Elliott Street School
10-24-2005 to 10-28-2005

Introduction

The New Jersey Department of Education conducted a CAPA (Collaborative Assessment for Planning and Achievement) review of Elliott Street Elementary School on 10-24-2005 to 10-28-2005. This school is designated as "in need of improvement" for four consecutive years as defined in the *NJ Accountability Workbook*. *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) §1117: School Support and Recognition requires that the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) create and maintain a statewide system of intensive and sustained support for those Title I schools designated as "in need of improvement" for 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;
- 47 classroom visits;
- General observations, such as morning and afternoon arrival and dismissal, lunch in the cafeteria, and student restrooms;
- 43 interviews with teachers;
- 6 interviews with building leadership and administrators;
- 3 interviews with district administrators;
- 20 interviews with students;
- 29 interviews with school and student support staff; and
- 19 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:

TEAM POSITION	NAME	AFFILIATION
Team Leader	Elizabeth Domigan	Educational Consultant
District Liaison	Terrance Cunningham	Newark Public Schools
Principal	Richard Kaye	Educational Consultant
Lanugage Arts Literacy Specialist	Keisha Smith-Carrington	Educational Consultant
Mathematics Specialist	Renee Howard	Educational Consultant
Special Education Specialist	Joseph Jakobowski	Educational Consultant
District Special Education Specialist	Cheryl Myrie*	Newark Public Schools
District Bi-Lingual Education Specialist	Donald Lutzke	Newark Public Schools
Parent/Guardian or Grandparent	Barbara Pugh-Gorham	Educational Consultant
DOE Liaison	Keith Lockwood	NJ Department of Education
DOE Bi-Lingual Specialsit	Erika Reed	NJ Department of Education

* assisted with classroom visits and discussion with other appropriate personnel

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.

COMMENDATIONS

The administrative staff of principal and two vice-principals are commended for a clear focus on students and dedication to providing the structural supports that allow teachers to develop and provide quality instruction to the population they serve.

The principal and all staff are commended for having developed a very positive, ongoing working relationship with the parents and other members of this community.

The school is commended for creating a child-centered positive learning environment with a clearly expressed belief that all children are capable of, and want to succeed at high levels of academic accomplishment.

School leadership and staff are commended for having efficiently and effectively moved their building from implementation of a teacher-centered LAL curriculum to functional implementation of a student-centered balanced literacy program. There has been and continues to be a concerted effort to meet the needs of students that has grown to include providing native language instruction. It is admirable that the LAL program described in the Intensive Early Literacy Report of 2003 is not descriptive of Elliott Street as it stands in 2005.

The district is commended for creating, implementing and continuing to refine a structure for instructional improvement that is classroom embedded and collaboratively focused on research-based best practices.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Elliott Street Elementary School - Newark Public School District

Visit Date:	October 24-28, 2005
Team Leader:	Elizabeth Domigan
Grade Levels:	PK-4
Enrollment:	656
LPS/AYP Status:	Year 4

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, next steps and recommendations.

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. The school had a contract from September, 1999 through June, 2004.
- Reason model discontinued: 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

FINDINGS

Academic Performance - Literacy

The school has in place structures to continue to move their building from teacher-centered LAL curriculum to student-centered balanced literacy program. There has been and continues to be a concerted effort to meet the needs of students that has grown to include providing native language instruction. The district has recently adapted *Harcourt Trophies*, *Kidspiration* , and *Breakthrough to Literacy* 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, tutors, and the use of Grade Level Meetings to continue to refine professional practice. Areas needing to be addressed on a school-wide basis are: strengthening guided reading instruction, reviewing the timing of interventions for fragile readers, authentic assessment, rubric design and use, deepening on understanding of how analysis of data leads to instructional practice changes, and using technology as a teaching tool not just for word processing.

Academic Performance - Mathematics

Elliot Street School's teachers demonstrate varying levels of progress in their movement toward providing a standards-based, balanced math instructional program, and most are still struggling with managing the "balance" and with aspects of the spiraling curriculum. Because it takes time to make the major content knowledge and pedagogical shifts that are needed, a disconnect exists between the written and implemented curricula—i.e., to move away from the traditional specific skills and

procedures view of mathematics learning (the way most stakeholders were taught math and teachers were trained to teach it) to a view of mathematics as (a) a science that explores relationships between/among concepts, facts, skills, and a specialized symbolic language and (b) a process that requires ongoing problem-solving, mathematical reasoning, and the justification of ones solution methods. In addition, less than two years ago, the entire school moved into the *Everyday Mathematics* program at one time which put most students at the disadvantage of not having sufficient prior exposure to the program to prepare them for its challenges.

School leadership and the district's math department have put some needed mechanisms into place. The district adopted *Everyday Mathematics*, a program that meets the U.S. Department of Education's criteria for quality, research-based programs; provided related professional development activities; and offered ongoing technical assistance to the school. The school's leadership outfitted all classrooms with appropriate print, manipulative and media materials and has some curriculum monitoring vehicles. Unfortunately, efforts to make the process more classroom-embedded have been limited to date, as there has been no full-time math coach.

Learning Environment
The areas under this subtitle address the supports of climate and discipline, parent invovlement and professional development. There is a support for teachers through planned and implemented professional development components, yet there is a need to strengthen the connections between school goals and professional learning. There are many supports for students and the climate for learning is apparent in the building. It is recognized that there is an extremely active outreach to parents that results in strong parental and community support. The needs of special education students are addressed but there continues to be a need for more inclusive activities and opportunities for more special education students to attend after-school programs.

Efficiency and Leadership
Elliot School has made substantial positive progress in moving the general population of students to a level of proficiency, as determined by assessment measures established by the State of New Jersey. This has been accomplished through a collaborative process, led by a capable principal and his administrative staff, who have been successful in bringing the staff, professional, and non-professional, as well as the parent and larger community, into the process. Together they have used data to make the programmatic, instructional and management decisions that have brought them to this point of accomplishment

Given the very positive professional, collaborative operation within this school, the excellent support services available from the district, and the commitment of the staff to the successful achievement of each student learner, there is clear reason to believe the goals set by the staff of Elliott Elementary School will be accomplished.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Academic Performance - Literacy
Opportunities for professional development can be addessed by reviewing differentiated needs of teachers and providing for this through a plan for grade level meetings and targeted coaching assistance as well as through specific feedback from administrators. Focus should be placed on

increasing the analysis of student work, rubrics and differentiated assessments. Opportunities for vertical articulation should be provided .

Academic Performance - Mathematics
In order to reduce the curriculum disconnect and continue moving toward implementing a math program that is rigorous and intentional—

1. the school should (a) systematize and formalize long- and short-term mathematics focus areas for all stakeholders; (b) increase the specificity and frequency of curriculum monitoring vehicles; (c) reduce disruptions to math instructional time so that all daily lesson plan components can be effectively implemented; and (d) prioritize classroom-embedded professional development by finding the most cost-effective way to secure and support a qualified, full-time, building-based mathematics coach

2. the district should (a) target more training time (esp. mandated sessions) to continue to deepen and broaden stakeholders' mathematics content knowledge of the "big ideas" and connections embedded in the curriculum and to expose them to what is currently known about how children learn mathematics; and (b) work with the school administration to find the most cost-effective way to secure and support a qualified, full-time, building-based mathematics coach to provide classroom-embedded support designed to help teachers experience and practice teaching and learning within a balanced, standards-based instructional framework.

Learning Environment
Focus staff development activities and procedures on the clear connection to school goals, continue to address issues raised for special education inclusion and training needs of special education teachers.

Efficiency and Leadership
To strengthen and refine those practices that are producing positive results in student achievement and the development of action plans to address new initiatives the following are recommended: attention be given to a more targeted, systematic process for staff development/supervision, formalizes the connection between certain staff members, uses expanded and more in-depth analysis of data, is grounded in classroom embedded collaborative activities, and provides the professional development that is both program driven and staff requested; that there be a specific focus regarding instruction in mathematics as a building priority, and clearly identified within all components of the three - year operational action plan; there be a deeper conversation among staff and the development of a specific action plan, to address the needs of that population that has achieved proficiency and is ready to move to higher levels of academic accomplishment; and finally, that at the school and district level there be an expanded analysis of the unique needs of the Special Education and English Language Learner populations, and including outside consultants as necessary. This study must include both philosophical and structural analysis, as well as research based program options that will be supported and piloted to determine their validity.

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

- Review of Abbott report on instructional priorities (3-Year School Improvement Plan), District grade-level, mathematics and literacy curriculum guides (K-4), Junior Achievement, guidance, career day, student work, student planner, Documents of professional development days/release time, Grade-level, SLC, and faculty meeting agendas and attendance rosters, District and school policies, Board approved math programs and related teacher and student materials, Lesson plans, Class schedules, Formal assessment data from the state and district (NJ-ASK for grades 3-4; SPA for grades 5-7; GEPA for grade 8) and Informal classroom-based assessment data (unit test results; checklists; grades on mid-term and final exams)
- Student and school-based and district staff member interviews
- Classroom visitations
- Observations of hallways

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

The school schedule includes a weekly period and a half for horizontal articulation. These sessions are for math and language arts literacy (LAL) on alternating weeks. Each of the three administrators are assigned to a grade level or range and attends the grade level meeting (GLM) for that group. Vertical articulation does not occur on a regular basis. Therefore, there is little monitoring of transition points between the school and the middle school to which it feeds, as well as within the building. There is evidence that the school conducts meetings of stakeholders to monitor curriculum implementation based on state assessments, district-mandated literacy assessments, and other factors.

Special education teachers participate in grade level meetings with general education teachers under the coordination of the building administration. Within this setting they provide ongoing training and discussions with all teachers in the building regarding the implementation of the Balanced Literacy and Everyday Math Program. The district has hired a Special Education Resource Teacher/Coordinator for language arts/literacy coach, who periodically attends these meetings, and has met with the new special education teacher. This vehicle has not provided enough time for the resource center teacher to collaborate with regular education teachers or with the CST when they are present in the building.

Mathematics

There is evidence that vertical and horizontal math articulation occurs, but not at the frequency or depth needed to ensure that all relevant areas are addressed with the specificity and regularity needed to provide clear articulation among and across all grade levels. In addition, it was not clear if the math-related items on many agendas that were available for review were included for informational or articulation purposes, since the agendas were not accompanied by meeting minutes. Portions of at least two early student dismissal days were used for vertical math articulation, but all of the key transition points within the building that were addressed were not clearly delineated. Grade level meetings (including both regular and special education teachers) facilitated by a building administrator provide the main vehicle for horizontal articulation, but very little data relative to math articulation was evident in documentation for the SLC (School Leadership Council) and its curriculum and instruction sub-committee. Some faculty meeting agendas also had math-related items on them.

Because the school is only beginning its second full year of implementation of a balanced, standards-based math curriculum (the transition began in the spring of the 2003-04 school year), much of the math articulation activities to date have revolved around managing components of the *Everyday Mathematics* program. Grade three and four teachers have also spent some time discussing the NJ-ASK. In addition, some articulation has focused on examining the following types of data: (a) global and summative student achievement data, and/or (b) mastery data relative to 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 cluster designations in the mathematics section of the NJ CCCS. Recently, exemplars of student problem-solving work have been studied in preparation for examining the work of Elliot School students.

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

There is evidence the school provides intentional connections to career options and post-secondary education through the Junior Achievement curriculum and Career Days. There is some evidence of an intentional effort to expand learning opportunities into the school and the community. The daily problem required in all classes and the monthly genre activity required in some grade levels provide evidence that there are some opportunities for the application of learning in matters that will prepare students to be self-sufficient and productive citizens. Lesson plans do not reflect intentional integration of NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS) for workplace readiness into LAL classes.

Mathematics

Most instruction observed during classroom visitations was delivered primarily in a teacher-directed mode to the entire class with students working individually on skill-based practice activities. On occasion, students were given a question to ponder and encouraged to share their thinking with a partner or small group, but time was rarely allotted for some of this thinking to be shared with the rest

of the class. 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.

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.

Language Arts Literacy

The School Leadership Council (SLC) has a curriculum subcommittee that works with school administration to use multiple assessment data to evaluate student performance. These data analysis has not yet reached a level whereby it results in identifying key transition points, adjusting instructional practices, and making revisions to the implemented curriculum. Some evidence indicates that school level teacher peer reviews of the NJ CCCS and curriculum are beginning. However, the district has instituted benchmarks in reading fluency and genre writing that have been implemented in the school, which is now moving toward the use of assessment walls to monitor student progress in each of these areas.

The district-adopted LAL curriculum is aligned to the adopted programs. Program implementation varies in each classroom due to this lack and to inconsistent levels of teacher training. There are resources in place to address this issue that have not been refined.

For teachers of students with special needs, the principal and vice principals conduct classroom observations, review lesson plans in conjunction with these observations, and provide feedback. Most special education teachers have expressed a desire to receive more informal observations of their instructional practices with constructive comments so that these areas can be addressed prior to formal observations.

Mathematics

Classroom visitations and interviews indicate that teachers are working hard to try to implement the written curriculum, but there is still some disconnect between the written and implemented math curricula. Although they use *Everyday Mathematics* (which meets the U.S. Department of Education's criteria for quality, research-based programs and is designed to provide standards-based, balanced math instruction), during most of the math classroom visitations instruction was delivered primarily in a teacher-directed mode to the entire class with students working individually for all/most of the period rather than collaboratively engaged in inquiry and problem solving. District supervisory personnel displayed an awareness of the gaps existing between *Everyday Mathematics* and the NJ CCCS (for example - a misalignment relative to the area of discrete mathematics), but the school's administrators and teachers did not demonstrate a clear awareness of the gaps or of ways to remedy the situation.

A concerted effort has been made to allocate resources for professional development. Weekly grade level meetings (GLMs) are scheduled to give teachers a vehicle for peer review of the curriculum. The school's administrators ensure that teachers attend mandatory offerings provided by the district,

disseminate articles relative to math instruction on occasion, ask the Math Resource Teacher/Coordinators (MRTCs) to conduct professional development activities during some GLMs, and encourage teachers to attend district and outside vendor workshops offered on a voluntary basis. Multiple indicators of student performance have been utilized as articulation tools, but their ability to effectively inform instruction is limited because most tend to be (a) global, (b) summative rather than formative, and/or (c) not clearly aligned to the specific sub-cluster areas in the math section of the NJ CCCS. Plan books are checked by the building administrators on a bi-weekly basis for the grade levels they directly supervise. Most of those reviewed for this report contained notations relative to objectives, NJ CCCS alignment (down to the sub-cluster), procedures, materials, and assessment, but not all of these areas were delineated on a daily basis. Frequent classroom walk-through visits are conducted by the administrators, but there is no formalized system for feedback and teacher reflection. Formal observations are conducted as mandated by code, so their frequency is limited and the number involving math instruction was not clearly delineated. Efforts to make the process more classroom-embedded have been limited to this point as no one with appropriate content and pedagogical expertise focusing only on mathematics instruction and curriculum articulation has been permanently assigned to the building on a full time basis.

Special Education

Special education teachers attend grade level meetings with general education teachers. Because most of the special education students served within this building are assigned here from their home school, state data is not available. In addition, these meetings are organized by grade level clusters, which cover fewer grade levels than some special education teachers serve. Often literacy and math teachers are subdivided within these meetings, which forces special education teachers who teach both subjects to miss at least one subject's collaboration at each meeting. Special education teachers have expressed that these meetings often do not inform their instruction for their students and have expressed the desire for more training in adapting and modifying the curriculum for their students and to be trained in a supplemental reading program.

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 instructional resources for LAL program implementation provide challenging opportunities for all students to access curricular materials that are aligned to the NJ CCCS. The use of this material is not consistently maximized to ensure that the learning needs of students performing below grade level are accommodated. The CRP intervention kits, although endorsed by district approval and required training, are not routinely used by teachers for fragile readers. There was a school level decision to pull the most fragile readers out for intervention during the LAL block which results in decreased instructional time for this population. Varying levels of training and/or comfort result in inconsistent implementation of guided reading and differentiation strategies. There is some classroom instruction that does not provide sufficient wait time for students to demonstrate problem solving skills and higher order thinking.

Mathematics

Students are scheduled to receive 75 minutes of math instruction on a daily basis, but some instructional time is lost on a regular basis due to unscheduled passing time that occurs before/after lunch or a special class (example – art), the need to take students to the restrooms after the language arts literacy block or the lunch period, and students being pulled out for math/literacy tutoring. As a result, there often is not enough time to adequately address all of the basic components of an *Everyday Mathematics* lesson, especially those that require time for exploration and collaborative problem solving. Lesson objectives were not posted for student reference in most classrooms visited, but some teachers orally stated them after completing the lesson's opening routine activities. During classroom visitations, students usually were only asked to state the answer they arrived at or to review procedural steps they used rather than to justify their own thinking and solution methods. While some suggestions for differentiated instruction can be found in the *Everyday Mathematics* materials, they were not available in the district's curriculum guides nor were they evident during most classroom visitations.

Special Education

The implemented curriculum maintains high expectations for all students, but does not always accommodate the needs of all special education students. Two of the three special education classes are self contained, in which the general education curriculum is implemented. Elliot Street School is providing opportunities for some special education students to fully participate in general education classes with the assistance of a personal assistant and some students who are only pulled out for literacy and mathematics through the resource replacement classes. Interviewed staff and administration indicate that this is a successful practice.

Bi-Lingual

ELS teachers were following the state mandated guidelines and district's ESL curriculum, which was incorporated in the teachers' daily planning activities. Instructional strategies and learning activities for English language learners was in alignment with the district, school, and state goals and assessment expectations for student learning. The district curriculum is aligned to the NJ CCCS. The curriculum along with the district approved ESL materials is designed to address the needs of the students in a spiraling sequence that accommodates the diverse needs of the students. In the implementation of the curriculum, teachers' lesson plans are complete with objectives, supporting activities, and assessments. In the delivery of instruction, teachers are energetic and enthusiastic. Their lessons are challenging and reflect the desire to accommodate the students' needs. Questioning techniques build from simple knowledge and comprehension questions to questions requiring students to compare, contrast, and analyze.

STANDARD 1 NEXT STEPS

Language Arts Literacy

School leadership should consider having the tutors serve as grade level representatives. A kindergarten and pre-kindergarten teacher could then be released to attend the scheduled tutor GLM in order to enable vertical articulation. (1.1)

Mathematics

1. Refine plan book notations by increasing the areas delineated on a daily basis that are directly related to the focus section of the daily math lesson where most new content is introduced/developed. (1.3)
2. Post and clearly communicate daily math objectives so students are more clearly aware of the expectations during the focus section of each day's math instructional time where most new content is introduced/developed. (1.4)

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. Charge a "literacy committee" to target the identification of key transition points in the curriculum in order to begin the process of curriculum mapping for the building. A representative of this 'committee' should be designated to meet quarterly with someone from the receiving school's literacy committee to ensure vertical articulation between the two buildings. (1.1)

2. Teachers should take advantage of opportunities to enhance LAL implementation by making cross disciplinary connections wherever possible. These should be designated in lesson plans by noting appropriate NJ CCCS. (1.2)

3. The district developed infrastructure for professional development should be maximized to ensure that embedded training systematically addresses instruction through the use of data. For each teacher, there should be scaffolded opportunities for growth. These opportunities should focus on teacher ability to implement district-adopted strategies to address students' needs. (1.3, 1.4, 3.3, and 3.4)

4. School leadership should push intervention into the classroom during the LAL block in order to provide increased time for the instruction of struggling readers. For readers considered most fragile, there should be additional time provided outside of the block in which instruction is systematically targeted toward moving these students to grade level proficiency. (1.4)

Special Education

5. The special education literacy coach and resource teacher should conduct vertical meetings with the entire special education staff to review data, to regularly evaluate and monitor curriculum implementation based on multiple factors (e.g., local and state standards, student performance on classroom and state assessments, student academic needs defined by other sources, as it applies to special education). (1.1)

6. Provide additional training to special education staff in making adaptations and modifications to the general education curriculum and in supplemental reading programs, e.g. Wilson. (1.4)

Mathematics

1. Continue to have staff work collaboratively to reduce the disconnect between the written and implemented mathematics curricula by refining, systematizing, and increasing the depth, specificity, and frequency of school-based mathematics articulation in relation to its ability to effectively inform instruction. (1.1) (1.2) (1.3) (1.4)

2. Study existing conditions that regularly impact and reduce daily mathematics instructional time and implement reasonable and appropriate remedial actions. (1.4)

District

Language Arts Literacy

1. The district should expedite the revision of the K-5 curriculum in order to provide teachers with a tool that demonstrates the connections amongst the multiple district-adopted LAL resources. This will enable both novice teachers and seasoned teachers with less than optimal understandings of reading and writing development to better align their instruction to best practices in the field of literacy development. (1.3 and 3.1)

Mathematics

1. Continue to provide ongoing technical assistance to Elliot Street School (through the mathematics supervisory and resource staff) in order to (a) reduce the disconnect between the written and implemented math curricula and (b) increase the teachers and administrators ability to monitor the implemented mathematics curriculum with more specificity so that instruction can be more effectively informed and adjusted to meet students' group/individual needs. (1.1) (1.3)
2. Work with the Elliot Street School administration to devise a staffing option that will provide a more classroom-embedded form of mathematics professional development in order to (a) enable teachers to experience and gain a better understanding of best practices for standards-based, balanced mathematics instruction; (b) help both teachers and administrators grow in their ability to effectively monitor and adjust instruction; and (c) provide a full-time person solely focused on the horizontal and vertical delivery of math instruction and articulation at the school. (1.1) (1.2) (1.3) (1.4)

Special Education

3. District test coordinators should distribute individual student NJ-ASK test data to the school that the special education student attends.

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:

- Review of Abbott report on instructional priorities (3-Year School Improvement Plan), District grade-level, mathematics and literacy curriculum guides (K-4), Documents of professional development days/release time, Grade-level, SLC, and faculty meeting agendas and attendance rosters, District and school policies, Board approved math programs and related teacher and student materials, Lesson plans, Formal assessment data from the state and district (NJ-ASK for grades 3 and 4; SPA for grades 5-7; GEPA for grade 8), Informal classroom-based assessment data (unit test results; checklists; grades on mid-term and final exams) and SLT IV monthly writing action plan, student work, student planner, common planning schedule, observation survey, DRA, and disaggregated data documents
- Observations of hallways
- Student and school-based and district staff member interviews
- Classroom visitations
- Class schedules

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.

FINDINGS

Language Arts Literacy

There are multiple assessment tools endorsed by the district. In the School Leadership Team (SLT) to which the school is assigned, there is also an action plan that provides specific mandates for authentic assessment for teachers of grades three through five. The results of these are used to monitor student progress. School level procedures to ensure that the results of these assessments are used to modify instruction to meet individual needs are still being developed.

There is little evidence to suggest that students can select the manner in which they demonstrate learning. Feedback on available work products is sometimes tailored in a way that can be used by students to strengthen future performances. The GLM structure does not routinely allow teachers to collaborate to analyze student work products and use the results of this analysis to revise pedagogy, instruction, curriculum, and assessment. There is partial implementation of the assessment wall structure intended to measure student growth over time.

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Mathematics

Although evidence exits that the school gathers multiple indicators of student performance, the ability of this data to effectively inform instruction is limited because much of it: (a) is global (i.e., overall

cluster scores from state assessments; mid-term/final exam grades); (b) is summative (i.e., unit tests; mid-term/final exam grades); (c) consists of lists of skills not specifically re-organized to show a clear a clear alignment to the sub-clusters under each of five broad clusters designations in the math section of the NJ CCCS (i.e., listings generated from the Standards Proficiency Assessment, NJ-ASK practice tests in grades 3 and 4, and *Everyday Mathematics* unit tests/teacher checklists); and (d) did not contain opportunties for students to choose ways to demonstrate their learning.

Special Education

Special education teachers demonstrated an awareness level of knowledge of learning styles and multiple intelligences, but expressed a need for more training in these areas. Some teachers, however, are offering students a choice in how to demonstrate that learning, in terms of writing, drawing, projects, rubrics, checklists, etc. All 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, authentic and aligned with NJ CCCS subject matter.

FINDINGS

Language Arts Literacy

Most assessments require valid and appropriate demonstrations of what students should know and be able to do, although there is little evidence that students are provided choice in forms of assessment. There is no evidence of ongoing collaborative design of assessment tasks. The evidence indicates that the tasks are structured by either the CRP or district LAL leadership structures.

Mathematics

Based on the evidence presented, it was difficult to ascertain if authentic, rigorous assessment tasks are intentionally and regularly incorporated into daily lessons because (a) notations in most plan books often contained the same assessment for each lesson in a given week/month; (b) most assessment notations referred to the completion of review/practice activities found in the student workbooks; (c) most teachers interviewed stated that they did not have a secure understanding of authentic-based assessment, and (d) students were not given a choice in the forms of assessment. Although most assessment tasks are summative and draw heavily on resources provided by the *Everyday Mathematics* program and commercial NJ-ASK test preparation materials, work has recently started with exemplars (see 2.1 above) to help teachers grow in their ability to design assessments with clearer and more specific feedback mechanisms for students and instruction.

Special Education

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 and have not collaborated in the design of authentic assessment tasks. They do implement the building curriculum assessments and 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. Some tasks require valid and appropriate demonstrations of what students should know and be able to do. Students are not always provided choice in forms of assessment.

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

While there is evidence that teachers have reviewed grade appropriate adaptations of the NJ Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric, there is no evidence that teachers collaborate to develop rubrics that provide performance expectations for students. Academic expectations are infrequently communicated visually to students but are often verbally emphasized and task-specific. There is minimal evidence that students formally evaluate their own performances and reflect upon their work. The majority of students understand what they should know and be able to do to meet teacher expectations.

All special education teachers are using the writing rubrics. However, teachers do not develop or collaborate on the development of clearly defined rubrics that provide clear content and performance expectations for students. Some special teachers use rubrics in conjunction with student reflection.

Mathematics

Verbal reference by the teacher to the lesson's primary objective was often observed during classroom visitations, but most classrooms did not have written objectives displayed for student reference. Almost none of the visitations showed evidence that students are regularly asked to articulate what they should know and what needs to be demonstrated to show that they are proficient in specific mathematical concepts/skills/strategies. Few hallway displays contained samples of student work in mathematics and none of the displays (including work displayed in classrooms) was accompanied by rubrics.

Some special education teachers are using a generic math rubric, but they do not develop or collaborate on the development of clearly defined rubrics that provide clear content and performance expectations for students. Some use rubrics in conjunction with student reflection.

Bilingual teachers clearly communicate academic expectations to students as evidenced by student work with rubrics, students' portfolios, journal, and centers. Rubrics were evident in students' folders. There were rubrics for math and open-ended activities. The consistent use of rubrics in different classrooms is evidence that there is collaboration between ESL and bilingual teachers.

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 SLC, in conjunction with school administration, conducts ongoing analysis of the results of multiple assessments. There is evidence that some assessment data is disaggregated but it is not clear that all data determines gaps in the curriculum and is used to make instructional implications. There is limited development of a process to ensure that curricular, instructional, and assessment practices are modified, as needed, for all students and sub-groups.

State test data for classified students is sent to home schools, and is not available for all but a few of the special education children attending Elliot Street School. Other forms of building wide assessment are being administered and will be used to guide instruction for all students (Letter ID, Writing Vocabulary., Dictation, Slossen, DRA). All of these assessments are given and analyzed on a fall to spring basis. There is no data to demonstrate that this data is reviewed on a spring to spring basis as a measure of regression as it applies to special education and the decision for extended school year.

Mathematics

Some disaggregated data are reviewed by administrative and teaching staff, but due to the constraints discusses in indicator 2.1, there is little this data can do to delineate gaps or to inform/adjust daily instruction (for example, an overall NJ-ASK score in the Numbers and Numerical Operations cluster does not give sufficient information relative to specific individual or group knowledge and needs the area of fractions).

State test data is available only for a few of the special education children attending Elliot Street School because many of them live outside school's attendance area. Other forms of building wide assessment are being administered and used to guide instruction for all students (ex. – math unit test profiles). All of these assessments are given and analyzed on a fall to spring basis, but there is no data to demonstrate that this data is reviewed on a spring to spring basis as a measure of regression as it applies to special education and the decision for extended school year.

There was limited documentation available for NCLB accountability concerning standardized second language proficiency assessment and AYP/AMAO data for English language learners that would indicate that test scores are used to identify gaps. During interviews, ESL and bilingual staff members could not articulate how this data analysis would be used to drive their instructional and assessment practices. There is evidence that this data was presented to the faculty at their orientation in September and during common planning time.

STANDARD 2 NEXT STEPS

Language Arts Literacy
Data from the initial reading and writing assessments should be reflected on the assessment walls. (2.1)

Mathematics
1. Refine plan book notations to clearly delineate how mastery of the specific new content being presented/developed in the focus section of each individual lesson will be assessed. (2.2)

2. Incorporate more daily opportunities for students to reflect upon and enumerate expectations for what they are expected to know and be able to do in relation to the content being presented/developed in the focus section of each individual lesson. (2.3)

STANDARD 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Language Arts Literacy

1. One GLM each month should be devoted to the collaborative analysis of student work. The results of these analyses should be used to develop authentic assessment tasks and corresponding rubrics on at least a quarterly basis. Instructional and curricular implications should also be reflected upon during this process. At least quarterly, grade level representatives should bring GLM work product to the vertical articulation meetings in order to support the curriculum mapping process. (1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, and 3.7)

2. Embedded training should address the topic of differentiated assessment. (2.2 and 3.3)

3. All classrooms should contain grade-appropriate rubrics that are routinely used by teachers to both communicate expectations of and evaluate student performance. Opportunities for developmentally appropriate student self-evaluation should be included in all classrooms. Teachers should also be encouraged to model peer review in both reading and writing, and provide opportunities for students to participate in this process to increase student learning and help students internalize expectations. (2.3)

4. The SLC, in conjunction with school leadership and the vertical articulation representative, should develop a process to ensure that data is used to provide targeted professional development of increasing depth to ensure that teachers have access to a well-developed functional repertoire of strategies and techniques to address identified needs for all students. Leadership should emphasize this movement toward data-driven instruction in feedback that is given from building walkthroughs and in staff evaluations. (2.4 and 3.4)

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-cluster areas in the NJ CCCS for mathematics, and (c) offer students a choice in forms of assessment. (2.1) (2.2) (2.4)

Special Education

1. Special education teachers should participate in professional development and collaboration activities devoted to designing assessment activities in the areas of multiple intelligences, learning style and authentic assessment, and rubric design. (2.1)

2. All measures of student needs and progress should be reviewed on a spring to spring basis as a determination of regression. This information should be used by the IEP as a partial indicator of whether a child requires extended school year. (2.4)

District

1. Continue to help all stakeholders more effectively implement best practices for standards-based, balanced mathematics instruction by expanding and refining the number of mandatory professional development offerings that (a) clearly target the mathematics behind the "big ideas" and connections in the curriculum (especially those embedded in problem-solving tasks), (b) help teachers grow in their understanding and application of what is currently known about how children learn math. (3.1) (3.3) (3.4) (3.7)

2. Assign a full-time math coach with sufficient content and pedagogical expertise to the school so that a more classroom-embedded program of professional development can take place (including following up on what occurs at district training sessions), thus reducing the disconnect between the written and implemented curricula.

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:

- Review of Abbott report on instructional priorities (3-Year School Improvement Plan), District grade-level, mathematics and literacy curriculum guides (K-4), Documents of professional development days/release time, Grade-level, SLC, and faculty meeting agendas and attendance rosters, District and school policies, Board approved math programs and related teacher and student materials, Lesson plans, Class schedules, Formal assessment data from the state and district (NJ-ASK for grades 3 and 4; SPA for grades 5-7; GEPA for grade 8), Informal classroom-based assessment data (unit test results; checklists; grades on mid-term and final exams), opening day packet, staff assignments, sample Professional Improvement Plan (PIP), sample evaluation, SLT IV monthly writing action plan, classroom assessment, homework policy, student work, student planner, common planning schedule, observation survey, DRA, and disaggregated data documents
- Observations of hallways, classroom libraries, and technology use by students and teachers
- Student, parent, school-based and district staff member interviews
- Classroom visitations

STANDARD 3 INDICATORS

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

FINDINGS
Language Arts Literacy

There is evidence that the district has adopted a balanced literacy framework replete with effective and varied instructional practices. These are utilized in most classrooms. Several teachers use student-centered, culturally responsive instructional strategies like guided reading, student-facilitated discussion reflecting higher order thinking skills, and learning centers accommodating various learning styles. Few teachers intentionally plan for and make interdisciplinary connections. The implemented CRP has a thematic approach that enables teachers to require students to focus on guiding and essential questions.

Mathematics

Because the school is only beginning its second full year of implementation of the *Everyday Mathematics* program, teachers indicate that they are still struggling with managing aspects of the program and trying to adjust to the concept of a spiraling curriculum. There is limited evidence relative to the use of varied instructional strategies. In most classes and during most math lessons, instruction is still more teacher than child-centered and presented predominantly in a whole-group format with students operating as collections of individuals engaged in practice activities rather than in inquiry-based/exploratory problem-solving tasks that require the use of higher-order thinking skills and the communication of ones reasoning and solution methods. Although the *Everyday Mathematics* resource materials offer teachers some differentiated instructional options, they were not included in the district's curriculum guides, plan book notations, or put into practice during most classrooms visitation sessions. Manipulatives were listed in some plan books and some of the classrooms visitations pupils were actually using them or teachers reminded pupils that they could be used as problem-solving tools. It should also be noted that children's literature was incorporated into some lessons and most teachers were able to keep the focus primarily on the mathematics involved rather than on literacy skills.

Special Education

Observed special education classes included whole group, multiple group, and individualized instruction. Personal and capacity assistants were well used in all observed classes. After initial whole group instruction, students broke into groups in which they worked on computers, with aides, with the teacher, and rotated throughout the period. Classroom activities sometimes required students to use higher-order thinking or problem-solving skills.

Bi-Lingual

Observations in bilingual classrooms revealed the use of varied and pedagogically sound instructional practices such as learning centers, cooperative activities, graphic organizers, and thematic units of study that require interdisciplinary connections.

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

FINDINGS

Language Arts Literacy

The lack of a well-developed district curriculum results in many teachers aligning instructional strategies to the CRP. District and SLT guidance in the area of writing is a teacher resource that allows students to complete assessment tasks similar to those on state assessments. Similarly relevant items are available through assessments in the district-adopted CRP. Students are exposed to multiple genres and are daily required to respond to journal prompts that are open-ended, by nature. It is not evident that instructional strategies are informed by ongoing analysis of these informal assessments. Interviewed special education teachers indicated that they use specialized materials that provide learning activities that require students to complete assessment tasks similar to those on the state assessments (e.g., open-response questions, experiences with various types of reading)as a supplement to the curricular materials.

Mathematics

It is difficult to ascertain how effectively instructional strategies are informed by the analysis of student assessment data. As noted in standards 1 and 2 (above), assessment data that is available is not specific enough or organized in a manner that provides a clear alignment to the specific sub-cluster areas in the mathematics section of the NJ CCCS. Teachers and administrators indicate 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 and during some of the after-school programs, but evidence indicates that the regular inclusion of these types of tasks in grades K-2 is an area that is still being refined.

Special education teachers indicated that they use specialized materials that provide learning activities for students containing assessment tasks similar to those on the state assessments (e.g., open-response questions, converting data to graphs) as a supplement to the curricular materials.

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

FINDINGS

Language Arts Literacy

The school administers the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), intended to inform the formation of flexible reading groups. Classrooms are at varying levels of guided reading implementation. Various learning styles, multiple intelligences, and brain research are sometimes accommodated through instruction. School leadership monitors instruction and attempts to provide feedback to teachers that will assist them in meeting the needs of a diverse student population.

Mathematics

When interviewed many teachers indicate that they informally try to give additional help to pupils who demonstrate difficulty after a lesson is initially presented, but there was little or no differentiation of instruction relative to specific accommodations for learning styles and/or multiple intelligences demonstrated during most classroom visitations or noted in the plan books that were reviewed. In addition, most of the activities did not require the use of higher-order thinking or the justification and explanation of solution strategies by the students.

Special Education

Special education teachers interviewed indicated that they had an awareness of multiple intelligences and learning styles, but did not demonstrate knowledge of how to systematically inculcate this into their learning activities. Teacher consistently worked with children in small rotating groups and generally described that grouping as differentiation.

Bi-Lingual

Bilingual classroom instruction is monitored through formal and informal observations. A bilingual VP has been assigned to oversee the bilingual ESL program. Each administrator is responsible for coordinating and chairing the common preparation period meetings with their respective grade levels. The variety of instructional practices is evidence that students' needs and learning styles are addressed.

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

FINDINGS

Language Arts Literacy

Evidence demonstrates that school leadership has recruited personnel that are highly qualified, by NCLB standards, and certified to teach in their assigned grade levels. While teachers participate in the required hours of professional development, professional practice is not always updated. Most teachers demonstrate the necessary content knowledge consistent with the NJ CCCS to plan for grade level content areas and include literacy skills as a part of regular classroom instruction. Technological literacy is part of some teachers' classroom instruction. Some teachers use an overhead projector, tape player, and the computer lab in order to differentiate instruction. Leadership has provided resources and begun to require teachers to schedule routine use of the school's computer lab in order to expand this practice.

Some special education staff have not received formal training in implementing the Balanced Literacy Program at this time. There are limited coaching opportunities for coaching by the literacy coach and resource teacher coordinator.

Mathematics

Teachers demonstrate varying levels of progress in the movement to toward a standards-based, balanced math instructional program, with most still struggling with providing an effective "balance" and the concept of a spiraling curriculum. As a result, a disconnect still exists between the written and implemented curricula because it takes time to make the major instructional and content knowledge shift that is needed—i.e., it requires teachers to move away from the way they were taught math as well as the way they were trained to teach math. Stakeholders should move away from the traditional specific skills and procedures view of mathematics learning to a view that sees mathematics as a science that explores relationships between/among concepts, facts, skills, and a specialized symbolic language that can effectively be developed mainly through ongoing problem-solving, mathematical

reasoning, and justification of ones solution methods. Compounding the above are the facts that (a) the entire school moved into the *Everyday Mathematics* program at one time, putting many students (especially those in grades 3 and 4) at a disadvantage of not having sufficient exposure to the program to prepare them for the changes and challenges at their grade level and (b) 2004-05 was the school's first full year of implementation of *Everyday Mathematics* (transition began in the Spring of 2003).

Both school leadership and the district's math supervisory staff recognize the need for ongoing, job-focused, professional development with the goal of enabling the various stakeholders to 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 curriculum monitoring, assessment, and pedagogical strategies. Both district-wide and school-based activities have been implemented, but (as noted earlier in this report) there is a need to make them more systematized, frequent, specific in focus, and classroom-embedded (for ongoing teacher coaching and consultation).

Some, but not all, special education teachers have participated in a three-day workshop on implementing the Everyday Math curriculum.

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

FINDINGS

Language Arts Literacy

There is some evidence that teachers incorporate the use of technology in their classrooms. The district E-pals and E-board are sometimes used to expand the classroom into the community. Each classroom has at least two computers. Only computers in third, fourth, and one self-contained classroom are networked; however, all teachers are required, this year, to schedule themselves into the computer lab. Some teachers routinely use technology for instructional purposes. There is little evidence of the monitoring of this practice.

There is a full-time technology coordinator in place. A needs assessment was conducted to develop the school technology plan. Technical assistance is provided on an as-needed basis. There is evidence that some training has centered on the use of technology in the classroom.

All observed special education teachers have been provided computers, some of which are on the internet. In each of their classrooms, they are being used as a part of the literacy and math programs to practice math problems and writing. Students are broken into various groups and one of the groups rotates throughout the class period. All teachers have been provided educational software, either on their stand alone computer. Currently, there is limited availability of the Internet in classrooms, but it is available in the lab

Mathematics

Although some teachers are using technology to generate their math lesson plans, classroom visitations and lesson plan notations did not indicate that technology is being infused into instruction on a regular basis. Overhead projectors were seen in some classrooms, and some were observed in use during math

instructional time. Calculators were available in most of the classrooms that were visited, some plan books contained notations relative to their use on an occasional basis, and students were observed using them during some lesson visitations. Most classrooms have at least two computers, but Internet access is not available throughout the school as yet and a resource list of web sites and software is provided by the district's math department. Specific plans relative to the infusion of computer technology in the math instructional program are still being refined, but the building-based technology coordinator has instituted a regular schedule of classroom visitations to the computer lab rather than only having a sign up system for those teachers interested in using it with their class.
All observed special education teachers have been provided computers, some of which are on the Internet. In each of their classrooms, they are being used as a part of the math program to practice math problems. Students are broken into various groups and one of the groups rotates throughout the class period. All teachers have been provided educational software.

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

The school has swiftly addressed resource deficiencies noted in the Intensive Early Literacy Report in 2004. Many classrooms have met and exceeded state requirements. There is still a shortage of guided reading materials to supplement instruction. Although diversity is minimally reflected in the instructional resources, all resources are age appropriate.

In special education classrooms, there is a sufficient variety of printed instructional material to support the literacy and math curriculum. However, there are less materials available to supplement the curriculum for the lowest functioning students. In addition 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.

Mathematics

Teachers interviewed report that the principal has made a concerted effort to outfit their classrooms with a sufficient supply of electronic, print, and manipulative teaching materials and resources. They also indicate that he is always open to suggestions for new materials/resources and attempts to secure them in a timely manner. Because of the variety of components and options available in the *Everyday Mathematics* program, teachers report that the learning curve for managing the program has taken much of their time and effort to date. Third and fourth grade classrooms also use test-preparation booklets containing items similar in format to those found on the NJ-ASK. Manipulatives were observed in use during some classroom visitation sessions. Because of the nature of mathematics, many of the manipulatives used 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 exists in the form of calculators, overhead projectors, a minimum of 2 computers per classroom, a computer lab, and computer

software. However, the specific application of technology infusion in the mathematics instructional program has not been clearly delineated and implemented as yet.

Most special education teachers indicated that they have sufficient materials to support the district curriculum, but have expressed the need for more assistance from special education specialists such as the special education resource teacher. The Special Education Resource Teacher serves 16 schools and is only able to provide limited classroom assistance.

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

FINDINGS

Language Arts Literacy

The majority of the teachers have received some training in the administration of the DRA. It is not evident that this training has been expanded to inform instructional practice beyond the formation of reading groups. While teachers in Kindergarten through second grade have uneven levels of training on the writing process, it is clear that teachers in grades three and four have received training. The conferencing portion of the process is not clearly reflected in evidence. There are protocols for analyzing student writing, namely the assessment wall, that are partially implemented. There is some evidence that teachers' access released items to individually analyze student work; but, collaborative analysis is not regularly scheduled.

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. Some special education teachers have expressed concern about this process in that their students score so low compared to other students that at this point it does not result in valuable information in regard to instruction within their classrooms.

Mathematics

As noted in standards 1 and 2 (above), teachers meet to collaboratively analyze student date, but most of the data used to date is not specific enough or organized in a manner that provides a clear alignment to the specific sub-cluster areas in the mathematics section of the NJ CCCS. It was also noted (in standards 1 and 2) that they are beginning to study and discuss exemplars of student work and to apply what they learn to samples of their own students' work. While a district math resource teacher/coordinator is facilitating the initial phase of this work, there is no building-based math specialist to help insure that the process is ongoing, that teachers grow in their proficiency to use to the results to effectively inform/adjust their instruction, and that there is a formalized plan for the focus areas that will be addressed throughout the school year.

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

FINDINGS

Language Arts Literacy

School leadership has provided student planners for all grade levels and encouraged their use as tools for communication between parents and teachers. These, along with other available evidence indicate that homework is frequent, tied to instructional practice, and monitored.

Special Education: All special education teachers assign homework on a daily basis and use it as a means to inform instruction and to assess student learning.

Mathematics

Homework assignments were posted in most classes that were visited and related notations were found in many plan books that were reviewed. Based on the evidence presented, it appears that most of the homework is focused on practice activities rather than providing opportunities for extending learning and addressing higher-order thinking, reasoning, and justification of solution strategies within a problem-solving context.

All special education teachers assign homework on a daily basis and use it as a means to inform instruction and to assess student learning.

STANDARD 3 NEXT STEPS

Language Arts Literacy

The SLC, in conjunction with school leadership, should consider the modification of the CRP assessment tool to align it more fully to the state assessments. If done, the time currently allotted for LAL Test Sophistication could be added to the writing block in order to provide increased opportunities for teachers to conduct guided writing. This technique scaffolds writing instruction in a powerful way that will improve student performance on state assessments.

Mathematics

1. Dedicate some grade-level meeting time to a focus on ways to incorporate differentiated instruction that address various learning styles/multiple intelligences in addition to the specific mathematics learning target and prepare a listing of possible options for teacher reference in future lesson planning and implementation activities.(3.3)

STANDARD 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Language Arts Literacy

1. Teachers should receive scaffolded training on differentiated instruction and guided reading in order to gain the required skills and confidence level to effectively implement these strategies. Leadership walkthroughs should monitor lesson plans and classroom instruction to ensure the practices are evenly implemented. Teacher use of wait time should be reinforced. (3.1)
2. School leadership should monitor the use of technology and conduct targeted walkthroughs to ensure that teachers regularly use multiple forms of technology during classroom instruction in

order to address diverse learning needs and to develop students' technological literacies. (3.4 and 3.5)
3. School leadership should continue to enhance resources for the development of classroom libraries that reflect the diverse cultures of the students and address students' learning needs. (3.6)

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 professional development activities that will enable teachers see and experience mathematics teaching and learning within the framework of a balanced, standards-based mathematics in a classroom-embedded context. (3.1) (3.2) (3.3) (3.4) (3.7)

Special Education

1. Greater in class support should be provided to special education teachers, especially new teachers, by the Special Education Resource Teacher. (3.6, 3.7)

2. 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)

3. Research the use of a supplemental reading program should be provided for those 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. (3.6)

4. Although special education teachers participate in GLMs, this process could be further enhanced through an additional structure in which special education teachers meet with the special education resource teacher in regard to the needs of special education students and to inform a broader range of instructional options. (3.7)

District

3. Continue to help all stakeholders more effectively implement best practices for standards-based, balanced mathematics instruction by expanding and refining the number of and voluntary professional develop development offerings that (a) clearly target the mathematics behind the "big ideas" and connections in the curriculum (especially those embedded in problem-solving tasks) and (b) help teachers grow in their understanding and application of what is currently known about how children learn math. (3.1) (3.3) (3.4) (3.7)

4. Assign a full-time math coach with sufficient content and pedagogical expertise to the school so that a more classroom-embedded program of professional development can take place (including following up on what occurs at district training sessions), thus reducing the disconnect between the written and implemented curricula.

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:

- Review of School Safety Plan, Student/Parent Handbooks/SLC Planning Committee Minutes, Outdoors, cafeteria and hallway observations, School safety plan, Emergency Drill plans, Schedule for adult supervision, Teacher lesson plans, State assessments, PIPS, Disaggregated data, Classroom libraries, Bulletin Boards, Student recognition by PTO, Displays of student work, Master schedule, Instructional Resources that reflect diversity, Bullying policy, Lesson Unit plans and assignments, Community organization list and Sexual harassment policy
- Classroom visitations
- Teacher, non-instructional staff, administrator, parent, student and district interviews

STANDARD 4 INDICATORS

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

FINDINGS

According to the staff interviews and observed interactions between administration and staff and students all groups feel safe and supported by the administration. The school leadership has created and cultivated an environment that is warm, inviting, safe, and instructionally sound by establishing classroom management and discipline policies that provide for this safe environment, not only for students but all members of the school. The administration has demonstrated the necessary commitment in the creation of a school environment that is equitable and meaningful for all stakeholders in the school community. School leadership collaborates with district representatives, community members and staff to maintain an ongoing communication loop to constantly improve and maintain a safe healthy, orderly and equitable learning environment. The Administration highlights the need to minimize disruptions to instruction by collaborating with school members to ensure that instruction is taking place. The school environment and physical structure of the school is clean well maintained provides for a safe, healthy and equitable learning environment. The installation of cameras and monitors to observe many of the areas on the perimeter of the school has also added to the improved safety of the school climate.

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.

FINDING

There are high expectations for all students, and it is documented by progressive writing walls, and celebrated student literacy work decorating the classrooms and the hallways throughout the school. Meaningful interactions between students and teachers regarding performance, behavior and individual needs of students, is evidenced by the transactional relationship between students and teachers. Students feel comfortable in asking questions and teachers use appropriate amounts of praise to cultivate motivation with students. Questioning and answering techniques employed by teachers for students, supports student interest and ongoing learning by talking about real world applications in literacy classes visited. Staff and community members are involved in providing praise through award ceremonies. The use of the computers and access to the internet provides additional motivation for students beyond the classroom. Teachers and administration exude a happiness and contentedness as a team that works collaboratively to meet the needs of students as the primary focus of their efforts. Parents and the community are extremely involved in the functioning of the school and accept the responsibility for providing excellent instruction for all students as a whole.

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

FINDINGS

The school leadership has cultivated a sense of ownership for the success or failure amongst the staff. The staff works tirelessly in attempting to meet the instructional needs of students on an ongoing basis. Teachers, administration and district representatives understand the link between student achievement and instructional effectiveness. Systematic reviews of instruction are in place evidenced by grade level meetings and targeted professional development for instructional staff. The demonstrated reflective practice, some teachers engage in during their grade level meetings and professional development speaks to the commitment of the staff in the success of students in the school. There is some evidence that formal and informal meetings, established by instructional staff strengthens pedagogical practice by offering teachers the time to reflect and engage in recursive dialogue to improve practice. There is some of evidence that students have the opportunity to give teachers feedback. The design of classroom instruction is established by district representatives, administration and teachers to promote student achievement by advancing the necessary need for critical thinking and reflective practice as it impacts student success.

4.4 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

It was apparent that the school has gone through the painstaking process of assigning staff to classes that best suits their skills and experience. School leadership makes decisive and meaningful moves of staff based upon improving the quality of instruction for students. The decisiveness of the Principal was demonstrated by the moving of teachers, and a vice principal, last year to improve the instructional program for the following year. School leadership taps into the community to bring ion people of

different expertise, Fireman, Police Officer, Web designer, Postal Worker to augment student interest and provide for a varied knowledge bank that students could access. District Representatives and School administration meet frequently to discuss and improve the flexibility of the schedule to meet student instructional needs and maximize teacher strengths to improve student achievement. Classrooms were places of high activity and motivated interest of children and teachers. Opportunities for engaged learning was plentiful and this was a consequence or the yield of student excitement and active participation in line with appropriate teacher assignment within his or her classroom.

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

FINDINGS

Student achievement is highly valued by staff and administration. School staff members regularly celebrate student achievement. Student achievement is celebrated at Board of Education meetings and community-based parent student meetings and councilman meetings for students in the North Ward. Classrooms are print rich having all forms appropriate incentives for displaying student achievement. Exhibitions of student work and achievement are evident in the school building.. The staff accepts the challenges of presenting student work in progress, and work that has been completed by students in the process of learning. There is some evidence of rubrics and work of students apparent and when students are questioned they understand the rubric "process." In the area of literacy, there were displays of quality student work outside of each classroom. However there was very little quality work on display in the area of mathematics or other content areas. Although all teachers use the writing rubric, only some were on display with student work.

There are three special education program offerings: one LD self contained class, one BD self contained class, and a resource replacement class that offers literacty and math classes. Students in replacement classes, are integrated into the regular education program for the rest of their day. There are a few students who are receiving in class support classes with the assistance of a personal aid or the resource center teacher. It has been reported that, in the cases where children are integrated, it is working well. All of the students who are placed in self contained classes (about 2/3 of the special education students) only have an opportunity to interact with typically developing peers during specials and lunch, not during academic classes. All special education teachers indicate that they have students who would be suitable for ICS, but feel that they are prevented from doing so by the IEP which mandates a self contained program. Some teachers expressed that they have not been given input into the development of the IEP, and, in fact are not invited to the meeting. The administration also endorses an expansion of the resource program, but again sites the IEP as the reason it is not provided. 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 adminstration does not feel that they have lattitude to alter these student's programs. They have expresses a desire to work more closely with teacher, parents and the administration to move closer to a more inclusive model.

Although school leadership has implemented a staffing procedure that meets regulation and ensures an effective student/teacher ratio for meeting the needs of general education students, they lack the control to fully implement such a procedure for special education students. Aside from the integration issue noted above, they lack the local control to establish grade level spans within special education classes

within their own building. The building administration has set their acceptable instructional range as two years, within the self contained classes and were able to establish this in the past with the cooperation of the SLT. However during this school year, the Office of Special Education dictated that their BD class was to serve a four year age range, as allowed by law. The building administration feels that this interferes with the instructional quality within this program and creates some uncomfortable student influences when placing a 6 year old BD student in the same class with a 10 year old BD.

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

The school is centrally located in a Latino community. Much of the staff is bilingual and they demonstrate the necessary empathy to be effective instructional leaders in a school to make the transfer between cultures. The school was decorated and is print rich with bilingual written material that cultivates further interest in exploring more deeply a broad range of cultural and intellectual interests. The principal is from the community and demonstrated the sensitivity and critical awareness to comprehend the social, instructional and cultural needs of such a diverse community. The school community celebrates diversity in the many celebrations and community events that occur at the school throughout the year. This is particularly evident by the high parental involvement in the school. Instructional practice incorporates diversity and is sustained seamlessly due to the high amount of respect given to multiculturalism, and a sensitive administration and staff.

STANDARD 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Special Education

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:

- Instructional and non-instructional staff member, parents and student interviews
- Review of community involvement programs, Perception survey, Visitation logs, Newsletter and Three-year operational plan
- Classroom visitation
- Student handbooks

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. Through an open door policy for parents they are allowed to access computers for training. There is a parent liaison that is very active with distributing flyers (English and Spanish), fund raisers, and planning community projects. Training for parents is offered by the school in both English and Spanish (e.g. Every Parent Influences a Child (EPIC), workshops). There are strategies in place that promote interaction between parents and teachers to evaluate student performance (Parent/Teacher conferences, Open house, Student Homework book). Parental involvement is highly visible in the school on a daily basis. Parents interviewed are active in the classrooms, the cafeteria, playgrounds and at the Parent Council Meetings. There are two parents on the School Leadership Council (SLC) team. Community and school programs are offered to all students.

Although there is evidence of parental participation in a number of school programs, including the parents of special education students living in the neighborhood served by the school, it is noted that there is low participation of the parents of special education students who live in areas outside of this neighborhood.

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 a procedure in place to communicate with parents on a regular basis (e.g. phone, e-mail, visits, flyers, student handbooks, E-Pal) to discuss student progress. Parents interviewed were pleased and satisfied with the opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's education. Teachers are encouraged to communicate with parents on a weekly basis and

communications are not only about discipline problems. Special education staff does 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 are two to three computers in every classroom. There is a computer lab that is available all day for instructional use and for parents. There is evidence that steps are being made to eliminate gaps in achievement (Connective Math).

There is an after school program offered to ELL students (Bilingual ESL Extension Project BEEP) that focuses on academic studies. Student data is used and analyzed in this program**.** Guidance counselors collaborate with staff members and families to provide support services to meet the needs of the students.

There is an after-school program that offers homework assistance, NJASK preparation, as well as a supplemental instruction program, as required by NCLB. However, only a handful of special education students attend. Most special education students do not live in the school community and do not take advantage of late transportation, in order to participate. Currently there is no late bus to accommodate these students. 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 that their students are in the greatest need for this program.

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. Platform learning is offered and evaluated to meet the needs of the students. The school and community collaborate to provide all students with opportunities for learning.(e.g. Focus, Raising Readers, Do Something Club, Platform Learning). There are policies in place that support student health and social services referrals when needed.

There is an active Pupil Resource Committee (PRC). The PRC team has not been formally trained and does not have all of the valuable materials provided by the state **(**Intervention and Referral Services Committee Manual). They meet once per month or more, if necessary, to deliberate over referrals.. They have received 46 referrals last year. Most are resolved without a CST referral. Outside resources are often not a timely intervention, due to parents and students being placed on waiting lists. The building administrator is not a member of the team and only attends occasionally. They have not played a role in staff development needs. The PRC currently carries very few cases to the following school without an additional referral. Some teachers are concerned about the length of time that it takes for the committee to respond to a referral.

There is a NJASK academy made available to students (grade 3 & 4) as a means of providing additional instruction to prepare for the state assessments. Special education students do not attend due to a lack of transportation

STANDARD 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. 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)

2. 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)

3. 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 up-coming training. Outside intervention resources should be identified and linkages established between the school and the agency in order to provide these services in-house. A school administrator, or his designee, should be permanently assigned to the committee.(5.4)

District

1. Investigate providing transportation for parents who could possibly be bused from a central location in each SLT to appropriate schools for participation in important parental activities, such as conferences, IEP meetings, etc.(5.1)

2. Many of the problems associate with this particular indicator could be ameliorated by each school providing programs for all of their student 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:

- Review of Three-year operational plan, sample PIPs, sample evaluations, Grade level minutes and Teacher Handbook
- Classroom visitations
- Teacher, administrator and district interviews

STANDARD 6 INDICATORS

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

FINDINGS

The school recognizes the importance of professional development and sets aside blocks of time each week for teachers to gather collegially in Grade Level Meetings (GLM). The expectations for these meetings are that they focus on the improvement of instruction by planning instructional strategies and staff development activities. Meetings are generally led by vice-principals, literacy coach or RTCs with teachers contributing. Minutes indicated that there are opportunities for some problem solving and sharing to identify and think through concerns of practice.

While there is a general plan to alternate meetings with math and literacy content and there is evidence in agendas of opportunities to discuss how to embed technology into content, there are no specific action plans for this year articulated at the building level for math and literacy that give a yearly structure to these meetings with clear expectations for teacher practice changes as a result of this professional development.

There are new teachers who are participating in a pilot project for Induction of New Teachers with Mathematic to improve their practice and provide feedback for the Induction Process. 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. District initiatives are aligned with Professional Improvement Plans (PIP) of teachers and principals.

The district offers staff development aligned to an assessment of student needs in literacy and math. Activity teachers and teacher aides have their own meetings. Both groups express a desire for more planning opportunities with the classroom teachers. Teacher aides feel a need to know more about the reading curriculum.

6.2 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.

FINDINGS

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. The Professional development opportunities for staff and administrators are determined in alignment with the district programmatic responses for improving students' achievement in math and literacy and addressing teacher identified needs and those identified through the evaluation process. The PIPs of staff are aligned with these overall general goals as well as customized to certain specific needs of individual teachers. There is no reference in PIPs to the school's Instructional Priorities plan. The district's assessment of administrators is aligned to the ISLLC standards. Principals receive monthly professional opportunities both through superintendent workshops and SLT IV meetings. Vice-principals meet monthly both with the superintendent and the SLT IV staff. These are all tied to improvement of instruction.

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

FINDINGS

Professional development activities for teachers are varied. There are 6 full-day and 2 ½ days allocated for staff development in the school year calendar as well as staff development opportunities during the summer and on weekends. There are other opportunities provided by the district for specific content workshops tailored to teachers of specific grades.

Professional development is job embedded and tailored to teacher needs and school-based as far as addressing major areas of math and literacy. GLMs focus part of every agenda on identified content areas. Teachers work on developing skills related to their content as well as to analyze student work and to address concerns. The time allotted to these activities in the agendas, however, is limited . Coaching is provided in some classes in literacy and is more limited in math due to the lack of a math coach on site. There have been no cross grade levels meetings held yet this school year, although evidence exists that these meetings were held last year. All staff share the responsibility for professional improvement as expressed in interviews. Many resources are made available to teachers through the district e-boards, the literacy coach and RTCs.
GLM agendas reviewed indicate items to be addressed and brief notes to summarize outcomes and in some cases next steps. Agendas are quite full and time allotments seem to be limited for the development of teacher's deeper understanding of the topic concepts and skills identified.
As expressed by the administrators, there is a need this year to differentiate the professional development opportunities for teachers, even during these meetings.

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 PIPs. The three areas are: district initiatives, personal needs identified by teachers and needs identified through the evaluation process. Teachers report that assessment of PIPs is on-going during observation post-conferences. Written PIPs provided for review show that activities are boiler plate rather than specific. There is no reference to the Abbott report on instructional priorities in the reviewed written PIPs. Teachers feel, but have no hard data, that their PIPs impact their professional practice

The employee evaluation form is directly connected to the four domains of teaching as identified by Charlotte Danielson. Teachers interviewed are aware of the four domains and express an understanding that they need to develop themselves within these domains. Written Evaluation provided for review clearly assesses all the domains. The evaluation process used in district encourages teacher reflection.

STANDARD 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

School

1. Identify clearly for all staff targets for professional development and create professional development action plans for these targets. (6.1)

2. Clearly state the Instructional priorities in PIPs so that all teachers are immersed in the working towards achieving these specific priorities in their professional growth. (6.2)

3. Have the SLC subcommittee review and analyze GLM agendas and make recommendations for how to allot more time for the concentration on the content pieces. (6.3)

4. Continue to assist teachers to identify specific activities on their PIPs tied to the goals. Clearly connect goals to the School's Instructional Priorities. Encourage teachers to keep reflective records of their professional development activities in keeping with the total evaluation process' expectations for teacher reflection. (6.4)

District

1. Assist administrators to more clearly connect PIPs to the goals of the schools and the evaluation process so that the, connections to specific student learning and the reflective aspect of teacher's learning becomes more focused and integral to student improvement. (6.4)

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:

- Review of Data analysis, SLC (school leadership committee) planning and committee meeting notes, agendas, minutes, Faculty and grade level team meeting agendas and minutes, Perception Survey, Teacher and Administrator PIP'S (professional improvement plans), Three Year Improvement Plan, Analysis of master schedule and Professional development activities yearly list
- Administrator, student, SLC members, professional staff, non-professional staff interviews

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

All data is systematically analyzed by the members of the professional staff and becomes the basis for specific plans regarding targets for instructional focus leading to increased student achievement. The Principal and vice-principals, together with the SLC, complete a first round analysis. The process continues on to the literacy coach, academic tutors and grade level staff for further review and continued analysis. One of the academic tutors serves as an unofficial mathematics support person to the staff. One of the ESL teachers for grades 3&4 serves as the part time testing coordinator. While it is a positive statement about staff willingness to complete all of the tasks necessary to support good data analysis and instructional improvement, it is also an example of reduced direct services to specific student populations. The principal is clearly focused on student academic accomplishment. Some examples of his actions based upon the analysis of data include staff placement changes, decisions about re-hiring, adding additional time for writing. He includes the vice-principals in all operations of the school and consults, and interacts with, the SLC to the fullest degree possible, but also may initiate change himself, while explaining it to the staff for their review and feedback.

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

FINDINGS

Documentation shows that data analysis results in specific decisions about instructional practice. The analysis is generalized, not specific. Professional development, that supports staff delivery of research based best instructional practices, and collaborative services by the vice- principals, literacy coach, academic tutors, technology specialist, in collaboration with all teaching staff members, is evident. However, the scaffolding support for teacher professional development based upon what individual needs might be, is less evident. Sub-group analysis and grade level profiles are a focus of the data review and the three administrators have taken the role of grade level leaders, (pre-k –1), (2-3), and (4). Data about the educational progress of the non-resident special education students is not made available to the school. Instead, it is kept by the sending school. There is also focused discussion about instructional interventions and program design to move the Special Education and English Language Learners further ahead, resulting from the data analysis process. Port of entry youngsters, with no English, and in many cases lack of education and literacy in the native language, present significant issues to the staff. The student profile of the school represents many children in need of intensive exposure to language. Even with the very substantial parental involvement in reading activities, class size reduces the impact of instructional practices because of the depth of need of the clients.

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

FINDINGS

The principal carefully allocates the resources made available to the school by the district budget. All staff members report that they have an excellent array of materials they need and are able to request specific items that may emerge. The school has a print rich collection, at least two computers in each classroom, a full computer and science laboratory, math calculators and manipulatives. This year, given the existence of 5 academic tutors, (4.5 literacy and .5 math) the principal assigned one per grade level to further support the specific curricular and instructional priorities and practices of the

staff on that grade level, related to literacy. The tutors are recommending that they help in connecting the staff across grade level, which is an area that the principal recognizes should be strengthened. Creating the additional writing time across the school, is an example of a decision to modify the use of time related to a specific emergent need that was evident in the data.

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

Leadership is shared and collaborative, but everyone agrees that the principal is the driving force of this school. His presence is evident in classrooms, walking the halls, in the cafeteria, meeting parents before and after school as he walks the street around the school. Teachers understand exactly what is expected of them as professionals, and what is being looked for in the informal visits to classrooms. Data was not available to show the reflective process that results from these informal exchanges. Together with all personnel assigned to the school, the principal has created a very orderly, but child appropriate environment, that is safe, clean, nurturing and inviting. Students and parents, who were interviewed, indicate that they are pleased to be part of Elliott Street School and staff members do not ask to transfer to other building sites. The principal demonstrated an understanding of the Core Curriculum Standards, data analysis, instructional best practices, and organizational conditions that support staff and student growth, during his presentation to the CAPA team and in subsequent interviews. Faculty, grade level and other meetings all have stated and acted upon instructional focus. Students interviewed in grades three and four are able to explain how the school helps them to learn, how they know if they are making progress as learners, why they enjoy being a student in this school. Parents echo similar comments.

STANDARD 7 NEXT STEPS

1. The principal should work with the academic tutors to create a vertical, cross-grade level linkage among the grade levels and staff. (7.3)

STANDARD 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Administrative Team, (principal and vice-principals), should maintain an ongoing file of the informal walk-through written materials, so they can become a more useful tool in the mentoring and monitoring of improved specific instructional practice of each teacher. (7.3)

2. The principal/vice-principals and SLC should extend the conversation regarding the needs of the two sub-group populations that are still struggling to reach required levels of academic accomplishment. The study will necessitate the collaboration with district experts and other leaders in the field of Special Education and English Language Learning. These are not building based needs, but a district and national priority. There is information beginning to be discussed in the school regarding intensive enrichment immersion programs for ELL. A thorough philosophical and research based conversation regarding inclusion should be completed and district practices reviewed against this analysis. As the district and school reach the point of action research pilot project initiation, the appropriate resources will have to be provided from the district. (7.1; 7.2; 7.4)

3. The Administrative Team should engage the SLC in developing a more thorough analysis of student data and individual staff development needs and then build to support program related to the findings. (7.1; 7.2;)

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:

- Review of perception survey, Master schedule, Minutes and agendas of staff, grade level and SLC meetings, lesson plans in classrooms visited, NCLB School Improvement Plan
- Instructional and non-instructional staff members, administrator and student interviews

STANDARD 8 INDICATORS

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

FINDINGS

Staff assignments are made with specific intention to match student needs to the experience and skills of the staff members available. This is evident by the movement of certain staff from one grade level to another, as well as the decision to not rehire certain persons. Changes in grade level assignment, linking the literacy tutors to a grade level, exemplify the intentional process. The school has highly qualified staff, with one person awaiting final paper clearance from Trenton. The principal has carefully brought males into the school in both professional and non-professional positions. All positions requiring specific certification have been appropriately filled. Instructional assistants are placed to meet the learning needs of students, within the limited resource of such personnel available to the school. The administrative team has a well- developed collaborative working relationship with the non-instructional staff. The non-instructional staff reports that they feel a valued part of the team that provides services to the children. The principal has linked the school to community organizations to provide additional support to students who are not in grade levels that have the district provided aides. There is evidence of collaboration throughout the school, fostered by specific time provided, but more especially through a shared culture of collaboration that the principal has nurtured. All teachers new to the building have a mentor, whether required because of certification or not.

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

Instructional time is specifically scheduled as evidenced by the time set aside for literacy, mathematics, writing, science and special area subjects. This year the principal instituted assigned time for each class to use the computer lab. Previously, individuals elected to use the facility, with some being regular users while those less comfortable stayed away. With a specific school goal to embed technology in the instructional repertoire of all teachers, as another tool to better differentiate instruction, the decision naturally flowed from the data analysis and goal setting process. The staff is very supportive of the decision. The schedule shows that instructional modules have a common time that ends one activity and begins another. Some time is lost in this situation when students have to move from one room/floor, to another. Student management in classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, is in – place and appropriate to the age level of the students in this school. It creates a calm positive learning environment that is focused on student learning.

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

The principal has implemented a master schedule that protects grade level horizontal planning time. The need for vertical, cross grade level meeting time is expressed throughout the school. Opportunity for this collaboration was provided twice last year on early release days. At present, it is not possible for the special area teachers to be part of these meetings because they instruct the students while the grade level personnel meet. The three administrators are in-charge of the grade level meetings, serving as instructional and administrative leaders in that capacity. Lesson plans are reviewed on a regular basis.

STANDARD 8 NEXT STEPS

1. Review the schedule of academic literacy tutors to attempt to bring them into the grade level meeting. (8.3; 8.2;)

2. Invite a teacher from grade 2 and 3 to become a cross grade level linkage team, allowing the improved understanding of the NJASK to develop. (8.2; 8.3)

STANDARD 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The principal should gather staff recommendations regarding the improved use of the grade level meetings. Time needs to be more specifically allocated to things such as, the specific teaching of mathematics, sharing of teacher concerns and practices that work well. (8.2; 8.3)

2. Create a formal, specific, delineated plan for in-class collaborative co-teaching and reflective process between the grade level teachers and the literacy coach, resulting from the data analysis and programmatic instructional decisions that emerge from the grade level meetings. (8.1; 8.3)

3. Engage the non-professional instructional aides and their instructional partners in appropriate staff development activities related to their collaborative roles in the teaching and learning process. (8.1; 8.3)

4. Gather staff input regarding the need for support related to the improvement of instruction in mathematics, including components such as, but not limited to, a full time math coach and professional development in a content and classroom embedded best instructional practices model. Then create an operational plan to meet the needs that emerge. (8.3)

5. The leadership team should engage the staff in a thorough analysis of the current master schedule, to determine what areas of need regarding the use of time may not be currently met. Among the possible issues that emerge, consideration should be given to the time between 8:35-8:45, when students have breakfast and announcements are made over the public address system, as well as those times before and after a class goes to and returns from special subject areas. Then a sub-committee should be empowered to investigate alternative models to determine what additional needs can be facilitated, and existing problems reduced. (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 SLC and faculty meeting agendas and minutes, Mission and vision statements, Perception survey, SLC sub-committee agendas and minutes and Data analysis records
- SLC and administrator interviews

STANDARD 9 INDICATORS

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

FINDINGS

Elliott Elementary School has a well-defined common vision and mission regarding the development of all of the children in the school. It is visible throughout the school in written form and actual practice. Parents are active partners in the implementation of these words into what is done in school and at home, to a degree that is worthy of recognition. The principal is an excellent spokesman for the school and models the beliefs in his interaction with students, staff parents and community members. The SLC sees itself as a partner in the leadership of the school. They describe the principal as very open to ideas, requiring strong data to support recommendations and willing to implement proposals that they bring forward.

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

Members of the SLC were very knowing about the data profile of the school. They speak to what changes have occurred over the past few years, how they have modified a plan when the data showed shortcomings. The SLC investigated the impact of homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping on student achievement. They began to sense that the data showed limitations in the then homogeneous pattern that was in place. Upon their initiation, the building engaged in a careful look at the question, even thought the principal did not initially agree with their position. By carefully documenting their work, the recommendation to move to heterogeneous grouping was brought forward and accepted by the principal. The impact on instruction was planned for, staff training was secured and the decision is fully operationalized.

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 vision and mission of the school are consistently the focus for planning strategies to increase student academic achievement. The Improvement Plan is generalized and generic while classroom practices and grade level tasks are more specific. Budget requests arise from the data analysis, and while they not always be secured, the basis for the requests is valid. It is not clear how the plan is evaluated.

STANDARD 9 NEXT STEP

Review the perception survey and open a conversation to determine what has created the difference between some of the staff responses and the perception that the principal and SLC members have about those same questions.(9.1; 9.2)

STANDARD 9 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The SLC should open a conversation about the needs of, and opportunities for, that population of students that has reached proficiency and is ready for the increased challenges of higher levels of academic achievement. (9.1; 9.2; 9.3)

2. The Administrative Team and SLC should take the staff through a process that will result in the creation of a building based school improvement action plan. The plan should have all of the appropriate components, including, but not limited to: school specific goals, time-lines, strategies for achieving the goals, an evaluation plan, persons responsible for each of the various components, etc. (9.2; 9.3)

CONCLUSION

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

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

1. How can the school use data to move to an even deeper understanding of the root causes for student academic success and failure?

2. How can the staff increase its understanding and use of authentic assessment in creating instructional options for all students that will result in improved academic achievement?

3. What will assist teachers in moving further away from teacher-directed, whole –class instruction to other models of teaching more suitable for meeting the needs of all students?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

District	Newark Public Schools
School	Elliott Street School
Principal Name – Years in Building	Angel L. Juarbe – 9 years
Grade Levels	Pre K - 4
Number of Teachers meeting NCLB HQT	53
Number of Teachers with Emergency Certification	0
Total Number of Classrooms	34
Percent Special Education	.05%
Number – Self Contained Classrooms	2
Number of Inclusive Classrooms	
Percent Bilingual	24%
Number of Bilingual Classrooms	8
Number of Students	656
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	yes
Percent Parent Involvement	80-90%
Abbott only - Whole School Reform (WSR) Model	District Model: Reaching for the Brass Ring
Abbott only - Status of WSR Contract	Discontinued
Persistently Dangerous "Warning"	
Most Current Number of Students reading at grade level in 3rd and 4th grades.	3rd - 77/123 4th - 56/90 Test: DRA 10 /05 DRA 5/05
AYP Indicators Missed (specify)	ASK – subgroups – SPED, Bi-Lingual
AYP Content Areas Missed	ASK: Language Arts – Mathematics—Bi-Lingual AA
Language Arts Program/Textbook	Harcourt Trophies
Mathematics Program/Textbook	Everyday Mathematics
Number of Students Offered Choice Option in 2005-2006	
Number of Students Receiving Supplemental Services in 2004-2005	149 additional 49 for SY 2005-06