

Newton Street Elementary School
4-22-2005 to 4-26-2005
Introduction

The New Jersey Department of Education conducted a CAPA (Collaborative Assessment for Planning and Achievement) review of Newton Street Elementary School on 4-22-05 to 4-26-2005. This school is designated as “in need of improvement” for four consecutive years as defined in the *NJ Accountability Workbook. No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) §1117: School Support and Recognition requires that the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) create and maintain a statewide system of intensive and sustained support for those Title I schools designated as “in need of improvement” for four consecutive years. As part of this required support system, the NJDOE developed the CAPA review process, which assigns teams of skillful and experienced individuals to provide schools with practical, applicable, and helpful assistance, increasing the opportunity for all students to meet the state’s Core Curriculum Content Standards. CAPA is required for all Title I schools in corrective action.

The CAPA review team activities included:

- A review of the documents collected for the school portfolio and data profile;
- 8 classroom observations;
- General observations, such as morning and afternoon arrival and dismissal, lunch in the cafeteria, and student restrooms; hallways
- 7 interviews with teachers;
- 5 interviews with building leadership and administrators;
- interviews with district administrators;
- interviews with students;
- 31 interviews with school and student support staff; and
- interviews with parents.

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

Team members and their affiliation included:

TEAM POSITION	NAME	AFFILIATION
Team Lead	Elizabeth Domigan	Educational Consultant
Lanugage Arts Literacy Specialist	Katherine Trimarco	Educational Consultant
Mathematics Specialist	Debra Gretina	Clifton Public Schools
	Carole Grayson	East Orange Public Schools
Special Education Specialist	Joe Jakubowski	Educational Consultant
Pupil Personnel	Tom Lawton	Educational Consultant
Parent	Barbara Pugh-Gorham	
District Liaison	Angelina Barillari	Newark Public School District
DOE Liaision	Lisa Schnall	NJ Department of Education

Academic Performance Standards

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

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

Learning Environment Standards

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

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

Efficiency Standards

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

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

STANDARD 1 - CURRICULUM:

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

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- School Curriculum Committee Agendas
- District, teacher and special education personnel interviews
- Classroom observations
- Grade Level Meeting Agendas
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education classroom and staff documents

Findings:

The district provides workshops and meetings with Language Arts and Literacy (LAL) coaches, who turnkey to K-8 school LAL staff. Staff members attend four full day and three half-day workshops. The Literacy coach initiates internal discussions for horizontal and vertical articulation. There is little written evidence that articulation meetings include discussions on New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJ CCCS) and their relevance to instruction although the literacy coach in interview is clear that this should be the focus.

There are monthly School Leadership Team (SLT) meetings for special education staff. Literacy coaches do provide ongoing training and discussions with all teachers in the building, including special education staff. Some special education teachers indicate that they receive suggestions regarding adapting the Literacy programs for special needs students, but do not feel that they receive the same level of assistance as do the general education staff.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- District, school administration, teacher and special education personnel interviews
- School and Community Perception Survey
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education classroom and staff documents

Findings:

The curriculum provides some connections to links to life and career options. Varied activities initiated in primary grades establish links and models for students to emulate community helpers. Partnerships established through the school enable students to participate in such organizations as Future Educators of America, New Community Corporation and alliances with several higher education institutions. These affiliations offer students the opportunity to become aware of post-secondary career options.

The curriculum that is used in the special education classes is the same as the general education program. Special education teachers are not allowed to deviate from that program, but are required to adapt as necessary to meet their students' special needs. Teachers have been resourceful in their endeavor to do so. Although this program offers no reading instruction per se, beyond literacy, these students are reading at levels that preclude them from reading the very textbooks from which they are expected to learn. The majority of classes are self contained. About 15 special education students attend an after school program and receive Wilson Reading in that program.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Three-Year Operational Plan
- SLC manual and interview
- NJASK3 and 4, GEPA Assessment Results
- District, teacher and special education personnel interviews
- Progressive Data Analysis (PDA)
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education classroom and staff documents

Findings:

School leadership has procedures to address curriculum issues, but they are not always fully implemented. Student achievement is measured on results of the GEPA, NJ ASK3 and 4, and Standards Proficiency Assessment (SPA). The LAL department provides fall and spring assessments for the purpose of curricular adjustment based on evidence of student achievement. Test data and specific item/cluster analyses are identified in the Progressive Data Analysis (PDA). There is little evidence to show how instruction is modified as a result of this analysis.

There is no evidence that this occurs specific to the special education program. These classes are required to offer the general education curriculum at appropriate grade levels.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of lesson plans
- LAL and math local curriculum documents
- Teacher, special education and parent interviews
- Classroom observations
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education classroom and staff documents

Findings:

All students have access to a common academic core. Some of the implemented curriculum elicits higher order thinking and problem solving skills from students. Special needs students in Language Arts Literacy

are accommodated with grade level/appropriate reading level novels. Wilson Reading Program is not being offered during the day to students who require the program.

The special education classes are largely exclusionary. There have been minimal efforts to offer inclusionary classes to special education students. A vast majority of special education students are offered in self contained classes, in which there is no integration with general education students. They have no opportunity to interact with non-disabled peers in their academic programs. There are two resource room replacement teachers who offer replacement LAL classes, one of which provides in-class support to about 4 students, in addition to replacement. There are 115 special education students in the building. All of the special education staff state that they have students who could benefit from an in class support program, in which a special education teacher provides modifications and accommodations in the general education program.

1.1h The principal and faculty work together to ensure that the district curriculum determines what is taught through the review of lesson plans and teacher peer review of curricular standards and the best methods of teaching them.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- **Building administration and teacher interviews**
- **Review of lesson plans**
- **Classroom observations**

Findings:

There is no school format for development of lesson plans. The school determines when and to whom lesson plans are submitted for review. Feedback on lesson plan evaluation is limited and not targeted to instructional revision. Lesson plans do not drive professional development. Grade level teachers can collaborate on curriculum but there is limited follow up regarding NJ CCCS alignment and implementation of contents of plan books

STANDARD 1

NEXT STEPS

Focus administrative formal and informal observations (walkthroughs) on the implementation of the curriculum as expected in each grade and on discerning how instruction is differentiated for effective teaching and learning. The school should keep written records of the summary of these observations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. School staff members should be in-serviced to become cognizant of the most up-to-date curricular trends.
2. School leadership should implement procedures to address curricular issues such as alignment of curriculum with new NJ CCCS 2004 issue.

3. Lesson plan evaluations should include guidance from administrators with regard to curricular standards, identified student needs and should be monitored for any necessary professional development needs
4. CST, special education staff and general education staff should be trained in inclusionary practices so that a full range of program options can be offered to special education students.

STANDARD 2 - CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION:

The district and school use multiple evaluation and assessment strategies to continuously monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of lesson plans
- Local curriculum documents
- Teacher and special education personnel interviews
- Classroom observations
- Sample Literacy Assessments
- Progressive Data Analysis (PDA)
- Principal's Quarterly Report (December 2004-February 2005)
- Grade level meetings agendas
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education classroom and staff documents

Findings:

Assessments prepared by teachers do not align to the NJ CCCS. Some assessments are aligned and based on other contents e.g. textbooks. Some of the assessments do not indicate which skills are measured. Evidence is not apparent that students' needs are being addressed for modification of instruction.

Special education classroom assessments are tied to the general education program and follow that model. All special education teachers use a wide range of activities and projects that serve as assessment vehicles.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Lesson plans
- Local curriculum documents and units of study
- Teacher and special education personnel interviews
- Classroom observations
- Grade level meetings agendas
- Observation of special education classrooms

- Review of special education classroom and staff documents

Findings:

Teachers have common planning periods for collaboration throughout the year at grade level meetings. However, the assessments, provided as documentation during this review, are not aligned with the current NJ CCCS. Tutors, during interviews, express need to be included in these types of discussions.

Special education teachers have not been trained in, but routinely practice, authentic assessments or other forms of alternative assessment such as performance assessment. All teachers are using portfolio assessment that consists merely of a collection of student work. Self-contained teachers do collaborate in this area. Many special education teachers engage students in projects, but there has not been an extensive use of rubrics. Few have received any formal training in their development or use.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Teacher and student interviews
- Classroom observations

Findings:

Interviews of teachers indicate that students are aware of academic expectations in each class but students during interviews often could not individually articulate exactly what they need to know and be able to do in order to be proficient in each content area. There were few rubrics found in the school that would define and elaborate skills and processes necessary for proficiency in the LAL content areas.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- District, teacher and special education personnel interviews
- District interviews
- Classroom observations
- Progressive Data Analysis (PDA)
- Principal's Quarterly Report (December 2004-February 2005)
- Grade level meetings agendas
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education classroom and staff documents

Findings:

The Principal's Quarterly Report includes the Progressive Data Analysis (PDA). The PDA is a comprehensive document required for reporting by the administration that collects individual grade level identifications and analysis of certain identified data to identify student achievement gaps. However, the action steps within in the PDAs themselves do not generally parallel the identified needs. There is no

written evidence in grade level meeting minutes or agendas that the areas of concern have been addressed with the teachers.

There is no evidence that special education teachers are using state test scores. Teachers have not been trained to analyze test data nor are they assigned that task in order to inform their curriculum or instruction.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- District, teacher and student interviews
- Classroom observations
- Review of student works (journals, portfolios, writers' notebook, etc.)
- Interviews with special education personnel
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education classroom and staff documents

Findings:

Review of student works indicates that students receive minimal meaningful feedback from teachers in their journals, portfolios, writers' notebooks. Observations and interviews reveal few opportunities for students to choose ways to demonstrate learning based on multiple intelligences and preferred learning style.

For Special Education, please refer to 2.1d. In addition, the use of alternative forms of assessment have been observed, such as performance assessment, which includes the use of rubrics, in some cases.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- District, teacher and special education personnel interviews
- Classroom observations
- Progressive Data Analysis (PDA)
- Sample Literacy Assessments
- Grade Level Agendas
- Curriculum Committee – SLC Meetings
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education classroom and staff documents

Findings:

Teachers indicate that they have not received training in protocols for analyzing student work across content areas and grade levels. Teachers indicate that students progress is discussed during common planning time as well as before and after school at informal meetings. There is little evidence that any analysis of student work impacts on teaching and learning. Tutors express need to be included in this learning.

All teachers are maintaining student samples in the form of a portfolio. All teachers state that they compare students' work to previous performance and celebrate their progress. All teachers express that they take responsibility for the success and failure of their students and frequently consult with one another in order to inform pedagogy.

STANDARD 2

Next Steps:

1. Further training in protocols for analyzing student work should be conducted. Student work analysis should continue, where begun, and begin, if not implemented. Include how to use rubrics meaningfully as part of this training and on-going analysis of student work.
2. Ensure that students understand use of rubrics.
3. When displaying work, write complete cumulative progress indicators of the CCCS rather than a display of only the standard number.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide Analysis of state test results and assessments for the purpose of informing instruction and pedagogy in a timely and user friendly manner. Teachers should have access to all state testing data, for analysis, as soon as it is available to the school.
2. All future assessments created by teachers should align with NJ CCCS and should be prepared to gauge student learning so that teaching is modified to individual needs.
3. In order to modify the curricular gaps identified on standardized test results as reported to staff by the PDA, the identified areas of concern should be addressed at grade level meetings on an ongoing basis. There should be a plan for this.
4. Special education teachers need a myriad of professional development programs that would allow them to better meet the needs of the students they serve:
 - Specialized reading Programs for their population, e.g. Wilson Reading Program, Project Read, Language, etc.
 - Alternative Assessment: Performance, Authentic, Portfolio
 - The development of a process and logistical structure that requires analysis of test data and assessment and collaboration that yield specific instructional and pedagogical decisions for special education students (See standard 6).

STANDARD 3 - INSTRUCTION:

The school's instructional program actively engages all students by using effective, varied and research-based practices to improve academic performance.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- District, teacher and special education personnel interviews
- Classroom observations
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education classroom and staff documents

Findings:

There is no school Instructional Practices policy. There is a consensus among teachers interviewed, that varied instructional strategies should be employed and instruction should be differentiated for the learners. Observations, during this visit, indicate that the majority of teachers used direct instructional strategies e.g. lectures, whole-group instruction and worksheets while only some teachers were observed skillfully implementing cooperative learning and small group instruction. Generally, questioning strategies focused on the lower levels of the cognitive taxonomy; knowledge and comprehension, with some exceptions noted.

Some special education teachers were aware of how to accommodate multiple intelligences, learning styles and differentiated learning but most teachers lack the formal training that would allow them to implement these strategies at more sophisticated levels. There were projects displayed in most classes in which the students might have completed as an application of learning. Overall, special education teachers are providing students with a good range of group and individual learning strategies. There is evidence that these strategies are discussed and shared among self-contained teachers. Only one special education teacher received any training in reading strategies, but these strategies are only applied in an afternoon program for fifteen special education students. (Wilson Reading Program).

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of lesson plans
- SLC and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- State assessment results
- Hall and classroom exhibits
- Language Arts Literacy Curricular Guide, K-5, 2001-2002

Findings:

Many classes align instructional strategies with the 2001-2002 Language Arts Literacy Curricular Guide, K-5 (LAL) which contain the older version of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJ CCCS). The Language Arts Literacy Standards were revised in 2004 to represent a comprehensive and balanced elementary literacy program. The ordering of the standards and the content do not represent the

current standards. Some student learning activities do not align to the school curriculum regarding assessment standard format.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of lesson plans
- District administrator, teacher and special education personnel interviews
- Classroom observations
- Grade Level Meeting Agendas
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education classroom and staff documents

Findings:

School leadership monitors classrooms. Interviews with teachers and administrators indicate that administrators are visible. There is not written record of feedback to teachers or specific information from interviews that show how this monitoring assists teachers in their effort to modify instruction to meet the individual needs of students.

In special education classes, there is no evidence that this is occurring beyond the auspices of the required school wide curriculum. This program has not accommodated the diverse needs of a special education population who present a myriad of academic, social and behavioral issues to a classroom. Most teachers were aware of how to accommodate learning styles and multiple intelligences, but need and desire more training.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- District, administrative, teacher and special education personnel interviews
- Classroom observations
- Professional Development activity offerings manual
- Perception Surveys
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education classroom and staff documents

Findings:

Highly qualified teachers challenge and motivate students to high levels of learning. The school leadership takes part in the recruitment and retention of a diverse staff. As per district mandate, all teachers participate in professional development programs to learn the elements of new Language Arts Literacy (LAL) programs. Interviews and observations indicate that some teachers did not demonstrate the necessary content knowledge consistent with the NJ CCCS to make connections for planning units of study. Teachers, during observations, did not demonstrate a range of varied instructional strategies for the balanced literacy program. Interviews with staff and administrators explain that this is an early implementation of the district's Balanced Literacy Initiative.

Most special education teachers lacked training and knowledge in specialized reading programs that are designed to educate special needs students with significant reading problems. They do, however, demonstrate content knowledge in each of the subject areas in which they were observed.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- District, teacher and special education personnel interviews
- Classroom observations
- Observation of computer lab
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education classroom and staff documents

Findings:

Most classrooms observed did not have students working on classroom computers during LAL periods. Interviews revealed that only one computer in each class is connected to the internet. A small group of students were observed in the Computer Lab performing computer functions on their own. No formal instruction was taking place.

Most of the special education classrooms have two computers. Most teachers feel this is inadequate to actually integrate their use into the instructional program. Computers can only be used by individual students for reinforcement through computer assisted instructional programs and is used for word processing. The internet is not available in some classrooms. They do have a computer lab available on a scheduled basis. There has not been any real attempt to group students in their use because special education teachers feel that their students do not work well in groups. Teachers feel they need more training as well as more computers. None of the teachers are using Webquests.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- District, teacher and special education personnel interviews
- Classroom observations
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education classroom and staff documents

Findings:

The school's new LAL programs are aligned to the NJ CCCS. Material and resources are sufficient to support the school's balanced literacy program. The 2001-2002 LAL Curriculum Guides K-5 are not aligned with the current NJ CCCS. Teachers are using the text to align curriculum to the NJ CCCS. Teachers report that instructional resources are sufficient to support the school's implemented balanced literacy curriculum.

Special education teachers have ample materials to implement the required school wide curriculum, and feel that they have sufficient resources to supplement these programs as well. They do not have a budget

per se, but feel that their needs are being met through requests to the building administration. Again, there are not sufficient computers. There is also no availability of assistive technology, such as smart boards, which have a wide range of uses for this population. In terms of human resources, the CST does provide assistance upon request and does provide counseling experiences to their students. There are OT and speech and language services being offered as well. Literacy and math coaches do provide instruction on program implementation.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Teacher and special education personnel interviews
- Classroom observations
- Professional Development Schedule
- Grade level meetings
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education classroom and staff documents

Findings:

Teachers have not received training in protocols for analyzing student work. Grade level meetings provide teachers with opportunity to informally discuss and analyze student work and use this information to inform their practice. Grade level teachers meet several times a week to discuss student work and informally address students' needs. There is insufficient evidence to ascertain that the analyses are used to inform instructional practice. Tutors express need to be included in these discussions.

Special education teachers meet with each other on a structured and assigned basis and do use these meetings to, among other things, discuss student work and progress. They also meet within subject areas with general education teachers and coaches.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of lesson plans
- Review of SLC notes
- Teacher, special education personnel and SLC interviews
- Classroom observations
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education classroom and staff documents

Findings:

Teachers have implemented procedures regarding assignments, collection, monitoring and returning of homework. Language Arts Literacy teachers assign independent reading each night. Students were not able to articulate the relationship between homework and class work. There is little instructional follow-up for homework or evidence that homework extends student learning or connects to real world experience.

All teachers indicate that homework is assigned and completed and when it is not, parents are called.

STANDARD 3

Next Steps:

1. Remove the old standards and replace with the 2004 NJ CCCS. All objectives and assessment materials should have correct NJ CCCS information. Refer to the district K-5 March 2005 LAL revised guide aligned to standards.
2. Utilize assessment test data and item/cluster specifications to instruct for mastery of individual student curricular gaps.
3. Monitor computer lab schedule to assure its operation with scheduled classes.

Recommendations:

1. Increase opportunities so that staff can develop competence in a variety of instructional strategies and higher order thinking skills at grade level meetings. Encourage teachers to share their strategies.
2. Monitor implementation of variety of instructional strategies and the use of higher-order thinking skills during classroom observations.
3. Staff development should include the opportunity for teachers to experience and practice embedding standards with instruction and assessment.
4. Offer parallel training to paraprofessionals and tutors at grade level meetings to learn effective strategies to support teacher instruction.
5. Revisit homework policy with teachers. Spot check homework assignments for rigor and connection to instruction.
6. Additional computers should be provided so that teachers can offer technology as an integral component of their instructional programs. Provide sufficient internet access for all students. Smart boards should be provided to special education classes for more personalized instruction.
7. A specialized reading program should be explored and adopted into the special education self contained and resource room replacement classes.

STANDARD 4 - SCHOOL CULTURE:

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

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Teacher, non-instructional staff and special education personnel interviews
- Classroom observations
- School opinion surveys
- Student Parent Handbook
- Principals Quarterly SLT Report
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education documentations

Findings:

The school leadership has established a limited safe, orderly and equitable learning environment. Sixty instructional staff members and over twenty students were interviewed regarding the culture and climate of the building. Most of the individuals interviewed state they feel safe in the school, but not in the neighborhood. Discipline policies and procedures are in place. A referral system is established and implemented for students experiencing behavioral issues such as the PRC/504 committee and crisis teacher. In house suspension is used to address a behavioral problems of students.

There are conditions, however, that are not conducive to learning. For example, observations of classrooms and hallways show safety hazards such as broken cabinets and closet door panels, missing blackboard panel, dirty walls and pipes, peeling paint, gym ceiling water damage and electrical wires exposed along the wall, and first floor fire doors do not close properly. Some rest rooms did not have toilet paper, liquid soap or paper towels, a toilet stall door missing on second floor. The floors in rest rooms were not clean. Dirty sofas in the first and second floor teacher rest room were observed. The intercom system did not function in some regular and ancillary classrooms in the building. In addition, there is a lack of keys for some teachers and paraprofessionals to communicate any issues directly to the main office. All students interviewed noted their concern with the smell in bathrooms. During interviews, administrators indicated the concern over adequate custodial services.

Few of the special education classes are located in the same area as non-disabled peers. Class size is appropriate in numbers, but spans three grade levels, with even more diverse academic levels. The sizes of the rooms are inadequate to allow self contained teachers to offer all subject areas, with stations, and display areas, and there is inadequate storage to accommodate the breadth of materials required.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of lesson plans
- Local curriculum documents and units of study
- Teacher, support staff member, special education personnel, parent and student interviews
- Classroom observations
- Interviews with special education personnel
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education documentations

Findings:

School leadership and community expressed a commitment to high academic expectations for all students. The mission statement affirms this belief. Parents are familiar with the school mission. It is evident that teachers, and support staff agree that leadership creates experiences that foster the belief that all children can learn at high levels. Staff discussed multiple learning incentives which are used to encourage students to work to their maximum capacity such as attendance recognition displayed.

Teachers are afforded the opportunity to collaborate horizontally and vertically at grade level, faculty and staff development meetings. Classroom observations reveal lessons are based on NJ CCCS. Majority of focus is placed on state testing grades 3, 4, and 8. Test data is collected regularly, however there is limited evidence to support consistent use of data to monitor and adjust teaching and learning.

The school leadership encourages staff and provides some opportunities for them to share instructional strategies and innovations. Grade level and subject content meetings are provided on a regular basis at the school and district level. Emphasis is on improvement in student learning and achievement.

However, the special education staff state that the needs of their children cannot be met through the implementation of the special education program alone.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of lesson plans
- Teacher and support staff interviews
- Classroom observations
- Student Parent Handbook
- Consistency Management Cooperative Discipline (CMCD)

Findings:

Staff members and teachers demonstrate a belief of high expectations for many students. Students state that teachers have high expectations because they encourage them to do better. Some student work displayed included rubric scoring and comments. Several bulletin boards in the hallways had quality student work,

including the NJ CCCS was posted. However, there were displays of student work that had incorrect language usage that were not labeled as “works in progress.”

The observed learning environment of the school is nurturing. Staff members were observed using praise and positive reinforcement to motivate student achievement. There were occasional, meaningful interactions between some students and staff e.g. Guidance, Social Worker and outside community partners to address specific student needs. Standards of behavior are implemented by teachers using strategies e.g. the CMCD model. However, some classes observed inconsistently apply strategies equitably to all students. Behavioral standards are defined in student/parent handbook and some teachers establish their own classroom rules with student input. While teachers and other staff as well as students, in interviews, mentioned a concern about the discipline in the building, observers found little evidence of undisciplined students.

4.1e Teachers accept responsibility for student success/failure.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- State test data
- Teacher, student, support staff member and SLC interviews
- Classroom observations
- Student/teacher Surveys

Findings:

Teachers and the administrators review instructional practice based on student performance and achievement e.g. vertical and horizontal team meetings. Students and teachers are provided some opportunities to assess instructional performance on surveys. Teachers occasionally reflect upon the impact of their instruction on the success of their students. There is no written minutes of meetings to show what steps were taken to lead to a change in classroom practices. Furthermore, teachers and other school personnel, in interviews, often correlate poor student performance and behavior to the lack of parental involvement.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of lesson plans
- Local curriculum documents and units of study
- Teacher, support staff member, special education personnel interviews
- Classroom observations
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education documentations

Findings:

The teacher-student ratio is lower than the Abbott requirement for all classrooms. Students are heterogeneously grouped. There is limited opportunity to align the strengths of staff with the needs of the students. Some teachers implement cooperative learning groups and flexible grouping based on the instructional needs of students. Guided reading and tutoring does provide for flexible grouping matched to the needs of the student. Some Gifted and Talented students receive outside services to address their needs, but there is no in school class support provided at this time. The administrators indicate that the master schedule allows for teacher preference and is not designed to accommodate student needs.

This is a strong special education staff, however special education students, in the majority of cases, have no opportunity to access the general education staff with supplemental aides and supports. In addition, although the district provides a number of personal assistants, they have received no training to deal with the specific disabilities of the students to which they are assigned.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Teacher, support staff member and special education personnel interviews
- Teacher Classroom Phone Log
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education documentations

Findings:

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

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

Some teachers have indicated that they have ongoing communication with parents.

This is a strong special education staff, however special education students, in the majority of cases, have no opportunity to access the general education staff with supplemental aides and supports. In addition, although the district provides a number of personal assistants, they have not be trained to deal with the specific disabilities of the students to which they are assigned.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Classroom and hallway observations
- Local curriculum documents and units of study
- Teacher, support staff and special education personnel interviews
- Support staff interviews
- Bulletin Boards and Trophy Cases
- Observation of special education classrooms
- Review of special education documentations

Findings:

Student work is displayed in all hallways and classrooms, and is shared with parents during parent/teacher conferences. Student work displayed in some areas may not reflect exemplary student work or NJ CCCS. Interviews revealed that award assembly programs are held to recognize student academic achievement. Student accomplishments are regularly recognized through incentives, exhibition of student work, attendance displays and assembly programs. Students express some familiarity with the rubrics that guide to high achievement.

The special education staff does value the progress of their students. Most classrooms display student work above subject area learning centers and in hallways. Teachers state that progress is celebrated through rewards.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Teacher and support staff member interviews
- Classroom observations
- Student Work
- Community Partnerships

Findings:

The school atmosphere reflects a commitment to equity and an appreciation of diversity. The school policy and practice demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunity and diversity. Instructional strategies address multi-cultural issues and are integrated into the curriculum but not always at the highest level of intellectual rigor. Teachers demonstrate clear efforts for equitable and effective education for each student.

Again, the special education program is an mostly exclusionary program, with a majority of students receiving their instruction in self-contained classes, and little opportunity to interact with non-disabled peers. All special education teachers support in-class support and feel that if they could be assigned to a general education class with some of their students, they could make the necessary modifications to the academic program and could control student behavior to the point that they child could derive educational benefit from such a placement.

STANDARD 4

NEXT STEPS

1. The district and school leadership should immediately take action to review and plan to address each item:
 - The painting of entire interior (e.g. school classrooms, gym and halls, rest rooms).
 - All classroom and facility repairs listed in the Principal's Quarterly report March, 2005.
 - Repair the school intercom system to improve communication to and from all classes
2. Review displays of student work to ensure that language is used correctly, unless specially labeled as "Work in Progress."
3. The administration should require the custodians to maintain and submit a log of weekly, daily and monthly jobs that are completed regarding the cleanliness and on-going maintenance of the entire building facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The school should provide protocols for the proper display of student work to include, but not limited to the following:
 - (a) how to display the work so that every student's individual needs are addressed (see standard 2 #3)
 - (b) consistent use of rubrics in the display and rating of student work;
 - (c) bulletin boards to show student work progression.
2. Survey/hold forums for all students and staff about the incidence of bullying and school climate on an annual basis. The results should be used to plan programs for all students. Students at each grade level K-8 should be trained as peer mediators, not just students in grades 4-8. All 8th grade students should also be encouraged to be peer mediators with an emphasis on career opportunities.
3. Place emphasis on improving sanitary conditions in the student and staff laboratories. Take immediate steps to improve the cleanliness and aesthetics of the physical plant. The district and SLT facilities department should establish forms and schedules to ensure that each school receives consistent services and supplies as needed by the school.
4. There should be an analysis of special education classroom assignments in terms of determining their proximity to the classrooms of their non-disabled peers.
5. Conduct a meeting to review the perception of discipline as an area of concern. Provide data on suspensions, referrals to the principal, vice-principals, incidences of fighting etc to ground the discussion. Assist staff to name what is the foundation of their concern about discipline in order to address what that is. Engage students in a similar activity.
6. Structure opportunities, during all professional development sessions, for teachers/administrators to engage in and log self-reflection of their own practice and to add their insights from their logs to the construction of their PIPs.

STANDARD 5: STUDENT, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT:

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

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Teacher, parent and paraprofessionals interviews
- Support staff member interviews
- Classroom observations
- Parent Student Handbook
- Monthly School Calendar

Findings:

There is limited parental involvement in the school even though many efforts have been made to reach out to involve all parents. School-to-home communications are disseminated by flyers, emails, phones, cable, and school web site. However, there are some dedicated parents who volunteer in after school programs, coach cheerleaders, and assist students with homework in the enrichment programs. Some parents participated in various workshops after school and on Saturdays such as: Technology and Stress workshops. Parents and outside community partners participate in the Peer mentoring and Rainbow programs. The Parent Liaison coordinates the Chapel program that assists parents with social issues.

There are various outside community partnerships that enhance and promote student achievement. There is a school Parent Involvement Policy related to roles and responsibilities of staff and parents working together. Teachers and paraprofessionals would like to see more parental involvement in the educational process. Parents are welcomed without prior appointments to observe classrooms or walk their child to class.

There is an SLC in the school with policies and procedures for sub-committees and recruitment. Currently there is a parent who is a member on the SLC committee and a parent who participated on a special education committee. The school has an SLC Resource Guide that lists the roles and responsibilities and Abbott regulations and guidelines.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Teacher, special education personnel and parent interviews
- Support staff member interviews
- Classroom observations
- Observations of special education classrooms
- Review of special education documents

Findings:

Targeted support services are provided in the areas of community (Essex County College, UMDNJ) and district wide workshops, supplemental educational services (tutoring), Saturday GEPA Academy. The school is a Title I school wide program thus services are open to all students. Counseling and social work services are offered to all students in the school. Counseling programs include a peer-to-peer program, mentoring services, Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation and referral to other services.

Student participation data is not used as the entrance criteria for extended day and year programs and enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no evidence of a program evaluation. Very few observations of student and teacher use of technology were observed. Some students communicate with other students in New Jersey via email.

The district Comprehensive Equity Plan outlines procedures to ensure that all students have equal access to the common academic core. The extended school services program is designed to support and promote individual student achievement. Special education students are isolated by program and, in some cases, location.

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

1. The school jointly developed with, and distributes to, parents of Title I students a written parental involvement policy that describes the means for carrying out NCLB parental involvement requirements. §1118(b)
2. The school convenes an annual meeting of parents of Title I children to inform them of the NCLB parental involvement requirements. §1118(c)
3. The school has a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, staff and student share responsibility for student achievement. §1118(d)
4. The school builds capacity for parental involvement through use of the 14 mechanisms outlined in the NCLB legislation. §1118(e)
5. The school and district provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities and parents of migratory children. §1118(f)
6. The school and district inform parents of the existence of statewide parental resource and information centers. §1118(g)

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Teacher and support staff member interviews
- Classroom observations
- District and School Web Site

Findings:

Title I program and support services are integrated and support the learning needs of all students. There is no specific criteria for access to supplemental educational services (SES) or after school programs. Students are assigned to the SES program and the 21st Century program on a first come, first served basis. The after school ASK 4 and GEPA programs are voluntary for 4th grade students and mandatory for the 8th grade students. There is no SLC or planning committee that analyzes data to determine access to programs. The student support services program collaboration focuses mostly on behavior and discipline issues. There is limited verbal communication between classroom teachers and providers of extended school services. Documentation, observation and interviews indicate that services beyond the classroom are available. A review of the documentation and interviews did not identify a selection process for students to

participate in these programs. There is no documentation to support the effectiveness of these after school programs.

Policies and procedures exist for student health and social services referrals. Connections with some community agencies are evident. Classroom observations did not show widespread use of differentiated instruction. There are some intervention services for assisting students with learning problems referred by the Pupil Resource Committee/504.

There is a group of young men who meet with an administrator, teacher and security guard each day after school that, according to student interviewees, has an significant positive impact on them.

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

The PRC is an active and well run committee and has received a number of referrals this year. It is comprised of key school staff, including the building VP, but has not participated in the valuable training provided by the state or are in possession of the equally valuable resource manual that is also provided by the state.

The CST is providing some counseling to students, crisis intervention and some assistance in the academic program, but is very limited. The CST is inundated with initial referrals, reevaluations and annual reviews which take almost all of their time. They indicate have had a great difficulty keeping pace with required timelines. Work seems to be accomplished, however. They have no secretarial assistance. In addition they lack the advantage of a computerized network IEP to directly input information for annual reviews and reevaluations.

STANDARD 5

NEXT STEPS

1. Implement a mechanism for all instructional staff to sign off and review student IEPs.
2. Recruit alternate parent representatives to the SLC and schedule some of the meetings so that parents can participate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Leadership and staff should develop clearly defined procedures to increase parental and community involvement in order to enhance student learning and performance. The school leadership should review its current structure and organizational focus regarding the involvement of parents in the school. A parent committee of the SLC should be formed to consider strategies and meetings that meet the needs of the parents. After a survey of parental needs, programs should be developed to provide literacy and technology training for parents during the 21st. Century program and during the school day.
2. Leadership should develop, implement and monitor continuous and formalized collaboration among teachers of the following programs: Title I SES programs, after school programs and the 21st Century program, to ensure coordination of the delivery of services that promote student achievement. Student referral procedures should continue to be implemented and monitored

consistently. Building leadership should reach out to the Title I advisory board for assistance in expanding the parent involvement program. **Evaluation of all programs should be clearly identified.**

3. Train the CST staff in inclusionary practices.
4. Require an annual report developed by the PRC committee to the professional development committee and/or principal the themes of the issues that are presented to the committee so that appropriate professional development activities can be implemented. In addition a member of the CST should be assigned to this committee and all referrals should be required to go through the PRC before they go to the CST.
5. Provide for PRC members to participate in the state training that is provided for I&RS committees and that sufficient resource manuals are purchased for the PRC team members.

STANDARD 6 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

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

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- District professional development plan
- Administrator, teacher and special education personnel interviews
- Grade level topic sheets

Findings:

Professional development activities are conducted throughout the year and are job-embedded and collegial. Weekly grade level meetings as well as professional development days are targeted toward identified collective school needs. Teachers interviewed and teacher surveys indicate that their professional development needs are being met. There is no written overall plan for grade level and professional development days, although VPs and the literacy coach work off on a sense of what should be accomplished this year to assist teachers in addressing the demands associated with implementing the new Balanced Literacy district initiative. Vertical scheduling for upper grade teachers has focused on two areas: direct instruction and setting up classroom libraries. The School Leadership Council's subcommittee has designed specific workshops to address identified staff needs for the literacy program. Onsite demonstrations and workshops are also delivered by district RTCs .

In addition, the district and SLT have a commitment to substantial and sustained professional development that addresses needs identified at the district and SLT level from the state assessment data. There are district and SLT opportunities that support the enhancement of leadership skills are provided only for members of the staff (i.e., administrators, literacy coach, and technology coach). The district has a professional development plan that is current and comprehensive. All teachers are eligible to participate in the district-wide professional development offerings as well as those afforded at the building level. In

addition, teachers have the opportunity to attend summer institutes, weekend institutes, after school study groups and to participate in programs in partnership with local universities. The district conducts an annual needs assessment to determine the professional development offerings for instructional, non-instructional and administrative staff. The focus of most of the professional development in the last year is in the areas of language arts and mathematics as presented in its district improvement model. Attendance and topics for staff meetings are evident but not outcomes of meetings in most cases. Although there is a sense among all staff that there is a focus on the above, there is not a written plan that shows the interrelationships between all these professional development activities and that identifies clearly the specific strategies and activities with clear accountability and timelines and evaluation.

Professional development that the special education teachers have received is only that offered to all teachers about the implementation of the required school wide curriculum. The implementation of this program enjoys collaboration among staff. Special education staff does participate in grade level meetings and collaborates among themselves.

Other school staff interviewed receive training at the district level but said they would like to be more involved in some discussions at the school level so they more understand what teachers are doing. Paraprofessionals interviewed indicated that they do not participate at grade level vertical planning meetings but at training.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- School and community survey
- Sample anonymous PIPs
- Administrator and special education personnel interviews
- Three-Year Operational Plan

Findings:

School-wide professional development priorities are aligned with the goals set out in the 3-year plan. Staff surveys and vice-principal interviews indicate that staff development opportunities, the PIPs of staff members and teacher observations are connected. The PIPs are connected with school wide initiatives based on district initiatives, math and literacy, with other specific items determined from teacher evaluations. Teachers may request to attend outside professional development opportunities as identified from their PIPs. Because the information had not been organized in a data base, it is difficult to follow the connection between the PIP, the Three Year Operational Plan and the school's learning goals. Administrators' PIPs are developed in conjunction with the SLT assistant superintendent and are related to school goals.

PIPs are collaboratively developed with each special education staff member's supervisor. However, there is no evidence that special education PIPs are tied to any district wide priorities.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- School and community survey
- Administrator, teacher and special education personnel interviews
- Classroom observations

Findings:

Professional development emphasizes a process for sustained and continuous growth through job-embedded opportunities. Scaffolded professional development experiences consisting of on-site modeling and coaching are available to teachers by on-site coach and Resource Teacher Coordinators (RTCs). Teachers participate in professional development, but aside from personal testimony there is little record of accountability to ensure the transfer of professional development into research-based pedagogical practices in the classroom. Teachers have received training on computer topics but a management plan does not exist in this area to identify the quality of the results of training not to follow-up specific needs of teachers as they implement new strategies.

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is a program for middle grades that has been adopted by the district to be implemented in Newton Street school. Due to timing issues the appropriate people were not involved in the beginning training thus the program was not as fully implemented as possible. Other 6-8 staff were trained in pathway subjects that introduce and reinforce quality instructional practices for students, such as Carnegie note-taking. AVID is expected to be more fully implemented next school year, thus offering Algebra 1 to some students.

All professional development for Special Education teachers is tied to the school wide curriculum.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of sample anonymous PIPs
- Teacher surveys
- Administrator and teacher interviews

Findings:

The employee evaluation system has been revised. Written evaluations identify teacher strengths and weakness in the domains identified in the teacher evaluation system. Sample evaluations provide good feedback to teachers, however, some of the performance ratings on the various rubrics are not checked off.

The school does have a clearly defined evaluation process and some teachers shared that although some of the feedback is not what a teacher might want to hear, it is helpful. Through surveys 98% of teachers answering the survey (60% of teachers) strongly agreed or agreed that the employee evaluation system improves staff proficiency.

STANDARD 6

NEXT STEPS

1. Identify teacher computer concerns about incorporating technology into instruction on a regular basis and provide specific additional computer training and assistance to teachers and gauge the success of these strategies. .
2. Keep minutes of all grade level meetings and leave each meeting with a specific action to be taken by each teacher as a result of the meeting.
3. Take time to explicitly connect the NJ CCCS to the work at grade level meetings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. School leadership should lay out a written action plan which coordinates all the various professional development ideas that individuals in accountable leadership positions have identified in one plan that is published for all to have access to . This should include the committee chair of the SLC curriculum committee. This plan should clearly identify timelines, people responsible and evaluation (or how we know we got what we wanted from our strategies/activities) . Include the needs for Special Education teachers as identified below. Consider prioritizing these suggested topics for professional development teachers and paraprofessionals and laying out a plan for offering these as a menu of sessions to which general ed teachers can join with their colleagues. This should be a plan that is published for all staff to see at the beginning of the school year.
2. The school leadership council should continue to identify and plan focused professional development towards the instructional goals of the school and include these ideas in the action plan for the school. All activities in the plan should have clear outcomes for learning for teachers that will result in improved learning for students. (see Recommendation 1 above)
3. Charge a parent subcommittee group of the SLC to review new research on the effects of parent involvement on student learning and what are the implications of involvement/non-involvement in schools and report their findings to the whole staff.
4. CST, special education staff and general education staff should be trained together in inclusionary practices so that a full range of program options can be offered to special education students.
 - Special education teachers need a myriad of professional development programs that would allow them to better meet the needs of the students they serve:
 - a. How to modify and supplement the required school-wide curriculum to the functional level of their students
 - b. Specialized Reading Programs for their population, e.g. Wilson, Project Read, Language, etc.
 - c. Multiple Intelligences
 - d. Learning Styles
 - e. Cooperative Learning
 - f. Brain Based Learning
 - g. Questioning Techniques
 - h. Behavior Management
 - i. Integrating Technology into the Everyday Instructional Program.

- Alternative Assessment: Performance, Authentic, Portfolio
 - Analysis of state test results and assessments for the purpose of informing instruction and pedagogy
 - The development of a process and logistical structure that requires analysis of test data and assessment and collaboration that yields specific instructional and pedagogical decisions for special education students
 - Inclusionary Practices, Structures and Strategies (this should be offered to the general education teachers as well)
5. SLT and district staff development office create a data base to coordinate all aspects of on-going staff development, i.e. PIPs.

**STANDARD 7: EFFICIENCY, ORGANIZATION, STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES:
Instructional decisions focus on support for teaching and learning, high performance expectations, creating a learning structure, and developing leadership capacity.**

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- SLC agenda and notes
- Teache, support staff and student interviews
- Classroom observations – hallways and classrooms

Findings:

The mission of the school is ingrained in the school's culture. During interviews it was stated that the school revised its mission statement this year and added a shorter motto: the 3 D's: desire, dedication, discipline. Throughout the building there were displays of the school's mission and the new motto, although in some cases the mission is the older version. Some adult interviewees were able to state their understanding that the school is dedicated to improving student achievement but not any other specifics of the mission statement. Students and support staff when directly asked were not able to state the mission. Support staff indicated that they would like to be involved when topics such as this are discussed with teaching staff.

During interviews some staff members stated that the mission statement had recently been updated; however, there was no description of that process in SLC or faculty minutes. In interview with the principal the process was described whereby 10 staff member visited a sister school and as a result came back to spearhead the revisiting of the old mission statement. Principal, during his overview, identified how the vision for improvement has focused all of his use of resources. Interviewees are not aware of updates on progress toward accomplishing the mission. Minutes of meetings are not kept so it is hard to document how the achievement of the mission is regularly communicated.

There is a disconnect with the name of the school as the Newton Street School of Science and Technology. There are no obvious focused practices that distinguish this school as such.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- SLC agenda and notes
- Teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

Findings:

Document review indicated the district provides the school with disaggregated data. The data is returned to the school for interpretation. School staff members use the results of data analysis for communications purposes, but not to modify curricular, instructional, and assessment practices. There was no documentation to indicate when and how the administration and staff reviewed data on the school level beyond the general statements in the Three Year Operational Plan and the use within the PDAs and the writing walls. These are not specifically connected to NJ CCCS.

The DRA and other assessments aligned with the new literacy program are administered in each school and the results used by classroom teachers and the literacy coach. The district provides mid-year and end of year test results and sometimes these help to focus the PDAs. Grade level teachers sometimes review teacher-made and chapter tests informally.

Although there is some evidence in plan books and in postings in classes of teachers identifying NJ CCCS with specific work done by students there are many instances of confusion with applying the new appropriate standards.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of SLC meeting agendas and notes
- Review of three-year operational plan
- SLC member interviews

Findings:

During interviews it was repeatedly mentioned that data is provided to staff by administrators. In grade levels, teachers are also using Assessment Wall data, particularly in writing. Through interviews it was explained that next year reading walls will be more prominent. There is evidence of some analysis of data in the three-year operational plan but no evidence of a plan to track the implementation of strategies that the analysis identified and, therefore, no way to know how well each of the strategies worked nor whether and how they might need to be refined.

In the school, there is a consistently expressed perception that lack of parental involvement is the source of much of poor performance by students but there is no concrete data to connect poor achievement with those students who are identified as coming from families who demonstrate a lack of involvement.

The SLC Meeting minutes did not reveal that the analysis of disaggregated data was communicated to the school staff. The principal does believe, however, that all teachers and administrators are aware of the needs of the diverse population of the school. The SLC has made recommendations to provide further assistance to students in math and language arts, and to prepare for the New Jersey ASK but specific data is not attached to these recommendations.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of lesson plans, student code of conduct, district calendar and information guide, teacher handbook
- Administrator and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations and entry of students, restrooms and lunch

Findings:

A review of the written documentation, visits to classrooms, walking the halls and perusing the cafeteria revealed a code of conduct and orderliness. Interviews reveal that staff, paraprofessionals and parents that there is a need to address behavioral issues in the entire school. Consistency Management Cooperative Discipline (CMCD) roles are posted in classrooms and are actively carried out by some students. There were few disruptions noted during the entire visit. Observations revealed some morning classroom time is interrupted by the breakfast program and lateness of students.

Time is regularly provided for teachers to collaborate in grade level or vertical team meetings but not both. Teachers of art, music, physical education and world language do not share common planning time to coordinate activities with classroom teachers. In interview, some of these teachers shared that they do communicate about connections before or after school or at lunch time.

Practices are in place to protect instructional time. However, the 90-minute reading block in the early grades did not consistently begin promptly at 8:45 am during this observation.

Time is provided beyond the school day for students to engage in homework and other enrichment activities.

7.1g Leadership plans and allocates resources, monitors progress, provides organizational support and removes barriers to continuous school improvement.

Evidence:

- Administrator, teacher and SLC interviews
- Classroom observations
- SLC minutes

Findings:

Teacher interviewees all agree that instructional resources are abundant and that time resource is used well. Special subject teachers, however, since they are coverage teachers do not experience the same level of planned time for interaction with teachers.

Although there is an expressed expectation and belief that all classes have computers in active use during instruction, observations during this visit revealed that this was not the case.

There is no hard data to show how often nor for what purposes classroom computers are used to support instruction. Also, during interviews, it was stated that only some computers in classrooms are connected to the internet and that computers are not always operational.

A tour of staff and student bathrooms showed a lack of soap, hand towels and in some cases toilet paper. Several of the bathrooms were unsanitary and had an unpleasant odor. It was noted in SLC minutes that this is a problem that has been noted and that has not been solved during the year to date. Student interviews indicated that this is one thing that was of concern to all students. There were no specific written management plans seen to review these issues.

7.1k The principal gives highest priority to academic performance.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Administrator, teacher, student and SLC interviews
- Faculty meeting agendas
- Professional development documentation
- Three-year operational plan
- Classroom observations

Findings:

A review of the individual PIPs indicated areas of concentration for workshops, however, there is no formal sequential record to document when and where staff attended workshops and the area covered during the workshop. A list compiling staff attendance at professional development days, since the inception of the school year, was unavailable.

The school principal has established a supportive persona that has been embraced by the staff. He is seen as an enabler, supporter and someone who truly cares for his staff and students. The school principal is committed to providing a school atmosphere that is conducive to teaching and learning and has expectations that things are falling in place. Interviews reveal that many teachers are independently doing their best to provide service to children but that there is a lack of coordination. Detailed action plans to coordinate activities and assist in monitoring implementation of strategies and activities are not in place.

STANDARD 7

NEXT STEPS

1. Establish regular administrative meeting schedule.
2. Follow up on all school cleanliness items.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide regular meetings of all school level leaders, i.e. literacy coach and technology coordinator to coordinate and plan for an integrated professional development plan pulling together all the separate plans operating already within the building. Preparing the plan can identify overlaps. The plan should identify specific goals for all activities, outcomes for each activity, persons responsible for implementing and monitoring the implementation of activities and a way to assess effectiveness of proposed strategies and activities.
2. The appellation of Newton Street School as a school of science and technology should be revisited. School community should decide if this is the focus for the school. If so, determine how to infuse this theme throughout the building so that it is apparent.
3. The school leadership should update the full faculty and other school support staff as to progress in achieving the mission. Measures, besides test scores, of this success should be identified and tracked.
4. The SLC as well as school administration should continue to learn more about data analysis so that they can continue to assist all members of the school to base decisions on disaggregation of data and not on “gut feelings.” Members of this group need to be proficient in data analysis and how to use data for decision making.
5. Teachers, assisted by administrators, need to share specific applications of the standards in their work so that they can assist each other in fully internalizing the NJ CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS standards. These standards are the basis for all state testing and without solid use of the knowledge and skills contained in these standards students are at a loss in attaining them.

STANDARD 8: ORGANIZATION S STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

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

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of master schedule
- Administrator, school staff member and SLC interviews
- Review of NCLB and school report card

Findings:

Interviews with administrators and staff indicated that although there is not a formal policy ensuring that staff assignments are made to address specific student needs based on performance data, such information does inform the assignment of staff.

Documentation indicates that all but one teacher meets the NCLB criteria of Highly Qualified Teacher. School staff members indicated that there is a great deal of collaboration among teachers, some of which occurs during grade-level meetings and some outside of formal school time.

Instructional assistants are assigned in keeping with legal guidelines: aides and paraprofessionals are assigned to pre-K classrooms, to special needs students as required by their IEP and as capacity aides in self-contained special education classes. In addition, permanent instructional assistants work in each of the three kindergartens and two in the first grade classes.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of master schedule, teacher lesson plans
- Administration, teacher and student interviews
- Classroom observations
- Operational Plan priorities

Findings:

Review of the master schedule, operational plan, teacher lesson plans and teacher interviews all indicate that at least 90 minute blocks of time are set aside for the instructional priority of language arts/literacy and 75 minutes for mathematics.

Classroom management and organizational practices affect how the instructional use of class time is maximized. Observations of mathematics classes revealed that the prescribed program structure was followed closely. While a number of classroom observations revealed students and teachers on task and maximizing their time, some other classroom observations revealed a fair amount of time spent on behavioral rather than instructional tasks. In two special classes observed, the teachers spent the majority

of the class time trying to keep order and focus the students. In contrast with what was generally observed, school staff and students frequently commented in interviews that student classroom behavior was a major problem in the school and that it frequently inhibited effective classroom instruction.

Observation revealed that with some exceptions, instruction was predominately teacher-centered and textbook-based with worksheets.

The school has added a daily after-school enrichment hour that is intended to assist students with their homework.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of master schedule
- Review of grade-level meeting agendas
- Administrator, school staff member and SLC interviews
- CAPA survey
- Three-Year Operational Plan update

Findings:

The staffing schedule indicates and staff interviews confirmed that weekly time is allotted to support common planning time for each grade level. Teacher and administration interviews indicated a great deal of support (of time, materials, etc.) for teacher collaboration and common planning; some vertical articulation takes place during faculty meetings or through the work of the RTC.

An interview with the SLC, review of the SLC CAPA Survey results and teacher and administrator interviews suggest that common planning meetings often address needs arising from an analysis of student performance data, but there is no documentation of this process, nor is there a shared venue to post plans that might promote further horizontal and vertical team planning.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

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

Findings:

The school uses Title I funds to support their after-school program, the Compass Learning Odyssey Program, a research-based program, useful for students needing remediation or enrichment.

STANDARD 8

COMMENDATIONS

There is a great deal of informal collaboration among teachers which helps create a positive, caring, exciting and challenging learning environment for students and staff. Teachers and administrators have demonstrated commitment to students, as well as commitment to each other for support and planning, beyond their normal workday

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide for a focused discussion at a staff meeting to uncover the reasons for the discrepancy between staff and student statements indicating broad-scale behavioral problems and CAPA team observations.
2. Increase the variety of activities within class, i.e. cooperative learning groups, centers, to maximize all class time used for instructional purpose. (See standard 3 and standard 3 math for similar recommendations).

STANDARD 9 – COMPREHENSIVE AND EFFECTIVE PLANNING:

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

DEFINING THE SCHOOL'S VISION, MISSION, BELIEFS

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of three-year operational plan
- Teacher, administrator and SLC interviews
- Mission, vision and belief statements

Findings:

The school has a broad vision that is reflected in mission, vision and belief statements. The motto of the school is posted prominently throughout the building: "The Three D's to Succeed: Desire to want to learn; Discipline to train the mind, body and character; Dedication to never give up." There is evidence that a "school plan" is discussed with teachers at the beginning of the school year, but little evidence to indicate that the vision, beliefs, mission and goals are discussed or altered substantially. The broader school community may be involved via the SLC, which includes representatives from all stakeholder groups.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Administrator, teacher and SLC interviews
- Review of SLC documents
- School report card
- Three-Year Operational Plan

Findings:

There is evidence of a process for collecting and analyzing data to determine areas of strength and limitation, although this is not necessarily done systematically to inform school and classroom decision making, nor used systematically to update the Three-Year Operational Plan. In interviews, all staff indicate the awareness of the importance of data collection. The curriculum subcommittee of the SLC frequently initiates data collection to more fully understand performance issues in the school, yet it is not clear from written minutes of meetings what that process looks like nor that this is done in the context of a detailed action plan. Comparisons are provided between similar and high performing schools in the district as well as measurement against state profiles. It is not clear that the SLC gathers information from higher achieving schools to inform their understanding of what has helped the schools to achieve as they did.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of three-year operational plan
- SLC interviews
- Teacher interviews
- School and Community Perception Survey

Findings:

The Three-Year Operational Plan indicates the measurable goals of student performance as evidenced through testing. There is no evidence of assessing the school's capacity for instructional and organizational effectiveness.

Staff members have utilized a wide variety of data in such areas as demographics; parental participation in school activities; suspension rates; NJASK and GEPA achievement; teacher deficiencies and research-based educational programs in an effort to determine the capacity of the school staff to achieve program objectives. The school has initiated rudiments of analyzing and disaggregating this data.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of three-year operational plans
- Administrator and SLC interviews

Findings:

Most of the strategies in the three-year operational plan include an intentional focus on closing the achievement gap. Goals and objectives are guided by requirements and benchmarks to attain Adequate Yearly Progress according to NCLB. Although most strategies in the Three-Year Operational Plan are grounded in research, they may not always be sufficient to achieve the objectives because specific goals and objectives are not always linked to each strategy. The Three-Year Operational Plan does not have clear timelines or responsible persons identified who will carry out its implementation. Although school leadership regularly conduct walkthroughs, no evidence was found indicating that these walkthroughs are systematically linked to an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Three-Year Operational Plan.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Review of three-year operational plan
- Review of documentation of evidence of achievement of goals and benchmarks
- SLC minutes and agenda
- Administrator interviews

Findings:

School leadership and the SLC, in interview, state that they collect and review assessment summaries but there is no written evidence that describes how the school regularly evaluates the specific strategies in the plan as it relates to classroom practice. The evaluation of the plan is state test data.

STANDARD 9

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide professional development in the analysis of multiple forms of data to facilitate the assessment of strategies in the three-year operational plan related to student achievement, building instructional and organizational capacity, improving classroom practices and identifying the impact and implementation levels of these strategies.
2. Develop a process to systematically collect, manage and analyze data for use in decision making processes and assessing instructional and organizational effectiveness.
3. Review and update the Three-Year Operational Plan to include action plans for each strategy that includes timelines and a list of persons responsible for various elements. Bring this to the larger school community for input, increased awareness and to create a formal process for accountability.
4. Use the SLC sub-committees to monitor the Three Year Operational Plan monthly and report outcomes to the SLC at the monthly meetings. The SLC should inform and communicate sub-committee outcomes to the entire faculty at monthly meetings

MATHEMATICS REVIEW

STANDARD 1-CURRICULUM

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Professional Development Calendar
- Lesson plans
- Curriculum guides
- District and teacher interviews
- School Leadership Committee (SLC) meeting agendas
- Classroom observations

Findings:

The school initiates and supports internal discussion among all teachers to ensure horizontal articulation. The district's mathematics department has a comprehensive staff development calendar that addresses pedagogy in the teaching of the selected district series for elementary (Everyday Math) and middle grades (Connected Math). Teachers are required to attend full day staff development workshops. In addition, teachers have the opportunity to attend summer institutes, weekend institutes, after school study groups and to participate in programs in partnership with local universities. There is no evidence, however, that content knowledge beyond the scope of the series is not addressed. Additionally, there is no clear understanding of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJ CCCS) and their relevance to instruction.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Three-Year Operational Plan
- Curriculum guides
- District, principal and teacher interviews
- School announcements and bulletin boards
- Classroom observations

Findings:

The curriculum includes some opportunities for application of skills, knowledge, and processes that will prepare students to be self-sufficient and productive citizens, but opportunities for application of learning are not authentic. Math assignments in Everyday Math often contain a piece/component/question that is real-life related. Connected Math usually contains this real-life related piece, and provides Algebra in the last three units. The content in Connected Math is rich enough to provide sufficient background for a high school college preparatory course in Algebra, but there is no course offering for Algebra in grade eight.

The curriculum provides some connections to continuing education, and applications to life and career options. There is evidence of a career day in the school. There is also a mentoring program that utilizes parents and community members across skill-based and professional careers.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Three-Year Operational Plan
- PDA reports
- NJ ASK 3 and NJ ASK 4 Assessment results
- GEPA results
- District Assessments
- Teacher interviews, including special education teachers
- Math Protocol Form II-A, II-B, and II-C

Findings:

School leadership has procedures to address curriculum issues, but they are not always fully implemented. The district has previously evaluated student achievement and made the decision to select a new series for both elementary and middle grades based on the anticipation of improving test scores and instruction. Teachers are expected to complete regular inventories of student achievement, which are presented to the principal in the Progressive Data Analysis (PDA) report. In addition, the district provides mid-term, final, and state-modeled assessments in the form of the Standards Proficiency Assessment (SPA) to evaluate student performance.

Interviews with district personnel describe a review process for curriculum revision and evaluation by the district coordinator outside of committee. Teachers did not indicate they either had participated in or were aware of a curriculum review process. Documentation indicates that the curriculum subcommittee of the School Leadership Committee (SLC) has met, but notes do not reflect their minutes or agendas.

There is no written evidence at the school site that the district works with special education faculty to systematically monitor, evaluate and adjust the curriculum based on the evidence of student achievement specific to the special education program. Some special education teachers indicate that they receive suggestions from a mathematics resource teacher regarding adapting the mathematics programs for special needs students, but do not feel that they receive the same level of assistance as does the general education staff. Special education classes are required to offer the general education curriculum at appropriate grade levels with little or no modification.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Lesson plans
- NJ School Report Card
- Math local curriculum documents, units of study and lesson plans
- District, administrative and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- Math Protocol Form II-A, II-B, and II-C

Findings:

The implemented curriculum accommodates the learning styles and needs of only some of the students and/or does not maintain expectations for high academic performance. Lesson plans, homework, and in-class assignments are generally aligned to grade level for all students.

Interviews with the principal, district mathematics coordinator, resource teacher, and classroom teachers indicate that the same curriculum is offered to every student in the school, including special education classes that are largely taught in self-contained and exclusion classrooms. There have been minimal efforts to offer inclusionary class to special education students.

There are no English Language Learners identified. There is no gifted and talented program in the building that is offered as a part of the regular school day.

1.1h The principal and faculty work together to ensure that the district curriculum determines what is taught through the review of lesson plans and teacher peer review of curriculum standards and the best method of teaching them.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Curriculum documents
- Faculty meeting agendas
- Documentatin of professional days
- Lesson plans
- School and district interviews

Findings:

The principal ensures that lesson plans are reviewed on a regular basis to determine if the district curriculum is taught, but documentation and interviews indicate that there is limited follow-up regarding implementation. The district policy regarding the submission of lesson plans is stated, but a review of plan books indicates there is no consistent school formatting. Lesson plans demonstrate a common lack of knowledge of current NJ CCCS. Old standards are consistently and/or erroneously quoted and approved by building administrators.

STANDARD 1 – MATHEMATICS

STANDARD 1-CURRICULUM

NEXT STEPS

1. Remove any reference to 1996 standards from classrooms and lesson plans. Replace them with the revised NJ CCCS for Mathematics from July 2002.
2. Encourage teachers to read and link cumulative progress indicators to each lesson.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Teachers and building administrators need further support and staff development in order to read, implement, and fully internalize the NJ CCCS standards.
2. Ensure that in-house professional development time has, as one focus, mathematical pedagogy. Have building mathematics teachers with strong skills in writing rubrics, using manipulatives, and facilitating group work conduct peer training sessions.
3. Develop curriculum to allow students with higher abilities to have access to an Algebra I course in grade eight (see AVID implementation recommendation).
4. Establish a formal process for horizontal articulation especially with respect to literacy, science, and social studies (i.e., data collection, display, and analysis are important in those subjects).
5. Establish SLC committees composed of district personnel, mathematics resource teachers, and faculty (including Special Education) to review mathematics curriculum and instruction.

STANDARD 2 -CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

The district and school use multiple evaluation and assessment strategies to continuously monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Lesson plans
- Samples of student work and assessments
- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- Math Protocol District/Classroom Assessment Form III-B

Findings:

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

The district provides a mid-term, final (for all grades), SPA assessment (grades 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7), and a practice GEPA for grade eight based on the NJ CCCS to evaluate student performance. Most teacher-produced assessments are not standards-based. Few teacher-designed classroom assessments are fully aligned with the NJ CCCS or current research on differentiated instruction and multiple learning styles.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Lesson plans
- Local curriculum documents and units of study
- Teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- Review of teacher-prepared assessments
- Bulletin boards
- Review of student work

Findings:

Some assessment 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. Some special education teachers maintain portfolios consisting of student work, but have no specific training in the appropriate development or use of rubrics.

Displayed work and student notebooks reveal that assessments in the elementary grades were most often derived from the Everyday Math series while assessments in the upper grades were most often derived from the Connected Math series. Based on interviews, there is horizontal and vertical collaboration among teachers.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Teacher and student interviews
- Classroom observations
- Classroom displays/bulletin boards
- Math journals
- Math Protocol Elements of Standards-based Instruction Form V-B

Findings:

Some students can articulate what they should know and be able to do. Students reflect upon their work, but do not formally evaluate their own performances. Rubrics were prominently displayed in most classrooms, but they were consistently hard to read based on wall positioning and font size. Interviews revealed that children feel teachers had high expectations for them, but they could not articulate how to achieve those expectations. Student opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation are limited. NJ CCCS-based lesson objectives are not posted by all teachers. Rubrics are not developed and used by all the teachers. There is no record of staff meetings to collaborate on the rubrics.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Three-year operational plan
- District and teacher interviews
- Building principal interview
- PDA reports
- Three-year comparative data for NJ ASK4 and GEPA

Findings:

The results of district assessments (mid-year, end of year, GEPA and NJ/ASK Practice Tests) are scored, reviewed, analyzed and disaggregated by central office. The data is returned to the school for interpretation. School staff members use the results of data analysis for communications purposes as evidenced by the PDAs, but these reports are not used to modify curricular, instructional, and assessment practices. Once the data is submitted to the principal, teachers reveal in interviews that there is no feedback that is returned to them so that they can adjust curriculum. There is no evidence that special education teachers have had training to analyze test scores in order to inform their curriculum or instruction.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- PDA reports
- Teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- Classroom assessments
- Math Protocol District/Classroom Assessments Form III-B

Findings:

There are a limited variety of classroom assessment tasks and they are only occasionally analyzed to determine the need for instructional modifications. There is little or no evidence of non-standard evaluation processes, such as portfolio assessment. Based on displayed assessment samples and other student work samples, teachers primarily scored student work with an occasional word or two of encouragement on top. Commentary and critiques provided minimal feedback for student improvement, and did not always reflect the rubric used for that score. These findings are consistent in special education classes.

Limited opportunities exist for students to have a choice to demonstrate learning based on diverse learning styles. Classroom assessments are dominated by traditional tests and seldom include other formats (writing, posters, projects, and so on).

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- Student portfolios

Findings:

There is evidence of a school policy to encourage formal articulation among and between grades regarding analysis of student work for the purpose of revising curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Teachers have received some training in the protocols for analyzing student work to make certain that the content standards are covered. However, there is no evidence that analysis is performed consistently in order to revise curriculum or teaching strategies.

Student notebooks are present at all grade levels. Most of the work in the folders consists of worksheets and a few examples of open-ended questions. While rubrics are used, no formal processes that use student work to guide instruction or revise curriculum are indicated.

STANDARD 2 – MATHEMATICS

NEXT STEPS

1. Rubrics need to be displayed where children can read, use, and understand them.
2. Basic professional development on creating rubrics should be provided to all teachers, and scoring rubrics should be shared with students before assignments – no sample student work should appear without its scoring rubric.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop a school-based staff development plan that meets the needs of the instructional staff in the area of authentic assessment and evaluation of student work, with specific training in the area of classroom protocols for analyzing student work.
2. Continue to schedule math resource teachers that are available to collaborate and provide demonstration lessons for classroom teachers on a weekly basis.

3. Teachers should meet to discuss student work across grade levels to identify grade-level weaknesses in anticipation of expectations for the following academic year. Staff meetings and collaboration meetings should have recorded minutes.
4. Teachers should make available to students sample written assignments that mirror similar format and design as they would appear on state assessments. Students should be provided with examples of well-written and poorly-written responses to open-ended questions so they can see the degree of proficiency that is expected of them on state-administered and other assessments.

STANDARD 3 –INSTRUCTION

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- Student work
- Lesson plans
- Math Protocol Elements of Standards-based Instruction Form V-B

Findings:

School leadership has no instructional practices policy that is fully implemented to ensure effective and varied instructional practices in the general education classroom. Instruction in most classrooms is not problem-solving based. Questioning techniques did not encourage higher thinking. Questions posed required a brief and often instinctive response.

All classrooms used calculators and manipulatives in some way, but activities did not always provide for inquiry-based discovery. Everyday Math and Connected Math both lend themselves to reference to a certain “page” for the day. The “lesson” becomes the activity/task required on that page. Neither lesson plans nor observations reflected activities that address all learners, modalities, or differentiation. When asked about strategies during interviews, teachers were not able to provide examples of strategies.

Most instructional strategies are textbook driven, consisting of lectures and whole group instruction. Teachers provide some student-centered instruction that allows for the use of hands-on activities or other engaging strategies that are focused on an end product. There is rarely an intentional focus on addressing various learning styles or multiple intelligences.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Lesson plans
- Textbooks
- Curriculum guides
- Teacher interviews

- Classroom observations
- Math Protocol Elements of Standards-based Instruction Form V-B

Findings:

Most learning activities do not require students to complete assessment tasks that are similar to state-wide assessments. Although aligned with the school/district curriculum, the Everyday Math and Connected Math series provide directed-practice rather than allowing pure exploration and discovery where students explore concepts and draw their own conclusions.

Displayed work and classroom observations indicate some learning activities require students to complete assignments similar to those on state assessments, but district and school goals are not consistent with the NJ CCCS Process Standard (4.5). The Process standards and strategies are inconsistently practiced.

While the curriculum planning documents are Standards aligned and include a variety of alternative assessment and technology suggestions, a lack of deep and extended mathematics education professional development results in actual instructional strategies that are often textbook-based and only sometimes similar to the NJ ASK and GEPA.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Lesson plans
- Teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- Student work
- Math Protocol Elements of Standards-based Instruction Form V-B

Findings:

Instructional strategies and activities may accommodate the learning needs and learning styles of students, but they are intentionally planned to do so. Differentiation of instruction is not observed in most classes. Adherence to a given “programs (Everyday Math and Connected Math) seems to wed teachers to a text instead of viewing the lesson as going beyond the page of a book; therefore, class time cannot address either different modalities or differentiation. Written observations and lesson plan feedback conducted by administration did not reflect knowledge of this implementation. Feedback on lesson plans is limited and therefore not conducive to changing this deficit.

When asked about teaching strategies, some teachers identified the existence of different learning styles in the classroom, but usually not the existence of special needs. During observations, there is a deficit of indicators of essential lesson components, which might include, but are not limited to catching the students’ attention at the beginning of class and transferring the current work to new situations or connecting to big ideas. The questions did not vary in type. Actual instructional practices often do not accommodate the learning needs and styles of students, although the curriculum does.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- Professional development logs
- Math Protocol Elements of Standards-based Instruction Form V-B

Findings:

Many teachers do not demonstrate the necessary content knowledge consistent with the NJ CCCS to make connections for planning units of study and rely on the textbook. They rely exclusively on the curriculum guide or textbook series. In some classes, teachers were observed to be teaching content incorrectly.

There is an attempt to focus the most highly qualified teachers in the testing grades, 3, 4 and 8. There is a math specialist provided by district for both elementary and middle grades that visits classrooms on a regular schedule.

Required hours of professional development do not always update the content knowledge and the pedagogical content knowledge, but are instead more focused on generic pedagogical knowledge. Mathematical knowledge tends to be sufficient to make informed decisions about textbook adoptions and curriculum planning, but most lack a deep and conceptual knowledge of the mathematics content.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- Lesson plans
- Math Protocol Elements of Standards-based Instruction Form V-B

Findings:

Teachers are not expected to use computer technology in the classroom to supplement math instructional purposes. All classrooms have two or three computers, depending on grade level. In most cases, there was only one computer connected to the Internet. Computers were not integrated into instruction, except for scheduled time in the computer lab where students used the computers as word processors and to decorate work that would be put on display. Formal lessons in technology were not observed in the computer lab. There was no evidence that students were conducting WebQuests.

Calculators were available for use in all classrooms, and were appropriate for grade level. Not all students in a classroom were able to use the calculator at grade level.

From displayed student work, observed lessons and interviews, it is not apparent that this is a school of technology. Interviews indicate staff members view professional development in technology as skill building and not necessarily as a tool for instruction or lesson content. There is not yet a link between what they are learning and how lessons may be improved with technology knowledge.

3.1f The district and school ensure that instructional resources are sufficient.

Findings for this indicator based on:

- District and teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- Math Protocol Manipulative Inventory Sheet Form IV-A

Findings:

There are sufficient material resources for classroom teachers to fully implement the math curriculum. Teachers and students are provided with teacher editions, textbooks, workbooks, and manipulatives as required by the mathematics program. While there are sufficient material resources for classroom teachers to fully implement the math curriculum, some teachers may not be fully aware of how to use them. When asked, teachers could not isolate the most important materials or manipulatives, but responded that they had all that they needed to accomplish instruction. Overall, the teachers seem to have what they need or can get it provided for them.

Overhead projectors and overhead manipulatives were evident in most classrooms. The school does not have SmartBoards to guide instruction for teachers or students.

The Everyday Math (elementary) and the Connected Math (grades 6 – 8) textbooks are the primary instructional resources. There is a collection of manipulatives in each classroom, although some newer teachers lack a thorough and deep knowledge of how and why to use the full range of materials. Teachers rely upon the scripted lesson activities to plan their lessons and the use of manipulatives.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- SLC meeting agendas
- Teacher interviews
- Classroom observations
- Lesson plans
- Examples of student work
- Staff meeting agendas

Findings:

Teachers meet occasionally to review student work, but results of the analyses do not always inform instructional practices. In interviews, teachers stated that they collaborated horizontally and vertically, but were not specific about whether addressing student work is a part of this dialogue.

Teachers have not received training in protocols for analyzing student work. There is no collaborative, systematic process or protocol in place for the analysis of student work to modify instructional practices. There has been training in using the GEPA Math testing and grading format, as well as the grading template for the in-house Monthly Assessments, and the results of those assessments are analyzed and shared by leadership for discussion. However, there has been little training in developing rubrics or grading templates. Teachers admit that rubrics are still a challenge.

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

Findings for this indicator based on:

- Lesson plans, SLC notes
- Teacher and student interviews
- Classroom observations

Findings:

Homework in most classrooms is monitored and frequent and sometimes extends student learning. Most teachers assign daily homework and feel it is an integral component of the student instruction. In most cases, homework is monitored for completion, but not necessarily to promote correction/improvement. Many students seem unaware of the purpose of homework beyond practice, such as elaboration and preparation for new learning. Teachers indicate that a school policy regarding homework is in existence, but cannot identify a definitive guideline for same. Homework concerns some teachers, because they say that it is hard to get back and to get parent support for its completion. They feel that falling behind in the homework affects the productivity of their class time. Homework on display is occasionally tied to current instruction.

STANDARD 3-MATHEMATICS

NEXT STEPS

1. Create a log of regular computer usage to document instructional integration of technology in the classroom.
2. Dedicate common prep time so teachers can study the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards and align curriculum to same.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals should receive additional professional development on differentiated instruction, questioning skills and higher order thinking skills at the appropriate implementation level.
2. Provide ongoing, job-embedded and thorough professional development in the following areas:
 - a. use of manipulatives in mathematics
 - b. how to use calculators as tools for increasing higher-order thinking skills
 - c. designing, using, and displaying rubrics
 - d. using the Internet to access mathematics websites on the computer
3. The technology coordinator should provide staff development and computer software as a supplement to classroom instruction. Software programs should be reviewed and purchased at district level to provide instructional support.
4. Realign building computer resources to allow teachers to integrate using computers as teaching, learning, and research tools in the classroom. Additional computers should be purchased for each classroom, with Internet access provided for each.
5. All staff should attend professional development on the integration of technology into mathematics classroom instruction to broaden and expand student learning.

IN CONCLUSION

Members of the CAPA review team express their appreciation to the staff and community of Newton 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 staff and students move to predicting student achievement through a comprehensive analytical instructional process?
2. How can the school take ownership of the results of the CAPA review to lead our school to proficiency?
3. How can the school systemically monitor the quality of curriculum and instruction?
4. How can the school's assessment system provide an accurate and useful picture of student achievement based upon multiple sources of evidence?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

District	Newark Public Schools		
School	Newton Street School		
Principal Name – Years in Building	Mr. Willie Thomas – 30 years		
Grade Levels	PK-8		
Number of Teachers meeting NCLB HQT	32		
Number of Teachers with Emergency Certification	1		
Total Number of Classrooms	33		
Percent Special Education	24%		
Number – Self Contained Classrooms	9		
Percent Bilingual	0		
Number of Bilingual Classrooms	0		
Number of Students	2004 - 524	2005 – 498	
School Leadership Council (SLC) or Title I Planning Committee (PC) Meets Monthly	yes		
SLC or Title I PC has complete representation	1 parent vacancy		
Intensive Early Literacy Visit and Complete Plan	NA	Visit Date:	Completed Plan:
Percent Parent Involvement			
Whole School Reform (WSR) Model	Balanced Literacy		
Status of WSR Contract			
Corrective Action Plan – Persistently Dangerous “Warning”	None		
Most Current Number of Students reading at grade level in 3 rd and 4 th grades.	3 rd - 76%	4 th 68%	Test: DRA