

**10-11-2005 to 10-17-2005**  
**Eighteenth Avenue School**

**Introduction**

The New Jersey Department of Education conducted a CAPA (Collaborative Assessment for Planning and Achievement) review of Eighteenth Avenue Elementary School on 10-11 to 10-17-2005. This school is categorized as a “low performing school” meaning 50.0 percent or more of the general education students were not proficient on the 2002 ESPA Language Arts Literacy subtest, adjusted by the Commissioner, as codified herein, based on mean score growth or decline from 1999-2002. Any school so identified will remain in this category for the 2004-2005 school year, even if more than 50 percent of its general education students were proficient or advanced proficient on the 2003 NJASK4 Language Arts Literacy subtest. A literacy assessment team reviewed the early literacy program in the fall of 2003; and an Intensive Early Literacy agreement is in place. 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 more than two 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.

The CAPA review team activities included:

- A review of the documents collected for the school portfolio and data profile;
- 41 classroom visits;
- General observations, such as morning and afternoon arrival and dismissal, lunch in the cafeteria, and student restrooms;
- 32 interviews with teachers;
- 7 interviews with building leadership and administrators;
- 3 interviews with district administrators;
- 52 interviews with students;
- 28 interviews with school and student support staff; and
- 14 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 included:

<b>TEAM POSITION</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>AFFILIATION</b>
Team Leader	Elizabeth Domigan	Educational Consultant
District Liaison	Gus Truppo	Newark School District
Principal	Richard Kaye	Educational Consultant
Lanugage Arts Literacy Specialist	Donna Mitchell	Educational Consultant
Mathematics Specialist	Renee Howard	Educational Consultant
Special Education Specialist	Joseph Jakobowski	Educational Consultant
District Special Education Specialist	Pamela Horn Kathleen Greenwald JoAnn Dismuke	Newark School District
Institution of Higher Education	Leonard Fitts	Educational Consultant
Parent/Guardian or Grandparent	Barbara Pugh-Gorham	Educational Consultant
DOE Liaison	Carlos Rodriguez	NJ Department of Education

### **School Academic Performance Standards**

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

- Standard 1:** The school implements a curriculum that is rigorous, intentional, and aligned to state and local standards.
- Standard 2:** Multiple evaluation and assessment strategies are used 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.

### **School 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.

### **School 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, and 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:** School leadership and the SLC or NCLB planning committee communicates a clear purpose, direction and strategies focused on teaching and learning through the development, implementation and evaluation of the following: vision, goals, NCLB school improvement plan and report on instructional priorities for Abbott schools.

### **District Academic Performance Standards**

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

- Standard 1:** The district P-12 curriculum is rigorous and aligned to state standards.
- Standard 2:** The district and 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 district's instructional program actively engages all students by using effective, varied, and research-based practices to improve student academic performance.

### **District Learning Environment Standards**

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

- Standard 4:** The district functions as an effective learning community and supports a climate conducive to performance excellence.
- Standard 5:** The district 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 district provides professional development opportunities based on an evaluation of individual and collective teacher needs.

### **District Efficiency Standards**

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

- Standard 7:** District instructional decisions focus on support for teaching and learning, organizational direction, high performance expectations, creating a learning culture, and developing leadership capacity.
- Standard 8:** The district is organized to maximize use of all available resources to support schools in achieving high student and staff performance.
- Standard 9:** District leadership and the SLC or NCLB planning committee communicates a clear purpose, direction and strategies focused on teaching and learning through the development, implementation and evaluation of the following: vision, goals, NCLB district improvement plan and report on instructional priorities for Abbott districts.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Eighteenth Avenue Elementary School - Newark Public School District

Visit Date: October 11-17, 2005  
Team Leader: Elizabeth Domigan  
Grade Levels: PK-6  
Enrollment: 311  
LPS/AYP Status:

#### WHOLE SCHOOL REFORM MODEL STATUS:

- **Whole School Reform model(s) currently** under contract: There is no WSR model under contract. The school uses the district model "Reaching for the Brass Ring."
- If there is no model under contract, state the model previously used and length of time it was use: Previous Model was SFA. School had contract from February, 1999 through, June 2004.
- Reason model discontinued: The district reviewed the SFA literacy data which revealed weakenss in literacy and mathematics. The decision to dissolve the relationship with the model developer was made by the district.
- Name of new model or approved district model: "Reaching for the Brass Ring."
- Description of how decision was made to adopt new model: The district made the decision to adopt the new model.

The CAPA team members, together with school and district leadership, have identified common themes emerging from the report that would have the greatest impact on student achievement. This summary represents these themes found in findings and recommendations.

#### FINDINGS:

##### **Academic Performance Language Arts Literacy**

The district has recently adapted *Harcourt Trophies*, *Kidspiration*, and *Breakthrough to Literacy* in an attempt to strengthen the balanced literacy curriculum and align it with the state and local standards. The district and school have also provided technical assistance through the school-based literacy coach, tutor, and Reading Recovery staff.

##### **Mathematics**

Teaching mathematics through a balanced, standards-based curriculum represents a major shift from the traditional specific skills and procedures view of mathematics teaching and learning to a view that introduces mathematical ideas by situating them in problems and encouraging students to explore, conjecture, validate, and communicate the understandings they have constructed. This represents a radical departure from the way most teachers were taught mathematics and the way they were trained to teach it. As a result, it is not surprising that most teachers at Eighteenth Avenue School have not yet reached a comfort level with it, resulting in a disconnect between the written and implemented mathematics curricula.

The school principal and district supervisory staff recognize that the ability to teach using this approach is something that develops slowly over time and requires ongoing support especially in classroom-embedded activities. The district started the process several years ago by adopting and phasing in two math programs (*i.e.*, *Everyday Mathematics* in grades K-5 and *Connected Mathematics* in grades 6-8) that meet the U.S. Department of Education's standards for quality, research-based program. They have also provided related professional development activities and offered ongoing technical assistance to the school through the services of their mathematics supervisory and resource staff. This year, a part-time math coach has been assigned to Eighteenth Avenue School for three half days each week. The school has outfitted classrooms with appropriate print and materials and is working to refine and expand the curriculum, monitoring and articulation processes already in place in relation to the area of mathematics.

### **Learning Environment:**

The areas under this subtitle address the supports of climate and discipline, parent involvement and professional development. There is a strong support for teachers through the planned and implemented professional development components. There are many supports for students via mentors and the commitment of adults in the building; yet there is a need to address specific issues of discipline that interfere with learning and to address the additional services needed for special education students. It is recognized that there is an active outreach to parents but that the school is, itself, not satisfied with the results.

### **Efficiency and Leadership:**

18<sup>th</sup>. Avenue School is an example of a collaborative relationship in which all staff, professional and non-professional, join together to create a learning environment that supports high student achievement for each learner. The school uses its resources carefully and has reached past what is provided by the district, to further enhance staff professional development and student support services. The positive progress that the school has made in raising student levels of academic achievement is testimony to the willingness to continue that growth until all students are above the level of proficiency.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### **Academic Performance:**

#### **Literacy**

In order to work to implement a balanced literacy curriculum that is rigorous, intentional, and aligned to state and local standards, it is necessary for the school to prioritize professional staff development, increase the diagnostic/prescriptive activities given to new staff who lack proper training in classroom management and curriculum at the same time they are working to implement the balanced literacy curriculum. Three additional areas need to be addressed on a school-wide basis: authentic assessment, rubric design and use, and technology as a teaching tool not just for work processing.

#### **Mathematics**

In order to continue to work to implement a mathematics program that is rigorous, intentional, and more specifically aligned to state and local standards, it is necessary for the school to (a) increase the

specificity and frequency of curriculum monitoring and articulation vehicles in relation to mathematics; (b) outline long- and short-term mathematics-focus areas, and (c) put a priority on classroom-embedded professional development, especially through the use of the building-based mathematics coach.

To help teachers continue to progress in making the major instructional shift away from the traditional view of mathematics teaching and learning and reduce the disconnect between the written and implemented math curricula (a) the district should assign a full-time math coach to Eighteenth Avenue School so that an ongoing program of in-class professional development activities can be implemented which will enable teachers to see and experience mathematics teaching and learning within the framework of a balanced, standards-based mathematics program experience and (b) district supervisory staff must allocate more mandatory training time to helping all of the school's administrative and instructional stakeholders develop a (a) deep and broad understanding of the mathematics embedded in problem-based learning situations; (b) an up-to-date knowledge of how children learn mathematics; and (c) a rich fund of appropriate assessment and pedagogical strategies.

### **Learning Environment:**

The focus is on practices for improving discipline and removing barriers for the special education population, especially addressing the results of the busing of so many special needs students to this building.

### **Efficiency and Leadership:**

These recommendation focus on:

1. Further investigate the data and explore alternative program options/designs, for a specific population that presents major social, emotional, behavioral issues that interfere with their learning process, and that of other students.
2. Use documented, existing data regarding student lack of success in mathematics, as well as the need for intensive teacher training in this content area and pedagogical practices, to request and secure a full time mathematics coach.
3. Engage the entire staff in an understanding of the relationship between the developmental needs and tasks of elementary age youngsters, research based differentiated best instructional practices, and classroom management, in order to achieve the appropriate behaviors of all students that support positive classroom learning environments for teaching and learning.
4. Continue to develop and implement the carefully prepared professional development program necessary to support the induction of a large number of new and inexperienced staff, while helping all instructional staff to increase their capacity to deliver differentiated instruction, which is fundamental to the improved academic achievement of all students.

## **COMMENDATIONS**

### **LEADERSHIP**

The principal, a dedicated and talented professional, is commended for her leadership in moving her school forward for all students. She has embraced the CAPA process as an opportunity to gain insight into her school and how to make it even better. The school under her leadership has come to understand, develop, nurture and strengthen a collaborative, collegial working relationship among all of the members of the staff.

### **SCHOOL**

1. The school is commended for developing a comprehensive professional development plan and having all staff commit to implementing. Staff has an understanding and is developing their capacity to use data regarding student successes and needs for improvement as the basis for creating and implementing operational plans to meet the goals that have been set. The focus on differentiated instruction is appropriate for the needs identified and it is anticipated that as teachers are more skilled in its execution then all students, including gifted and talented, will benefit. It is further anticipated that this professional development plan will be sustained and expanded as teacher competency and students' need dictate.

2. The staff is commended for the commitment to move all of the special education students to a greater level of integration with the general education population, despite the fact that most of the special education students are bused to the school from other schools. Special education teachers are already integrated with general education teachers in all forums.

## **STANDARD 1 - CURRICULUM**

**The school implements a curriculum that is rigorous, intentional, and aligned to state and local standards.**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- Abbott report on instructional priorities (3-Year School Improvement Plan)
- 2003-04 School-Based Technology Plan Implementation Strategies/Activities
- Improving Student Achievement in Writing Manual
- Progressive Data Analysis of District, WSR, & School Assessments
- 2005-2006 Staff Orientation Notebook
- Student Achievement Curriculum and Instruction 2004-05
- School-Based Professional Development Plan
- 2005-06 Literacy Professional Development Manual
- Consistency Management Cooperative Discipline Manual
- PTC Logbook
- School and Community Perception Survey Results 2004-05
- Language Arts Literacy Assessment Manual
- 6+ 1 Trait Writing
- Documents of professional development days/release time
- Grade-level, SLC, faculty, and SMART Team meeting agendas, minutes/notes, and attendance rosters
- School-based and district staff member interviews
- School-based student interviews
- K-6 District Curriculum and Textbook Guides
- District policies
- Board approved math programs and related teacher and student materials
- Lesson plans
- Classroom visitations
- Class schedules
- Formal assessment data from the state and district (NJ-ASK for grades 3 and 4; SPA for grades 5-6)
- Informal classroom-based assessment data (unit test results; checklists; grades on mid-term and final exams)
- Sample administrative “walk-through” observation/feedback forms

## **STANDARD 1 INDICATORS**

**1.1 The school initiates and facilitates discussions regarding curriculum standards to ensure they are clearly articulated across all grade levels (P-12).**

### **FINDINGS:**

#### **Language Arts Literacy:**

There is evidence that horizontal and vertical articulation occurs weekly in Grade Level, and SMART (Specific/Strategic, Measureable, Attainable, Results Bound/Relevant, Timely) team, Pre K-K, 1-2, 3-

4, 5-6, meetings in the school. Through observations and participation in the meetings, the school initiates and facilitates discussions regarding curriculum and the alignment to the standards. With the recent adoption of a new literacy program, Harcourt Trophies, it is apparent, that the school has identified vital curriculum points, within and between grades, with the Literacy Coach facilitating to ensure that curricular connections exist and that this information and connection has been shared with teachers, SLC, and building administrators. The topics discussed at these meetings include but are not limited to content curriculum, the NJCCCS, guided reading, read-aloud, lesson plans, learning centers, running records, best practices, and content literature.

Special education teachers participate in grade level and SMART team meetings with general education teachers under the coordination of the general education Literacy Coach, when available. Within this setting they provide ongoing training and discussions with all teachers in the building regarding the implementation of the Balanced Literacy Program. However, this coach feels that she is limited in her knowledge regarding making adaptations of the curriculum to meet the needs of students whose needs extend beyond the scope of these programs. The district has hired a Special Education Resource Teacher/Coordinator for language arts/literacy, who periodically attends these meetings, and provides an expertise in making these adaptations.

### **Mathematics:**

Some school-based math articulation has occurred, but not to the frequency or depth that was demonstrated in the area of language arts literacy. Much of the articulation has focused on trying to identify student needs by examining (a) global and summative student achievement data, and/or (b) listings of specific skills that are not necessarily re-organized so that there is a clear alignment to the sub-clusters falling under each of five broad clusters designations in the mathematics section of the NJ CCCS. In addition, there was some evidence of articulation activities involving the examination of student problem-solving work samples.

Agendas and minutes from January 2005 to the present yield very little data relative to math articulation activities conducted at SLC (School Leadership Council) meetings or at meetings of its curriculum subcommittee. However, some math-related articulation (often facilitated by a district math Resource Teacher/Coordinator) has occurred at grade level meetings during this same time period. Since the 2005-06 school year marks the start of SMART team meetings for the school, plans for the scope and sequence of areas to be covered in mathematics are still in the process of being developed. In addition, each SMART team meeting includes teachers from two adjacent grade levels, thus, enabling math articulation to occur at the following key transition points: pre-k and K, grade 1-2, grades 3-4, and grades 5-6 (Note: Part of the 5-6 SMART team's responsibility will be to address the transition as students exit the *Everyday Mathematics* program at the end of grade 5 and begin the *Connected Mathematics* program in sixth grade).

**1.2 The school requires all students to take courses with sufficient academic rigor to prepare for post secondary education and provides specific links to life and career options.**

## **FINDINGS:**

### **Language Arts Literacy:**

Classroom observations show evidence of intellectual challenges. Documentation showed a curriculum being implemented with specific links to everyday life and possible careers, with opportunities for application of skills, knowledge, and processes, to prepare the students to be self-sufficient and productive citizens. Interviews and documents showed community members participating in Celebrity Reads, the annual Career Day, Project GRAD (Graduation), Community Partnerships, College Day, and an Inter-Disciplinary Career Project. Only the experienced special education teachers indicated that they are linking learning activities to the student's out of school lives.

### **Mathematics:**

Most plan books that were reviewed had the lesson's objective and the number of the overall NJ CCCS mathematics content cluster that was being addressed, but did not contain a notation relative to how the lesson would be structured. Although *Everyday Mathematics* and *Connected Mathematics* include opportunities for applying math to real-life problem-solving situations, most instruction observed during classroom visitations was delivered primarily in a teacher-directed mode to the entire class with students working, often individually, on a set of practice activities rather than engaged in inquiry-based, problem solving activities. As a result, it was difficult to ascertain if there is a concerted effort to integrate opportunities for the application of mathematics skills, knowledge, and processes with life skills.

Formalized connections designed to familiarize students with mathematics-related career options were not clearly delineated in the documentation provided (including the district's curriculum guide) or in interviews with staff.

There are several new special education staff members, who have received formal training in the *Everyday Math* program. They have limited experience in implementing the curriculum at this point in the school year. As a result, only the experienced teachers have indicated that they are linking learning activities to the student's out of school lives.

**1.3 The school leadership works with district supervisors and school faculty to systematically evaluate and adjust the curriculum based on the evidence of student achievement and to ensure that the district curriculum is effectively taught.**

## **FINDINGS:**

### **Language Arts Literacy:**

During grade level meetings, SMART teams, in-service sessions, and professional development meetings, school leadership, faculty, and district supervisors/administrators work to review and analyze student achievement. A review of lesson plans lists varied skills that allow a teacher to differentiate instruction in center activities. Student achievement data is analyzed through running records, monthly writing assessment, eight-week assessment standardized test scores (NJ ASK 3-4), and the curriculum is reviewed and revisions implemented as needed. However, there were few opportunities for authentic assessment noted in lesson plans.

Special education teachers attend GLM (Grade Level Meetings) and SMART teams where student achievement is addressed and specific areas of student needs are identified, based on state disaggregated test results and other building based assessments. However, because most of the special education students served within this building are assigned here from their home school, some of the relative literacy assessment data is not available for the school's articulation meetings (it's included with the students' home school's aggregated data). In addition, the GLM and SMART team meetings are organized by grade level clusters, which often cover fewer grade levels than some special education teachers serve. Also, literacy and math teachers are subdivided within these meetings, which forces special education teachers who teach all subjects to miss at least one subject collaboration at each meeting

### **Mathematics:**

Classroom visitations yielded evidence that a disconnect exists between the written and implemented curricula (i.e. most instruction observed was delivered primarily in a teacher-directed mode, with students working independently on practice activities rather than collaboratively engaged in inquiry-based, problem solving).

The principal and vice-principal conduct weekly walk-through visits in most classrooms and use a checklist with comments to provide feedback for teachers and to help them focus and reflect on generic best practices, but it does not necessarily provide an in-depth focus on the mathematical content and pedagogical specifics inherent in the lesson. Formal observations are also completed as mandated by code, but evidence was not presented relative to how many were done during math lessons. Because school leadership recognizes the need for ongoing, job-embedded, professional development, the district's Math Resource Teacher/Coordinators (RTCs) have been asked to facilitate curriculum articulation/monitoring activities at some grade level meetings. Since these RTCs have many schools to service, there is limited time for them to take the work a step further and provide in-classroom coaching support. A part-time math coach (three half-days per week) has been assigned to the school for the first time this year. Most of her time has been spent attending training sessions and helping the many new teachers. A long-term plan for the scope and sequence of her services have not been formalized as yet.

District math supervisory staff provides mandatory and voluntary professional development activities in centrally located sites. They also indicate awareness of gaps that exist between the district's adopted math programs and the NJ mathematics CCCS (ex. - the misalignment caused by the way discrete math is covered in *Everyday Mathematics*), but teachers and administrators in the building did not display an awareness of the gaps or of methods to remedy the situation.

Special education teachers also attend GLM and SMART team meetings. Since most of the special education students served within this building are assigned here from their home schools, some relevant math assessment data is not available for use at the meetings (it's included in the students' home school's disaggregated data collection). In addition, these meetings often cover fewer grade levels than some special education teachers serve. Also, literacy and math teachers are subdivided within the meetings, forcing special education teachers who teach all subjects to miss at least one subject's collaboration at many meetings.

**1.4 The school ensures access to a common academic core for all students including but not limited to special education and ELL students.**

**FINDINGS:**

**Language Arts Literacy:**

The curriculum, which is aligned to the NJCCCS, and the three-year operational plan indicate that teachers utilize the common core materials, Harcourt Trophies, for all students. The Harcourt Trophies curricula is designed to elicit higher order thinking and problem solving skills from all students at age and developmentally appropriate levels. The school offers a Grade 3-4 NJ ASK Academy, After School Youth Program, Project Grad Tutoring, Technology Club, Library Club, Book Club and the 25 Book Challenge also provides students with reading materials that are grade level appropriate and high interest.

The school provides opportunities for special education students to participate in activities that are integrated with general education students on an informal basis. Interviewed special education teachers indicate that this is a successful practice.

**Mathematics:**

The district's adopted math programs (*Everyday Mathematics* in grades K-5 and *Connected Mathematics* in grades 6-8) meet the U.S. Department of Education's standards for quality, research-based programs; they were designed to operate within a standards-based, balanced math framework; and include ample opportunities for the application of skills, knowledge, processes in real-life problem solving situations. Despite this, students were rarely seen engaging in problem-solving activities that require them to justify their own thinking and solution methods, use higher order thinking skills, or to listen to and learn from the thinking of other students.

Students receive 75 minutes of math instruction on a daily basis, but a review of class schedules indicates that some instructional time may be lost because passing time was not shown for periods scheduled before or after lunch or a special class (example – art).

Copies of the district's standards-based math curriculum have been distributed to all appropriate teachers and references to the overall mathematics clusters of the NJ CCCS were found in plan books that were reviewed. While some suggestions for differentiated instruction can be found in the *Everyday Mathematics* and *Connected Mathematics* materials, they were not available in the district's curriculum guides.

Nine of the 11 special education teachers serve students in self-contained classes, which are totally exclusionary (i.e., academic classes and specials are held in isolation without any exposure to typically developing peers). One special education teacher provides a combination of resource center replacement and in-class support and another teacher provides in-class support exclusively. These two inclusive classes serve only 12 of the 75 special education children in this school. All classes are required to implement the same curriculum. While the implemented curriculum maintains high expectations for all students, it does not always accommodate the needs of all special education students. Even though special education students receive supplemental materials and instruction, some students have needs that extend beyond the scope of the curriculum, even with adaptations. It must

also be noted that Eighteenth Avenue School is providing opportunities for special education students to participate in activities that are integrated with general education students on an informal basis and interviewed special education teachers indicate that this is a successful practice.

### **STANDARD 1 NEXT STEPS**

#### **Mathematics**

1. Clarify the role of the SLC and its curriculum sub-committee relative to mathematics curriculum articulation and monitoring as well as how it interfaces with the activities/findings of grade-level and Smart team meetings. (1.1)

#### **District**

1. Identify the scope and sequence of gaps existing between the district's adopted math programs (i.e., *Everyday Mathematics and Connected Mathematics*) and the mathematics section of the NJ CCCS and provide school staff with background information and guidance relative to addressing the situation. (1.3)

### **STANDARD 1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Language Arts Literacy**

1. Continue to train the staff in the creation of non-traditional multiple assessments such as authentic and project-based activities. (1.2)
2. Continue to implement the School Based Professional Development Plan by providing high quality staff development in Language Arts Literacy that allows for the collaborative development of authentic and performance based assessment. (1.2)
3. Because 50% of the school's staff is non-tenured and there has been a 24% staff turnover rate, additional training is needed in Harcourt Trophies in order to gauge instruction for student achievement and effective implementation of the program. (1.1)

#### **Mathematics**

1. Continue to work collaboratively to systematize, refine, and increase the depth and frequency of school-based mathematics articulation and curriculum monitoring vehicles/activities to more effectively inform instruction and reduce the disconnect between the written and implemented mathematics curricula. (1.1) (1.2) (1.3) (1.4)

#### **Special Education**

1. Consider increasing the frequency of the integration of self contained special education and general education students, as an administrative expectation, in the areas of science and social studies. (1.4)

#### **District**

1. Continue to provide ongoing technical assistance to Eighteenth Avenue School (through the mathematics supervisory and resource staff) in order to increase the teachers and administrators ability to monitor the implemented mathematics curriculum with more specificity so that instruction is more effectively informed and can be more effectively adjusted to meet students'

- group/individual needs and reduce the disconnect between the written and implemented mathematics curricula. (1.1) (1.3)
2. Assign a full-time math coach to Eighteenth Avenue School, supported by an ongoing and systematic program of technical assistance, to help reduce the disconnect between the written and implemented mathematics curricula (a) by bringing best practices for standards-based, balanced mathematics instruction to teachers through in-class coaching support and (b) by acting as a facilitator during school-based horizontal and vertical math curriculum articulation activities. (1.1) (1.2) (1.3) (1.4)
  3. District test coordinators should re-distribute individual student NJ-ASK test data to the schools that the special education students attend. (1.3)

## **STANDARD 2 – ASSESSMENT – EVALUATION**

**Multiple evaluation and assessment strategies are used to continuously monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work.**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- Abbott report on instructional priorities (3-Year School Improvement Plan)
- 2003-04 School-Based Technology Plan Implementation Strategies/Activities
- Improving Student Achievement in Writing Manual
- Progressive Data Analysis of District, WSR, & School Assessments
- 2005-2006 Staff Orientation Notebook
- Student Achievement Curriculum and Instruction 2004-05
- School-Based Professional Development Plan
- 2005-06 Literacy Professional Development Manual
- Consistency Management Cooperative Discipline Manual
- PTC Logbook
- School and Community Perception Survey Results 2004-05
- Language Arts Literacy Assessment Manual
- 6+ 1 Trait Writing
- District grade-level, mathematics curriculum guides (K-6)
- Documents of professional development days/release time
- Grade-level, SLC, faculty, and Smart Team meeting agendas, minutes/notes, and attendance rosters
- School-based and district staff member interviews
- School-based student interviews
- K-6 District Curriculum and Textbook Guides
- District policies
- Board approved math programs and related teacher and student materials
- Lesson plans
- Classroom visitations
- Class schedules
- Formal assessment data from the state and district (NJ-ASK for grades 3 and 4; SPA for grades 5-6)

- Informal classroom-based assessment data (unit test results; checklists; grades on mid-term and final exams)
- Sample administrative “walk-through” observation/feedback forms
- Documents of professional development days/release time
- Board approved math and literacy textbook programs and related teacher and student materials
- Informal classroom-based assessment data (unit test results; checklists; grades on mid-term and final exams)

## **STANDARD 2 INDICATORS**

### **2.1 The school leadership and faculty ensure that multiple assessments are frequent, rigorous, aligned with NJ CCCS, used to gauge student learning, and adjust teaching to individual needs.**

#### **Language Arts Literacy**

Multiple forms of assessment data, which are aligned with the NJ CCCS, are used to evaluate student performance. Assessments are frequent and provide students with opportunities to demonstrate performance. Teachers are using the Harcourt Trophies tests for assessment as well as Running Records, NJ Holistic Scoring Rubric for writing, and the Writing Assessment Wall for the purpose of tracking individual students’ writing progress over the school year. There is evidence that this process will be implemented with Progressive Word Walls as display areas for writing papers. Very few assessments are teacher created. The literacy coach meets with staff to review data, gauge student learning, and adjust teaching to improve student performance. Building administration has put into place a procedure to expose students to the various types of writing needed to be successful on state assessments. Writing portfolios are required and are implemented as evidenced through lesson plans and classroom observation.

Some of the special education staff were not able to articulate how to match a student’s preferred learning style and their preferred type of intelligence with how they demonstrate their learning. Some teachers, however, are offering students a choice in how to demonstrate that learning, in terms of writing, drawing, projects, rubrics, checklists, etc. Many teachers are using curricular assessment, building prescribed assessments, writing samples, etc. to determine student needs.

#### **Mathematics**

Assessment-related topics have been on the agenda of some grade-level meetings and the intent is to make it a part of future SMART team meetings. A variety of math assessments are used at the school and consists mainly of (a) global and summative achievement data (ex. - overall cluster performance scores from state assessments; mid-term/final exam grades) and (b) listings of specific skills (i.e., those found on student/class profile sheets that were generated from math unit tests/teacher checklists and those generated from NJ-ASK practice tests and/or the Standards Proficiency Assessment). Because much of this data is not specific or re-organized to show a clear alignment to the sub-clusters under each of five broad clusters designations in the math section of the NJ CCCS, it was difficult to ascertain the degree to which it was used to inform and revise instruction. Some student work samples resulting from problem-solving tasks were reviewed, but it was difficult to ascertain how frequently (beyond once a month) these types of assessment tasks were given. Although all of the district’s math curriculum guides contain a rubric to assess open-ended problems, there were no specific assessment suggestions aligned to the NJ CCCS overall clusters and/or sub-clusters for mathematics.

Some of the special education staff were not able to articulate how to match a student's preferred learning style and their preferred type of intelligence with how they demonstrate their learning. Some teachers, however, are offering students a choice in how to demonstrate that learning, in terms of writing, drawing, projects, rubrics, checklists, etc. Many teachers are using curricular assessment, building prescribed assessments, writing samples, etc. to determine student needs.

**2.2 Teacher-designed assessment tasks are intentionally standards-based, rigorous and authentic and aligned with NJ CCCS subject matter.**

**FINDINGS:**

**Language Arts Literacy**

Common planning time in grade level and SMART team meetings is provided. However based on interviews, classroom observations, and meeting agendas, not all assessments are authentic and students are provided with limited opportunities for choice in the type and or form of assessments being used. During an interview with the literacy coach, it was noted that teachers rarely collaborate in the design of authentic assessment tasks.

Most special education teachers were not knowledgeable about authentic assessment and did not routinely use it as a means of assessing students. They lack training in this area. Teachers have not collaborated in the design authentic assessment tasks. They do implement the building curriculum assessments, Special education teachers are typically using traditional assessments that primarily come from the curriculum. Some teachers use assessment tasks that require demonstrations of what students know and are able to do, however this is not done consistently or by all teachers.

**Mathematics**

It was difficult to ascertain if authentic assessment tasks are intentionally incorporated into daily lessons as most plan books reviewed did not contain assessment notations relative to the lesson being taught. Based on the evidence presented, it appears that most tasks used for assessment draw heavily on resources provided by the *Everyday Mathematics* and *Connected Mathematics* programs as well as those found in commercial NJ-ASK test preparation books. Monthly problem-solving tasks were administered and some of the samples reviewed appear to require students to use inquiry, reasoning, and to explain their findings, but no indication was given as to how frequently students were given these types of assessment tasks. In addition, it was difficult to ascertain if the unit checklists were completed while students were working on appropriate skill-based tasks or as a summative document after administration of the unit tests or if students were provided any choice in forms of assessment they were asked to complete.

Most special education teachers were not knowledgeable about authentic assessment and did not routinely use it as a means of assessing students. They lack training in this area. Teachers have not collaborated in the design of authentic assessment tasks. They do implement the building curriculum assessments. Special education teachers are typically using traditional assessments that primarily come from the curriculum. Some teachers use assessment tasks that require demonstrations of what students know and are able to do, however this is not done consistently or by all teachers.

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

**FINDINGS:**

**Language Arts Literacy**

Although there is a dedicated effort by teachers to efficiently organize and manage time for learning, only some students can articulate what they should know, how they are graded, and what needs to be demonstrated to be successful. Classroom observations, lesson plans, agendas from meetings, and interviews showed that teachers were using formal letter and numerical grades to indicate proficiency in various content areas. The NJ Holistic Scoring Rubric and the 6 + 1 Trait Writing rubric were being used in student writing. Rubrics were posted in few classrooms. Most displayed student papers focused on a numerical score without attention to the criteria that warrants the score. There was little evidence of student centered, student created rubrics made in collaboration with the classroom teacher. In interviews, teachers indicated a need to have professional development in the design and implementation of rubrics.

**Mathematics**

Some classrooms had written objectives displayed for students to see and verbal reference by the teacher to the lesson's objective(s) was often observed during classroom visitations. It is also interesting to note that some classroom and hallway displays of student work were accompanied by a student objective. Generic rubrics for open-ended math problems were included in each grade level curriculum guide and sometimes posted in classrooms or hallways with student work.

During most classroom visitations, students were expected to respond to closed-ended questions generated by the teacher and were not asked to articulate what they thought they needed to know/be able to do mathematically during the lesson, to describe characteristics or quality work, or reflect upon their own performances and/or share their thinking with teachers/peers.

**2.4 Disaggregated test scores are used by the district and school to identify curriculum gaps and adjust instructional practice, as needed, for all students and sub-groups.**

**FINDINGS:**

**Language Arts Literacy**

The school uses the district provided assessment data. The district in concert with the building administration, and staff, provides analysis to identify curriculum gaps for instructional realignment. Grade Level and SMART team meetings are scheduled to analyze and address these concerns at the school level. Evidence supported by classroom observations, teacher and district interviews indicate that the data is used effectively. Disaggregation and ongoing school level assessment is evident in teacher lesson plans and classroom practices. School staff members also use the results of data analysis for communication purposes. As a result of the analysis, gaps were identified and improvement plans were developed and are being implemented.

State test data is sent to home schools, and is only available for those special education children whose home school is Eighteenth Avenue.

### **Mathematics**

Some disaggregated data is reviewed by administrative and teaching staff, but due to the constraints discussed in indicator 2.1, but beyond noting that females outperformed males during most years, there is little this data can do to inform/adjust daily instruction (for example, an overall score on disaggregated data from the NJ-ASK in the “Numbers and Numerical Operations” cluster does not give sufficient information relative to a students’ individual or group conceptual/procedural knowledge of fractions). In addition, most of the special education pupils do not reside in this school’s vicinity; therefore, State test data is sent to home schools and is only available for the few special education children attending Eighteenth Avenue who live in the school’s attendance area.

## **STANDARD 2 NEXT STEPS**

### **Language Arts Literacy**

1. Building administration should review samples of student work such as journals and writing portfolios to ensure that teachers are consistently using rubrics and providing students with meaningful feedback. Teachers should be in-serviced on the use of graphic organizers, rubric design. (2.1) (2.3)

### **Mathematics**

1. To help teachers focus on ongoing assessment, a policy of placing a notation in teacher’s plan books related to the assessment strategies specific to each mathematics lesson should be established and monitored by the school administration. (2.2)
2. During daily mathematics lessons, incorporate more opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding of and reflect upon expectations for what they are expected to know and be able to do. (2.3)

## **STANDARD 2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Language Arts Literacy**

1. When continuing to develop teacher competency through grade level meetings, focus on the development and implementation of teacher-created assessments, along with student work, to allow for feedback on the quality of the assessments and their alignment to the NJCCCS. (2.1)
2. School leadership should collaborate with district personnel to ensure that professional development opportunities address the need to expand and deepen the use of rubrics and graphic organizers. (2.3)
3. Charge a small group to investigate and propose to the SLC an organized school process for students to self-evaluate and reflect on their learning. Implement this process once appropriate preparation has been made. (2.3)

## **Mathematics**

1. Refine and expand the collection/organization, collaboration, and analysis of assessment data to include multiple measures along the continuum from traditional to authentic assessments that (a) measure formative as well as summative student growth and (b) contain information specific enough to inform/adjust instruction relative to the sub-clusters within each overall cluster on the NJ CCCS in mathematics, and (c) offer students a choice in forms of assessment.  
(2.1) (2.2) (2.4)

## **District**

Continue to provide ongoing technical assistance (through the mathematics supervisory and resource staff) in order to increase the proficiency of the Eighteenth Avenue School's teachers and administrators with regard to collecting and analyzing multiple assessment measures along the continuum from traditional to authentic assessments that (a) measure formative as well as summative student growth and (b) contain information specific enough to help inform/adjust instruction relative to the sub-clusters within each overall cluster on the NJCCCS in mathematics. (2.1) (2.2) (2.3) (2.4)

## **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.

### **EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- Abbott report on instructional priorities (3-Year School Improvement Plan)
- 2003-04 School-Based Technology Plan Implementation Strategies/Activities
- Improving Student Achievement in Writing Manual
- Progressive Data Analysis of District, WSR, & School Assessments
- 2005-2006 Staff Orientation Notebook
- Student Achievement Curriculum and Instruction 2004-05
- School-Based Professional Development Plan
- 2005-06 Literacy Professional Development Manual
- Consistency Management Cooperative Discipline Manual
- PTC Logbook
- School and Community Perception Survey Results 2004-05
- Language Arts Literacy Assessment Manual
- 6+ 1 Trait Writing
- District grade-level, mathematics curriculum guides (K-6)
- Documents of professional development days/release time
- Grade-level, SLC, faculty, and Smart Team meeting agendas, minutes/notes, and attendance rosters
- School-based and district staff member interviews
- School-based student interviews
- K-6 District Curriculum and Textbook Guides
- District policies
- Board approved math programs and related teacher and student materials
- Lesson plans

- Classroom visitations
- Class schedules
- Formal assessment data from the state and district (NJ-ASK for grades 3 and 4; SPA for grades 5-6)
- Informal classroom-based assessment data (unit test results; checklists; grades on mid-term and final exams)
- Sample administrative “walk-through” observation/feedback forms
- Documents of professional development days/release time
- Board approved math and literacy textbook programs and related teacher and student materials
- Informal classroom-based assessment data (unit test results; checklists; grades on mid-term and final exams)

### **STANDARD 3 INDICATORS**

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

##### **FINDINGS:**

##### **Language Arts Literacy**

The school leadership has established a 100 minute block for the balanced literacy program which is standards-based and aligned with the NJ CCCS. The school’s literacy curriculum is designed to engage students and provide for varied instructional strategies. Classroom visitations and interviews with staff and students showed that instruction included various learning styles, instructional practices, multiple intelligences, and higher order thinking skills.

In observed self-contained special education classes instruction was conducted in whole group format. All students received the same instruction at the same time in the same manner. There was little evidence of differentiation or any adjustment for learning styles or types of intelligences in observed self-contained classes. Varied instructional strategies and effective classroom management were observed in some classes, however there were other classes where instructional strategies were less effective and there were behavior concerns.

##### **Mathematics**

Although some differentiated instructional options are available in the curricular programs being used, they were not included in the district’s curriculum guides. Plan books that were reviewed did not contain references to accommodations for various learning styles/multiple intelligences the use of manipulatives was not noted in the plan books reviewed or observed in use by students in most of the classrooms visited (although each classroom was outfitted with a variety of manipulatives). There is evidence that the school’s administration has attempted to address this issues as some of the walk-through checklist feedback forms that were reviewed contained notations relative to differentiating instruction in the lesson that was observed.

Classroom visitations, documentation that was presented, and interviews with supervisory and teaching staff indicates that most teachers have not yet reached a comfort level in terms of the major instructional shift that has to be made when teaching mathematics through the delivery of a standards-

based mathematics curricula (this includes staff new to the school this year as well as other staff members). Instruction is still more teacher than child-centered and presented predominantly in a whole-group format with students operating for most of the instructional time as collections of individuals (even where students' desks were placed in groupings) problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills were not elicited during most of the classroom observation time available and a reference to them was not found in the plan books that were reviewed (since most plan books did not have notations relative to the procedures that would be used to implement the lesson's objectives).

In observed self-contained special education classes instruction was conducted in whole group format. All students received the same instruction at the same time in the same manner. There was little evidence of differentiation or any adjustment for learning styles or types of intelligences in observed self-contained classes. Varied instructional strategies and effective classroom management were observed in some classes, however there were other classes where instructional strategies were less effective and there were behavior concerns.

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

#### **FINDINGS:**

##### **Language Arts Literacy**

The Balanced Literacy curriculum and instructional strategies are aligned with the district, school, and state goals. The teachers have participated in professional development training to promote the utilization of techniques and strategies that will prepare students for the State and local assessments. The school will administer a mock assessment, the contents of which mirrors the state and local assessments. The results will be analyzed and a priority skills checklist developed. The teachers will use this information to target language arts literacy instruction.

Instructional strategies and activities in special education instructional settings are aligned with the school curriculum, which is based on the NJ CCCS. Although not observed, teachers indicated that they implement learning activities that require students to complete assessments similar to state assessments to the extent that they are included in the curriculum.

##### **Mathematics**

As noted in standard 2 (above), assessment data that is available is not specific enough or organized in a manner that provides a clear alignment to the sub-clusters in the mathematics area of the NJ CCCS. As a result, it is difficult to ascertain how effectively they can be used to determine curriculum gaps and related instructional implications. Interviews with supervisory and school staff indicated that commercial materials containing activities similar to the NJ-ASK items are available and will be used as a regular part of instruction in grades 3 and 4 as the school year proceeds. This is supplemented by an after-school program geared to the NJ-ASK for grades 1-4.

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

#### **FINDINGS:**

##### **Language Arts Literacy**

Interviews revealed that school leadership monitors classroom instruction and consistently provides proper feedback to teachers to assist them in their effort to modify instruction to meet the needs of a diverse population. There was evidence in interviews and classroom visitations that activities to accommodate the learning needs and learning styles of students were intentionally planned. School leadership monitors instruction by conducting informal observations, reviewing lesson plans, reviewing the data collection, formal evaluations, and meeting with individual teachers and the Literacy Coach. The grade level and SMART team meetings and other in-service activities are used to provide teachers with training to ensure that instructional practices are intentionally planned to meet the needs of the students. Students were observed participating in various learning style activities such as center activities, cooperative learning groups, and sustained silent reading.

Some observed special education classes were conducted as whole groups with little indication of differentiation. Some teachers stated during interviews that they present material across ability levels on a conceptual level, but implement different activities and expect different results from those students. Interviewed teachers were somewhat aware of multiple intelligences and learning styles and did not show evidence nor indicate that they were being intentionally accommodated.

##### **Mathematics**

During most classroom visitations, little or no differentiation of instruction was demonstrated and plan books reviewed did not contain notations relative to accommodating various learning styles or multiple intelligences. Most of the instruction viewed did not require the use of higher-order thinking, the justification of solution strategies, or differentiated activities. In order to begin to address this, school administrators conduct frequent classroom walk-throughs and present teachers with a feedback sheet containing a checklist designed to foster generic best practices rather than math-specific best-practices.

Some observed special education classes were conducted as whole groups with little indication of differentiation. Some teachers stated during interviews that they present material across ability levels on a conceptual level, but implement different activities and expect different results from those students. Interviewed teachers were somewhat aware of multiple intelligences and learning styles and did not show evidence nor indicate that they were being intentionally accommodated.

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

#### **FINDINGS:**

##### **Language Arts Literacy**

School leadership makes an intentional effort to recruit and retain a diverse staff that are certificated and meet the NCLB Standard. All teachers participate in professional development programs to

update their content knowledge and professional practices to motivate students to high levels of learning. The teacher turnover rate and the percentage of non-tenured teachers causes a disconnect in the ability to reach the high levels of teaching. However, documentation indicates that the building administration, the literacy coach, the District Literacy consultants, provide professional development activities to strengthen instructional strategies and classroom management. Teachers consistently demonstrate an eagerness to challenge and motivate students and for them to be successful in all areas not only on the State assessment.

New special education teachers have not received formal training in implementing the Balanced Literacy Program at this time. Ongoing support will be provided through SMART team meetings, the Literacy Coaches and Special Education Resource Teacher.

### **Mathematics**

Despite the fact that the school has several new teachers, evidence exists that most teachers have not reached a comfort level in terms of the major instructional shift needed to deliver a balanced, standards-based mathematics curriculum. This shift requires one to move away from the traditional specific skills and procedures view of mathematics teaching and learning to a view that sees mathematics as a collaborative problem-solving process that explores relationships between concepts, facts, skills, and a specialized symbolic language interwoven with ongoing mathematical reasoning, thinking, and communication to all parties involved. It represents a drastic difference from the way teachers were taught mathematics as well as the way they were trained to teach it. As a result, classroom visitations and interviews with staff reveal that--

- a. most instruction is still more teacher than child-centered and focuses on specific skill attainment as opposed to helping pupils construct an understanding of mathematics as an interconnected set of ideas
- b. students operate primarily as a collection of individuals
- c. most of the instructional time is used to practice skills rather than engage in problem-based learning in real-life contexts that engage students in collaborative problem-solving requiring the use of higher-order thinking and reasoning skills.

Both school leadership and the district's math supervisory staff recognize the need for ongoing, job-focused, professional development in order to help reduce the disconnect between the implemented and written curricula. They also indicated that they know that training activities must focus on helping the various stakeholders develop a (a) deep and broad understanding of the mathematics embedded in problem-based learning situations; (b) an up-to-date knowledge of how children learn mathematics; and (c) a rich fund of appropriate assessment and pedagogical strategies.

School-based activities in this regard include the implementation of weekly walk-through visits by the school administrators followed by a feedback sheet designed to foster teacher reflection; use of district math RTCs to facilitate some of the grade level, math articulation meetings, and establishment of SMART teams where teachers are asked to take the lead in collaborative learning and work activities. They have also scheduled teachers for both mandatory district-wide math inservice activities and encouraged them to seek out and enroll in training activities conducted beyond the regular work week/year. Unfortunately, opportunities to make the staff development process more classroom-embedded have been limited to this point because there was no one focusing entirely on math assigned to the building on a regular basis. Although the school has been given a part-time math coach (i.e., for

three half-days a week) for the first time this year, plans for the scope and sequence of her services have not been formalized as yet because her time has been spent attending training sessions and helping the many new teachers assigned to the school.

Although district mathematics supervisory indicated awareness of some of the gaps that exist between the district's adopted math programs and the NJ CCCS in mathematics (such as the misalignment caused by the coverage of discrete math in *Everyday Mathematics*), teachers and administrators in the building did not display a clear awareness of the gaps or of methods to remedy the situation.

All special education teachers have participated in a three-day workshop on implementing the *Everyday Math* program. Some members of the special education staff have participated in training in math content knowledge, which appears to be an area of concern, as indicated in observations and interviews.

### **3.5 There is evidence that teachers incorporate the use of technology in their classrooms.**

#### **FINDINGS:**

##### **Language Arts Literacy**

There is limited evidence that teachers incorporate technology in their instructional programs. While each classroom has two to three computers, classroom visitation and lesson plans did not indicate technology being infused into instruction. A technology coordinator was hired this year and is in the process implementing professional development activities for the staff. There are two computer labs in the school and both have internet access. There is also internet access in the classrooms of Grades 4-6. In classroom visitations, some teachers were using technology as a center activity. The district has recently implemented the use of Kidspiration, a K-5 program, to assist in developing literacy and comprehension skills, and a new program by McGraw Hill, Breakthrough to Literacy, will be implemented to help kindergarten students meet technology benchmarks in literature.

Although each special education classroom has two to three computers, there was little evidence that they are an integral component of the instructional program. Several interviewed teachers stated that they do have access to the computer lab on a once per week assigned basis. They may also use the computer lab on sign up basis during unassigned periods. All teachers have been provided educational software, either on their stand-alone computer or on the network, where available. Currently, there is limited availability of the Internet. All teachers expressed confidence in the technology coordinator to provide instructional and equipment assistance when needed.

##### **Mathematics**

Calculators were available in many of the classrooms that were visited and were observed in use in some. Many classrooms had overhead projectors, but few were used during classroom visitations. The computer lab is available for classroom use, but a determination as to how this was specifically connected to the infusion of computer technology in mathematics instruction could not be ascertained based on the evidence presented. Although most classrooms have at least two computers, internet access is not available throughout the school. Specific math-related technology is currently addressed through a resource list of web sites provided by the district.

Although each special education classroom has two to three computers, there was little evidence that they are integral components of the instructional program. Several interviewed teachers stated that they do have access to the computer lab on a once a week assigned basis and may also use the lab on sign up basis during its unassigned periods. All teachers have been provided educational software, either on their stand-alone computer or on the network, where available. Currently, there is limited availability of the Internet. All teachers expressed confidence in the technology coordinator to provide instructional and equipment assistance when needed.

### **3.6 The school leadership ensures that instructional resources are sufficient and that all instructional materials are culturally responsive and aligned to the curriculum.**

#### **FINDINGS:**

##### **Language Arts Literacy**

From the classroom visitations and interviews with teachers and parents, the resources provided from the district and school are sufficient to effectively implement the balanced literacy curriculum. Classroom visitations revealed that all classroom libraries have at least 200 titles and are aligned to the NJ CCCS. Evidence also indicated that the staff utilizes resources sufficiently and effectively in the delivery of instruction/curriculum. The library is currently under construction but the librarian goes into classrooms and reads to students. The school participates in the 25 Book Challenge which allows students the opportunity to self-select books based on their individual reading levels and personal interests.

For special education students, there is a sufficient variety of printed instructional material to support the literacy curriculum. There is also a sufficient variety of printed material to supplement the curriculum up to about two years below grade level. However, there are some students who have a language-based disability, have gaps in their decoding, lack fluency, are poor spellers or have been unsuccessful with other reading programs who require a supplemental program. Teachers at the K-2 level have received such training. There is a recognized need to provide this training at upper grade levels. Teachers, especially new teachers, have been receiving support through the Special Needs Literacy Coach. The Special Education Resource Teacher serves 16 schools and is able to provide limited classroom assistance, but is able to provide the opportunity for extensive training, through workshops, to special education staff. In most cases, however, this is on a voluntary basis.

##### **Mathematics**

Each mathematics classroom is outfitted with textbooks and supplementary print resources from the *Everyday Mathematics* and *Connected Mathematics* programs. Because of the variety of components and options available, teachers and administrators report that the learning curve for managing the program (especially in the case of *Everyday Mathematics*) takes time. Many teachers also indicated that the games found in the *Everyday Mathematics* program are easily adaptable for use in their math learning centers. Third and fourth grade classrooms also use test-preparation booklets containing items similar in format to those found on the NJ-ASK. Manipulatives needed in relation to the mathematics content that will be covered were seen in almost all classrooms, but few were observed in use during lessons. Because of the nature of mathematics, many manipulatives used in hands-on experiences tend to be generic (rather than culturally responsive) so that attention can be focused on concept formation.

As noted in the findings for indicator 3.5 (above), technology in the form of calculators, overhead projectors, and a minimum of 2 computers is available in many classrooms. However, the specific application of technology infusion in the mathematics instructional program has not been clearly delineated as yet.

Special education teachers, especially new teachers, have been receiving support through the Special Education Resource Teacher/coordinator. Unfortunately, this teacher serves several schools along with a colleague and is able to provide limited classroom assistance, but is able to provide the opportunity for training, through workshops, to special education staff. In most cases, however, this is on a voluntary basis. Greater levels of classroom assistance would require additional Special Education Resource Teachers.

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

#### **FINDINGS:**

##### **Language Arts Literacy**

The teachers work with the building administration, and the literacy facilitators to discuss and review student work and instructional strategies. The grade level and SMART team meetings allow teachers to use this information to guide their instruction. The literacy coach provides assistance to the teachers through in class support, demonstration lessons and making arrangements for classroom visitations. Classroom visitations, interviews, and a review of student work on display in classrooms, indicated that the use of rubrics was limited and not across content area. Also the samples indicated that prompts were teacher selected, which does not allow for student choice.

Special education teachers are in the initial stages of being trained to collaboratively analyze student work in order to identify individual student strength and to focus on specific areas of instruction. Although special education teachers participate in the school and district literacy training activities, there was little evidence to show if they meet regularly enough with the Special Education Resource Teacher in regard to examining a broader range of instructional options designed to address the literacy learning needs of special education students.

##### **Mathematics**

Monthly problem-solving tasks are given to all students and teachers meet to examine the work that is produced. A district resource teacher/coordinator is often available at grade-level meetings to help facilitate the process, but documentation and interviews did not yield specifics as to how group as well as individual strengths and needs are identified and how the information is used to make instructional decisions. School leadership reports that this is an area that is in its initial stages and can be refined and expanded in Smart team and grade-level meetings.

Special education teachers are in the initial stages of being trained to collaboratively analyze student work in order to identify individual student strength and to focus on specific areas of instruction.

### **3.8 There is evidence that homework is frequent and monitored and tied to instructional practice.**

#### **FINDINGS:**

##### **Language Arts Literacy**

The school and district homework policy is adhered to by grade level in addition to a twenty minute reading each night. Homework is assigned as an extension of classroom instruction. Students and parents can articulate the relationship between class work and the homework assignment. Students also stated that homework is checked regularly. Teachers' lesson plans also indicated that the homework policy is implemented by the teachers.

All special education teachers assign homework on a daily basis and use it as a means to inform instruction and to assess student learning. However, homework is inconsistently completed and signed by parents, when requested.

##### **Mathematics**

In many mathematics classes, homework assignments were posted for student reference, but no lesson-based homework assignments were noted in the plan books that were reviewed. Some support is given to help student with their homework through after-school activities and mentoring programs.

All special education teachers assign homework on a daily basis and use it as a means to inform instruction and to assess student learning. However, homework is inconsistently completed and signed by parents, when requested.

#### **STANDARD 3 NEXT STEPS**

##### **Mathematics**

1. Explore resources for differentiated instruction during grade level and SMART team meetings and prepare a listing of possible options for teacher reference and use as part of their instructional planning activities. (3.3)

#### **STANDARD 3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **Language Arts Literacy**

1. The building administration and district supervisors must focus formal and informal observations on the use of varied instructional practices. Teachers must then be held accountable for putting into practice the strategies and techniques learned during professional development training sessions.(3.4) (3.7)
2. District and school leadership should continue to provide professional development for teachers to vary instructional strategies to include best practices such as classroom management, multiple intelligences, rubrics and higher order thinking skills. (3.4) (3.7)
3. School administration should develop and implement an intentional, focused, and rigorous plan implementing and monitoring the classroom use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning, across grade levels and content areas. Teachers should be required to have evidence

of the infusion of technology as a tool, not just for word processing, in their instruction in their lesson plan books. Special emphasis for technology based staff development should be infused into the professional development planned for 2005-2006. (3.5)

4. Building administration should require all teachers to use technology for instruction and independent student work. (3.5)

### **Mathematics**

1. To help teachers continue to progress in making the major instructional shift away from the traditional view of learning mathematics teaching and learning, focus on providing more in-class professional development activities (especially through the services the school's math coach) that will enable teachers see and experience mathematics teaching and learning within the framework of a balanced, standards-based mathematics program (3.1) (3.2) (3.3) (3.4) (3.7)

### **Special Education**

1. Investigate providing a supplemental reading program for those students in grades 3 through 6 who have a language-based disability, have gaps in their decoding, lack fluency, are poor spellers or have been unsuccessful with other reading programs. (3.6)
2. Greater in class support must be provided to special education teachers, especially new teachers, by the Special Education Resource Teacher. Additional Special Education Resource Teachers should be provided. This would allow for greater follow-up to the SMART meetings in terms of providing a broader range of curriculum implementation, instruction and assessment options could be explored. (3.6, 3.7)
3. Investigate developing a new teacher orientation that takes place over several days that includes and emphasizes strategies in classroom management, behavior management and the fundamentals of pedagogy and questioning techniques. Conduct at least quarterly after school follow-up meetings to discuss other areas and areas for which teachers have concerns. In addition, the following areas that are referenced in the CAPA descriptors, and correlate with the instructional needs of students and the professional needs of some staff members, should be considered for inclusion in the PIPs of some special education teachers, and most new teachers, as deemed appropriate, by administration and staff member.(3.1)
  - a. Learning Styles (3.1, 3.3)
  - b. Multiple Intelligences (3.1, 3.3)
  - c. Authentic Assessment (2.2)
  - d. Differentiation (3.3)
  - e. Math Content (3.4)
  - f. Supplemental Reading Programs (grades 3 – 6) (1.4)

### **District**

Continue to provide ongoing technical assistance (through the mathematics supervisory and resource staff) and expand the number of mandatory content-related professional development workshops for all stakeholders so that they can gain a deeper understanding of the mathematical ideas and connections embedded in the curriculum as well as an understanding of how children learn math, thereby enabling them to more effectively implement best practices for mathematics instruction. (3.1) (3.3) (3.4) (3.7)

## **STANDARD 4 – SCHOOL CULTURE**

**The school functions as an effective learning community and supports a climate conducive to performance excellence.**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- Teacher, student, support staff and administrator interviews
- Disaggregated data
- School climate surveys
- Review of three-year operational plan
- Principal PowerPoint presentation
- Classroom and hallway observations

## **STANDARD 4 INDICATORS**

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

### **FINDINGS:**

All of the individuals interviewed state they feel safe in the school. A referral system has been established by the PRC committee for students experiencing behavioral issues. School leadership supports the CMCD program which can be beneficial for classroom management and procedures, however, implementation of these procedures is not consistent.

In 2004/2005, the school averaged approximately 435 tardy occurrences per month. Staff members and students also described incidents of bullying. Teachers and students stated that they are concerned with classroom disruptions due to student behavioral problems. Although the school implements the CMCD program, staff member were unable to articulate the presence of a protocol or procedure that ensures minimal classroom disruptions. The physical structure is also a concern, a deteriorating roof leaks constantly in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors. The gym and student recreational area are also prone to water leaks. An overall observation of the facility indicated that the building, in spite of its physical condition, was extraordinarily clean.

**4.2 School leadership, teachers, staff members, parents, the school community as well as students themselves hold high expectations for all students academically and behaviorally and care about students and inspire their best efforts as evidenced in their interactions, attitudes and instructional practice.**

### **FINDINGS:**

School leadership expressed a commitment to high academic expectations for all students. Students state that teachers have high expectations and they receive homework and are encouraged to do better. Some students are also assigned a mentor and participate in the “Because I Care” program (sponsored by Anheuser Busch) or the school mentoring program (TLC). In many instances, staff and students alluded to classroom behavior of a few students having impact on instruction. Classroom rules are agreed upon by all students in accordance with the CMCD program. A peer mediation program was

available to the students last year, but is not presently meeting. The school does not have specific student code of conduct that is enforced in all classrooms. The school has a team of social services professionals that include a whole school reform social worker, guidance counselor and a crisis intervention teacher.

A review of student work revealed that rubrics and comments on writing samples are inconsistent. Several bulletin boards in the hallway had quality student work, the NJ CCCS, and a rubric that explained the grade. In some instances, student work in the hallways did not display quality work or explain the reason for the grade on the paper.

#### **4.3 School leadership and teachers accept responsibility for student success/failure.**

##### **FINDINGS:**

Weekly SMART meetings and grade level meetings include time for teachers to reflect upon their instructional practices and their impact on student performance. SMART team meetings, currently, are focused on disaggregated data and its impact on student achievement and pedagogy. However, there is not yet a procedure in place for student input on teaching practice.

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

##### **FINDINGS:**

There are multiple systems in place for rewarding good behavior and academic achievement (school bulletin boards, super honor roll, perfect attendance, hallway displays, pizza parties, CMCD rewards). Student work is displayed in all hallways and classrooms and it is shared with parents during parent/teacher conferences. Interviews revealed that few assembly programs are held to recognize student achievements; instead the school has a greater concentration on student exhibits. Student accomplishments are regularly recognized formally and informally through incentives, exhibitions of student work, special honor roll and attendance assemblies. Students are familiar with the rubrics that guide achievement.

All but a few special education students are educated in totally exclusionary settings, with little or no opportunity to interact with typically developing peers. There are special education self contained teachers who have informally integrated their students with general education classes in science for a particular unit or activity. Those that have done so report that it has been very successful and would embrace a permanent in class support program in the areas of science and social studies. The CST also would like to see greater levels of integration. The administration also endorses an expansion of the resource program and feels the general education staff would accept such a program. A mitigating force that makes this difficult is that the vast majority of students are bused to this location for the specific purpose of being assigned to a self contained class. Their programs are designed by CST's in their home school. The receiving school administration and CST feel that they have little latitude to alter these student's programs. They have expressed a desire to work more closely with teacher, parents and the administration to move closer to a more inclusive model.

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

**FINDINGS:**

The school is making attempts to match teacher strengths with student needs in order to maximize student achievement. Student grouping and class assignments appear to be based on student needs, but in some instances that determination is based on the availability of teachers. The teacher-student ratio is adequate.

**4.6 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:**

A multicultural curriculum is available to all students. Diversity is celebrated throughout the school primarily at the classroom level. In the past the school has celebrated Black History month, Women's History month, ethnic celebrations etc.

**STANDARD 4 NEXT STEP**

Re-adopt the Peer Mediation program (4.2)

**STANDARD 4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. In an effort to protect instructional time, the school leadership council (SLC) should research the need for a student code of conduct and convene a committee to assess and make recommendations to address the severe tardiness problem. (4.2)
2. Visit with neighboring schools and research the feasibility and impact of an in-school suspension program to ensure that instructional time is protected. (4.1)
3. The school leadership in conjunction with the district office and school leadership team should provide guidance to all instructional staff on the following: (a) how to display student work so that every student's individual need is addressed; (b) consistent use of the rubrics in the display and rating of student work; (c) complete notation of the NJ CCCS rather than a display of only the number; and (d) (where applicable) division of bulletin boards to show student work in progression. (4.2)
4. Provide opportunities for students to evaluate teacher performance and use the feedback to improve classroom practice, as appropriate. (4.3)

**Special Education**

5. It is recommended that the CST, school administration, special education and regular education staff meet in order to determine the feasibility of establishing additional resource replacement and In-Class support programs for incoming students. A criteria should be established for an identification process that is consistent with the Oberti test. This would require an annual review for each student who has a change in program that is conducted, minimally by the case manager, a special education and regular education teacher, the parent and student, if appropriate. (4.4)

## **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.**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- Interviews with staff, parents and students
- Community involvement programs
- Walk-through observations
- Perception survey
- Phone logs
- Newsletter
- Three-year operational plan
- Classroom visitation

## **STANDARD 5 INDICATORS**

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

### **FINDINGS:**

School leadership has formed partnerships with the community and families to remove barriers to learning for all students. (e.g. homework, reviewing student work) Training for parents is offered by the school (Every Parent Influence a Child (EPIC), workshops, Computer Classes). Strategies have been developed to promote interaction between parents and teachers to evaluate student performance (Parent teacher conferences). Parent involvement is limited on school committees despite the many efforts school administration has made to recruit them. Parents interviewed feel welcomed to the school through the open door policy. Community and school programs are offered to all students, however, transportation for special education students are not offered by the district at this time.

There is low participation of the parents of special education students in all forums designed for parental involvement. The vast majority of these students are bused here from other schools throughout the city, therefore, this is not their neighborhood school which makes parental participation difficult.

**5.2 There is regular communication with families by meetings, phone calls, notes and e-mail about their children's progress.**

### **FINDINGS:**

The school leadership has implemented a phone message service (School Messenger Calling System) that is updated on a regular basis to communicate to parents any school events or meetings that are being held. However, there is no evidence that shows communications to parents are done other than in the English language that addresses students' academic performance. Parents, students and teachers interviewed, regularly communicated student progress (e.g. verbal, phone, notes or teacher student

conference, and report cards) and are not always reactive. The school has a website. Special education staff members do not have a formal process for reporting IEP mastery to parents.

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

**FINDINGS:**

There is an extended school program that is available to all students and is designed to promote individual student achievement. There is an after school program that has enrolled approximately 100 students for the current school year. However, only of handful of special education students attend. These students are transported and cannot participate in after school activities unless a late bus is provided. Information on the availability of a late bus to accommodate these students is unclear. The special education staff has not reached out to parents or universally encouraged their students to attend because of this issue, even though they feel their students are in the greatest need for this program. The school offers different programs that addresses student academic needs e.g. K-2 Academy, NJASK Academy, Gifted and Talented Club.

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

**FINDINGS:**

The school offers additional support to all students. There is a doctor that comes on a weekly basis to monitor motor skill development of all students. There is an active Pupil Resource Committee (PRC). The social worker does not currently have a phone which presents a problem when it comes to official use of time. The PRC team has not been formally trained and does not have all of the valuable materials provided by the state. They meet once per week to deliberate over referrals, which they divide into medical, behavioral and academic issues. They have received 46 referrals last year and 8 so far this year. Most are resolved without a CST referral. The PRC states that the resources available are insufficient to meet the needs of the student population.

Few special education students participate in clubs and teams that are offered after school due to the fact that they are in need of transportation and a late bus has not been provided.

.

**STANDARD 5 NEXT STEPS**

1. The school social worker should immediately be supplied with a phone to assure privacy of conversation. (5.4)

**STANDARD 5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. While the number of parents of Bi-lingual students is small, there seems to be a change in the demographics of the area. Given these changes, beginning written communications in other appropriate languages is recommended. (5.2)
2. Continue to research through the Parent Committee ways to increase parental involvement.

### **Special Education**

3. Clarify the the accessibility of bus transportation for the extended day program for special education students. Once clarified, then provide appropriate communications to parents and encourage teachers to recommend that students attend and follow up on students attendance. (5.3)
4. The work of the PRC will be strengthened by the analysis of its current practice and resources in relationship to needs of the student population. Assure that all PRC members attend upcoming training. Case management of the students referred must be a shared responsibility of all PRC members. (5.4)
5. Outside intervention resources should be identified and linkages established between the school and the agency in order to provide these services in-house. (5.4)

### **District**

1. Given, the observed needs of students in this building, as the situation stands, the district should consider adding the following positions to increase learning oppotrnties for all children:
  - An additional reading recovery teacher for regular ed students and a reading recovery component for special education students where it is deemed appropriate.
  - A reading tutor should be provided for children above second grade who should be trained in the standard curriculum and additional supplemental programs for children who are manifesting severe deficits.
  - A behavioral interventionist should be provided who, in addition to crisis intervention, can offer ongoing intervention strategies.
2. Create a progress reporting format based on IEP objective mastery and other indicators to be completed by special education teachers on a quarterly basis and sent home with student report cards. (5.2)
3. Investigate providing transportation for parents who could possibly be bused from a central location in each SLT to the Eighteenth Avenue School for participation in important parental activities, such as conferences, IEP meetings, etc.(5.1)
4. Many of the problems associated with this particular indicator could be ameliorated by each school providing programs for all of their students within the home school. If this condition creates an over crowded condition in some schools, consider the addition of a trailer to place both general and special education students on an equitable bases. Another consideration would be to transport an entire grade or section to other schools, which would include both the general and special education students in the grade or section. (5.3)

## **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.**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- Three year plan
- Teacher interviews
- Observation of SMART TEAM meetings
- SMART team training and notes
- Review of Analysis of Student work samples
- Classroom visits
- Coach interviews
- Review of sample PIPs
- Review of sample evaluations

## **STANDARD 6 INDICATORS**

### **FINDINGS:**

The culture of the school is one of professional collegiality. The school does year-long planning with a focus for professional development. At the school level teachers work both in grade level meetings and collaboratively in SMART teams across two grade levels. In these SMART team meetings teachers take responsibility for their learning, cooperative, problem solving and make decisions, e.g. during one observed SMART team, teachers grappled with how to identify students' specific skill strengths and needs without good data from state assessments and identified a way to fill this gap. Individual grade level teachers work informally to assist each other. Staff, including teacher aides, participate in a book study group time. This year the focus is on "Building a Professional Learning Community." Five teachers are offered opportunities to participate in an Action Research project with the vice-principal at Montclair NJ Network for Education Renewal which looks at best practices related to difficult situations. Two other new teachers are participating in a pilot project for Induction of New Teachers with ETS/Mathematician to improve their practice. Other staff's professional development is provided, in part by the district general office for that area. The principal also encourages all staff to take advantage of outside workshops that align with their job needs by providing information to them through their mailboxes.

The district offers staff development aligned to an assessment of student needs in literacy and math. There have been incidences however when the principal sent a grade level group of special teachers to a district workshop and the special education teachers were not accepted into the session.

### **FINDINGS:**

The professional development opportunities for staff and administrators are determined with analysis of student test data and in alignment with the district programmatic responses to improving students' achievement in math and literacy as well as the school focus of differentiating instruction. PIPs of staff are aligned with these goals as well as customized to certain specific needs of individual teachers.

The district's assessment of administrators is aligned to the ISLLC standards. School-based professional development priorities are set by aligning the goals for student performance with the evidence of achievement and with the Professional Improvement Plans (PIP) of teachers and principals. All special education teachers have rather extensive PIPS that are aligned with the curriculum implementation, the school improvement plan (3 year plan) and individual needs.

**6.3 Professional development is high quality, job-embedded, frequent, tailored to teacher needs and school-based.**

**FINDINGS:**

Professional development is high quality, job-embedded and tailored to teacher needs and school-based. Staff members meet weekly in both grade level and SMART teams. They are able to develop skills related to their content as well as to analyze student work and other student's data. Other written analysis of student work by teachers is done and feedback by leadership is organized and consistent. Some school staff are beginning to engage in action research. All staff share the responsibility for professional improvement as expressed in interviews and observed in meetings. Many resources are made available to teachers through the district e-boards.

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

**FINDINGS:**

PIPs are developed through needs identified both through the evaluation process as well as through the identification of skills needed to address student specific needs. Veteran teachers interviewed describe the process of balancing items in their PIP's Assessment of PIP's is on-going during the formal evaluation process and annual review. The evaluation process encourages teacher reflection as does the expectation of teachers as they analyze student work and work together in SMART team meetings.

**STANDARD 6 COMMENDATION**

The school is commended for developing a comprehensive professional development plan and having all staff commit to implementing. The focus on differentiated instruction is appropriate for the needs identified and it is anticipated that as teachers are more skilled in its execution then all students, including gifted and talented, will benefit. It is further anticipated that this professional development plan will be sustained, refined and expanded as teacher competency and students' need dictate.

**STANDARD 6 RECOMMENDATION**

**District:**

1. Review and refine guidelines for attendance at content areas workshops for special education teachers.
2. Delineate skill sets for special education teachers and other teachers so that teachers may clearly assess knowledge and skills against this.

## **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, and developing leadership capacity.**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- School Leadership Council agendas and minutes
- Faculty and team meeting agendas and notes
- Perception survey
- Staff interviews
- Professional development plans and teacher attendance
- Staff evaluation reports
- Interviews with Principal, Vice Principal, Literacy Coach, Technology Facilitator

## **STANDARD 7 INDICATORS**

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

### **FINDINGS:**

Data derived from the State and District is analyzed by the SLC with the principal in a leadership role. It is beginning to become the basis of the decisions regarding professional development plans and activities within the building at the SMART teams, which are designed for data driven analysis for the improvement of instruction, (Specific/Strategic, Measurable, Attainable, Results Bound/Relevant, Timely) grade- level team meetings and staff meetings. The principal clearly states what she is looking to see both during informal and formal classroom visitations. The staff appreciates the dialogue and agrees that the focus must always be on improved student achievement. They concur that all of the actions of the principal are focused on student academic performance.

**7.2 The principal ensures data is analyzed and disaggregated to assist teachers in adjusting their instructional practices. -**

### **FINDINGS:**

The principal is the leader in the analysis of disaggregated data, bringing the SLC into the process with her. Together they are examining the positive growth of the male population, which is different from the national profile. Their attention to this shows the ability to do data analysis as well as knowledge of national trends. The Literacy Coach and Technology Facilitator use this data in specific planning at team meetings, as well as the collaborative classroom modeling and co-teaching that they engage in with colleagues. The informal walk-throughs by the principal and vice principal reinforce the priority of research based best classroom practices related to student achievement. Minutes of team meetings show specific decisions to use certain strategies because of a gap in particular skill areas. There is limited data regarding the profiles of special needs students who are bused to this school, because the data is held by the sending school.

**7.3 The principal plans and allocates resources, monitors progress, provides organizational support, and removes barriers to sustain continuous school improvement.**

**FINDINGS:**

The principal has made specific changes of staff from one grade level to another to deal with learning gaps discovered on the assessments. She also made specific personnel decisions to not return staff to the building based upon the lack of student growth related to insufficient staff growth in the implementation of improved classroom instruction. All of these decisions are the result of the monitoring of student progress and teacher ability to meet the needs of a particular population. Recently, the principal, together with the SLC has completed a grant to secure additional funds for specific staff needed to deal with program areas that are not currently supported by the budget.

**7.4 The principal demonstrates a priority to academic performance, sustaining a learning environment that promotes development of teacher leaders and efficiency of operations.**

**FINDINGS:**

The Classroom Walk-Through folio that the principal has prepared and shared with all staff is specific to the process, focus and desired outcomes of the initiative. It clearly is a collaborative, reflective process designed to increase the conversation regarding the increase of student achievement based upon best instructional practices. The principal, in collaboration with the SLC, has gotten faculty consensus to reduce administrative task discussions at staff meetings, moving those to written memos with time for questions, so as to increase professional development and sharing time at the meetings. The building is a safe, orderly, healthy place for children to learn, and the parents interviewed all expressed their belief and confidence in the staff and learning environment. The principal has included the vice principal in full partnership of all administrative functions, and together they work with the Literacy Coach, Technology Facilitator, District Specialists and SLC in a collaborative leadership mode.

**STANDARD 7 NEXT STEP**

The data profile and ongoing record of accomplishment of special needs students who are bused to this school from other neighborhood schools must be duplicated and made available to the staff at the Eighteenth Avenue Elementary School. ( 7.2 )

**STANDARD 7 RECOMMENDATION**

Expand the analysis and disaggregation of test and non-test data, to identify specific populations whose needs are beyond the capacity of the school. This data will become the basis for determining what program modification, staff training, or additional personnel needs, may be necessary to improve student learning. The principal and staff have begun the identification of such a group. ( 7.1; 7.2; 7.3; 7.4)

## **STANDARD 8 - ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES**

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

### **EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- Perception survey
- Teacher schedules
- Review of agendas and minutes from grade level, SMART and staff meetings
- Certification data of staff
- Lesson plans
- Walk throughs

### **STANDARD 8 INDICATORS**

**8.1 School leadership appropriately assigns instructional and non-instructional staff members to serve the learning needs of all students.**

#### **FINDINGS:**

The district provides the school with highly qualified staff, to the degree possible. The principal and vice principal then interview these new staff, review their personnel file and place them where they will best meet the learning needs of the current school population. This occurs with both the instructional and non-instructional staff. All personnel are assigned in accordance to district policy and administrative code. Specific decisions were made to re-assign staff to other grade levels, or to not renew contracts, based upon specific student needs. Departmentalization at the 3-6 grades considers the current strengths of staff, and then supports growth through specific professional development opportunities. Non-instructional staff members are integrated into the training with their professional colleagues, as appropriate.

**8.2 The leadership ensures evidence that the staff protects and makes efficient use of time to maximize learning and the school schedule reflects instructional priorities in accordance with regulations; i.e. Abbott Regulations, Reading First, Secondary Initiative, and Professional Learning Communities.**

#### **FINDINGS:**

School leadership has developed and implemented procedures to safe guard instructional time in compliance with district requirements in literacy and mathematics. Compliance in these areas results in a dilemma regarding appropriate time in other content areas both in legal /time needs such as physical education and program goals such as world languages. Recently, the staff has made an agreement to move away from whole school assemblies to celebrate and demonstrate student accomplishments and replaced that with specific grade level and inter-grade level sharing, more targeted to the core curriculum standards. This is a specific change to increase direct instructional time and connect it to the goals of the class, and/or grade level. Classroom observations show that appropriate discipline and management is often not the result of the use of best instructional practices. Instead it is delivered as series of specific learned components of the Consistency Management & Cooperative Discipline Model that is not well internalized by the staff. There is some interference of

instructional time with the use of the public address system. The behavior of a clearly identified small student population is reducing productive instructional time, both for themselves and other students. It is also reducing the effectiveness of instruction of some teachers who are unprepared to deal with the complex issues that these children bring to the classroom

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

**FINDINGS:**

School leadership provides a variety of measures to provide time for staff to meet and collaborate, such as SMART teams, grade level teams, and whole staff meetings. Meetings are held to connect grade levels; however there is not the capacity to have all literacy folks meet together, other than an in-service day. The connection between grade 6 and 7 is a district function and not one that the building leadership can control. The Leadership has used the annual retreat of the SLC to include non-members of that group, so as to increase the conversation about instruction and the collaborative process within the building.

**STANDARD 8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The school leadership team, Administrators and SLC, should review the available human services staff resources, and develop a plan to improve the utilization of the existing staff, based upon the analysis of data regarding the instructional and behavioral needs of a specific group within the total population. The data should be further analyzed to determine if the present environment is in need of additional staff to support the needs of this population, or to determine if it is more cost effective to consider other placement options to meet the educational, psychological emotional and social needs of the population involved. This task should be undertaken whether or not the new grant is received. (8.2)
2. The school leadership team should create a building wide master schedule that will allow the staff to see the use of time and personnel in all instructional and non-instructional activities. This should then become a basis for a deeper analysis of what the present pattern provides for, as well as what is not provided for. From this launching point, the staff will be ready to investigate alternative schedule patterns that might better allocate time and personnel resources to meet the needs of the student population. (8.2)
3. The school leadership team should invite the district into a conversation related to the real dilemma that occurs when you comply with the protected time for literacy and math and the impact this has on the delivery of other content areas. While there may not be an immediate answer to the problem, the dialogue may lead to increased collaboration in building new models of instructional delivery through integration and cross-disciplinary activities. (8.3; 8.2)
4. Professional development activities related to the developmental tasks and needs of children should be implemented in concert with best instructional practices. The synthesis of these two

will result in the diminishing of inappropriate behaviors that take away from student academic performance. (8.2)

5. The principal should request a full time math coach in the next budget cycle using the careful data that has already been gathered in a needs assessment relative to this content area. ( 8.1)

### **District**

1. The district should allocate resources to appoint a full-time math coach to the school. (8.1)
2. The district should invite the school into an open dialogue to discuss the program necessary to address the educational objectives of a specific population of special needs students currently served by Eighteenth Avenue School. This conversation should allow for a thorough exploration of all options that might be considered for these students, regardless of current practices, and within an expanded view of the legal scope of code. If the conversation can be enriched with the participation of state department special education personnel, an immediate outreach should be made. (8.2)

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

**School leadership and the SLC or NCLB planning committee communicates a clear purpose, direction and strategies focused on teaching and learning through the development, implementation and evaluation of the following: vision, goals, NCLB school improvement plan and report on instructional priorities for Abbott schools.**

#### **EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- Review of the school mission, vision and belief statement
- The School and Community Perception Survey
- Agendas and minutes of the SLC and sub-committees
- Staff interviews
- School improvement plan

### **STANDARD 9 INDICATORS**

**9.1 There is evidence that the school community embraces and collaborates in the development of the school's mission, vision and goals.**

#### **FINDINGS:**

There is evidence of a collaborative process that results in a shared vision, mission and philosophy that drives the work of the school. The message is found throughout the building and is circulated throughout the community in printed materials. The school acknowledges the need to continuously work to increase parent/community participation in the process.

**9.2 There is evidence that the School Leadership Council (SLC) or NCLB Planning Committee planning process involves collecting, managing and analyzing multiple forms of data to annually update the comprehensive needs assessment and to develop the Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities or the NCLB School Improvement Plan.**

**FINDINGS:**

The district provides the school with extensive disaggregated data which is used by the SLC and Administration as the basis for all continuous decision making evidenced by the specific goals and plans for improvement once the areas of need are discerned. Data is further disaggregated by age, gender, grade, ethnicity, and the special learning needs of the limited classified population who reside within this school neighborhood. The data is analyzed to see how this population compares to similar populations within and beyond the district level. Currently, the building management data system is manual, as opposed to electronic. The members of the SLC are very comfortable in sharing specific data, showing a thorough understanding of its use.

**9.3 Strategies in the Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities or NCLB School Improvement Plan are aligned with the school's vision and student and school goals; identifies resources, and contains an evaluation plan that evaluates the degree to which it achieves the goals and objectives for student learning.**

**FINDINGS:**

The school leadership has operationalized the mission, vision, and school goals. Activities in the three- year operational plan are being addressed and are grounded in research and best practices. Resources allocated to the school are reviewed and evaluated in accordance with district policy and code, accompanied by recommendations for improvement and need. The school leadership conducts walk-throughs on a regular basis. The checklist that is used is a well-focused best practices checklist that speaks to the need for reflection.

### **STANDARD 9 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Continue to increase the number of teachers who are invited to participate in the SLC retreat, to better understand the purpose and procedures of the SLC and gather additional volunteers to serve on sub-committees. ( 9.1; 9.2)
2. Explore moving from a manual data management system to an electronic data management system. ( 9.2 )
3. Continue the comprehensive and effective planning activities that will lead to further improved student achievement, and look past the goal of reduced need for remediation and extension of activities for the successful learner. ( 9.3 )

## **IN CONCLUSION**

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

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

1. What else can the school do to assist all teachers to move from teacher directed, whole-class instruction to other models of teaching more suitable for meeting the needs of all students?
2. What are some activities that might further facilitate building a bridge between the school and the community( parents, guardians ) to address parent participation? Who are key people who might positively influence this process?
3. How can the school take ownership of the results of the CAPA review to lead the school to proficiency?

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

District	Newark Public Schools
School	Eighteenth Avenue
Principal Name – Years in Building	Barbara A. Ervin – 3 years
Grade Levels	PK-6
Number of Teachers meeting NCLB HQT	35
Number of Teachers with Emergency Certification	4
Total Number of Classrooms	23
Percent Special Education	24%
Number – Self Contained Classrooms	8
Number of Inclusive Classrooms	8
Percent Bilingual	Less than 1%
Number of Bilingual Classrooms	0
Number of Students	311
School Leadership Council (SLC) or Title I Planning Committee (PC) Meets Monthly	Yes
SLC or Title I PC has complete representation	Yes
Intensive Early Literacy Visit and Complete Plan	December, 2003
Percent Parent Involvement	20%
Abbott only - Whole School Reform (WSR) Model	District: Reaching for the Brass Ring
Abbott only - Status of WSR Contract	Discontinued
Persistently Dangerous “Warning”	0
Most Current Number of Students reading at grade level in 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> grades.	3 <sup>rd</sup> - 20      4 <sup>th</sup> - 14      Test: --NJASK Observational Survey
AYP Indicators Missed (specify)	ASK -subgroups
AYP Content Areas Missed	ASK Language Arts - mathematics
Language Arts Program/Textbook	Harcourt Trophies
Mathematics Program/Textbook	Everyday Math
Number of Students Offered Choice Option in 2005-2006	0
Number of Students Receiving Supplemental Services in 2004-2005	69