

Miller Street Academy
2-14-2005 to 2-16-2005

Introduction

The New Jersey Department of Education conducted a CAPA (Collaborative Assessment for Planning and Achievement) review of Miller Street Academy 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;
- 38 classroom observations;
- 54 general observations, such as morning and afternoon arrival and dismissal, lunch in the cafeteria, playground and student/staff restrooms;
- 37 interviews with teachers;
- 12 interviews with building leadership and administrators;
 - 5 interviews with district administrators;
- 75 interviews with students;
- 44 interviews with school and student support staff; and
- 15 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.

CAPA team members and their affiliation include:

TEAM POSITION	NAME	AFFILIATION
Chairperson	Char A. Stanko	Educational Consultant
Principal	Leonard Fitts	Educational Consultant
Language Arts Specialist	Theresa Mikajlo	District Liaison
Mathematics Specialist	Sarina Glazer	Educational Consultant
Special Education Specialist	Joseph Jakubowski	Educational Consultant
English Language Learner Specialist	Berta Petrillo	District Liaison
Parent	Ida Spates	
Community Representative	Paulette Jones	
DOE Liaison	Patricia A. Mitchell	NJ Department of Education
Local Support Team Member	Tisha McKenzie	NJ 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 school develops and implements a curriculum that is rigorous, intentional, and aligned to state and local standards.

1.1a There is evidence that the curriculum is aligned with the NJ CCCS.

Findings for this indicator based on:

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

Findings:

The district curriculum is aligned with the NJ CCCS. Teacher's lesson plans include some of the district curriculum. Professional development activities are made available to the staff. There is limited evidence of follow-up to the professional development activities provided for the implementation of a rigorous, intentional curriculum aligned to state and district standards. A pull-out "writing lab" is being utilized without any curriculum having been developed, and without any software in place to support the lab. Teachers and tutors were using text prep materials in lieu of readily available district adopted literacy curriculum materials. In each of the special education classrooms, NJCCC standards were prominently posted. There were, however, no indications in plan books that these standards were being addressed in the lesson.

1.1b The district initiates and facilitates 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 lesson plans
- Local curriculum documents, units of study and lesson plans
- Teacher and district interviews
- Classroom observations
- Grade level meeting minutes
- Cross-grade level meeting minutes
- Newark Teachers Contract Agreement

Findings:

There is some evidence that vertical articulation occurs across grade levels in the school. There is evidence that the district initiates and facilitates discussions among the schools regarding curriculum standards and frameworks. Evidence gathered through teacher and district interviews, classroom observations and grade level meeting minutes shows that those discussions are not being clearly articulated. There is no documentation that the literacy coach facilitates vertical communication at any grade level. The literacy coach has been assigned by the administration to teach students all day every day, thus eliminating time for any coaching efforts. The explanation for this deployment is that it is in accord with the Newark Teachers Contract Agreement. Although grade level meetings are held on a routine basis at Miller, in which a number of housekeeping and professional development activities take place, special education staff seldom attends.

1.1c The district initiates and facilitates discussions between schools in the district in order to eliminate unnecessary overlaps and close gaps.

Evidence for this indicator based on:

- Teacher and district interviews
- Curriculum guides
- Test score data analysis

Findings:

Documentation showed the district does initiate and facilitate discussions between schools. There is evidence that there are some follow-up procedures to promote discussion beyond those offered by the professional development sessions.

1.1d There is evidence of vertical communication with an intentional focus on key curriculum transition points within grade configurations (e.g., from primary to middle and middle to high).

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of lesson plans
- Local curriculum documents, units of study and lesson plans
- Teacher and district interviews
- Classroom observations
- Grade level meeting minutes
- Cross-grade level meeting minutes

Findings:

The master schedule provided by the school indicates time is available for teachers from different grade levels to meet as teams. There is little evidence to show that vertical communications are occurring as it relates to the intentional focus on key transition issues. Interviews and observations revealed there is a disconnect between grade levels with respect to mastery of skills and readiness for appropriate grade levels. Resource center teachers meet informally in order to discuss a number of practices, including IEP implementation and other curricular expectations. The pre-school teacher serving autistic children meets with other such teachers to discuss curriculum.

1.1e The school curriculum provides specific links to continuing education, life, and career options.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of lesson plans
- Local curriculum documents, units of study and lesson plans
- Teacher and district interviews
- Classroom observations
- Grade level meeting minutes
- Cross-grade level meeting minutes

Findings:

There is some evidence of intentional integration of continuing education, life and career options in the Language Arts/Literacy instruction. Teachers and tutors were using test prep materials in-lieu-of readily available district adopted literacy curriculum materials.

1.1f There is in place a systematic process for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the curriculum.

Findings for this indicator based on:

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

Findings:

There is a procedural process for monitoring, evaluating, and reviewing curriculum; however, the evidence indicates that the process is not systematic. Evidence obtained from classroom observations, lesson plans, and interviews shows that the process is inconsistent and not well articulated.

1.1g The curriculum provides access to a common academic core for all students.

Finding for this indicator based on:

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

Findings:

Documentation indicated that not all students have access to a common academic core. There are inconsistencies in the amount of time and quality of instruction for students. In many classrooms curriculum implementation is impeded by lack of teacher preparation and/or skill level. In-class support is offered to 50 percent of the special education population for one or more class periods per day. The principal and CST are very supportive of expanding this practice. Children attending the preschool disabled class are integrated into specials with the general education pre-school children.

STANDARD 1

NEXT STEPS

1. Special education staff should participate in the grade level meetings for which it is determined are most important for them to attend. Coverage should be provided, if necessary.
2. Teams of general and special education staff and CST members should receive training in inclusive practices and strategies. There are a number of such opportunities to attend workshops or to have consultants come into the district to provide such training.
3. Special education teachers should indicate the relationship between planned activities and NJCCCS.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Institute professional development activities for staff and administrators to fully operationalize all aspects of the educational curriculum as provided by the Newark School District.

2. Create an on-going monitoring and accountability process to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented in accordance with district and state requirements. District approved literacy materials should be consistently utilized.
3. The literacy coach's job functions and responsibilities should be implemented as approved by the district.
4. The practice of placing special education students, who can derive educational benefit from placement in a general education class with supplemental aids and services, should continue to be expanded in a systematic manner. Teachers and aides should be assigned to provide additional in-class support to these students.
5. Teams of general and special education staff and CST members should receive training in inclusive practices and strategies.

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

2.1a Classroom assessments are frequent, rigorous, aligned with NJ CCCS.

Findings for this indicator based on:

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

Findings:

Standard textbook classroom assessments are infrequently aligned to the NJ CCCS. The school follows the district's homework policy. However, according to interviews, observations and other documentation the current "limited time requirement (45 minutes)" does not allow or encourage assignments that are rigorous in nature and contribute to the acquisition of higher order thinking skills. Teacher designed assessments are not always rigorous. Teachers are not consistently familiar with sound assessment strategies, e.g., authentic assessment.

2.1b Teachers collaborate in the design of authentic assessment tasks aligned with CCCS subject matter.

Findings for this indicator based on:

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

Findings:

Teachers rarely collaborate in the design of authentic assessment tasks. Grade level meetings do not address teacher-designed assessments. Authentic assessment tasks are developed but there is no evidence

they are consistently reviewed by school leadership and are aligned with the NJ CCCS. Grade level common planning meetings do occur; however, they are sporadic and lack evidence of outcomes. There is no evidence that special education teachers participate in any formal collaboration.

2.1c Students can articulate the academic expectations in each class and know what is required to be proficient.

Findings for this indicator based on:

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

Findings:

Student interviews reflected that most students in grade levels 3-8 could articulate the academic expectations in each class and had some knowledge of what is required to be proficient. The teachers used rubrics developed by the state.

2.1d Test scores are used to identify curriculum gaps.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Teacher and district interviews
- Performance data analysis
- State and district test scores

Findings:

The school uses the district provided assessment data. The district provides some analysis to identify curriculum gaps for instructional realignment. Grade level meetings are scheduled and held to analyze and address these concerns at the school level. Evidence supported by classroom observations, teacher and district interviews indicate that this data is not used effectively. Disaggregation and ongoing school level assessment is not evident in teacher lesson plans and classroom practices. There is a disconnect between what is stated as a need and the modification of curriculum, instruction and assessment practices to meet that need. Though data regarding the general program students is plentiful, staff members do not collect data on the progress of special education and bilingual children on a consistent basis. Special education staff does not participate nor have they been trained to conduct gap analysis or data analysis to modify curriculum, instruction or assessment practices. There are annual reviews of the progress of special education students, however, teachers do not actually write these reviews, but simply respond to a checklist provided by the CST.

2.1e Multiple assessments are specifically designed to provide meaningful feedback on student learning for instructional purposes.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of lesson plans, student portfolios, roll books, local curriculum documents, units of study and lesson plans
- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- Samples of assessments

Findings:

Multiple assessments are used to provide meaningful feedback on student learning. Documents indicated that although these assessments are being used, some teachers are not using them as they are designed, nor are they indicated in the teacher's lesson plan. Multiple assessments are used in the classroom. However, documentation indicated that most assessments are aimed at a lower level and they do not address different learning styles or modalities. Some assessments were used to provide meaningful feedback; however, it is inconsistent across grade levels.

There are a limited variety of classroom assessment tasks and they are only occasionally analyzed to determine necessary instructional modifications. Students are sometimes given the choice in the manner in which they are assessed. In the case where multiple assessments are being used, they are used largely to determine student's skill and knowledge and not often used to measure instructional effectiveness.

2.1f Performance standards are clearly communicated, evident in classrooms and observable in student work.

Findings for this indicator based on:

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

Findings:

There is some evidence that in the area of literacy, the performance standards were discussed. Exemplars were observed in students' work. The practice of assigning performance standards to student work is not consistent, properly understood or effectively implemented. In daily classroom instruction, it is not always evident what performance standards the students were attempting to meet, other than getting the answer correct. Some classrooms posted explanations of the rubrics for scoring. It is not evident that the students understood the meaning or the intended use of the rubrics. Writing rubrics were not displayed nor utilized appropriately by students or teachers to reflect on and improve their written products. Modifying classroom instruction to improve student performance is sporadic and inconsistent.

2.1h Samples of student work are analyzed to inform instruction, revise curriculum and pedagogy, and obtain information on student progress.

Findings for this indicator based on:

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

Findings:

Samples of student work were examined. There is a beginning level of analysis in the grade level meetings in the writing process. Interviews with teachers indicated that portfolio assessments are used in the literacy component. The administration advises staff to analyze student work in order to determine the students' strengths and weaknesses. Student work is occasionally analyzed, but results of the analysis are

inconsistently used to guide teaching and learning. Special education teachers use student portfolios as a means to compare student growth through work samples across time. Teachers indicate that the practice of differentiating instruction occurred, but it is not utilized in all content areas. Scheduling provided minimal opportunity for vertical articulation.

STANDARD 2

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Target professional development to address teachers' ability to create and use disaggregated data.
2. Special education teachers should be trained in multiple authentic assessment practices as well as the designing of rubrics.

STANDARD 3 -INSTRUCTION: The school's instructional program actively engages all students by using effective, varied and research-based practices to improve student 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, local curriculum documents, units of study and lesson
- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

Findings:

The school's literacy curriculum in K-8 is designed to engage students and provide for varied instructional strategies; however, evidence indicates that instruction of these programs is not consistent across the grade levels. Some instructional strategies are textbook driven and consist of lectures, small and whole group instruction. Some instruction focused on addressing various learning styles. Special education classes offer one-to-one and small group instruction in the replacement classes. It often consists of teacher prompts and student responses. In ICS classes, the special education teacher primarily provides redirection and re-teaching and refocusing to students. There is little evidence of the implementation of a broad range of instructional practices.

3.1b Instructional strategies and learning activities are aligned with the district, school and state goals and assessment expectations for student learning.

Findings for this indicator based on:

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

Findings:

The instructional strategies and learning activities in the lesson plans are sometimes aligned with the NJ CCCS. Some observed classes did not correlate with the instructional strategies outlined in their respective lesson plans. There is evidence that some of the learning activities offered in special education classes require students to complete assessment tasks similar to those on state assessments. A minimum 90-minute uninterrupted, continuous literacy block, beginning upon entry of students into the school, is not being adhered to, though this is policy per district implementation guidelines.

3.1c Instructional strategies and activities are consistently monitored and aligned with the changing needs of a diverse student population to ensure various learning approaches and learning styles are addressed.

Findings for this indicator based on:

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

Findings:

In some classes instructional strategies and activities are monitored and aligned with needs of the students. However, the monitoring is not ongoing or systematic. In some classes learning styles are being addressed. Within the special education program, there are scheduled annual reviews of each student's progress as defined within the IEP. There does not appear to be any expectation, in terms of any building or departmental monitoring process, that various learning styles are accommodated in special education classes. Although teachers participate in professional development activities, there is little evidence to indicate the transfer of these skills into classroom practice.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

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

Findings:

Teachers demonstrated an eagerness to challenge and motivate students; however, observations indicated that not all teachers have the content or curriculum knowledge to challenge their students to higher levels. Although special education staff members have participated in the general use of district selected instructional materials, they have not been trained nor are knowledgeable about the application to the special education population. Special education staff members have not been trained nor are they knowledgeable about alternative reading programs.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

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

Findings:

Although the district and school have technology plans, there is no evidence that these plans are fully functional in the building and classrooms. Observations and interviews reveal that the building is not completely wired. Although there are two or more computers in each of the special education classrooms, there is little evidence that teachers have significantly embedded technology into their instructional practice.

3.1f Instructional resources are sufficient to effectively deliver the curriculum.

Findings for this indicator based on:

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

Findings:

Available through the district and the school are a wealth of resources to help the staff in the delivery of instruction. However, evidence obtained through observations, lesson plans and interviews indicated that staff does not utilize resources sufficiently and effectively in the delivery of instruction/curriculum. Additionally, some teachers were observed using non-district adopted materials to deliver instruction, (e.g., language arts and literacy).

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of lesson plans, local curriculum documents, units of study and lesson
- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- Performance data analysis
- Grade level meeting minutes

Findings:

Teachers stated during interviews that they discuss, review and examine student work collaboratively at grade level meetings. However, there is no evidence of teacher articulation into classroom practice. Student work displayed in the school does not reflect quality. Writing is always a single event, related to a teacher prompt. Special education teachers have not received training in protocols for analyzing student work and do not meet in order to do so. Individual teachers do analyze student work, but inconsistently use that analysis to inform their instructional practice. In addition, there is no learning consultant or even available CST case managers to assist in such a process. Literary coaches have not provided assistance to special education teachers in this process.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of lesson plans, local curriculum documents, units of study and lesson
- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- Review of student homework, Grading and Promotion Policy and Parent Handbook

Findings:

The district's homework policy is followed inconsistently. Homework is assigned frequently in special education classrooms, but is not examined for completion or quality or for diagnostic purposes by ICS teachers in ICS classrooms.

STANDARD 3

NEXT STEPS

1. Implement the daily uninterrupted 90-minute continuous literacy block beginning upon entry of students into the building, per district policy as included in the approved implementation guidelines.
2. The SLC team should become more familiar with the accountability requirements for ELLs in their school, who make up almost 20 percent of the student population.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Institute professional development activities specifically targeted at effective and varied instructional practices that address higher order thinking skills. Monitor and evaluate on a consistent basis, grade level and cross grade level minutes relative to data analysis and intentional and focused collaboration.
2. Effectively implement and evaluate the current technology plan, including staff development for technology integration. The district should investigate wireless/mobile labs for full class technology access. Special education teachers are in need of training and monitoring in the use of technology in their classrooms. In addition, teachers should use the internet within their instructional programs (e.g., WebQuests).
3. Revise their goals and strategies so ESL teachers follow the ESL curriculum using the district adopted ESL materials that are aligned to the state assessments, NJ CCCS, the NJ English Proficiency Standards, and National TESOL standards. Parallel editions of the general program texts should be used.
4. Special education teachers should be systematically trained in: differentiated instruction, multiple intelligences, brain based instruction, learning styles, and basic sound pedagogical practices, e.g. wait time, use of the DO NOW, questioning techniques, cooperative learning, test analysis, etc. They should also have the opportunity to share their ideas in the implementation of such instructional practices.
5. Special education teachers should be trained in alternative reading programs and their appropriate implementation.

**Summary Findings in: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
(LEVEL OF PARENT PARTICIPATION, ADEQUACY OF SUPPLEMENTAL PROGRAMS TO
MEET DOCUMENTED INSTRUCTIONAL NEED)**

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

4.1a There is leadership support for a safe, orderly, and equitable learning environment (see culture audits, school opinion surveys, etc.).

Findings for this indicator based on:

- School administration, teacher, support staff and student interviews
- Classroom, hallway, exit, rest room, stairway observations
- Review of violence/vandalism report, 2003-04 and 2004-05 suspension reports
- Review of three-year operational plan, school safety plan
- CAPA School and Community Survey
- Newark Public School Disciplinary Policy

Findings:

Many programs (e.g., student peer-to-peer mediation, Best Friends, Valley Boys, Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline) to address a safe and equitable learning environment are in place. Sixty members of the Miller Street Academy completed the School and Community Survey. Students are not surveyed regarding the culture and climate of the building. Most of the individuals interviewed state they feel safe in the school. Discipline policies and procedures are in place. A referral system is established for students experiencing behavioral issues. The suspension rate for 2003-04 was 16 percent (72 suspensions). The state suspension average is 4.6 percent. Since September, 2004, there are 14 suspensions. Students described several incidents of bullying.

Teachers and students state the physical structure is not conducive to learning due to the heat. The temperature of the building is erratic with some rooms extremely hot and others comfortable. Eighth grade students expressed concern about taking the GEPA in the fourth floor gymnasium. The fourth floor is the warmest in the building. Some classrooms and hallways pose safety hazards due to clutter with boxes (SFA materials), obsolete equipment (air conditioners in the auditorium) and building materials (paint, turpentine, tar). The principal indicated she completed the necessary paperwork to have the books and equipment removed. Some rest rooms did not have toilet paper, liquid soap or paper towels. The floors in rest rooms were not adequately cleaned and sanitized to remove unpleasant odors. Some water fountains are not operational.

An electronic surveillance system is in place that monitors hallways and staircases. Two monitors for this system are stationed by the guard and in the principal's office. Observations show some doors not monitored during entrance and dismissal and a few doors were chain locked. The intercom is not operational and there are no telephones in the rooms. For emergency notification on all five floors, security guards would have to notify all floors. The intercom (when operational) is noted as a disruption to instruction due to frequent and lengthy announcements.

Three resource room classes are offered in one room at the same time. The CST office is inadequate in terms of space and confidentiality to provide for adequate testing and parent meetings. There is inadequate

furniture for carrying out the fundamental tasks required of the CST. The Pupil Resource Committee reviews student behavior on a regular basis.

4.1b Leadership creates experiences that foster the belief that all children can learn at high levels in order to motivate staff to produce continuous improvement in student learning.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- School administration, teacher, support staff and student interviews
- Classroom and hallway observations
- Review of three-year operational plan, school portfolio data
- CAPA School and Community Survey
- Review of student work
- School mission

Findings:

School leadership expressed a commitment to high academic expectations for all students. The mission statement affirms this belief. Most of the sixty individuals (85 percent) who took the School and Community Survey agree that leadership creates experiences that foster the belief that all children can learn at high levels. However, there are frequent references to parents as the cause for student academic failure. Staff discussed multiple incentives which are used to encourage students to work to their maximum capacity.

Communities In Schools is active in the school facilitating partnerships with local business and community agencies. The Valley Boys group is comprised of male graduates of Miller Street School. The Valley Boys provide mentoring services and donations for student awards and science lab equipment.

Common planning time is scheduled to foster vertical and horizontal articulation and collaboration among staff. However, there is no evidence that teachers collaborate with each other or the support staff on instructional issues or that collaboration among and between grade levels to share successful instructional strategies occurs. School leadership express a commitment to continuous improvement.

The principal is in support of providing special education services in the least restrictive environment and is of the belief that all children can have their educational needs met at the Miller Street Academy.

4.1c Teachers hold high expectations for all students academically and behaviorally, and this is evidenced in their practices.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- School administration, teacher, support staff and student interviews
- Classroom and hallway observations
- Review of three-year operational plan, school portfolio data, lesson plans
- CAPA School and Community Survey
- Review of student work
- School mission

Findings:

Staff members and teachers indicate they demonstrate a belief of high expectations for all students. Students state that teachers have high expectations because they encourage them to do better. Other than in

the pre-kindergarten classrooms, most classroom observations do not demonstrate the rigor (higher order questioning, response opportunity, feedback) expected with the belief. Teacher lesson plans provided little information about challenging content. Much of the student work did not consist of challenging assignments. Rubrics and comments on writing samples are inconsistent. Several bulletin boards in the hallways had quality student work, the NJ CCCS addressed and a rubric that explained the grade on the paper. Some teachers use post-it notes to give students feedback. In most cases, student work in hallways did not display quality work or explain the reason for the grade on the paper. Classrooms in all grades are calm and orderly with standards of behavior that are consistently and uniformly applied.

4.1d Teachers and non-teaching staff are involved in both formal and informal decision-making processes regarding teaching and learning.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- School administration, teacher and support staff interviews
- Classroom and hallway observations
- CAPA School and Community Survey
- Review of school portfolio meeting documents

Findings

Although special education staff members have the opportunity for input into the annual review process, they do not select the learning goals and objectives and strategies for their students. This is done by a CST case manager who may or may not have a working knowledge of that child. Also regular education teachers are not given the opportunity for input other than at the actual annual review meeting. Beyond the evaluation, IEP and placement process, CST personnel are underutilized in terms of the expertise that they have in the learning process.

4.1e Teachers recognize and accept their role in student success and failure.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- School administration, teacher and support staff interviews
- Classroom and hallway observations
- CAPA School and Community Survey
- Review of school portfolio meeting documents
- Review of student work

Findings:

Weekly grade level meetings are supposed to include time for teachers to reflect upon their instructional practices and the impact these have on student performance. Teachers and staff members recognize the important role they have in the education of their students, but some defer to significant influences present in the neighborhood as an explanation for student performance. The district's adoption of a modified Charlotte Danielson's *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* evaluation model may result in changes in classroom practice. Teachers cannot articulate a reflection process and the relationship of this to classroom practices and improved student achievement. Teachers do not provide students with opportunities to constructively evaluate their instructional performance.

4.1f The school intentionally 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
- Teacher interviews
- Support staff member interviews
- Classroom observations

Findings:

Students are randomly placed in classes. There is no evidence that student groupings are created based on instructional needs or staff strengths. Guided reading and tutoring does provide for flexible grouping matched to the needs of the student. The teacher-student ratio is lower than the Abbott requirement for all classrooms. The school has begun to implement an in-class support program which has the endorsement of the building leadership.

4.1g Teachers communicate regularly with families about individual students' progress (e.g., engage through conversation).

Findings for this indicator based on:

- School administration, teacher and student and interviews
- Support staff member interviews
- Review of teacher's CMCD logs of parent contact
- Review of parent signature logs

Findings:

The district has a formal communication procedure to communicate with parents. Multiple methods are used to communicate with parents including home visits, phone calls, newsletters, flyers, cable television and the school website. Teachers are required to communicate with parents on a regular basis. Each teacher maintains a CMCD log of parent contact. A school web page is available that includes the following information: staff email addresses, a school calendar for the year, a listing of student clubs, a parents page, and a District Home Page. Parents are welcome to make appointments with their child's teacher.

Student progress report cards are issued quarterly. Two report card nights are held for parents to meet with teachers and obtain report cards. Report cards include student grades, teacher comments, and standardized tests scores. The format of the report card is determined by the student's grade level.

Annual reviews are held for each special education students. Special education teachers are not completing quarterly IEP progress reports. Some teachers have indicated that they have ongoing communication with parents.

4.1h There is evidence that the teachers care about students and inspire their best efforts.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- School administration, teacher, support staff and student interviews
- Classroom and hallway observations

- Review of three-year operational plan
- CAPA School and Community Survey
- Review of student work

Findings:

School leadership and staff members intentionally work to create a nurturing learning environment. Interviews with students and staff indicate a caring climate exists throughout the building. Students reveal they feel comfortable with the teachers and can receive help before, after and during the school day. Teachers exhibit positive rapport and interaction with students. There is no advocacy program for students. Some mentoring occurs through Best Friends and Valley Boys. Student and staff achievements and accomplishments are publicly recognized and celebrated. Staff contributes their time and financial resources to encourage and motivate students. Students indicated that most teachers treated them fairly. Students were complimented for a “good job” and they reported that made them feel smart. Student work is exhibited in the hallways and the classrooms and a few are annotated with positive and encouraging comments. Administrators and teachers address academic and non-academic student concerns. Student excellence is celebrated along with attendance and wearing uniforms.

4.1j There is evidence that student achievement is highly valued and publicly celebrated (e.g., displays of student work, assemblies).

Findings for this indicator based on:

- School administration, teacher, support staff and student interviews
- Classroom and hallway observations
- CAPA School and Community Survey

Findings:

Student work is displayed in all hallways and classrooms, and is shared with parents during parent/teacher conferences. Student work displayed in the school does not reflect quality. Interviews revealed that assembly programs are held to recognize student achievements. Student accomplishments are regularly recognized through incentives, exhibition of student work, special honor roll and attendance assemblies. Students are familiar with the rubrics that guide to high achievement. Student academic achievement is not shared publicly with all stakeholders.

4.1k The school provides support for the physical, cultural, socio-economic, and intellectual needs of all students, which reflects a commitment to equity and an appreciation of diversity.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Teacher, non-instructional staff, administrator, parent and student interviews
- School and Community Survey
- Lesson plans
- Classroom and walkthrough observations
- Comprehensive Equity Plan
- District curriculum and curriculum materials
- Displays of student work

Findings:

Staff members exhibit sensitivity to the cultural needs of the students and community. The guidance and support staff members conduct a process to support the various health and social needs of the students.

The school is currently celebrating Black History Month. There is no evidence of a gifted and talented program. Special education referrals are up-to-date. There is an inclusion program at all grade levels in the school.

STANDARD 4

NEXT STEPS

1. The district and school leadership should immediately take action to have the following removed from the school: boxes of old SFA materials in the hallways; obsolete air conditions in the auditorium; and, paint supplies in the stairwell.
2. Investigate a way to have students take state assessments in a cooler environment.
3. Display student work that exhibits proficiency and uses language correctly. The school leadership (principal, vice principal and literacy coach) should review samples of student work with teacher assessments and provide feedback to teachers on the quality of the assessments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Instructional staff should display quality student work. The district should provide information to all instructional staff on the following: (a) how to display the work so that every student's individual needs are addressed; (b) consistent use of rubrics in the display and rating of student work; (c) complete notation of the CCCS rather than a display of only the number; and (d) division of bulletin boards to show student work progression. Teachers should collaborate systematically in the review of student work using classroom assessments. This activity should result in identification of instructional and assessment issues that need attention or modification. Teachers should receive training in analyzing student work, including projects, writing samples, oral reading, and formal assessments. Training should be scheduled to address protocols for the analysis of student work. Assessments should be analyzed for impact on instruction. Students should receive meaningful feedback that enables them to improve performances.
2. Develop and implement an ongoing campaign and program to prevent bullying among students. All students should be surveyed about the incidence of bullying and school climate on an annual basis. The results should be used to plan programs for the students.
3. In-class support should be offered to all students for whom it is determined could derive educational benefit in the general education classroom with supplemental aids and services. This full range of program options should result in successfully placing those students waiting to be placed. A regular education teacher, who has knowledge of the general education program, should have greater input into the development of the IEP for ICS students.
4. The resource classroom should be partitioned floor to ceiling with an additional doorway installed for separate access. Or, another classroom designated to provide separate instructional areas. CST offices should be reconfigured and floor to ceiling partitions installed so that adequate space and privacy can be offered while conducting CST services.

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 consistent with 6A: 10A-3.6 Supports for Parents and Families and NCLB §1118 Parental Involvement.

5.1a Families and the community are active partners in the educational process and work together with the school and district staff to promote programs and services for all students.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- SLC/by-laws, agenda, /member roster/ minutes review
- CIS/student/parent liaison/parents/SLC/staff /Valley Boys interviews
- Observations of sign in logs (school visitors, parent volunteers, parent contact sheet, perception surveys, school-to-home communication)
- Review of parent/teacher conference sign in sheets

Findings:

There are very few parents involved in the school even though efforts have been made to reach out to and involve parents. School-to-home communications include (English and Spanish) flyers generated from the school to the community. Neither of the family liaisons speaks Spanish, even though almost 40 percent of the population in the community is Spanish speaking. One of the office secretaries does speak Spanish and can translate when necessary. There are active parent and community groups present in the school--Parent Academy (volunteer program) PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) CIS (Community in School) and the Valley Boys. The Communities In Schools group engages parents in GED and boiler programs that provide skills for future employment. Valley Boys mentor sixth-grade boys and have contributed gifts for the graduating class and to the science lab. There are classes offered to parents on Saturday to assist their children with their homework.

There is an SLC in the school with policies and procedures for sub-committees and recruitment. Currently, the parents who are on the SLC committee are also employees of the school, which is inconsistent with the current by-laws and Abbott regulations. The election documentation validating the process was not available. Parents and community representatives interviewed had limited knowledge of the SLC and the three-year operational plan.

5.1b Structures are in place to ensure that ALL students have access to the entire curriculum (for example, school guidance, and special education, bilingual).

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Three-year operational plan
- Teacher and support staff interviews
- Classroom/hallways observations
- Supplemental educational services documentation
- Review of parent/teacher conference log/flyers/other documentation
- District Comprehensive Equity Plan
- Review of extended school services documentation

Findings:

Targeted support services are provided in the areas of community and district wide workshops, supplemental education services (tutoring), Saturday GEPA Academy and a high school fair to inform students about choices after graduation from the school. The school is a Title I school wide program thus services are open to all students. Counseling and social work services are offered to all students in the school. Counseling programs include a peer-to-peer program, mentoring services and referral to other services.

Student achievement data is not used as the entrance criteria for extended day and year programs. Enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no evidence of a program evaluation. Very few observations of the use of technology were noted. Some students are using e-pal to communicate with other students in Russia.

Special education students are provided with resource replacement and ICS classes. Minimal counseling and consultation services are provided.

The district Comprehensive Equity Plan outlines procedures to ensure that all students have equal access to the common academic core.

5.1d Students are provided with a variety of opportunities to receive additional assistance to support their learning beyond the initial classroom.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Three-year operational plan
- SLC/Student/Teachers/Parents/Principal interviews
- Support staff member interviews
- Classroom observations
- Review of extended school services documentation
- Supplemental Education Services

Findings:

There is some collaboration between classroom teachers and providers of extended school services. However, the collaboration does not fully address closing achievement gaps across subpopulations. Documentation, observation and interviews indicate that services beyond the classroom are available. A review of the documentation and interviews did not identify a selection process for students to participate in these programs. Further, teachers in these programs have little communication with the instructors in the regular classrooms. There is no documentation to support the effectiveness of these after school programs.

The district has established a Pupil Resource Committee to assist teachers in meeting the academic, emotional and behavioral needs of students who are struggling in these areas. This is comprised of a number of key student support staff and functions on a high level. They offer needed interventions, which can result in a student's difficulties being ameliorated. They have not received the state training as a team.

The CST at the Miller School consists of only a school social worker who is permanently assigned to this school. The LDT/C and psychologist is itinerant and serves several schools. As a result the CST is not utilized to provide assistance to teachers in terms of utilizing specific learning interventions in order to

implement the IEP. There is very little collaboration in this area. They do, however, provide teachers with Behavior Intervention Plans. Finally, extended year special education programs (of the same scope and sequence that is indicated in the IEP) have not been recommended for any of the special education students at Miller.

5.1g the district seeks parental input in the development of a written parent involvement policy.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- SLC/parent interviews
- Parent sign off forms and flyers
- Review of district parent involvement policy
- Parent meeting agendas

Findings:

There is documentation that a school parent involvement policy is in place. The district publishes a parent involvement brochure for distribution to stakeholders.

STANDARD 5

NEXT STEPS

1. Extended school year should be considered at each Annual Review /IEP meeting for each special education student, and provided in the same scope and sequence indicated in the IEP, if the student meets the loss/recoupment criteria. Loss/recoupment should be measured after school holiday breaks.
2. The entire proscribed PRC team, including the school administration, should participate in I&RS training offered by the state.
3. Parent membership on the SLC should be consistent with the bylaws and Abbott regulations. Specifically, the parent representatives should not be employees of the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increase LDT/C and the psychologist time assigned to the Miller Street Academy.
2. The entire PRC team, including the school vice principal, should participate in the I&RS training offered by the state. Each member of the team should acquire the resource book that is distributed at these training sessions.
3. School leadership should plan for the inclusion of a Spanish-speaking volunteer or community member to work with the family liaisons to purposefully involve Spanish-speaking parents in the school.
4. More parent directed programs should be offered at the school level to assist parents in helping their child to achieve academic success.

STANDARD 6 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: The school provides research based, results driven professional development opportunities for staff and implements performance evaluation procedures in order to improve teaching and learning.

6.1a There is evidence of support for the long-term professional growth needs of the individual staff members. This includes both instructional and leadership growth.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Interviews with principal, specialists, regular education teachers, guidance counselor, literacy coach, SLC and vice principal
- Review of district 2004-2005 Professional Development Plan
- Review of School 2003-2004 Staff Development Calendar
- Review of 2004-2005 Professional Development Roster
- Review of sample Professional Improvement Plans (PIPS)
- Review of three-year operational plan
- Classroom observations

Findings:

The district and school have a commitment to substantial and sustained professional development that supports the long-term growth needs of the staff in literacy, mathematics, and science. The district has a professional development plan that is current and comprehensive. All teachers are eligible to participate in the district-wide professional development offerings as well as those afforded at the building level. The district conducts an annual needs assessment to determine the professional development offerings for instructional, non-instructional and administrative staff. The focus of most of the professional development in the last year is in the areas of language arts and mathematics as presented in its model, *Reaching for the Brass Ring*. The school is in its first year of transition since discontinuing the Success For All program. The principal attends a monthly meeting sponsored by the School Leadership Team 3. Leadership, disaggregated assessment data, safety, employee evaluation and new programs are some of the agenda items for these meetings. Staff may request specific outside workshops to enhance skills as stated in the employee's PIP. Both the district and the school encourage all staff members to be life-long learners.

6.1c Staff development priorities are set in alignment with goals for student performance and the Professional Improvement Plans (PIP) of staff.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Interviews with principal, specialists, regular education teachers, guidance counselor, literacy coach, SLC, literacy consultant and vice principal
- Review of district 2004-2005 Professional Development Plan
- Review of School 2003-2004 Staff Development Calendar
- Review of 2004-2005 Professional Development Roster
- Review of sample Professional Improvement Plans (PIPS)
- Review of three-year operational plan
- Classroom observations

Findings:

The professional development opportunities offered by the district are determined based on results of analysis of student achievement data. All staff professional development is on going and occurs monthly or onsite through demonstrations and coaching. The district program is balanced literacy. Recently the literacy coach started teaching writing in the computer lab so that her time cannot be spent in classrooms presenting demonstration lessons. There is some connection between the professional development opportunities, PIPs of staff members and the three-year operational plan. Numerous folders of professional development and staff meeting attendance records were provided in the school portfolio. Because the information had not been organized in a data base, it is difficult to follow the connection between the PIP, plan and the school's learning goals.

6.1e Professional development is ongoing and job-embedded.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Interviews with principal, specialists, regular education teachers, guidance counselor, literacy coach, SLC and vice principal
- Interview with literacy consultant
- Review of district 2004-2005 Professional Development Plan
- Review of School 2003-2004 Staff Development Calendar
- Review of 2004-2005 Professional Development Roster
- Review of sample Professional Improvement Plans (PIPS)
- Review of three-year operational plan

Findings:

Professional development emphasizes a process for sustained and continuous growth through job-embedded opportunities. Scaffolded professional development experiences consisting of onsite modeling and coaching are available to teachers. To assist in professional staff development, coverage is afforded teachers to allow them to observe other staff members, attend workshops and articulate with other staff members. Follow-up to professional development sponsored by the district is intentional and a priority. The literacy coach has been assigned by the administration to teach students all day every day, thus thwarting any coaching efforts. Teachers participate in professional development, but there is little accountability to insure the transfer of professional development into research-based pedagogical practices in the classroom. It is not evident that the school is implementing the district model in language arts. Professional development for the special education and regular education staff has not been systematically offered within the building to foster the improvement of the special education program, as it applies to the construction of IEPs; instructional strategies, learning styles, specific disabilities, reading programs for special needs populations, inclusion, instructional modifications, assessment strategies, alternative reading programs, use of technology, etc.

6.1f Professional development planning shows a direct connection to an analysis of student achievement data.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Interviews with principal, specialists, regular education teachers, guidance counselor, literacy coach, SLC, literacy consultant and vice principal
- Review of district 2004-2005 Professional Development Plan
- Review of School 2003-2004 Staff Development Calendar

- Review of 2004-2005 Professional Development Roster
- Review of sample Professional Improvement Plans (PIPS)
- Review of three-year operational plan

Findings:

Evidence provided shows that the district analyzes assessment data and student work to determine the on-going professional development needs. A summary of staff attendance at district-sponsored programs was not available. Multiple sources of data are used for professional development planning. Deeper analysis is conducted on the district level to determine the needs of NCLB subpopulations with a demonstrated achievement gap. It is not clear how much of the analysis is communicated to members in the school. Data analysis appears to be minimal, despite a wealth of data residing at the school and district level.

Professional Growth and Evaluation

6.2c The school effectively uses the employee evaluation and the professional improvement plan (PIP) to improve staff proficiency.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Interviews with principal, specialists, regular education teachers, guidance counselor, literacy coach, SLC, literacy consultant and vice principal
- Review of district 2004-2005 Professional Development Plan
- Review of School 2003-2004 Staff Development Calendar
- Review of 2004-2005 Professional Development Roster
- Review of sample Professional Improvement Plans (PIPS)
- Review of three-year operational plan

Findings:

The employee evaluation system has been revised. This process is used to identify strengths and weakness in the staff with the goal for improving student achievement. The process of creating the PIPs is supposed to be a collaborative one. Some staff stated that there is no discussion before or after completing the PIP. Some special education staff members were not aware of what is contained within their PIPs and could not delineate the concomitant professional development in which they participated. Sample PIPs did not directly correlate to instructional needs of students.

6.2e The school three-year operational plan identifies specific instructional leadership needs, has strategies to address them and uses state and local requirements as a resource to accomplish these goals.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Interviews with principal, specialists, regular education teachers, guidance counselor, literacy coach, SLC and vice principal
- Interview with literacy consultant
- Review of district 2004-2005 Professional Development Plan
- Review of School 2003-2004 Staff Development Calendar
- Review of 2004-2005 Professional Development Roster
- Review of sample Professional Improvement Plans (PIPS)

Findings:

The principal and vice principal have a PIP developed according to contract in collaboration with district personnel. There are some instructional leadership offerings for principals and vice principals. Many staff members know about the creation and implementation of the three-year operational plan. Special education staff members were unaware of the contents of the plan. The building administrators work with coaches and consultants to enhance their understanding of the district's new curriculum initiatives. The three-year operational plan does not specifically identify instructional leadership needs or strategies. Instructional leadership needs are implied, they are not clearly and succinctly stated.

STANDARD 6

NEXT STEPS

1. Offer more content area training for new and established teachers in language arts and mathematics including a specific focus on writing in upper grades. Language arts, writing and mathematics professional development should be provided to upper grade teachers.
2. Special Education staff should be provided with the same training and collaboration from the math resource coordinator and literacy coach as the general education staff.
3. Members of the PRC should participate in the state training program for I&RS teams. The manual that is provided in the training is an extremely valuable resource.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The district and school should continue their ongoing, intensive and job-embedded professional development effort in literacy and mathematics. Emphasis should now include the careful analysis of achievement data and collaborative review of student work. District professional development providers should also extend their focus to assist teachers in varying their style of instruction, particularly in the upper grades. Classroom coaching should be extended to teachers in the upper grades. In many classrooms, students benefit from the support of more than one adult. Professional development is needed for support staff (teaching assistants/personal aides) to maximize their effectiveness. District and school leadership should extend coaching to include differentiated instruction and other instructional practices based on student needs. The literacy coach's job functions and responsibilities should reflect the district approved job functions and responsibilities of the literacy coach.
2. Collect and analyze the data to avoid redundancy of training and ensure the training is relevant and high quality. Evaluation is a critical component of the school program. It is recommended that the model be adjusted to include all staff – certificated and non certificated.
3. Instructional leadership needs should be specifically addressed in the district and school three-year operational plan.
4. General education teachers, special education staff, paraprofessionals and CST members should receive training in inclusive practices and strategies.
5. Special Education staff should participate in the following training:
 - a. alternative reading programs (Wilson Reading currently offered in district)
 - b. multiple intelligences and brain-based learning
 - c. authentic assessment
 - d. inclusive practices and strategies

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

STANDARD 7 – EFFICIENCY, ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES: School instructional decisions focus on support for teaching and learning, organizational direction, high performance expectations, creating a learning culture, developing leadership capacity.

7.1a Leadership developed a shared vision that is sustained.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Displays of vision, mission and belief statements
- Review of SLC and sub-committee meeting agenda/notes/minutes
- Administrative/teacher/student/parent interviews
- Three-year operational plan
- Walk-through observations
- Displays of student work – hallways and classrooms
- Web site
- PowerPoint presentation

Findings:

Throughout the building there were displays of the school's vision/motto, mission and belief statements. Some interviewees were able to state their understanding of what these statements meant and the purpose for each. Interviews reveal the statements were developed five years ago. During interviews some staff members stated that the mission statement had recently been updated; however, there were no documents to substantiate that process. A review of the SLC Blue Ribbon sub-committee document dated October 19, 2004, indicated the goal is to decorate the school with blue ribbons to encourage a blue ribbon status. The document review did not reveal how all stakeholders were included in the development of these statements, how decisions were guided by these statements, or how all stakeholders were provided progress updates.

7.1d There is evidence that the school leadership council (SLC) disaggregates data for use in meeting the needs of a diverse population, communicates the information to school staff and incorporates the data systematically into the school's plan.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of SLC and sub--committee meeting agenda/notes/minutes
- Review of three-year operational plan
- Interview of five members of SLC team with five representatives of leadership teams
- Interviews with principal and vice principal
- Staff meeting agendas
- Teacher/parent conferences
- District calendar

Findings:

During interviews it was repeatedly mentioned that disaggregated data is used by staff and administrators to guide decisions. Document review indicated the district provides the school with disaggregated data. There was no documentation to indicate when and how the administration and staff reviewed data to make decisions that address the needs of all students.

7.1e Leadership ensures all instructional staff has access to curriculum related materials and the training necessary to use curricular and data resources relating to the learning goals for New Jersey's Abbott districts.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of lesson plans
- Teacher/administrative interviews
- District curriculum documents
- SLC meeting agendas and minutes
- Professional development plans
- Three year operational plan

Findings:

During the district presentation it was stated there is a district-wide curriculum that is aligned with the NJ CCCS and is available to staff in an on-line environment. Through interviews it was substantiated that staff is provided with a multitude of resources to assist them in the instructional process. A review of documentation revealed the SLC sub-committee Curriculum and Instruction held a meeting in January 2005. There is no documentation of meetings for the Professional Development sub-committee of the SLC during this school year. Interviews indicated there were three faculty meetings this year. A review of the documentation showed one agenda for a faculty meeting in January 2005, with topics that were unrelated to curriculum and instruction or staff development.

7.1f Leadership ensures that time is protected and allocated 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/administrative/student interviews
- SLC agenda/minutes/interview
- Student Handbook
- Walk-through observations
- Entry/exit of students
- Restrooms/cafeteria

Findings:

A review of the written documentation, visits to classrooms, walking the halls and perusing the cafeteria revealed there is a student code of conduct, use of Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline (CMCD) and a voluntary uniform policy. There were rules and codes of conduct posted in various classrooms and the cafeteria. Some hallways had messages about a 6-inch voice. Interviews revealed classroom time is interrupted by the breakfast program, public address announcements, unscheduled parents who get past security, lateness of students, excessive heat in the building, changes in the schedule after the school year is underway (i.e. 4th grade departmentalized in November) and personnel changes after the school year begins.

7.1g Leadership plans and allocates resources, monitors progress, provides organizational infrastructure and removes barriers in order to sustain continuous school improvement.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of SLC and sub-committee agenda/notes/minutes
- Review of faculty agendas
- Teacher observation schedule
- School-based budget
- Teacher/administrative/student/custodian/cafeteria staff/SLC and leadership team representative interviews
- Walk-through observations
- Maintenance request log
- Perception surveys
- Violence and vandalism report 2003-2004/suspension report this year
- Three-year operational plan
- School report card

Findings:

A review of the documents, observations and interviews demonstrate the school has adequate resources. A review of the minutes of the SLC Technology sub-committee reveal all classes will have a computer with internet access and teachers have monthly staff development sessions as grade level meetings. The 2003-2004 School Report Card indicates all locations within the school have access to the Internet; however, this was not evident in observations. In addition, several of the computers were not operational. During the CAPA team visit the heat within the building is oppressive and interviews indicated this is a daily occurrence. The public address system and school clocks were not working during the CAPA visit. A tour of staff and student bathrooms showed a lack of soap, hand towels and in some cases toilet paper. Several of the bathrooms were unsanitary and had an unpleasant odor. Walk-through observations of the cafeteria and playground indicated there is not a certificated staff member present at all times, while students were in these locations. A walk-through of the building indicated the back auditorium doors were chained, the doors by the cafeteria/custodial area were chained and there were two paint cans, one half-full can of turpentine, a tall step ladder, several partially opened boxes of Elvis books and a table with a discarded monitor in the newly painted fourth-floor landing. During interviews it was revealed one class of eighth-graders has not had social studies instruction since the inception of the school year.

7.1k There is evidence that the principal demonstrates leadership skills in the areas of academic performance, learning environment and efficiency.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Teacher/administrative/staff/student/parent/SLC interviews
- Professional development documentation
- Three-year operational plan
- Walk-through observations
- Instructional staff observation schedule
- Agenda from faculty meeting

Findings:

The instructional staff observation schedule contained the name of a vice principal that had left approximately two months ago. A review of the completed certificated staff observation schedule revealed

the charting of observations was completed through the first quarter of the year, even though the second quarter just ended. Interviews revealed there were three faculty meetings this current school year. A review of the documents showed one faculty agenda that was announcements based. Through staff interviews it was revealed that programmatic changes are made during the school year without notice or input from staff. A review of the individual PIPs indicated areas of concentration for workshops. There is no formal sequential record to document when and where staff attended workshops and the area covered during the workshop. A list compiling staff attendance at professional development days, since the inception of the school year, was unavailable.

STANDARD 7

NEXT STEPS

1. Update administrative staff observation schedule and the chart that documents the completion of these observations, to accurately reflect which administrator will evaluate a particular teacher, during which quarter, and note when it has been completed on this chart as well as the district form.
2. The school leadership needs to immediately address the following items:
 - The heating system
 - The school clocks
 - The public address/phone system
 - Drinking fountains/faucets
 - The painting of hallways, stairwells and classrooms
 - The deteriorating ceiling in the newly painted hallway/landing
3. 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
 - Debris, hazards and unused books are removed from hallways
 - Chains are removed from all doors, when students are in the building
 - Students are supervised by a certificated staff member at all times
4. Reinstate social studies instruction for all eighth-graders and provide instruction for students on units missed the first half of the year.
5. Reinstate the continual 90-minute block for language arts/literacy, avoiding the last segment of the day for this instruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The mission, vision, beliefs and blue ribbon initiative 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 needs to schedule and conduct regular staff meetings that address the assessment and evaluation of achievement related data. Horizontal and vertical articulation

meetings need to 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.

STANDARD 8: There is evidence that the school is organized to maximize use of all available resources to support high student and staff performance.

8.1a There is evidence that the school is organized to maximize use of all available resources to support high student and staff performance.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of school-based budget
- Review of master schedule
- Teacher/administrative/staff interviews
- SLC and sub-committees and leadership team agenda/notes/minutes/interviews
- Student interviews
- Walk-through observations
- Review of ESL, LAL, math and science curriculum documents
- Student work displayed, folders and workbooks
- Test scores on GEPA Literacy 2003 and 2004
- Test scores on NJ/ASK 4 Literacy 2003 and 2004

Findings:

Document review indicates the school utilizes district policies and procedures. There is no documentation to indicate how, when or where resource management policies were communicated to multiple stakeholders. A review of the SLC minutes and subcommittee minutes does not reveal when or how this representative group collaborated to develop the school budget allocations. The instructional spaces where ESL and bilingual teaching take place are inadequate. In addition, there is insufficient school furniture to support this initiative.

8.1c The instructional and non-instructional staff are allocated and organized based upon the learning needs of all students.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of master schedule
- SLC and sub-committee agenda/notes/minutes review
- Teacher/administrative/staff/SLC interviews
- Walk-through observations
- Highly qualified teacher report

Findings:

Through interviews it was stated there are several long-term substitute teachers in the building. The Highly Qualified Teacher report was for the prior school year. No single report indicating the teacher's name and area of certification was supplied to the CAPA review team. A review of the school's organizational chart indicates there are at least four staff members who are either permanent substitutes or not working within their certification area (i.e. media specialist). Within the special education area the school has provided the personnel to service student needs as identified in the individual IEPs. During interviews it was revealed that one primary teacher was shifted from the grade she was teaching to take over the class of a colleague who had left the district. Through interviews and a review of individual staff schedules it was revealed that the lead science teacher is required to teach two classes of eighth-grade science, due to the departure of another staff member.

8.1d There is evidence that the staff makes efficient use of time to maximize learning.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of master schedule
- SLC and sub-committee agenda/notes/minutes reviewed
- Teacher/administrator/staff/student/SLC interviews
- Walk-through observations
- Review of ESL, LAL, math and science curriculum documents
- Student work displayed, folders and workbooks
- Test scores on GEPA Literacy 2003 and 2004
- Test scores on NJ/ASK 4 Literacy 2003 and 2004

Findings:

Classroom observations and building walkthroughs reveal that some staff make efficient use of time in the classroom. One teacher spent valuable class time trying to get the tape player to work so that students could listen to the story. Finally, she had all students sit on the floor around her, in a corner of the room, to listen as students took turns reading the story aloud. Once the teacher aide in the room got the tape player to work, students stopped reading and returned to their seats to listen to the story from the beginning. A walk-through observation showed a teacher divided the class into two groups, native language literacy and English literacy. The instructor spent class time running back and forth between the two groups trying to maintain discipline. Assignments consisted of busy work, copying the questions at the end of the story in the book, then answering them. No instruction took place. Picture prompt writing was displayed showing individual sentences describing the picture, not telling a story. Numerous student folders were available, but were mostly empty, or showed lack of coherence in curriculum implementation.

The bilingual sixth-grade teacher is the literacy teacher for her grade. However, her bilingual students, who require additional accommodations and adaptations for literacy instruction in the second language, do not get literacy until the last two periods of the day. It was observed that it took a group of fourth-grade bilingual students 30 minutes of instructional time to reach their corner of the basement from their third floor classroom. This literacy block is also scheduled during the last two periods of the day. Since students had not brought their coats and book bags, one could assume that these students would need to be dismissed early to allow them sufficient time to go back upstairs and get ready for dismissal by their general program teacher. At least two of the teachers observed taught lessons and skills previously taught

and learned. Presentation took the whole class period, and no new activities were introduced for reviewed skills.

8.1e Staff promotes team planning vertically and horizontally across content areas and grade configurations that is focused on the goals, objectives and strategies in the operational plan (e.g., common planning time for content area teachers; emphasis on learning time and not seat time, and integrated units).

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of master schedule
- School-based budget review
- Teacher/administrative/staff/SLC interviews
- Agenda and minutes from select team meetings

Findings:

The staffing schedule indicates there is time allotted to support common planning time for each grade level. It was not clear how horizontal and vertical articulation takes place. There is no common method of documenting the outcome of weekly common planning meetings, nor a system to record the topics of discussion during these meetings. One administrator has agenda and minutes to support the planning that takes place under his supervision. There is no documentation to indicate how the goals, objectives and strategies in the three-year plan are addressed.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND INTEGRATION

8.2d State and federal program resources are allocated and integrated (Safe Schools, NCLB, IDEA) to address student needs identified by the school. The school is designated as school wide Title I meaning that funds are blended.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of school-based budget
- Review of three-year operational plan
- Review of technology plan
- Administration/teacher/staff interviews
- IEPs and related services

Findings:

Based on documents reviewed, it appears revenue from various sources is integrated. However, there was no documentation to indicate how the school funds are monitored and how strategies are revised based on the evaluation of specific student needs, with the exception of students serviced under IDEA funding.

STANDARD 8

NEXT STEP

Assess the availability of teaching areas in the building in order to provide the bilingual and ESL teachers with a room in which to teach. Consider having the world language teacher go into each classroom for whole group instruction. This will provide a classroom and student desks for the bilingual teacher. The world language and bilingual teachers can share professional space, as the ESL teachers do in room 206.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The SLC has specifically excluded itself from decisions involving personnel. Therefore, the principal needs to take a proactive role in the recruitment of permanent staff to fill the spots that are currently being handled by individuals who may not carry the appropriate certification. This can be accomplished by attending the two Job Fairs that are held by the district, requesting special personnel advertisements for positions that become vacant or are filled by an individual who is not appropriately certified, and by contacting universities for recent graduates and alternate route candidates. Additionally, a dialogue needs to take place between the principal and the Assistant Superintendent for this group to ensure there is greater continuity between vice principals (5 different people in seven years) and greater retention of staff vs. the current level of staff mobility.
2. Review the entire school plant to ensure maximum utilization of classrooms for instruction. Also address the issue of privacy and confidentiality in the CST offices as noted in recommendations for Standard 4.
3. Develop a schedule that utilizes the talents of each administrator and pairs them with grade levels most similar to their areas of expertise. Each administrator should assume the responsibility for overseeing the weekly grade level meetings and ensuring topics revolving around student achievement are discussed and appropriate actions and/or recommendations are brought forth. When the master schedule is developed, time needs to be allotted for vertical as well as horizontal team meetings.
4. The administration needs to put into place all necessary measures to ensure instructional time is maximized. How can students have breakfast and not cut into instructional time? How can students change classes with minimal loss of instructional time? How can all staff increase their time on task with students? How can staff move students from the playground back to class with minimal time lost? All areas of the day need to be addressed to gain instructional time.
5. The district should assist the principal in ensuring that all staff have a comprehensive understanding of the **Achievement Through Instructional Excellence** initiative implemented by the Newark Public School District. Administration and staff members should have a clear understanding of how to use Danielson's *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* to expand the professional growth and development of their staff. When the administration and staff know what constitutes quality in the practice of teaching, the school will move closer to being a true learning community.

STANDARD 9 – COMPREHENSIVE AND EFFECTIVE PLANNING: 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.

DEFINING THE SCHOOL’S VISION, MISSION, BELIEFS

9.1a There is evidence that a collaborative process was used to develop the vision, beliefs, mission and goals that engage the school community as a community of learners.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Three year operational plan
- SLC/principal/teachers/parents/CIS/students/Valley Boys interviews
- School and Community Perception Survey

Findings:

A collaborative process was originally used to develop the schools’ vision, mission. These documents were presented to everyone at the schools’ 2003 open house.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROFILE

9.2a There is evidence the SLC planning process involves collecting, managing and analyzing data.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Three-year operational plan
- Perception survey
- Administration/SLC/teachers interviews
- NCLB problem priority checklist
- School Data Profile

Findings:

The school has a plethora of data that guides professional development and instructional decision-making at the school level in both language arts literacy and mathematics. The school data profile reflects the school’s overall performance. The sets of data collected in each area of the data profile are integrated and analyzed using a systems approach and compared to like schools. Data analysis appears to be minimal, despite a wealth of data residing at the school and district level.

ANALYZING INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

9.4a Perceived strengths and limitations of the school instructional and organizational effectiveness are identified using the collected data.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of three-year operational plan
- NCLB Problem Priority Checklist

- SLC/principal/teachers interviews
- Data analysis
- School and Community Perception Survey
- 2003-2004 School Report Card

Findings:

District personnel utilize a wide variety of data in such areas as demographics; parental participation in school activities; suspension rates; ASK and GEPA achievement; teacher deficiencies and research-based educational programs in an effort to determine and assist school staff to achieve program objectives. However, the level of analysis at the school is not always sufficient to verify the perceived strengths and limitations of the organization and instructional domains of the school. There is no evidence that a thorough understanding of data analysis exists at the building level by all professional staff members.

9.4b The school goals for building and strengthening the capacity of the school instructional and organizational effectiveness are defined.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of three-year operational plan
- Principal/SLC interviews
- 2004 School Report Card
- School and Community Perception Survey

Findings:

The school goals for building and strengthening the capacity of the school instructional and organizational effectiveness are defined in the three-year operational plan in Form F- Priority Problem Description Research-Based Strategy Used to address problems. The school improvement goals respond to NCLB benchmarks addressing AYP. Goals and strategies for Implementation 2004-2005 English Language Learners (B Charts) do not reflect a clear understanding of the ESL curriculum and instructional materials. There is no evidence that the collected data of AYP for English language learners measured by the IDEA, a state mandated language proficiency test required by NCLB regulations, has been taken into consideration when identifying instructional and organizational effectiveness

DEVELOPMENT OF THE THREE-YEAR OPERATIONAL/IMPROVEMENT PLAN

9.5a The strategies in the three-year operational or school improvement are aligned with the school improvement goals and objectives.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of the three-year operational plan
- SLC/teacher/principal interviews
- Progressive data analysis

Findings

The Progressive Data Analysis system of the district, WSR and School Assessments 2004-2005 Quarterly Reports reflects the action steps for the school improvement in alignment with the school improvement goals and objectives.

9.5b The plan identifies the resources, timelines and persons responsible for carrying out each activity.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of three-year operational plan
- Principal and faculty meeting
- Principal/teacher interviews

Findings

It is evident through interviews, observations and SLC minutes that the responsibility is shared by most stakeholders.

9.5c The means for evaluating the effectiveness of the three-year operational plan/improvement plan are established.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Principal /teachers/SLC Interview
- Walk-through observations
- SLC-meeting minutes /agenda

Findings:

The principal and SLC has an aggressive focus on evaluating the effectiveness of the three-year operational plan, evidenced by regular scheduled observations, classroom walkthroughs. Modifications to the plan are made between the principal and SLC when appropriate.

IMPLEMENTATION AND DOCUMENTATION

9.6b The school evaluates the degree to which it achieves the goals and objectives for student learning set by the plan.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of three-year operational plan
- Perception Survey
- Principal/teacher/SLC/student interviews
- SLC meeting minutes/agenda

Findings:

The SLC, principal, and school level administrators discuss, implement and evaluate goals and objectives set by the operational plan. This is evidenced through incremental progress as it relates to increased proficiency in LAL and mathematics.

STANDARD 9

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The principal, SLC, parents, community members and other stakeholders should convene to revise the school vision, beliefs, mission and goals. The revised items should be shared with the entire school community at a public meeting. All stakeholder groups should have a full understanding of the school's vision, beliefs, mission and goals. The next submission of the three-year operational plan should intentionally relate the newly revised mission and vision.
2. The school/district should 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.
3. 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.
4. The SLC team should become more familiar with the accountability requirements for ELLs in their school who make up almost 20 percent of the student population. Revise three-year operational plan goals and strategies so that the ESL teachers follow the ESL curriculum using the district adopted ESL materials that are aligned to the state assessments, NJ CCCS, the NJ English Proficiency Standards, and National TESOL standards.

MATHEMATICS CONTENT REVIEW

Summary Findings in: Academic Performance (Quality of Instruction)

STANDARD 1-CURRICULUM: The school develops and implements a curriculum that is rigorous, intentional, and aligned to state and local standards.

1.1a There is evidence that the curriculum is aligned with the NJ CCCS.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of local and NJ CCCS documents, district policies, units of study, lesson plans
- Staff member and student interviews
- Review of professional curriculum resource materials, staff meeting agendas

Findings:

Everyday Math and Connected Math (adopted by Newark for grades K-5 and 6-8 respectively) are in alignment with NJ CCCS and national standards for mathematics curriculum. Observations of classrooms and lesson plans as well as interviews with teachers and the district math supervisors document that the teachers at the school are implementing (two) mandated programs.

1.1b The district initiates and facilitates 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 and NJ CCCS documents
- Documents of professional development days/release time
- School and district staff member interviews

Findings:

The district's mathematics department has a comprehensive staff development calendar that encompasses the building of content knowledge and pedagogy. Teachers are mandated to attend full day staff development workshops. In addition, teachers have the opportunity to attend summer institutes, weekend institutes, after school study groups and to participate in programs in partnership with local universities (Rutgers and Montclair State).

1.1c The district initiates and facilitates discussions between schools in the district in order to eliminate unnecessary overlaps and close gaps.

Evidence for this indicator based on:

- Review of curriculum documents
- School and district staff member interviews

Findings:

The district-wide adoption of a standards-based, constructivist math series (two different series provide for K-8) makes the occurrence of gaps and overlaps in math curriculum unlikely. Teachers meet and discuss curricular concerns at district wide workshops, where teachers share concerns and strategies. There are no school records of meeting minutes that address either aligning curriculum or meeting with other schools.

1.1d There is evidence of vertical communication with an intentional focus on key curriculum transition points within grade configurations (e.g., from primary to middle and middle to high).

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Curriculum documents
- School and district staff member interviews
- Student interviews

Findings:

The district plans staff development opportunities such as the grade 6-9 Math Content Weekend Institutes and Graphing Calculator workshops that are attended by middle school and secondary teachers. Regularly scheduled common grade level (horizontal planning) meetings are held neither with a focus on mathematics nor with math on the agenda. Vertical planning is not evident.

1.1e There is evidence of links to continuing education, life and career options.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of three-year operational plan, units of study, lesson plans
- Availability of local resources
- Field trips, field experiences, community mentoring programs
- Perception surveys
- Staff member and student interviews
- Student work portfolios

Findings:

Math assignments in Everyday Math sometimes contain a piece/component/question that is real-life related. Connected Math assignments usually contain this real-life related piece. There is no evidence of a career day in the school. When interviewed, only the pre-K and K teachers reflected any knowledge of career and life options being woven into their curriculum.

1.1f There is in place a systematic process for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the curriculum.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of local board of education policies, three-year operational plan
- School and district staff members and SLC interview

Findings:

Interviews with district personnel described a review process for curriculum revision and evaluation. The district is currently in the middle of a six-year plan for implementation of an NSF grant (Local Systemic Change Initiative) that requires that all curriculum, materials and staff development be standards-based and aligned with national standards for curriculum and assessment. After a full review of available standards-based programs, the current curriculum/programs were adopted by committees comprised of central office personnel, administrators, parents, community representatives and teachers. Teachers did not indicate they either had participated or were aware of a curriculum review process. In addition, the district monitors curriculum implementation through school visitations, and periodically reviews and revises curriculum via committees comprised of central office content specialists, and all stakeholders (administrative, teaching personnel, community representatives, etc.). Documentation indicates that in January 2005 the curriculum subcommittee of the SLC met, but notes do not reflect their minutes or agenda.

1.1g There is a common academic core for all students.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of curriculum documents, texts and publisher supplemental materials
- Disaggregated student assessment data
- Student, teacher, and district interviews
- Classroom observations
- Review of local curriculum documents, units of study, and lesson plans

Findings:

Interviews indicated staff members are not synchronized in their connects in the implementation of the district's math curriculum. Lesson plans, homework and in-class assignments, as well as school-year progress does not align the grade levels. Lessons do not reflect an understanding of grade-level appropriate

assessment, nor do they reflect completion of grade-level curriculum which prepares the student for the upcoming grade level.

STANDARD 1

NEXT STEP

Teachers should be provided with a copy of the math curriculum guide for the grade levels immediately above and below their own.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All teachers should have a hard copy or disc containing all curriculum guides (K-8).
2. All teachers require training and coaching in the implementation of the math program.
3. Weekly meetings should provide an opportunity for content-specific (math) vertical (all grades) dialogue, assessment and alignment.

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

2.1a Classroom assessments are frequent, rigorous, aligned with NJ CCCS.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of units of study, lesson plans, samples of classroom assessments
- Review of samples of student work products
- Student and staff member interviews
- Walk-through observations

Findings:

A few types of assessments are used to evaluate the progress of students. These assessments include, but are not limited to, workbook evaluations, worksheets, and periodic exams emphasizing open-ended questions. District assessments are aligned with NJ CCCS standards, but they rarely ask real-life related questions or higher-level thinking/multi-step questions. There is no evidence of an eight-week assessment; progress reports were inside a folder entitled “eight-week assessments.” There is no evidence of grade-level meeting minutes or common planning time notes or minutes.

2.1b Teachers collaborate in the design of authentic assessment tasks aligned with NJ CCCS subject matter.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of samples of authentic assessments, lesson plans, professional resource materials
- New Jersey’s standards-based documents

- Staff member interviews
- Math assessment submission schedule

Findings:

Based on interviews, collaboration among teachers is sporadic. Staff members stated that departmentalization and the absence of content-area staff meetings or planning time, encourages isolated work. Displayed work and student notebooks reveal that assessments in the upper grades were most often derived from the Connected Math series. There is no evidence of collaborative meetings. The district personnel explained there is no math coach in the building, but that two math resource teachers are scheduled to work in the school on certain days. Teachers did not identify the math resource teachers as an instructional resource for them, nor were they familiar with their schedule. The principal uses a “math assessment submission schedule” which states to “see teacher assessment disk; make sure assessment contains no more than 50 problems, may be given over two days.” Records of these submissions to the principal were not available.

2.1c Students can articulate the academic expectations in each class and know what is required to be proficient.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Interviews with students and staff members
- Rubrics prominently displayed
- Student work with rubrics and identified performance expectations for common skill areas
- Students journals/learning logs
- Classroom displays
- Walk-through observations
- Perception survey

Findings:

Rubrics were prominently displayed in most classrooms, but they were consistently hard to read based on wall positioning and font size. One lesson demonstrated children evaluating each other’s work based on a rubric that is neither displayed during the discussion nor given with the assignment. Interviews revealed that children felt teachers had high expectations for them, but they could not articulate how to achieve those expectations. There is no record of staff meetings to collaborate on the rubrics.

2.1d Test scores are used to identify curriculum gaps.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Three-year operational plan
- Three-year comparative data
- Standardized test results
- Comparison of classroom/district/state assessment results

Findings:

The results of district assessments (mid-year, end of year, GEPA and NJ/ASK Practice Tests) are scored, reviewed, analyzed and disaggregated by central office. The data is returned to the school for interpretation. There is minimal significant evidence of student portfolios charting assessment. During teacher interviews some teachers stated mantras such as “assessment drives instruction,” but did not provide explanation or examples of the process used. A file labeled “eight-week assessment” only

contained progress reports. Data from the district does not analyze test data to determine strengths and weaknesses among the content areas in math; therefore, it is impossible to know the weakest content area in mathematics.

2.1e Multiple assessments are specifically designed to provide meaningful feedback on student learning for instructional purposes.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Three-year operational plan
- Open-response questions, culminating events/performance, tasks/projects
- Teacher-developed tests and projects
- Units of study/lesson plans and the accompanying assessment tasks
- Staff member and student interviews

Findings:

Based on displayed work and student work samples, teachers primarily scored student work with an occasional word or two of encouragement on top. Commentary and critiques providing essential feedback for student improvement, but did not reflect the rubric used for that score.

2.1f Performance standards are clearly communicated, evident in classrooms and observable in student work.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Example of assessment tasks with rubrics and student work
- Teacher and student interviews
- Rubrics posted in classrooms
- Quality student work posted using rubrics

Findings:

Most teachers observed diligently presented the standards (NJ CCCS) to their students on the board/chalkboard. Daily lesson objectives were usually vocalized so that students could become aware of what and why they were learning today. Use of rubrics is not evident in the primary grades. However, performance standards (as opposed to content standards) were rare overall. No indication of communication with parents outside of scheduled school nights is evident.

2.1h Samples of student work are analyzed to inform instruction, revise curriculum and pedagogy, and obtain information on student progress.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Staff member and student interviews
- Review of samples of classroom assessments, student working folders/portfolios
- Review of student performance level descriptions, results of analysis of student work

Findings:

Student notebooks were present in fourth through eighth grade math classes. Approximately half of the teachers required students to maintain math folders. Most of the work in the folders consisted of worksheets and a few examples of open-ended questions. No formal processes that use student work to guide instruction or revise curriculum were indicated. Based on interviews, teachers could not clearly articulate how to utilize the math program or how the skills would be useful to students. This observation occurred more often with the teachers using the Connected Math series rather than with the Everyday Math series.

STANDARD 2

NEXT STEPS

1. Rubrics need to be displayed where children can read, use, and understand them.
2. Target professional development for the needs of the school staff, to expand their capacity to instruct students using the new math series.
3. Target professional development to provide teachers the opportunity to see the global purpose and usefulness of the math programs as they transcend grade level and school level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide teachers and school leaders with staff development in the area of authentic assessment design.
2. Provide staff with on-site training in the implementation of the new math series.
3. Establish a schedule to ensure math resource teachers are available to collaborate and provide demonstrate lessons for classroom teachers on a weekly basis.
4. Teachers should make available to students sample written assignments that mirror similar format and design as they would appear on state assessments. Students should be provided with examples of well-written responses to open-ended questions so they can see the degree of proficiency that is expected of them on state-administered and other assessments.
5. Create a communication link between school/home/community with the goal of raising students' performance on state assessments.

STANDARD 3 – INSTRUCTION: The school’s instructional program actively engages all students by using effective, varied and research-based practices to improve student academic performance.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Three-year operational plan
- Lesson plans/units of study
- Student work
- Perception data
- Staff member and student interviews
- Walk-through observations
- Student journals/learning logs

Findings:

Instruction in most classrooms is teacher-centered. Questions posed required a brief and often instinctive response. Questioning techniques did not encourage higher thinking. All classrooms used calculators and manipulatives in some way. Activities did not provide for inquiry-based discovery. Connected Math lends itself to reference to a certain “page” for the day. The “lesson” becomes the activity/task required on that page. One teacher expressed the concern that the Connected Math is heavily language-based. Neither lesson plans nor observations reflected activities that address all learners, modalities, or differentiation. When asked about strategies during interviews, teachers were not able to provide examples of strategies.

3.1b Instructional strategies and learning activities are aligned with the district, school and state goals and assessment expectations for student learning.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Lesson plans/units of study
- Course syllabi
- Staff member and student interviews
- Walk-through observations
- Performance data review and analysis

Findings:

Interviews and document review indicated instructional strategies are sometimes aligned with school curriculum. Displayed work and classroom observations indicate some learning activities require students to complete assignments similar to those on state assessments. School goals are not apparent, where district and state goals are linked to assessment results/data. Process standards, NJ CCCS strands, techniques, and strategies are inconsistently combined/merged. One document, the “Progressive Data Analysis of District, WSR, and School Assessments” notes the staff development goal of “support in obtaining 100 percent after school and Saturday Academy.” Some teachers expressed that after school and Saturday Academy would be beneficial to their students’ progress as well.

3.1c Instructional strategies and activities are consistently monitored and aligned with the changing needs of a diverse student population to ensure various learning approaches and learning styles are addressed.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Lesson plans/units of study
- Classroom observations
- Student work
- Staff member and student interviews
- Perception survey
- Disaggregated student achievement data
- Student journals/learning logs

Findings:

Classroom observations did not reveal student-centered activities. From 4th grade through 8th grade, math instruction is departmentalized. Differentiation of instruction is not observed in most classes. Adherence to a given “program” – Connected Math – seems to wed teachers to a text instead of viewing the lesson as going beyond the page of a book; therefore, class time cannot address neither different modalities nor differentiation. Written observations and lesson plan feedback conducted by administration did not reflect knowledge of this implementation. Feedback on lesson plans is limited and therefore not conducive to changing this deficit. When asked about teaching strategies, some teachers identified the existence of different learning styles in the classroom, but usually not the existence of special needs. During observations, there is a deficit of indicators of essential lesson components, which might include, but are not limited to catching the students’ attention at the beginning of class and transferring the current work to new situations or connecting to big ideas. The questions did not vary in type.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Units of study/lesson plans with examples of classroom assessments
- Student and staff member interviews
- Student work
- Walk-through observations

Findings:

Scheduling and interviews indicate the “GEPA Prep” class has no curriculum other than the GEPA exam. As observed, the drill associated with test preparation did not allow for higher levels of learning.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Three-year operational plan
- Lesson plans/units of study
- Student and staff member interviews
- Walk-through observations
- Samples of student work and products
- Professional development sessions for teachers

- Use of technology by students
- Technology-integrated instruction

Findings:

Calculators were available for use in all classrooms. All classrooms have at least two (usually three) computers. Computers were not integrated into instruction. From displayed student work, observed lessons and interviews it is not apparent that this is a school of technology. Professional development for staff is voluntary and is scheduled on Saturdays and weekdays. As noted on the school schedule, staff members are credited with staff development when accompanying their class to the lab. The professional development record for school staff is disjointed and did not indicate attendance. Interviews indicated staff members view professional development in technology as skill building and not necessarily as a tool for instruction or lesson content. There is not yet a link between what they are learning and how lessons may be improved with that new technology knowledge.

3.1f Instructional resources are sufficient to effectively deliver the curriculum.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Textbooks/instructional resources/curriculum documents
- Perception surveys
- Student and staff member interviews
- Walk-through observations

Findings:

There are sufficient material resources for classroom teachers to fully implement the math curriculum. Teachers indicated that supply requests are honored in a timely fashion and always approved by building administration. Teachers and students are provided with manuals, textbooks, and workbooks as required by the mathematics program. Additional resources are provided, at teacher request, to supplement learning as identified by formal and informal teacher assessment of student progress. Teachers may not be aware of what they are lacking or how something is actually intended for use, such as a full classroom set of manipulatives. When asked, teachers could not convey what the most important materials or manipulatives are for instruction. Overall, the teachers seem to have what they need or can get it provided for them.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Staff member interviews
- Perception survey
- Lesson plans
- Units of study with feedback
- Analysis of student work

Findings:

Training that may address analysis of student work is optional. District documentation of professional development lacks detailing of the content of possible/offered trainings, and only lists that particular math

programs will be addressed/taught – such as Everyday Math. Most teachers expressed the opportunity to occasionally and without regularity meet/confer with colleagues regarding their classes. They were not specific about whether addressing student work is a part of this dialogue.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Lesson plans/units of study
- Perception survey
- Samples of homework with comments
- Staff member and student interviews
- Walk-through observations

Findings:

A district policy regarding homework is in existence. Homework concerns some teachers, because they say that it is hard to get it back and to get parent support for its completion. They feel that falling behind in the homework affects the productivity of their class time. Homework on display is occasionally tied to current instruction. Homework is monitored for completion, but not necessarily to promote correction/improvement.

STANDARD 3 – MATHEMATICS

COMMENDATION

Instructional resources are available and sufficient in the area of mathematics to support the school's implemented curriculum.

NEXT STEP

Teachers should provide comments on homework and class work so students will know what is expected of them to attain proficiency on a given task. School leadership should make written comments when reviewing lesson plans, and these should reflect process standards, content standards and strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals should receive additional professional development on differentiated instruction, questioning skills and higher order thinking skills at the appropriate implementation level. Teachers should work collaboratively to intentionally plan interdisciplinary connections as part of instruction. Teachers should vary the instructional strategies to address multiple intelligences, learning styles, and culturally responsive instruction.
2. All staff should attend professional development on the integration of technology into classroom instruction. Technology should be an integral part of instruction and should be designed to broaden and expand student learning.
3. Math lessons should be observed by school leadership and math resource teachers with the intent to monitor and enable implementation of the math programs.
4. Parents need to be kept updated on changes and requirements of the math program.

IN CONCLUSION

Members of the CAPA review team express their appreciation to the staff and community of Miller Street Academy 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. What can the staff and leadership at Miller Street Academy do to involve parents in the academic success of their child? What would it take from every staff member in the school to make it happen?
2. How can leadership be redefined to give all stakeholders a greater role in raising student achievement and sustaining high student achievement? What are the obstacles that must be overcome to create a culture of effective shared leadership, with individual accountability within the school? How must communication change?
3. 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? How can the leadership and instructional staff make effective use of research based best practices and school based student data to drive continuous improvement?
4. What improvements must be made in the building to make it a safe, orderly, healthy and equitable environment where high student achievement can take place? Who is responsible and what can be done now?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

District	Newark School District
School	Miller Street Academy
Principal – Years in Building	Seven
Grade Levels	Pre-K - 8
Number of Teachers meeting NCLB HQT	2003-2004 survey 34
Number of Teachers with Emergency Certification	2003-2004 survey 3
Total Number of Classrooms	29 – per Student Information Services
Percent Special Education	3.6% - per Student Information Services
Number – Self Contained Classrooms	1 – per Student Information Services
Percent Bilingual	20% - per Student Information Services
Number of Bilingual Classrooms	4 – per Student Information Services
Number of Students	2004 - 448 2005 - 446
School Leadership Council (SLC) or Title I Planning Committee (PC) Meets Monthly	Insufficient documentation to support this
SLC or Title I PC has complete representation	Based upon documentation – Yes
Intensive Early Literacy Visit and Complete Plan	N/A
Percent Parent Involvement	Unable to determine
Whole School Reform (WSR) Model	District - <i>Reaching For The Brass Ring</i>
Status of WSR Contract	N/A
Corrective Action Plan – Persistently Dangerous “Warning”	None
Most Current Number of Students reading at grade level in 3 rd and 4 th grades.	3 rd - DRA 31.1% Gen. Ed. 4 th – NJ/ASK 45.7% of Gen. Ed. NJ/ASK 41.7% of Spec. Ed. NJ/ASK 33.3% of LEP