA system; they do not have the key which permits operation.

Observations and interviews produced evidence that as the day progressed the bathrooms became unkempt and student bathrooms lacked toilet paper, paper towels and soap throughout the school day. None of the water fountains were operable. The furniture in many of the classrooms was broken, rusted, and some chairs appeared too small for the students.

#### **4.1b The principal and school community (e.g., teachers and parents) foster the belief that all children can learn at high levels.**

##### **Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Administrator, parent, teacher, student and non-instructional staff interviews
- Review of non-instructional staff end of year reports
- Classroom observations
- Review of PTA documents, SLC minutes, Student/Parent handbook and principal's presentation

##### **Findings:**

The school has a newly created mission (SEEM) and vision statement (established during this administration) which speaks to the social, emotional, educational and moral development of students. Some staff interviewed were able to express the mission/vision clearly. For the most part, students and parents interviewed are unaware of the mission/vision. Each month a grade level is assigned to do the *citizen's pledge* where students make positive statements (over the PA system) regarding their purpose. The school has a parent liaison and PTA president who works closely with members of the school staff to encourage the participation of parents and the community in the educational process. Some of the activities that were offered by school staff to increase parental and community participation this school year were: *Open house, Special Education Luncheon, Greet the New Principal, Parent/Teacher Conference, Gang Awareness, Drug Awareness, Kindergarten Tea, Puberty workshop*. There is evidence that these events were not well attended. Many staff interviewed stated that the school struggles with parent participation. Although horizontal and vertical articulation meetings are established for teachers, there is evidence that scheduling precludes all teachers from participating in both.

#### **4.1c Teachers hold high expectations for all students academically and behaviorally, and this is evidenced in their practices. There is evidence that teachers care about students and inspire their best efforts.**

##### **Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of non-instructional staff end of year reports and Student/Parent handbook
- Parent, student, teacher and non-instructional staff interviews
- Cafeteria, classroom and hallway observations

**Findings:**

Parents and students interviewed believed that most teachers and some non-instructional staff hold high expectations and encourage students to work at high levels and to follow rules of behavior. There is evidence that some teachers demonstrate rigor in the delivery of instruction (e.g. higher order questioning, student response opportunity). It is also important to note that over the course of this review, several teachers were absent and some classes had substitute teachers. Behavior standards have been established and students interviewed were aware of the rules and consequences of non-compliance. These rules are shared with students and parents through the dissemination of the student/parent handbook and posted class rules. Although students are not formally assigned to meet regularly with an adult that serves as an advocate, all students have access to teachers, non-instructional staff and the administration. There is evidence that the school staff uses positive reinforcement to motivate students to greater levels of achievement (e.g. verbal praise and redirection, small prizes, positive affirmations via PA system, display of student of the month and perfect attendance information in hallways, certificates and awards).

**4.1e Teachers accept responsibility for student success/failure.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Parent, student, teacher and non-instructional staff interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

Teachers interviewed acknowledged the importance of reflecting upon and altering classroom practices to meet the needs of students, but this was not observed as occurring consistently in classroom visited. Some teachers have stated that they are able to identify the need to modify instruction based upon student behavior/body language and questions and comments made by students. There is no formal process for students to provide feedback or to evaluate the instructional performance of teachers to improve classroom practice as needed. It should also be noted that the school has a literacy coach and math and literacy Resource Teacher Coordinators (RTC).

**4.1f The school matches teacher strengths and experience with the needs of students. The school assigns staff to maximize opportunities for all students to have access to the staff's instructional strengths.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of lesson plans, school report card and master schedule
- Administrator, parent, teacher and non-instructional staff interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

In some instances, student groupings are created based upon student needs (e.g. guided reading groups). There was very little evidence that all teachers were providing flexible grouping and regrouping with continuous assessment. Students are able to access tutoring via the two teacher tutors assigned at the school and some students participate in the after school programs (e.g. Platform Learning, Sylvan Learning Center).

**4.1g Teachers communicate regularly with families by meetings, phone calls, notes and e-mail about their children's progress.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Administrator, parent, student, teacher and non-instructional staff interviews
- Review of sample letters and announcements of school events
- Review of Student/Parent handbook, school website/e-board and non-instructional staff end of year reports

**Findings:**

School staff communicates with parents via written letters and notices, telephone calls and parent/teacher conferences. There is evidence to suggest that parent/teacher conferences and open houses have not been well attended by parents. Some parents have stated having access to teacher telephone numbers for evening contact. The school also has a website where parents and students may access information about the school. The website also provides access to the school's e-board which currently houses information about the school, links to a homework hotline, student learning activities, as well as assistance using technology. Student progress reports provide parents with written feedback regarding the performance of students. All teachers interviewed indicate that they attempt to make contact with parents. Some are successful, while others state that parents do not respond to telephone calls or written letters. Some teachers cited disconnected telephones as a barrier to interacting with some parents. Most outreach to parents focus on student behavior. The non-instructional staff interviewed state that they are able to connect with parents (mostly around student behavior) when some teachers have struggles contacting parents (academic concerns/behavior). Interviewees agreed that parents are more responsive when students are engaging in performances and receiving awards.

**4.1j Student achievement is highly valued and publicly celebrated (for example, displays of exemplary student work, assemblies).**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Administrator, parent, student, teacher and non-instructional staff interviews
- Classroom and hallway observations
- Review of SLC minutes

**Findings:**

There was a great deal of evidence to demonstrate that students were celebrated on a regular basis for their academic accomplishments. Additionally, students were celebrated for the progress made in

improving behavior. School staff hosts formal assemblies to honor students who achieve honor roll and improve their academic performance. Each teacher identifies a student of the month and a “biography” of the student is posted outside of the classroom (not necessarily academically related). Students are honored for perfect attendance (e.g. hallway displays, small prizes, trips). Students are also recognized for their participation in after school programs and extra-curricular activities (e.g. G.R.E.A.T. - gang violence program, basketball). Parents are notified of student accomplishments by the administration and school staff. Students also report sharing their success with parents. There is some evidence that student work is displayed (e.g. science exhibition, work displayed in classrooms and hallways). However, the exhibition and display of student work is limited and do not cover all content areas. Some of the student work displayed was high level and rubric scores were attached, while other pieces were low-level and did not demonstrate evidence of the use of a rubric. Most classrooms had visible rubrics posted and some students used rubrics to guide self-reflection (upper grades). However, there was evidence that this was not occurring consistently throughout the grades.

**4.1k The school supports the physical, cultural and intellectual needs of all students, which reflects a commitment to equity and an appreciation of diversity.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Parent, teacher, student and non-instructional staff interviews
- Review of lesson plans, SLC minutes and principal’s presentation
- Classroom and hallway observations

**Findings:**

There is some evidence that the school celebrates diversity and it is reflected in lesson plans. The school has activities around *Black History Month* and the World Language program also incorporates activities on cultural awareness (Latin/Hispanic culture). Teachers also have theme based lessons which focus on cultural awareness. Additionally, the classroom libraries and selected readings also include some literature to support multi-cultural education.

**STANDARD 4**

**COMMENDATIONS**

The school principal has begun to establish a nurturing learning environment and has begun to set a tone in the school that focuses on increased cooperation amongst staff and students.

**NEXT STEPS**

1. Ensure that each teacher has a key to access the PA system for increased communication and safety.
2. Ensure that all student and staff bathrooms have functioning stalls, toilet tissue, soap and paper towels. Additionally, bathrooms should be checked several times during the school day for cleanliness and supplies.

3. Provide more access to water coolers for all students and staff. School leadership may consider placing the water coolers in locations that have constant adult supervision.
4. All staff should collaborate with the technology coordinator to maximize the use of the school website and e-board as a resource for acquiring and disseminating information.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The district should consider providing walkie-talkies or other appropriate communication technology for each member of the security staff and others designated by the administration in order to better facilitate safety in the school.
2. The school safety committee/school climate committee should convene a series of meetings to review, discuss and modify (where necessary) the school safety plan and all programs and procedures to ensure the highest level of security throughout the school building and its perimeter. These discussions should be on-going and include student and parent representatives. These meetings should yield a comprehensive plan which speaks to specific strategies and action steps for addressing student behavior and safety (e.g., counseling services, anti-bullying program, behavior modification strategies). Additionally, this plan should be shared with all stakeholders.
3. The school should ensure that classroom furniture supports cooperative learning and decreases safety issues.
4. The SLC should continue to work with the parent liaison and the PTA president to ensure the involvement of parents in the educational process. Meetings, workshops and activities should continue to be offered at various times during the day. Additionally, the SLC should survey parents several times during the school year to garner feedback regarding programs offered and parent needs (e.g. determine if there is enough flexibility with the times programs are offered, childcare needs).
5. Increase the leadership role of the student council to include a focus on peer mediation and mentoring. This will require that student council members and advisor(s) receive formal training.
6. The administration, teachers and non-instructional staff should increase efforts to communicate with parents regarding student accomplishments, academic and behavioral concerns. This communication should be on-going, interactive and well documented. (e.g. telephone logs, copies of letters, summaries of parent conferences). Where necessary, the SLC should work with the administration to develop templates and procedures for maintaining such records.
7. The SLC should explore opportunities to increase access to multi-cultural programming for all students, staff and parents, beyond what is offered through classroom instruction.

## **STANDARD 5: STUDENT, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

**The school works with families and community groups to remove barriers to learning in an effort to meet the intellectual, social, career and developmental needs of students.**

**5.1a Families and the community are active partners with the school and district in the promotion of programs and services for all students.**

### **Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Parent, teacher and support staff interviews
- Review of parent workshop schedule and sample school-home communications
- Review of list of SLC members with affiliation and list of PTA officers
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

Based on several interviews with parents, teachers and the community representative, there is a need for inclusion of the parents of classified students in programs and services. School leadership has adopted a family and community involvement policy aligned with the district. The school communicates regularly with the home; however, the parental response is minimal. The scheduling of SLC meetings may hinder the ability of parents to be involved in improving student achievement.

**5.1b The school ensures that ALL students are taught what they are expected to learn and are tested on, with specific attention to special education and English Language Learner students.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of three-year operational plan, technology plan and parent resource center programs
- Teacher and support staff interviews
- Classroom observations
- Review of extended school services overview

**Findings:**

There is limited development of school policy to ensure that all students are taught and tested on what they are expected to learn, with specific attention to special education. There is no evidence of the use of analysis of student data to evaluate and modify extended school services to meet students' needs. There is no documentation of collaboration between classroom teachers and facilitators in the extended day programs. The Curriculum and Instruction subcommittee of the SLC has no agendas or minutes to reflect policy stating that all students have equal access to the curriculum.

**5.1d Students receive necessary additional assistance to support their learning in and beyond the classroom.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of three-year operational plan and extended school services overview
- Parent, student, teacher and support staff interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

Some students receive additional assistance through the extended day program, Title I SES provider and/or non-profit community organizations (e.g., SCEEP). There is no documentation of the extended day program's effectiveness in the school. A few classroom teachers provide additional support to students on a voluntary basis. There is evidence of a large number of students who do not receive any additional support. Although there is no evidence of being developed jointly with parents, a written parental involvement policy that describes the means for carrying out NCLB parental involvement

requirements is developed and distributed to the parents of Title I students. The SLT convenes an annual meeting of parents of Title I children to inform them of the NCLB parental involvement requirements. The school has a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, staff and student share responsibility for student achievement. The school and district utilize fourteen mechanisms to achieve parental involvement as outlined in the NCLB legislation. The school building is not barrier free. The school does have resources for parents of migratory children (e.g., NON-INSTRUCTIONAL PROFESSIONAL STAFF, Non-instructional Professional Staff, etc.). There is evidence that the school and district inform parents of the existence of statewide parental resource and information centers.

## **STANDARD 5**

### **NEXT STEPS**

1. The SLC should review current policy and scheduling practices to ensure that parents are partners.
2. The SLC should enlist the parent liaison to increase the involvement of parents with special needs students.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The school and district (Office of Special Education) should collaborate to develop additional training for the parent liaison on ways to incorporate and support the parents of special needs students.

**STANDARD 6 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:**

**The school and district provide professional development opportunities based on an evaluation of individual and collective teacher needs.**

**6.1a There is evidence of a school wide professional growth plan that supports collaboration among staff and decreases isolation and fragmentation.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Administrator, teacher and paraprofessional interviews
- Review of school professional development binder

**Findings:**

There was little physical evidence of formal professional development planning. A sketchy activity plan (from the previous administration) was included in the professional development binder. The principal stated that professional development was based on teacher need; however, a formal needs assessment was not conducted. Interviewed teachers reported that the principal uses the post evaluation conference as a means to help them identify school based resources they can use for their professional growth. Teachers participate in a number of district sponsored staff development opportunities in math and literacy. All teachers (regular education and special education) participate in staff development during the district scheduled professional development days, and some have stated that they appreciate the principal's encouragement for them to be life-long learners. Paraprofessionals do not participate in these sessions.

**6.1c District-wide professional development priorities are set by aligning the goals for student performance with the evidence of achievement and with the Professional Improvement Plans (PIP) of teachers and principals.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of sample anonymous evaluation forms
- Administrator and teacher interviews

**Findings:**

The principal provides monthly professional development opportunities based on her observations and analysis of test data and evaluative documents. Literacy, math and technology are most often the focal topics. The evaluation tools provided as exhibits for the CAPA team offered limited guidance to observed teachers, and contained numerous mechanical errors. It appears that professional development opportunities that support the enhancement of leadership skills are mainly provided for members of the School Leadership Committee (SLC). There appear to be a high number of incidents and suspensions. There was limited evidence of a structured program (including teacher preparation) in place to assist teachers in behavior modification.

**6.1e Professional development is high quality, frequent, tailored to teacher needs and school-based when possible.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Administrative and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

Teachers participate in professional development offered by the Literacy Coach and by the Technology Coordinator. Common prep periods, as well as the monthly staff development days are provided. Teachers state that they participate in many district sponsored professional development opportunities. It appears that there is, to some extent, time for teachers to collaborate and reflect on their new learning.

## **PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND EVALUATION**

**6.2c The school leadership uses the employee evaluation and the individual professional growth plan to connect improvements in teaching practice with individual classroom goals.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of sample anonymous evaluations
- Administrator and teacher interviews

**Findings:**

A revised evaluation system provides the framework for analysis of the observed instruction. Administrators hold pre and post observation conferences with teachers. Current PIPs were created under the guidance of the previous administration.

## **STANDARD 6**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. All teachers should be provided with additional training on the infusion of technology across the curriculum.
2. Analyze achievement data and use the results to develop a professional development plan for the 2005-2006 school year which is aligned to staff evaluations and their PIPs. Emphasis should include the careful review and analysis of student work.
3. The SLC professional development subcommittee should become a study team used to discuss current research, identify best instructional practices, structure teacher discussion groups, and turnkey professional development events for all staff.
4. Staff should participate in professional development and seek out effective practices in differentiated instruction, higher order thinking skills and effective teaching strategies for increasing achievement of all students. Leadership should develop and implement an intentional, focused and rigorous plan for implementing and monitoring strategies in language arts literacy and mathematics in the upper grades. Appropriate, school-based professional development (including classroom coaching) should be extended to paraprofessionals.

5. Develop/adapt a behavior modification program, and provide ongoing program related professional development to all staff in an effort to support a safe and orderly environment.

**Summary Findings in: EFFICIENCY (QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WHOLE SCHOOL REFORM MODEL, EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL)**

**School instructional decisions focus on support for teaching and learning, organizational direction, high performance expectations, creating a learning culture, and developing leadership capacity.**

**7.1a There is a shared vision that is understood and ingrained in the school's culture.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Teacher, parent and student interviews
- Student pledge recited each morning and displays of the vision, mission and belief statements
- Classroom and hallway observations
- Review of three-year operational plan, meeting announcements, agendas, minutes
- Review of Teacher/Student/Parent Handbooks, web site, SLC agendas and minutes

**Findings:**

There were displays of the school's vision/motto, mission and belief statements evident in the corridor opposite of the main office and in most classrooms; however, the district mission statement was in evidence more frequently than the school's. All interviewees were able to state their understanding of what the school's mission meant. There were no documents to substantiate a review process or how all stakeholders were included in the development of the mission statement, how decisions were guided by these statements, or how all stakeholders were provided progress updates. SLC meeting agendas are in evidence, but are not organized or targeted. There was evidence that the three-year plan was largely developed by the previous administration. Interviewed teachers did not know the location or origin/development of the plan. Announcements of meetings were not in evidence; but agendas, signature sheets and some minutes were available. Teacher, student and parent handbooks are in place; however; newsletters and brochures have not been developed.

**7.1b All instructional staff has access to curriculum-related materials and the training necessary to use curricular and data resources that enable students to master the CCCS.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- Review of SLC meeting agendas, minutes and data analysis

**Findings:**

School leadership stated that they provided classroom teachers with data and that class profiles were created. Core classroom teachers state that they have had many and varied training sessions, largely provided by central office departments. Core classrooms are supplied with academic/instructional resources; however, some obsolete materials have not been discarded. As evidenced during the interviews and review of meeting agendas, the SLC is not utilizing performance data to focus on improvement of student achievement, due to lack of training. Similarly, their priorities are not aligned with district and school goals and standards. Their minimal involvement in school improvement is through the establishment of a few subcommittees, although teachers have stated that they are not familiar with what the SLC has done. Analysis of data occurs during grade level meetings, according to agendas, minutes and teacher interviews; however, collaboratively designed PDAs are not in evidence.

**7.1d The leadership team analyzes disaggregated data that are used to assist teachers to adjust their instruction and to develop PIPs.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of SLC meeting agendas and notes, three-year operational plan
- Principal, SLC and teacher interviews
- Review of staff meeting agendas and minutes

**Findings:**

During interviews, it was mentioned that disaggregated data is used by staff and administrators to guide decisions; and through document review, it was apparent that the district provides the school with disaggregated data. There was little documentation to indicate when and how the administration and staff reviewed data to make decisions that address the needs of all students. Agendas of grade level meetings reveal some teacher discussion of data. There is evidence that teachers are divided into content and grade level groups and review data. Teachers developed class profiles to identify students' strengths and weaknesses by reviewing state assessments, SPA, suspension, and attendance data. The SLC, as evidenced during review of agendas and interview, has had access to student data, but has not provided academic targets. Teachers and administrators stated that they have just begun the PIP process.

**7.1f Leadership ensures that time is protected to focus on curricular and instructional issues.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of lesson plans, student code of conduct, district calendar and information guide, teacher handbook
- Administrator, student and school leadership interviews
- Walk-through and classroom observations and entry of students, restrooms and lunch
- Review of SLC decision-making procedures, staff/student handbooks, staff and master schedules, and extended school services

**Findings:**

A review of the written documentation, visits to classrooms, walking the halls and perusing the cafeteria revealed that there is a student code of conduct; however, it is not consistently enforced. Several students were observed in the hallways, unsupervised, usually in the area of the cafeteria. There were rules and codes of conduct posted in various classrooms and in several locations throughout the school. The master schedule does not include the district prescribed blocks of instructional times for literacy and mathematics. Walk-throughs and observations indicated that instruction begins close to schedule in most classes; instructional time is purposefully not interrupted by announcements or bells. There is evidence that the principal visits classrooms once a week. The vice principal, according to interviews, visits each classroom daily. There is an after-school program that includes a recreational component as well as supplementary learning services provided by Sylvan Learning and Platform Learning.

**7.1k The principal gives highest priority to academic performance.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Administrator/SLC/student/parent /teacher interviews
- Review of lesson plans, student code of conduct, district calendar and information guide, teacher handbook
- Review of professional development documentation and faculty meeting agendas

**Findings:**

There is no active parent representative; although there is a designee, she has not attended meetings. There is also no student representative. Faculty meeting agendas evidence meetings of teachers and principal during which student achievement concerns are discussed and NJCCCS are sometimes addressed. The principal observes classrooms weekly; however, there was no documentation relative to informal observations. During interviews with staff and parents, there was evidence that the principal works with staff to create a supportive environment. Teachers expressed the feeling that the school was “turning the corner.” Parents stated that they were very pleased with their child’s progress and with the school’s program.

**STANDARD 7**

**COMMENDATIONS** The establishment of a positive climate and direction, one in which teachers have expressed confidence in the future of Bragaw Avenue School.

**NEXT STEPS**

1. The professional development subcommittee should conduct a needs assessments, inclusive of data, staff and student surveys, to determine staff development priorities.
2. Design a specific school-based plan for professional development to address identified needs, which delineates resources to be utilized for delivery of service
3. Provide training and framework for the SLC which will include operational, structural and goal-setting information
4. The school leadership needs to immediately address the following items:
  - The formulation of a schedule which includes dedicated prescribed instructional times
  - The review of budget/expenditures to ensure adequate and timely acquisition of resources

- The establishment and implementation of a teacher observation schedule which provides for adequate pre- and post-observation conference time and substantive feedback
5. The school leadership needs to ensure the following tasks are completed, and appropriate individuals held accountable:
    - The bathrooms are cleaned and the district's checklist system is implemented
    - Soap, hand towels and toilet paper are provided in all bathrooms
  6. Schedule the uninterrupted 90-minute block for Language Arts/Literacy, avoiding the last segment of the day for this instruction.
  7. Conduct visitations to other urban/suburban middle schools that have been recognized for best Practices.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The mission, vision, beliefs should be revisited with maximum input from the stakeholders. It should then be clearly communicated to all people in the educational community.
2. The school leadership should schedule and conduct regular staff meetings that address the assessment and evaluation of achievement related data. Horizontal and vertical articulation meetings should be scheduled to guarantee staff has the opportunity to collaborate on strategies to address the learning needs of students.
3. The SLC needs to plan regular meetings for their main body as well as their sub-committees. As the planning team for the school, it is vitally important that this group provides input to the administration regarding the operation, budget, planning, three-year operational plan, the technology plan and student achievement. Members of this group need to be proficient in data analysis and how to use data for decision making.
4. Vertical articulation meetings need to be scheduled to guarantee staff the opportunity to collaborate on strategies to address the learning needs of students.

**STANDARD 8: The school maximizes use of all available resources to support high student and staff performance.**

**8.1c The instructional and non-instructional staff members are assigned to serve the learning needs of all students.**

### **Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of data analysis records used for classroom assignments, master schedule
- Administrator, SLC, school staff interviews
- Review of SLC agendas/minutes
- Classroom observation

### **Findings:**

Through interviews and a daily attendance report, it was stated that there is one long-term teacher absence (maternity leave), one vacancy (death) and frequent incidental absences. As per the principal, 41% of teachers are highly qualified, five are alternative route and three are Teach for America. No single report indicating the teacher's name and area of certification was supplied to the CAPA review team. In the area of special education, the school has provided the personnel to service student needs as identified in the

individual IEPs. Four classified students have been included in regular classroom instruction; all classified students participate in special activity classes along with regular education students. The teachers, during interviews, said that they do not know how teaching assignments are made. Teachers interviewed stated that the level of parental participation is minimal; they stated that phone numbers are unavailable for many parents.

**8.1d There is evidence that the staff makes efficient use of time to maximize learning and that the school schedule reflects instructional priorities (e.g., uninterrupted 90 minute block of literacy instruction in primary grades, classes begin on time, and classes continue until the end of the time period).**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of master schedule, SLC records
- SLC and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations of student work

**Findings:**

There is no uninterrupted 90-minute block for language arts instruction. The school leadership has reissued, with few modifications, existing student and teacher handbooks which delineate procedures for ensuring instructional time. However, policy implementation is questionable; few students, for example, were observed utilizing hall passes. Classroom observations and building walkthroughs reveal that some staff make efficient use of time in the classroom. In all observed classes, and as per student and staff interviews, homework is assigned on a daily basis; in some classrooms, it is clearly reviewed, as evidenced by grading or checkmark. Some classes have designated places for students to submit homework and retrieve checked homework. Instruction in some classes promotes higher order thinking skills, note taking skills, or activities that are fully aligned with the NJ CCCS. Much of the instruction was teacher-directed. Although student behavior in the corridors and in the cafeteria was inappropriate at times, effective management was observed in most classrooms. During interviews, teachers discussed scheduling extended instructional times to accommodate specific projects or teaching units. There were no special activities or assembly programs observed during the visit; however, students described occasional field trips which supported learning units.

**8.1e Staff promotes team planning vertically and horizontally across content areas and grades that is focused on the goals, objectives and strategies in the report on instructional priorities (e.g., common planning time for content area teachers; emphasis on time on task, and integrated units).**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of faculty/grade level meeting agendas and minutes, master schedule and lesson plans
- School staff interviews

**Findings:**

It was not clear how vertical articulation takes place, although the principal has designated scheduled VAT (Vertical Articulation Team) meetings. There was no evidence of shared lesson planning.

Agendas of grade level meetings included lists of participants. Agendas appeared to have been designed to address various management and academic topics at different grade levels; however, there was no delineation of specific grade level appropriateness. In addition, the list of faculty members on agendas was not inclusive. Administrators do not consistently attend/preside over grade level meetings. It appears that PDAs, based on student work analysis and designed strategies, are not developed during grade level meetings. Resources are not always used to support teacher collaboration, as evidenced by grade-nonspecific agendas. Monthly staff meetings are held as per the negotiated contract and sometimes a portion of the time is used to address instructional issues. The district calendar affords four days (and four half-days) for school wide staff development. During many of the all-day sessions, teachers attend districtwide content workshops. Agendas of school-based professional development were limited in scope and frequency.

## **RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND INTEGRATION**

### **8.2d State and federal program resources are integrated (Safe Schools, NCLB, IDEA) to address student needs.**

#### **Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of school-based budget and three-year operational plan
- Administration and staff interviews

#### **Findings:**

The school uses IDEA funds to expand its in-class support program. There is a Non-instructional Professional Staff and a NON-INSTRUCTIONAL PROFESSIONAL STAFF, who address Safe Schools issues, which are also infused into the classroom curriculum, as evidenced in lesson plans. NCLB funds are used to support the classroom program through supplemental services provided after school. The district technology plan reports a 5:1 computer to student ratio; all classrooms contained computers. There is a computer technology lab, which is used by the students on a regular basis. During interviews with students and staff, all commented upon the frequent use of computers; evidence of the utilization of technology within the classroom was found in posted student work samples. However, actual student use of computers was not observed during classroom visits. Revenue from various sources appears to be integrated to support the core curriculum.

## **STANDARD 8**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Review and revise the three-year operational/school in need of improvement plan with the SLC to ensure achievement of school and district goals.
2. Conduct needs assessments to determine professional development foci; utilize student achievement data, teacher/student/aide surveys, revised and approved three-year plan, district Strategic Plan
3. Develop and implement a staff development plan which addresses areas and strategies specific to Bragaw Avenue School. Design activities which are school-based.

4. Strive for administrative oversight of all grade level meetings; designate substitute chair as needed (e.g. – literacy coach, teacher tutor, administratively certificated staff)
5. The administration should implement necessary measures to ensure instructional time is maximized. To begin, increase and document the frequency of classroom visits, conducting both formal and informal observations.
6. The school leadership should review the Danielson model and expand the depth and breadth of feedback to teachers, providing substantive guidance for instructional improvement.
7. All stakeholders should collaborate to develop innovative programs to establish parental participation.

**STANDARD 9 – COMPREHENSIVE AND EFFECTIVE PLANNING:**

**The School Leadership Council/NCLB Planning Committee develops, implements, evaluates and adjusts its Report on Instructional Priorities/School Improvement Plan to communicate a clear purpose, direction, and limited goals focused on improving teaching and learning.**

**DEFINING THE SCHOOL’S VISION, MISSION, BELIEFS**

**9.1a There is evidence that a collaborative process that engaged the school community was used to develop the vision, beliefs, mission, and goals.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of three-year operational plan
- SLC, parent, teacher and student interviews
- Observation of student pledge each morning

**Findings:**

The district has clearly articulated Mission, Vision and Belief statements, which resulted from a district-wide strategic planning process. The school has adopted the same district-level mission and vision statements for the building, and has created a mission statement of its own as well; and these statements are posted in classrooms and across from the office. There is little or no evidence of collaboration with stakeholders (parents, teachers, administrators, students) at the building level to support the mission statement. Many teachers, parents and students were generally able to articulate the school’s mission; however, no one was able to describe the process of development, adoption and presentation. Students recited the school pledge daily in their classrooms, led by featured classroom representatives via the public address system.

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROFILE**

**9.2a There is evidence that the School Leadership Council (SLC) or NCLB Planning Committee planning process involves collecting, managing and analyzing data to annually update the comprehensive needs assessment and to develop the Three-Year Operational Plan or School Improvement Plan.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Administrator, SLC and teacher interviews
- Review of SLC documents

**Findings:**

The district provides disaggregated student achievement data which are shared with teachers to construct class profiles of strengths and weaknesses. The analyses did not appear to have been utilized to differentiate instruction; classes, although physically arranged in groups, were largely teacher-directed. The SLC has not been involved in data analysis. Currently, the School Leadership Council does not comply with code requirements. The composition of the SLC includes teachers, but no parents or students. During grade level meetings, data analysis sometimes occurs (as per agendas), but there is no evidence of application in instruction, nor is there evidence of a systematic data management process. The analysis of test data appears to have been left to teachers and does not consistently occur.

## **ANALYZING INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

**9.4b Data from multiple assessments is used to identify student and school goals and document strengths and limitations of instructional and organizational effectiveness.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of three-year operational plan and SLC minutes and agendas
- SLC and teacher interviews

**Findings:**

There is no evidence that a needs assessment using data from multiple sources was conducted to identify student and school goals and document strengths and limitations of instructional and organizational effectiveness. The TYOP does not state goals in measurable terms. Interviews support the statement that the SY03 Plan was absorbed with minor attempts at modification.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE THREE-YEAR OPERATIONAL/IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

**9.5a Strategies in the Report on Instructional Priorities or School Improvement Plan are aligned with student and school goals; identifies resources, timelines and persons responsible; and contains an evaluation plan that evaluates the degree to which it achieves the goals and objectives for student learning.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of three-year operational plan, SLC minutes and agendas
- Administrator and teacher interviews

**Findings:**

Most of the strategies in the three-year operational plan include an intentional focus on closing the achievement gap. The strategies are not clearly delineated for all the subpopulations in the school. While the goals and objectives are loosely guided by NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress, the planning lacks specific goals and objectives for each strategy. The three-year operational plan contains no measurable goals, no clear person responsible who will carry out its implementation, and no clear resources identified to address needs. Most of the staff in the building is not aware of the strategies, timelines or responsibilities included in the three-year operational plan. It is not evident that the responsibilities for carrying out the plan are shared among staff members. School goals are defined in the Three-Year Operational Plan in a limited manner. A systematic process for implementation and accountability seems to be absent.

**9.6b The principal and SLC regularly evaluate the degree to which it achieves the goals and benchmarks for student learning set by the plan.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of three-year operational plan, SLC or NCLB meeting minutes and agendas
- Review of documentation of evidence of achievement of goals and benchmarks
- Administrator and teacher interviews

**Findings:**

School leadership review assessment summaries are provided by the district. However, there is no evidence that the school evaluates the specific strategies in the plan as it relates to classroom practice. Other than the district evaluation system, there is no summary of data related to the school's progress in building and strengthening the classroom practice and student performance. The implementation of the strategies in the plan are difficult to evaluate as the plan contains no measurable indicators. There is no data to evaluate the impact of each strategy.

## **STANDARD 9**

### **NEXT STEPS**

1. The SLC should be restructured to ensure compliance with code.

2. The SLC should collaborate to revise the TYOP and distribute and discuss the resulting document with all stakeholders.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The principal, SLC, parents, community members and other stakeholders should convene to review and revise the school vision, beliefs, mission and goals. The resulting statements should be shared with the entire school community at a public meeting and become the guiding focus of the building.
2. The school should provide all teachers and staff with copies of the Three-Year Operational Plan and discuss components of the plan at grade level meetings. Make all school staff aware of the entire contents of the Three-Year Operational Plan, NJ ASK and GEPA test scores through in-service trainings. This will allow the staff and faculty to take authentic action steps towards desired results.
3. The Office of Planning, Evaluation and Testing should be utilized to provide professional development in the area of data analysis for use with each strategy in the three-year operational plan as it relates to student achievement, building instructional and organizational capacity and improving classroom practices. The school leadership should further analyze student performance data provided by the district, as well as data related to each strategy in the plan, to identify the impact and implementation levels and to make modifications to the three-year operational plan. The school leadership should review plan goals, objectives and benchmarks for each strategy to ensure that they are clear and concise and are focused on building the school's capacity to improve instructional and organizational effectiveness, improve student learning and change classroom practice.

## **MATHEMATICS REVIEW**

### **Summary Findings in: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE (QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION)**

**STANDARD 1-CURRICULUM: The district P-12 curriculum is rigorous and aligned to state standards.**

**1.1b The district initiates discussions among schools regarding curriculum standards and frameworks to ensure they are clearly articulated across all levels (P-12).**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of local curriculum documents, units of study and lesson plans
- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

The district provides staff development opportunities to address implementation of the NJ CCCS and promote articulation of the standards across grade levels. Teachers attend full-day workshops conducted by the district's mathematics department personnel, and are encouraged to participate in weekend and summer institutes which facilitate articulation among the schools of the district. Grade level meetings are held sporadically and there are no formal content area meetings to facilitate horizontal and vertical articulation within the building. The district's revised three year operational plan includes a commitment to articulation between the middle and high schools to promote continuity in the mathematics curriculum.

**1.1e The curriculum requires all students to take courses with sufficient academic rigor to prepare for college preparatory courses and pass the HSPA, and provides specific links to life and career options.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- District and teacher interviews
- Review of school and community perception survey

**Findings:**

The K-5 textbook series Everyday Math contains suggested activities or questions which link real-life situations to math skills. Connected Math assignments are usually related to real-life problem-solving situations through extension activities. Classroom observation showed little or no evidence that career links were intentionally made during class lessons. Upper grade teachers are deliberate in linking real-life situations to classroom instruction; however, teachers in grades K-4 did not focus on this aspect of the program. Bulletin boards displayed that some form of career awareness program was in place. Students reported that some teachers regularly encouraged students to believe in post-secondary education, however, there was no emphasis placed specifically on math related courses of study.

**1.1f The district works with supervisors and faculty to systematically monitor, evaluate and adjust the curriculum based on the evidence of student achievement.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of NJASK3 and 4 assessment results and three-year operational plan

- Teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

The district follows the guidelines set by the NSF to review and revise the mathematics curriculum. Bi-monthly grade level meetings are conducted by building vice-principals to review curriculum implementation and make adjustments in pacing and delivery based on student achievement. RTCs visit classrooms to provide support for teachers on curriculum related issues. A district curriculum committee comprised of content specialists, administrators and teachers meets during the summer to revise the math curriculum. The district has developed guidelines for monitoring implementation of the curriculum at all schools with Walk-Throughs, Educational Audits and Executive Field Observation Visits. The school has a curriculum committee which meets sporadically to discuss curriculum issues. Teachers volunteer to sit on the committee.

**1.1g The curriculum provides access to a common academic core for all students including, but not limited to, special education and ELL students.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of local curriculum documents, units of study and lesson plans
- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

The district is in its third year of a three year, district-wide plan for the textbook adoption. The Everyday Math Series is now fully implemented in all K-5 classrooms in the district, and Connected Math is used at the 6-8 grade level in both general education and special education classes. Both series emphasize problem-solving skills and higher-order thinking. Non-implementation of the district adopted math curriculum in self-contained special education classrooms has been an area of concern in the school this year. Teachers of special needs students are not trained in the philosophy behind either math series, and report that few, if any, materials necessary to implement the math curriculum in their classrooms exist.

## STANDARD 1

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A full set of class materials should be provided to the special needs teachers to enable the district approved math program to begin immediately.
2. Develop an on-site staff development plan which focuses on: increasing content knowledge of teachers, using data analysis to inform instruction, developing an understanding of the use of rubrics and open-ended questions, and helping teachers intentionally and thoughtfully link the math curriculum to real life. This will help students understand the benefits of learning the concepts and provide them with a reason to strive for mastery of the skills objectives.
3. Building leadership should conduct regular Walk-Throughs to monitor implementation of the mathematics curriculum. Guidance in determining the level of implementation should be provided by the MRT/Cs. Teachers are strongly encouraged to attend all in-service opportunities at the school/SLT/district level.
4. Allot time during the school day for regular vertical grade level content area meetings to provide teachers with the opportunity to articulate the curriculum among grade levels.

**STANDARD 2 -CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION: The district and school use multiple evaluation and assessment strategies to continuously monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work.**

**2.1a Assessments created by teachers, school and district are frequent, rigorous, aligned with NJ CCCS, used to gauge student learning and adjust teaching to individual needs.**

#### **Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of local curriculum documents, units of study and lesson plans
- Teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

#### **Findings:**

Several types of assessments are used regularly by some classroom teachers to monitor student achievement. These include review of math journals, unit/chapter assessments, and projects involving open-ended questions. Publisher provided assessments are used regularly in the lower grades with few teacher designed assessments in evidence. Teachers in grades 5 through 8 re-structure the publisher provided assessments to meet the student needs, and supplement the assessments with tasks which are similar to those included on district and state tests. Some teachers use only assessments which consist of multiple choice questions requiring fact recall. Classroom observation revealed use of the formerly used mathematics textbook for in-class work. The district has developed mid-year and end-of year assessments which are administered to students in grades K through 8. NJASK3, NJASK4 and GEPA practice tests are also administered at the appropriate grade levels. Students in grade 5, 6, and 7 take the SPA. Student class achievement does not accurately predict proficiency on the district assessments.

**2.1b Teachers collaborate to design authentic classroom assessments aligned with the CCCS.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of local curriculum documents, units of study and lesson plans
- Teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

Classroom observation, samples of student work and teacher interviews indicate that collaboration on assessment design is taking place only in grades 6, 7 and 8. Students are required to complete tasks which generally align with NJ CCCS. Teachers at all other grade levels work in isolation to design assessments which may or may not align with state standards.

**2.1c Students can articulate the academic expectations in each class and know what is required to be proficient. Academic expectations are clearly communicated, evident in classrooms and observable in student work.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Teacher, student interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

Rubrics were posted in most classrooms and easily located by the students when asked to do so. Little student created math work was displayed in hallways and classrooms and work that was displayed did not show comments or rubric scores. Students in the fourth and fifth grade classrooms were able to clearly articulate the criteria for each of the ratings on the rubric and said they regularly practice using the rubric to evaluate both their own and their classmates' assignments. Teachers in seventh and eighth grade admitted to a limited use of the rubric with students. Few students were able to state the criteria used to evaluate their progress towards meeting the objectives of their current unit of study.

**2.1d Test scores are used by the district and school to identify curriculum gaps.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

State and district administered assessments are analyzed by the central office and the results are disaggregated throughout the SLT. Teachers in grades 6, 7 and 8 stated that the data is discussed informally among themselves and is used to make adjustments with regard to closing curricular gaps. Limited information was available to support data analysis being used to modify curriculum in other grade levels.

**2.1e Multiple assessments are designed and used to gauge student learning and to adjust teaching to meet individual student needs.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of lesson plans
- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

Some teachers use a variety of assessments such as math journals, projects and “slate quizzes” to gauge students’ progress toward meeting learning objectives. Classrooms displays of student work showed traditional tests to be the most commonly used assessment tool. Feedback on most assessments was observed as limited to a word of encouragement or a simple directive. No evidence was found to show that students were given opportunities to choose how they would demonstrate learning progress.

**2.1h Samples of student assessments are shared among teachers and analyzed to inform instruction and to revise curriculum and pedagogy.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

Teachers have received some training, provided by the district, in the use of protocols for analyzing student work for alignment with state content standards. There is no consistency among the grade levels in using the protocols. Analysis is performed by grade level or by individual teachers according to the teacher’s preference. There is no evidence of a school based plan to analyze and use data to inform instruction. There is no evidence of a school policy requiring teachers to articulate student progress either horizontally or vertically.

**STANDARD 2**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Specific performance objectives for daily lessons should be posted and reviewed with students at the beginning and end of all class periods to enable students to evaluate their learning progress.
2. Results of district administered assessments should be reviewed with teachers regarding the identification of gaps in learning and adjusting the curriculum.
3. Teachers should provide meaningful feedback on all graded assignments which include criteria for achievement obtained and suggestions for improving student performance. Staff development should be planned to specifically address training for teachers in designing assessments which better reflect the format of state assessments by including multi-step problems and open-ended questions.
4. Collaboration on authentic assessments should be required among all grade levels to ensure continuous student improvement of test-taking skills as they move from grade to grade.
5. Provide staff development with a focus on using varied forms of assessments to gauge students’ progress on meeting state standards. Encourage teachers to use alternate assessment tools (technology, Assessment Assistant for Everyday Math and other test generators) and activities which allow students choices in the way they demonstrate achievement.
6. Administration should provide training in the development and use of student portfolios. Student portfolios should be implemented, maintained and updated regularly and used to check student progress towards clearly defined goals. Administration should regularly monitor this process.

7. Establish a school practice which requires teachers to analyze data that measures student progress towards meeting state standards. Increase the amount of teacher training to enable proficiency in data analysis.

**STANDARD 3 -INSTRUCTION: Instruction engages all students by using effective, varied and research-based practices to improve academic performance.**

**3.1a There is evidence that effective and varied instructional strategies are used in all classrooms.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of lesson plans
- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

Inquiry-based instruction was observed in use by teachers in grades 6-8, using the Connect Math series. There were few examples of full implementation of discovery-based, investigative learning in the lower grades. Although manipulatives are included in all lessons, the activity is usually teacher-directed rather than investigative in nature. Some teachers require students to draw conclusions based on patterns that develop during guided activities, while others feed information to the students. Questions often do not require students to use higher-level reasoning skills, most often eliciting a one-word response.

**3.1b Instructional strategies and learning activities are aligned with the district, school and state goals and assessments.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of lesson plans
- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

Classroom observations and interviews with teachers revealed that most teachers use some instructional strategies which align with the school curriculum. All students are required to complete some assignments which mirror tasks included on state assessments, with the assignments only a part of the regular routine of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8th grades classes. Some teachers in K-2 have a daily routine which requires children to perform tasks aligned with district and state goals. Professional development has been provided at the district level to inform teachers on the use of test results to link state standards, school/district goals and instructional strategies, but there is little evidence that that the strategies are being implemented.

**3.1c Instructional strategies and activities are continuously monitored and aligned with individual student needs.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of lesson plans
- Administrator and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

Every Day Math and Connected Math textbooks provide teachers with instructional strategies which address various learning styles and multiple intelligences. Interviews with teachers revealed that teachers are aware of the different learning styles of their students, but rely on textbook activities to accommodate them. There is little evidence of differentiated instruction taking place during the regularly scheduled class period. Teachers are required to submit lesson plans according to district guidelines, but school leadership does not provide feedback to assist teachers in modifying instruction. During classroom observations it was noted that essential lesson components are absent in the presentation of the lesson in most classrooms in grades 1-5. These include, but are not limited to, requiring students to use higher order thinking skills, transferring knowledge to new situations, and using embedded recall questions.

**3.1d Teachers demonstrate the content knowledge necessary to challenge and motivate students to high levels of learning.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- Review of school documentation

**Findings:**

Teachers at the upper grade levels appear to be comfortable with the content knowledge required for their teaching assignment. At the lower grade levels some teachers appear to lack the content knowledge required by Every Day Math and lessons are sometimes modified to exclude those activities which require further skill development by the teacher. The district staff development calendar shows opportunities for teachers to grow in expertise, and partnerships with several institutes of higher learning offer staff the opportunity to take courses in their content areas. MRTCs provide on-site help when requested to do so.

**3.1e There is evidence that teachers incorporate technology in their classrooms.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

Scientific calculators are available for use in all classrooms. Departmentalization at the upper grade levels results in only one class set of calculators per classroom teacher, which causes some problems in

availability during district and state testing. The computer lab is available every day at various times, enabling teachers to schedule time for their students to use computers to assist their learning. Seventh and eighth grade teachers collaborate with the technology coordinator to identify places within the math curriculum where computers can be used to extend learning outside of the textbook. Displays of student work in the hallways and classroom reveal authentic activities in geometry and data analysis which were designed to enhance the textbook learning

**3.1f The district and school ensure that instructional resources are sufficient and that all instructional materials are aligned to the curriculum.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

Classroom observations revealed sufficient resources to fully implement the math curriculum. Supply requests are honored in a timely fashion; and manipulatives are stored so that they are easily accessible. All classrooms have an overhead projector and screen which is essential for effective delivery of many components of investigative learning. Teachers have access to sufficient printed resources to extend their content knowledge and supplement the primary textbook used in their class.

**3.1g Teachers examine and discuss student work collaboratively and use this information to inform their practice.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- Review of grade level meeting agendas

**Findings:**

Collaboration by teachers which focuses on reviewing student work is confined to the middle grades. Teachers meet on their own initiative to share student work. Instructional practices are modified as a result of the analysis of the work samples. Guidance is also provided by the MRTC in the form of lesson demonstrations. Teachers are not always able to attend the meetings due to lack of class coverage. No evidence of collaboration was found below sixth grade.

**3.1h There is evidence that homework is frequent, evaluated and tied to instructional practice.**

**Findings for this indicator based on:**

- Review of lesson plans and SLC notes
- SLC, teacher and student interviews
- Classroom observations

**Findings:**

The school follows the district homework policy, and review of lesson plans indicates that teachers follow homework guidelines. Teachers report that homework completion is a problem for many students. Supplemental resources are frequently used as homework assignments and are focused on algorithmic

skills, not concepts. There is no evidence that homework is checked for completeness and accuracy. Feedback that students could use to improve their work was not evident on displayed samples.

### **STANDARD 3**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Teachers should write the full statement of the NJ CCCS in their lesson plan books in lieu of writing the reference number of the standards.
2. Skill/drill homework should be replaced with assignments which require students to perform tasks similar to those required on the district and state assessments.
3. Develop and implement a site-based professional development plan which focuses on: the constructivist approach to teaching mathematics and mathematical pedagogy, teaching techniques, and brain-based learning, in order to improve instruction. A focus on questioning techniques and wait-time is essential.
4. The school schedule should be adjusted to provide greater opportunities for all teachers to collaborate on planning, modeling, and reflecting on Every Day Math and Connected Math lessons.
5. School leadership and MRTCs should conduct frequent visits to support instructional and presentation strategies.
6. Continue to provide professional development in analyzing assessment results to modify instruction to meet the diverse needs of students. Monitor collaborative meetings to ensure teachers of all grade levels are familiar with the process.
7. Partner teachers according to their strengths and weakness in program implementation.
8. Provide class coverage as needed to allow teachers to demonstrate discovery based lessons and program components. Partner with other schools for teachers to visit math classes conducted by exemplary teachers.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

Members of the CAPA review team express their appreciation to the staff and community of Bragaw Avenue Elementary School for their gracious welcome and for their open interaction with us during our visit. We encourage the school community to review this report in depth, asking themselves deep reflective questions about the findings of fact and recommendations for action.

We also encourage school leadership to lead long-term reflections on the following:

1. How can we get all individuals connected to the school (teachers, parents and guardians, non-instructional staff, administrators, community, church leaders, district and the state) to take personal responsibility for the academic, social and economic success of the students who attend Bragaw Avenue Elementary School?
2. What will assist teachers in moving from teacher directed, whole-class instruction to other models of teaching more suitable for meeting the needs of all students?
3. How can the school analyze all student data including standardized and school developed assessments, student work and student demographics horizontally and vertically across grades so that student behavior is predictable?
4. How can the school make good use of data to drive continuous improvement?