

South Seventeenth Street School
11-14-2005 to 11-18-2005

Introduction

The New Jersey Department of Education conducted a CAPA (Collaborative Assessment for Planning and Achievement) review of South Seventeenth Street School on 11-14 to 11-18-2005. This school is designated as “in need of improvement” for three consecutive years as defined in the *NJ Accountability Workbook. No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) §1117: School Support and Recognition requires that the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) create and maintain a statewide system of intensive and sustained support for those Title I schools designated as “in need of improvement” for more than two consecutive years. As part of this required support system, the NJDOE developed the CAPA review process, which assigns teams of skillful and experienced individuals to provide schools with practical, applicable, and helpful assistance, increasing the opportunity for all students to meet the state’s Core Curriculum Content Standards.

The CAPA review team activities included:

- A review of the documents collected for the school portfolio and data profile;
- 35 classroom observations;
- General observations, such as morning and afternoon arrival and dismissal, lunch in the cafeteria, and student restrooms;
- 38 interviews with teachers;
- 6 interviews with building leadership and administrators;
- 4 interviews with district administrators;
- 27 interviews with students;
- 29 interviews with school and student support staff; and
- 9 interviews with parents.

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

CAPA team members and their affiliation included:

TEAM POSITION	NAME	AFFILIATION
Team Leader	Elizabeth Domigan	Educational Consultant
District Liaison	Keith Barton	Newark Public Schools
Principal	Richard Kaye	Educational Consultant
Language Arts Literacy Specialist	Keisha Smith-Carrington	New Jersey Department of Education
District Language Arts Literacy Specialist	None	
Mathematics Specialist	Renee Howard	Educational Consultant
District Mathematics Specialist	None	
Special Education Specialist	Vito D'Alconzo	Educational Consultant
District Special Education Specialist	Irwin Rubman Glenda Wimberley	Newark Public Schools
Parent/Guardian or Grandparent	Barbara Pugh-Gorham	Educational Consultant
DOE Liaison	Lisa Schall	New Jersey Department of Education

School Academic Performance Standards

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

Standard 1: The school implements a curriculum that is rigorous, intentional, and aligned to state and local standards.

Standard 2: Multiple evaluation and assessment strategies are used to continuously monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work..

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

School Learning Environment Standards

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

Standard 4: The school functions as an effective learning community and supports a climate conducive to performance excellence.

Standard 5: The school works with families and community groups to remove barriers to learning in an effort to meet the intellectual, social, career, and developmental needs of students consistent with 6A:10A-3.6 Supports for Parents and Families and NCLB §1118 Parental Involvement.

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

School Efficiency Standards

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

Standard 7: School instructional decisions focus on support for teaching and learning, organizational direction, high performance expectations, creating a learning culture, and developing leadership capacity.

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

Standard 9: School leadership and the SLC or NCLB planning committee communicates a clear purpose, direction and strategies focused on teaching and learning through the development, implementation and evaluation of the following: vision, goals, NCLB school improvement plan and report on instructional priorities for Abbott schools.

District Academic Performance Standards

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

- Standard 1:** The district P-12 curriculum is rigorous and aligned to state standards.
- Standard 2:** The district and school uses multiple evaluation and assessment strategies to continuously monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work.
- Standard 3:** The district's instructional program actively engages all students by using effective, varied, and research-based practices to improve student academic performance.

District Learning Environment Standards

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

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

District Efficiency Standards

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

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

COMMENDATIONS

SCHOOL

The school is commended for creating an environment in which students know that their teachers want them to succeed as capable learners.

The school is commended for developing students who exhibit positive and appropriate behaviors across all grades.

DISTRICT

The district is commended for providing the school with a significant number of personnel in the areas of instruction and human services who have responsibilities to support student high academic achievement.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South Seventeenth Street Elementary School - Newark Public Schools

Visit Date: November 14-18, 2005

Team Leader: Elizabeth Domigan

Grade Levels: PK-8

Enrollment: 500

WHOLE SCHOOL REFORM MODEL STATUS:

- **Whole School Reform model(s) currently** under contract: There is no WSR model under contract. The school uses the district model “Reaching for the Brass Ring.”
- If there is no model under contract, state the model previously used and length of time it was use: Previous Model was Accelerated Schools. School had contract from January 2000 through June, 2004
- Reason model discontinued: The decision to use dissolve the relationship with the model developer was made by the district.
- Name of new model or approved district model: “Reaching for the Brass Ring”
- Description of how decision was made to adopt new model: The district made the decision to adopt the new model

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

FINDINGS:

Academic Performance:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY

Of the three state assessments, the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK) for grade four is the one on which the school has consistently performed above the district. On both the NJASK for grade 3 and the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA), the school has consistently performed below both the district and the state. Cluster analyses of both of these assessments reveal that, with the exception of the 2005 GEPA writing performance, the school has not achieved the just proficient means (JPM) on either assessment for the years of data available (which are 2004 through 2005 for the NJASK3 and 2001 through 2005 for the GEPA).

Despite this data, which reflects only a small portion of the Language Arts Literacy (LAL) data available in the building, the school has not formulated a coherent plan of action for addressing either the professional development needs of its staff or the instructional needs of its students. In fact, there is limited availability of an analysis of LAL data that reaches the level of establishing a “root cause” that can become the focus of planning. This depth is mandated by the School Leadership Team (SLT) V in which the school is located.

MATH

South Seventeenth Street School has teachers who have participated in the district's ongoing mathematics professional development program; a written math curriculum aligned to the NJ CCCS, a rich fund of teaching and learning resources (including those in the district's adopted math programs); departmentalized teaching in grades 3-8*; a math tutor; a math coach; weekly grade level meetings; and administrative classroom walk-throughs. There is, however, a disconnect between the written and implemented math curricula, which is not surprising. The standards-based, balanced curriculum framework upon which the district's curriculum and adopted programs are based represents a major instructional shift for most teachers and administrators. To address this shift, it is necessary for teachers to move from the traditional, teacher-directed ("do as I/the textbook tell or show you"), specific skills and procedures view of mathematics teaching and learning to one that uses problem-based tasks as the vehicle for helping children construct new math ideas. This is a radical departure from the way most teachers learned mathematics and the way they were trained to teach it, but is based on (a) our current knowledge of how children learn math with understanding (i.e., by interacting and struggling with key ideas intentionally embedded in problem tasks, thus causing reflective thinking and the integration of newly constructed ideas with those already existing in their minds and (b) the nature of mathematics (i.e., it is a science using a set of interconnecting ideas, skills, procedures, facts, and symbolic language that explores and makes sense out of pattern and order in the world).

* Note: The math tutor provides initial instruction for one group of grade 8 pupils.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The South Seventeenth Street School has approximately 76 classified students in eight multi-graded/self-contained classes and one pull-out resource room. Of the nine staff members, seven are certified and two are on emergency certification and currently working toward permanent certification. Weekly, the special education staff meets as a department and attends general education grade level meetings. Since the special education classes are multi-graded, teachers often have to choose which grade level meeting (GLM) to attend with their regular education colleagues. Staff indicated that, at times, they felt isolated.

Staff has access to the GEPA, NJASK, and other standardized test scores. The district provides disaggregated test scores to the school. Although they are used to identify curriculum gaps, the special education staff does not always understand how to interpret these scores to adjust instructional practices and assess student progress other than pencil and paper and teacher observation. Most instruction observed was teacher directed/whole group instruction.

There are more than ample resources and supplemental materials available to the classes at all levels including computers in the classrooms and computer labs and a special education Reading 180 lab. Support services made available through the school and district, however, act independently of one another.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:

The areas under this subtitle address the supports of climate and discipline, parent involvement and professional development. There is a support for teachers through a variety of professional development components, but a clear plan for professional development linked to school goals and student outcomes is missing. There are many supports for students and students exhibit appropriate and courteous behavior. While there are annual opportunities for students to do project work through an extensive science fair and other major celebrations of student accomplishments are evident, e.g. social studies awards and a reading competition with awards, the regular display of student work in the hallways and classrooms generally gives no helpful explanation/feedback for grades assigned to it. Routine use of rubrics is not generally evident

It is recognized that there is an extremely active outreach to parents that has begun this year.

The special needs students receive a majority of their instruction from teachers in self-contained settings. Some are mixed for some academic subjects, and special education students are mixed with the general population for physical education, music, library, and lunch. There continues to be a need for more inclusive activities and opportunities for teachers to become more experienced and confident in presenting the district balanced literacy and *Everyday Math* and *Connected Math* programs.

EFFICIENCY AND LEADERSHIP:

South 17th Street School staff demonstrate a care for their students and believe that they can each achieve at high levels of accomplishment. The staff expresses a willingness to do the hard work necessary to make the changes that will help them to achieve that goal. However, there is not a systematic, focused, specific and ongoing process to enable the staff to become a community of learners where there is a shared, collaborative responsibility for the improvement of instructional practices that results in increased student achievement.

RECOMMENDATIONS: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:

LANGUAGE ARTS/LITERACY

Many findings reveal that the root cause that must be addressed, in the area of LAL instruction, is the lack of a focused plan – for the school, the teachers, and the children. The school needs to establish a LAL team, inclusive of administration, embedded professional developers, special educators, and primary, intermediate, and middle grade representatives. This team's charge needs to be the development of a plan that ensures systematic, ongoing, targeted professional development for teachers as well as the consistent use of strategies and techniques that individualize instruction for students.

MATH

In order to address the disconnect between the written and implemented mathematics curricula, it is necessary that

A. the school:

- (a) develop and implement math-related action plans that are proactive, systematic, comprehensive, and targeted to identified group and individual student needs

- (b) increase the specificity, frequency, and range of math monitoring and articulation vehicles so that they more clearly inform/adjust instruction to meet pupil needs;
- c) enable all teachers to have weekly opportunities to experience standards-based, balanced math instruction through a well-planned, school-based, professional development program centering on in-class coaching/modeling/team teaching activities.

B. the district :

- (a) provide more mandatory math training time for teachers and administrators
- (b) continue to help teachers and administrators develop a deeper and broader understanding of the mathematics embedded in problem-based situations as well as how to use this knowledge for planning, implementing, and monitoring instruction
- (c) provide technical assistance and targeted professional development (including, but not limited to, “shadowing” and workshop activities) for the new math coach

SPECIAL EDUCATION

There needs to be a master schedule that can delineate where the discrepancies of service are. There needs to be more mainstreaming and inclusion within the building where and whenever possible. There should be a mechanism and procedure in place so students can be evaluated for suitability of placement throughout the year.

Understanding and interpretation of data to determine specific, meaningful instruction strategies and multiple assessment techniques for individual students is warranted. It is important that the master schedule reflect continuity in time allotment for instruction especially in math and language arts for grade levels. Support staff roles must be reviewed and meetings established in which staff can work together to maximize the coordination of services. Job descriptions should also be shared with all faculty members. In this way, everyone knows what each staff member's responsibility is. Overall, the puzzle pieces are in place; they just need to be put together by the building administration in conjunction with the classroom teachers and support staff.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:

Focus staff development activities and procedures on the clear connection to school goals, continue to address issues raised for special education inclusion and training needs of special education teachers as mentioned in the special education section just above. Provide all staff with clarity regarding support services for students and how to access them.

EFFICIENCY AND LEADERSHIP:

A careful assessment of all resources, data analysis specific to student accomplishment, and targeted action plans for the specific goals set for each child, class, grade, sub-group and the entire school must be done. The administration must become an instructional leadership team, developing its own capacities as instructional leaders so as to be able to lead the rest of the staff. The school leadership must lead the school to document what is, what is needed, set the goals and plans, provide the necessary professional development, and engage in the learning process together, embedded in actual classroom shared practice and participation. The rich resources of SLT and the district should be fully utilized.

STANDARD 1 - CURRICULUM

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

EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:

- Review of local curriculum, curriculum implementation, classroom assessments, professional development, , lesson plans, student work, student planner, common planning schedule, PDAs (Progressive Data Analyses) generated by SLT-V and school (for SLT-V, district disaggregated data documents, informal classroom-based assessment data (unit test results; comparison of classroom/district/state assessment results, disaggregated student data for special education, checklists, grades on mid-term and final exams; holistically scored student work samples), district policies, grade-level, SLC, and faculty meeting agendas, minutes/notes, attendance rosters, Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities (3-Year School Improvement Plan), 2003-04 School-Based Technology Plan Implementation Strategies/Activities, 2005-2006 Staff Orientation Notebook, School and Community Perception Survey results 2004-05, class schedules and, board approved math programs and related teacher and student materials, sample administrative “walk-through” observation /feedback forms, sample formal observation reports. Math Portfolio prepared for CAPA team visitation, observations of hallways
- Interviews with school and district administration and staff members, School-based student, Paraprofessional
- Classroom visitations

STANDARD 1 INDICATORS

1.1 The school conducts regular discussions to ensure that curriculum standards are clearly articulated across all grade levels (p-12)

FINDINGS:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY:

The school schedule includes a weekly 50-minute period for horizontal articulation for grades Pre-K through four and vertical articulation for grades five through six and seven through eight. These sessions address language arts literacy (LAL) once each month. Each of these meetings is attended by the literacy coach and the grade level’s administrator. These meetings consistently are planned to cover several topics but lack depth (as documented in multiple agendas and minutes). The monitoring of transition points among the grade levels in the building is not a routine focus. Curriculum articulation between the school and the high schools in the district is not addressed at the level of the school. The guidance department facilitates days on which students are introduced to the opportunities available at and the academic expectations of the district’s high schools. There is evidence that the school conducts meetings of stakeholders to monitor curriculum implementation based on state assessments, district-mandated literacy assessments, and other factors.

MATHEMATICS

Some school-based articulation occurs, but it is primarily driven by SLT-V's School Leadership Team-V) action plan because a comprehensive, formalized, school-based plan is not in place as yet.

Although it was noted that at least one GLM (grade level meeting) a month will focus on math instruction this year, the frequency of last year's math-related articulation was not clearly defined and there was little evidence to indicate that the discussions went beyond the articulation at the monthly SLT-V grade level meetings in terms of adjusting/informing instruction. In addition, much of the articulation has focused on examining student data that (a) is global and summative and/or (b) contains listings of specific skills not necessarily re-organized to show a clear alignment to the sub-clusters falling under each of the broad clusters in the state's math standards. Also, evidence did not show if the math-related items appearing on some faculty meeting agendas were included for information or articulation purposes.

Formal vertical articulation does not exist at most key transition points within the building on a regular basis, although some teachers noted that they informally initiate articulation with an adjacent grade level. As a result, (a) there was little evidence to show how the transition from *Everyday Mathematics* in grade 5 to *Connected Mathematics* in grade 6 is monitored and how this informs instruction even though both grade levels meet together on a weekly basis and (b) there was no formalized provision for articulation over a band of grade levels (e.g., pk-grade 5; grades 5-8) which could be used to help address the concerns of many teachers using *Everyday Mathematics* have regarding how to deal with its spiraling curriculum or provide a forum for a wider range of articulation for math teachers in the departmentalized grades (ex.- grades 3-8).

SPECIAL EDUCATION

There are eight multi-graded, self-contained special education classes and one resource room pullout program, with mainstreaming and inclusion only in some related arts classes (music, physical education, and library). A few teachers indicated that there was some inclusion in Spanish and science classes, but no one had a list of these students. Weekly, the special education staff meets as a department and attends a grade level meeting. Due to scheduling conflicts in meeting times, teachers cannot always participate in all relevant grade level meetings; therefore, vertical and horizontal articulation is limited.

Data is collected by the SLT who then analyzes the data and reports back to the school. The school level reports are given to the building administration who shares them with the staff.

1.2 The school requires all students to take courses with sufficient academic rigor to prepare for post secondary education.

FINDINGS:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY:

Science fairs, occasional projects, and other activities provide some opportunities for the application of skills, knowledge, and processes that will prepare students to be self-sufficient and productive citizens. Available student work demonstrates that much of the opportunities for student application of LAL learning are not authentic. There is minimal evidence of an intentional effort to expand learning

opportunities into the school and the community. Lesson plans do not reflect intentional integration of NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS) for workplace readiness into LAL classes. Guidance facilitates a career day to introduce students to postsecondary opportunities.

MATHEMATICS

Everyday Mathematics includes opportunities for applying math skills, knowledge, and processes in real-life problem-solving situations, but their intentional and frequent use in the implemented curriculum was not evident because (a) they were rarely delineated in most of the reviewed plans (especially on a daily basis) and (b) a teacher-directed mode was used to deliver instruction during most classroom visitations with students working on review/practice activities for most of the period. Middle school teachers using the *Connected Mathematics* program report that they are often feel frustrated because many students have difficulty initiating the problem-solving process, but a list of common problem-solving strategies is not posted in their classrooms and there is little evidence to indicate that these strategies were intentionally and systematically included in the math lessons they implemented. Formalized connections designed to familiarize students with mathematics-related career/post secondary options were not clearly delineated in the district's curriculum guide or teacher's lesson plans.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

There exists a mix of post-secondary education and career options from individual teachers, guidance, parent workshops, and presentations by and visitations to the high school.

Students are made aware of high school opportunities through guidance, the case manager, and classroom teachers. Visitations are arranged for high school personnel to visit the school in order to present; arrangements are made for students to visit the high schools.

There is inconsistency in the time allocation for LAL and math instruction. Daily time allotments in special education language arts and math varies from a low of 71 minutes to a high of 105 minutes in language arts and a low of 63 minutes to a high of 105 minutes in math.

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

FINDINGS:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY:

The School Leadership Council (SLC) has not functioned at an optimal level for several years and is currently attempting to become a fully functioning organization with active subcommittees inclusive of one specifically addressing curriculum. The district assessment structure requires the use of multiple assessments (e.g., observation survey, Developmental Reading Assessment, monthly writing tasks, etc.) to evaluate student performance. The Progressive Data Analysis (PDA) process in the school has not developed to a level where it consistently informs either instruction or professional development. While the district has instituted benchmarks for all instituted assessments that have been implemented in the school, there is no evidence of school level teacher peer reviews of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJ CCCS).

The district-adopted LAL curriculum is not aligned to either the adopted comprehensive reading program (CRP), Harcourt Trophies, or the supplemental materials and, at the school, there is no attempt to do so. Furthermore, there are many areas of LAL curriculum implementation mandated by the district that are not fully functioning in the building (i.e., assessment walls, 90-minute block of LAL instruction, use of time during the block, daily writing, etc.). There are resources in place to address this issue that have not been refined.

The district Implementation Guidelines include a list of services provided by the LAL Resource Teacher/Coordinators (RTCs). It is of note that, despite the presence of literacy coaches in schools, there is no specific mention of the RTCs' services to coaches.

MATHEMATICS

Procedures relative to monitoring and adjusting math instructional practices at the school are primarily implemented and prescribed by SLT-V. The school is still working to establish an effectively functioning, school-wide curriculum committee that meets regularly (see the findings for 7.1 and standard 9). Most articulation is horizontal and vertical articulation does not occur on a regular and pre-planned basis at most key transition points within the building.

A disconnect exists between the written and implemented curricula. Instruction was primarily delivered in the traditional, teacher-directed ("do as I/the textbook tell or show you") mode to the entire class with students working individually for most of the period on specific skills practice/reinforcement activities. One of the key elements of problem-based learning was absent during many classroom visitations—i.e., the utilization of problem-based tasks as the vehicle for helping children construct key mathematical ideas. In addition, the majority of the teaching staff did not demonstrate a clear awareness of the gaps existing between the adopted math programs and the NJ mathematics CCCS (ex.- *Everyday Mathematics* is not clearly aligned to the NJ CCCS in the area of discrete mathematics) or of ways to address the areas that are impacted.

Administrative efforts to ensure that the curriculum is taught consist mainly of plan book reviews, classroom walk-throughs and formal observations as mandated by code, but there was little evidence to indicate that they were used on a regular basis to highlight best practices for math instruction. The school handbook gives teacher the option of deciding on the scope of their submitted plans, which are checked bi-weekly. Most plans reviewed for this report (a) varied in scope (from covering each individual day to those containing a general overview of instruction for a week or longer); (b) were missing some basic lesson plan elements delineated in the teacher handbook (especially daily notations regarding procedures and assessments relative section where new skills are introduced/developed); and (c) did not contain administrative feedback comments.

The principal allocates resources so that teachers can attend mandatory professional development activities provided by the district's math department as well as SLT-V. He also encourages staff to attend workshops offered on a voluntary basis. Although a full-time math coach has been assigned to the school for the first time this year, a schedule has not been designed as yet that enables each of the school's fourteen K-8 math teachers to receive at least one weekly period of in-class modeling/coaching/team teaching per week.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education's lesson plans are submitted bi-weekly to the building administration for review. Professional development is available through building workshops, SLT, and the district, providing ample opportunity for curriculum update. When the board approves new subject matter curriculum, staff are afforded all materials as well as professional development. However, implementing the new curriculum is inconsistent.

Communication in this area must be addressed. The building principal has stated that the "delivery of curriculum is in need of change." However, there doesn't seem to be a plan in place to translate this to the special education staff so that changes and implementations can be made and reinforced. The school should communicate the concerns with staff as well as what needs to be implemented, both culled from data available.

1.4 The school ensures access to a common academic core for all students including to special education and ELL students.

FINDINGS:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY

The instructional resources for LAL program implementation provide challenging opportunities for all students to access curricular materials that are aligned to the NJ CCCS. The use of this material is not consistently maximized to ensure that the learning needs of students performing below grade level are accommodated. The CRP intervention kits, although endorsed by district approval and required training, are not routinely used by teachers for fragile readers. The scheduling of intervention services frequently results in students missing grade level instruction. In some instances, students have curriculum standards and expectations identified for them; however, in these instances, there is at times an emphasis on district goals and objectives that takes the place of state standards. The development of higher order thinking skills through problem solving is not a consistent focus of instruction. There is no evidence of any efforts in place to address these issues.

MATHEMATICS

All students receive math instruction on a daily basis and objectives were posted for student reference in most classrooms visited, but some inequities exist--

- A. Some students are not receiving the district mandated minimum of math instructional time because some of it is lost on a regular basis due to (a) breakfast, opening exercises; and/or announcements; (b) unscheduled passing time before/after lunch or a special activity class; and/or (c) work the teacher to complete from previous lessons in other content areas
- B. Some, but not all, classes on a given grade level receive instruction in an uninterrupted block of time
- C. The math tutor can not service pupils in third and fourth grade who are scheduled for math instruction during the first period of the day because she is the primary math teacher for one of the eighth grade classes at that time
- D. Review/routine activities in many classes receive a disproportionate amount of time leaving less time for of the lesson's main teaching focus where new skills are introduced/developed in problem-based tasks that often include provisions for eliciting higher order thinking and problem-solving skills

- E. Test-besting type activities in some classes receive a disproportionate amount of time leaving less time for students to work on concepts/skills developmentally as laid out in the adopted math programs and may cause the perception that they are not related
- F. Suggestions for differentiated instruction were not in the district's curriculum guides nor were they evident in the lesson plans reviewed or in most of the lessons observed

In addition, it was difficult to ascertain the extent to which problem-solving strategies and higher order thinking skills are regularly and intentionally elicited because (a) none of the rooms visited had a listing of common problem-solving strategies (e.g., start with a simpler problem) posted for pupil reference nor did most teachers reference them during classroom discourse and (b) teacher questioning in most classrooms using the *Everyday Mathematics* program basically addressed only the lower two levels of Blooms taxonomy and pupils were rarely asked to explain/justify their own thinking, reasoning, and solution methods.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

There are eight multi-grade, self-contained special education classes and one resource room. The classroom teacher is responsible for instruction in all academic areas. There are ample materials in all subject areas to meet the core standards. There is minimal movement out of the special needs classes, being self-contained and having their own art class. Special Needs students do attend physical education, music, library. It is stated that some science and Spanish instruction with the general school population although no list of students for these classes was available.

STANDARD 1 NEXT STEPS

1. School leadership should select a representative from each of the grade ranges represented in the building, primary, intermediate, and middle. Further, at least one representative from the special education department should be identified. These representatives should join with the literacy coach and at least one administrator to form the school's LAL team. This team should meet to outline its course of action. (1.1)
2. Revise the math coach's schedule so that all of the K-8 math teachers, including special education teachers, receive a bi-weekly period of in-class professional development in the form of modeling/coaching/team teaching and determine how to address the situation when other activities impact these weekly in-class sessions. [Note: Excluding lunch, the current schedule contains 30 periods and allocates 10 for in-class modeling/coaching/team teaching, 7 for school-based GLMs (even though math is not always the focus of every meeting), and for the general mentoring of a new teacher to the school. The rest are used for paperwork and preparation activities. To date, the following activities have impacted the weekly in-class sessions: the coach's attendance at SLT-V's grade level meetings, district training sessions, and the completion of special school projects.] (1.3)
3. Increase the frequency of administrative walk-throughs and formal observations that are conducted during math instructional periods. (1.3)

4. Dedicate some grade-level meeting time to a focus on developing a list of common problem-solving strategies. Post developmentally appropriate listings of strategies in all math classrooms and begin to discuss ways to this resource during math lessons. (1.2, 1.3, 1.4)

DISTRICT

1. Continue to help teachers on all grade levels identify the scope and sequence of gaps existing between the district's adopted math programs and the mathematics section of the NJ CCCS and provide school staff with background information and guidance relative to addressing the situation. (1.3)

STANDARD 1 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish/revitalize a school curriculum sub-committee of the SLC to monitor the implementation not only of new programs but also existing ones. (1.3)

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY

1. In addition to horizontal grade level meetings, leadership should revise the schedule to include opportunities for teachers in these non-departmentalized grades, pre-kindergarten through two, to meet vertically. For teachers in departmentalized grades, there should be a weekly LAL department meeting (i.e., third through fifth and sixth through eighth). Special educators should be scheduled to attend the appropriate meeting with grade level peers in addition to having a department meeting to address issues specific to their population. (This will allow for the sharing of best practices for LAL instruction and differentiation.) The scheduled sessions should target the analysis of student work to identify strengths and weaknesses as well as the identification of key transition points in the curriculum. This information should be shared during bimonthly literacy team meetings in order to begin the process of school level curriculum mapping. The LAL RTC should attend these meetings at least quarterly to provide input as to whether or not the outcomes are aligned to the district's goals. (1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, and 3.7)
2. Teachers should ensure that instruction is aligned to the NJ CCCS. In addition, they should maximize opportunities for authentic student learning by infusing cross disciplinary connections wherever possible with appropriate NJ CCCS noted in lesson plans. (1.2)
3. The district developed infrastructure for professional development should be maximized to ensure that embedded training systematically addresses instruction through the use of data. For each teacher, there should be scaffolded opportunities for growth. These opportunities should focus on teacher ability to implement district-adopted strategies to address students' needs. (1.3, 1.4, 3.3, and 3.4)
4. School leadership should push intervention into the classroom during the LAL block in order to provide increased time for the instruction of struggling readers. Every student identified, using multiple forms of assessment, as in need of further intervention should receive additional time outside of the block with instruction systematically targeted toward moving him/her toward grade level proficiency. (1.4)

MATHEMATICS

1. Work collaboratively to formalize, systematize, and increase the scope, specificity, and frequency of school-based mathematics articulation and curriculum monitoring vehicles and activities so that they more effectively inform instruction and help reduce the disconnect between the written and implemented curricula. (1.1, 1.3)
2. Develop and implement procedures relative to refining teachers' plan book notations so that all math lesson plans are completed on a daily basis and include the basic lesson plan components noted in the school's teacher handbook with appropriate specificity in terms of the focus section of lesson where most new material is introduced/developed. (1.2)

SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. A school-wide workshop on the interpretation and utilization of data to improve program and student progress in helping to develop strategies. (1.1)
2. Continue to refine the transition process and information base for special needs students and parents in selecting a high school. Provide opportunities for the guidance counselor, CST, and teacher to communicate all realistic life and career options for preparing students for the next level. (1.2)

DISTRICT

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY

1. The district should expedite the revision of the K-5 curriculum in order to provide teachers with a tool that demonstrates the connections amongst the multiple district-adopted LAL resources. This will enable both novice teachers and seasoned teachers with less than optimal understandings of reading and writing development to better align their instruction to best practices in the field of literacy development. For teachers of grades six through eight, the district should consider this same type of revision as well as specifically providing materials for struggling readers that maintain high interest at the same time as they provide for low readability. (1.3 and 3.1)
2. The services provided by LAL RTCs, as indicated in the district Implementation Guide, should be revised to include the scaffolding of professional development for school level coaches. Optimally, the RTC should be a coach for the coach using the district's adopted cognitive apprenticeship model. This would not only model coaching but also ensure the LAL capacity of each school's coach. (1.3)
3. Provide assistance for school to create master schedules so that school can provide appropriate daily mathematics instructional time (1.3)

MATHEMATICS

1. Continue to utilize the mathematics supervisory and resource staff to provide ongoing technical assistance to South Seventeenth Street School relative to monitoring and evaluating student growth and curriculum implementation so that they will be able to—
 - (a) more effectively inform instruction and make appropriate adjustments/modifications
 - (b) increase the extent to which higher-order thinking and problem-solving strategies are regularly and intentionally infused
 - (c) reduce the disconnect between the written and implemented mathematics curricula.(1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4)

SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. In order to further the inclusion initiative, it is necessary to provide ongoing professional development in various topics, i.e., team building, collaborative teaching, cooperative learning, sensitivity awareness of the special needs student, IEP compliance mandates, and effective communication. (1.4)

STANDARD 2 – ASSESSMENT - EVALUATION

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

EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:

- Review of local curriculum, curriculum implementation, classroom assessments, professional development, , lesson plans, student work, student planner, common planning schedule, PDAs and district disaggregated data documents, district policies, Grade-level (GL), SLC, and faculty meeting agendas, minutes/notes, attendance rosters, Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities (3-Year School Improvement Plan, 2003-04 School-Based Technology Plan Implementation Strategies/Activities, class schedules and board approved math programs and related teacher and student materials, School and Community Perception Survey Results 2004-05, 2005-2006 Staff Orientation Notebook, comparison of classroom/district/state assessment results, disaggregated student data for special education, observations of hallways
- Interviews with school and district staff members, student, school-based and district staff member, paraprofessional
- Classroom visitations

STANDARD 2 INDICATORS

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

FINDINGS:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY:

There are multiple assessment tools endorsed by the district. Beyond compliance to district-mandated PDA development, it is not evident that the school consistently uses the results of these to monitor student progress. District-supported practices like assessment walls to measure student growth over time are not in place. However, school leadership does implement SLT V procedures for the number of assessments that must be used to measure student growth each quarter. The observance of teacher-centered instruction documented in available administrative walkthrough and evaluation forms does not demonstrate a purposeful effort, on the part of administration, to observe instruction targeted to meet individual students' needs.

There is little evidence to suggest that students can select the manner in which they demonstrate learning. Classroom assessments are typically uniform, with inconsistent inclusion of feedback on student work. Where available, feedback is not consistently structured in a manner that would allow students to improve future performances.

As stated earlier, the current grade level meeting (GLM) structure does not routinely provide time for concentrated attention on any area of need. As a result, teachers rarely collaborate to analyze student work products. There is little evidence to demonstrate that either this or individual teachers' analyses revise pedagogy, instruction, curriculum, and assessment.

MATHEMATICS

Although the school uses multiple indicators of student performance, the ability of this data to effectively inform instruction is limited because there is little evidence to indicate ~~that~~ how additional data sources are used. In addition, much of the data used--

- (a) is global (ex.- overall and cluster state assessment scores; mid-term/final exam grades);
- (b) is summative (ex.-unit tests; SLT-V marking period tests; mid-term/final exam grades);
- (c) is not re-organized (even when specific skills are listed) to show a clear alignment to the sub-clusters under each of five broad clusters in the math section of the NJ CCCS, (ex.- individual/class profile sheets generated from unit tests; Standards Proficiency Assessment skill listings; PDAs; NJ-ASK practice tests item analysis);
- (d) did not involve students in authentic assessments tasks
- (e) did not contain opportunities for students to choose ways to demonstrate their learning.

Other than providing grade level meeting time and submitting reports required by the state, district, SLT-V, there is no clear evidence to highlight the school leadership's role in ensuring that rigorous school-based math assessments are rigorous, varied, aligned to the NJ CCCS and consistently used to monitor student progress as well as to inform/modify instruction. Although the district's curriculum guides contain a rubric to assess open-ended problems, there are no specific assessment suggestions aligned to the overall clusters and/or sub-clusters in the mathematics section of the NJ CCCS.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Student interviews reflected meaningful feedback from teachers that continue to strengthen their instructional progress. In visiting special education classes, work was proudly displayed throughout the rooms. The majority of grades on these papers were numerical. Most special education teachers have been trained in the use of rubrics, but these are only used on language arts papers. Portfolios were used in most classes, however, not in a consistent manner. The school principal has issued a memo regarding lesson plan format and content that should be aligned with NJ CCCS. Lesson plans indicated the NJ CCCS next to the activity, but the assessments were little to non-existent. Teachers interviewed stated the need for ongoing math workshops to address the multiple instructional levels and varied learning styles.

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

FINDINGS:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY:

Teacher-designed assessment tasks are infrequently administered. District mandated and CRP assessments require valid and appropriate demonstrations of what students should know and be able to do. Again, there is no evidence of ongoing collaborative design of assessment tasks.

MATHEMATICS

Based on the evidence presented, it appears that most tasks used for assessment draw heavily on resources provided by the *Everyday Mathematics* and *Connected Mathematics* programs as well as those found in commercial NJ-ASK/GEPA test preparation booklets. Although samples of holistically scored student work were seen posted in some classrooms and a holistic rubric was found on most pupil's desks in grades 3 and up, it does not appear that authentic, rigorous assessment tasks are intentionally and regularly incorporated into daily lessons because (a) they were not clearly delineated in most lesson plans that were reviewed and (b) most plan book assessment notations focused on the areas of the lesson involving review/practice material as opposed to the section where most new material is introduced/developed.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Though there is some collaboration done with assessment, many staff members still rely on the SLT for assessments, which then become standard in classrooms but provide little input from staff. The majority of assessment is pencil and paper and teacher observation. Students voiced a concern that the work is not always challenging, and they would like to see more looping in the grade levels.

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

FINDINGS:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY:

There is evidence that some students understand the requirements for proficiency in LAL. Grade appropriate adaptations of the NJ Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric are evident in most classrooms but are infrequently used to communicate academic performance to students. There is no evidence that teachers collaborate to develop rubrics that provide performance expectations for students. Despite the district's support of reader response journals, there is minimal evidence that students are encouraged to participate in this type of reflection. Similarly, there is little evidence of students formally evaluating either their own or their peer's work.

MATHEMATICS

Lesson objectives were posted in many classrooms, but most teachers did not draw students' attention to them by verbally referencing them, using exemplars of student work to help pupils understand expectations, or asking pupils to articulate what they need to know and be able to do. Students were not observed using rubrics during classroom visitations, although samples of holistically scored student work were posted in some classrooms and rubrics for assessing open-ended problem-solving tasks were found on many student desks in grades 3 and above.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

There exists a series of posters hung throughout the special education rooms visited that articulated to students the desired goals, expectations, rubrics, etc. Language arts papers had a rubric score placed in the corner of each paper. The teachers meet with the students periodically to review tests and their progress, one-to-one, in addition to the daily feedback given. Report cards are issued and additional comments are sent home. The students reported that teachers regularly speak to them about the importance of an education and what they need to do in each and every presentation and activity. When students were asked specifically about *Connected Math*, they couldn't tell us what it was.

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

FINDINGS:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY:

The PDA process provides some evidence that the school utilizes data. However, it also reveals that there has been no school level identification of the root cause of areas of weakness. In like manner, district provided assessment data has not undergone a school level analysis to identify specific areas requiring focused attention for either students or staff. While there is an awareness of the gap between males and females at all tested grade levels, there is no evidence of the development of instructional implications. Furthermore, despite the fact that the school often performs below the district, there is no documentation of a school level conversation to ascertain the cause. In fact, implemented practices are not modified, as needed, for all sub-groups.

MATHEMATICS

Some disaggregated data is reviewed by administrative and teaching staff, but this data has limited ability delineate specific gaps or to inform/adjust daily and long-term instruction due to the constraints discussed in indicator 2.1 (for example, an overall score on disaggregated data from the NJ-ASK in the "Numbers and Numerical Operations" cluster does not give sufficient information relative to individual or group conceptual/procedural knowledge of fractions).

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The district provides desegregated test scores to the school. This information is provided to the teacher by the building administration. Although they are used to identify curriculum gaps, the special education staff does not always understand how to interpret these scores to adjust instructional practices.

STANDARD 2 NEXT STEPS

1. The curriculum subcommittee of the SLC should meet to begin a discussion of the school's performance in relation to the district and the state. They should, using available data, identify areas where the school is underperforming, not just in content but for all sub-groups, and highlight areas that need to be addressed, through research. Subsequent meetings for the school year should be scheduled to discuss the implementation, and data-supported effectiveness, of strategies and techniques to address the areas. (2.1)

2. Refine plan book assessment notations in math lesson to include those that more directly address the section of each lesson where new content is introduced/developed. (2.2)
3. Incorporate more daily opportunities for students to reflect upon and demonstrate their understanding of expectations relative to the section of each lesson that deals with the introduction/development of new math content. (2.3)

STANDARD 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. District-provided, grade-appropriate rubrics should be routinely used by teachers to both communicate expectations of and evaluate student performance. Opportunities for developmentally appropriate student self-evaluation, based on these rubrics, should be included in all classrooms. All teachers, including special education, should also be encouraged to model peer review in both reading and writing, and provide opportunities for students to participate in this process to both increase student learning and help students internalize expectations. (2.3)
2. Leadership should purposely focus building walkthroughs and staff evaluations on the effective implementation of guided reading, guided writing, and other forms of instruction targeted to address identified student needs. (2.4 and 3.4)

MATHEMATICS

1. In order to more effectively inform and guide instruction and monitor student progress, ensure that school-based curriculum monitoring activities— (a) include an appropriate balance of data gleaned from multiple measures along the continuum from traditional (paper- and-pencil, computation assessments) at one end to authentic tasks (requiring students to demonstrate and explain their reasoning/thinking) at the other end(b) utilize assessments that measure both formative and summative student growth (c) contain some listings of specific skills scores aligned to the NJ CCCS math grade level, sub-cluster benchmarks. (2.1)

SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. The LDTC should review scores with the special education teachers and discuss techniques and strategies for program improvement. (2.4)

DISTRICT

1. Provide technical assistance to the math coach through consultation and shadowing activities (performed by the mathematics supervisory and resource staff) so that she can more effectively facilitate the collection, organization, and analysis of multiple measures of student data along the continuum from traditional to authentic with the objective of informing instruction so that appropriate adjustments/modifications can be made. (2.1, 2.2, 2.4)
2. Provide more professional development on the interpretation and utilization of data to improve program and student progress for all teachers, including special education teachers. (2.4)

STANDARD 3 – INSTRUCTION

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

EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:

- Review of organizational agenda, staff assignments, classroom schedules, sample Professional Improvement Plan (PIP), sample evaluation, local curriculum, classroom assessment, professional development, Grade-level, SLC, faculty, and Team meeting agendas, minutes/notes, and attendance roster, lesson plans, homework policy, student work, district disaggregated data documents, board approved math programs and related teacher and student materials, PDAs (Progressive Data Analyses) generated by SLT-V and school (for SLT-V), Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities (3-Year School Improvement Plan, 2003-04 School-Based Technology Plan Implementation Strategies/Activities, board approved math programs and related teacher and student materials, School and Community Perception Survey Results 2004-05, 2005-2006 Staff Orientation Notebook, comparison of classroom/district/state assessment results, disaggregated student data for special education, Formal state and district assessment data (NJ-ASK 3 and 4; SPA for grades 5-7; GEPA for grade 8), informal classroom-based assessment data (unit test results, checklists, grades on mid-term and final exams, holistically scored student work samples), sample administrative "walk-through" observation/feedback forms sample formal observation reports, principal's power-point presentation for the CAPA Team, Math Portfolio prepared for CAPA team visitation
- Interviews with school and district staff members, comparison of classroom/district/state assessment results disaggregated student data for special education, school-based student, Paraprofessional
- Observations of hallways, classroom libraries, and technology use by students and teachers
- Classroom visitations

STANDARD 3 INDICATORS

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

FINDINGS:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY:

Few teachers are implementing all of the components of the district's balanced literacy LAL curricula. In most classes, student-centered instructional strategies (i.e., guided reading, interactive writing, literature circles, etc.) are not part of routine instruction. While content area and interdisciplinary connections are sometimes implemented, they are infrequently intentionally planned unless occurring as part of the adopted reading programs, Harcourt Trophies for kindergarten through fifth grades and McDougal Littel for grades six through eight.

Teachers are allowed to select the way the SLT form for planning is utilized. Most teachers plan for a two-week time period on one sheet, despite the inclusion of the word 'daily' as part of the form's title. This does not allow planning for individual days during this range and impedes observer efforts to

identify teacher-made connections for a given day's lesson. In addition, this multi-day planning format inhibits purposeful planning for each guided reading or small group's lesson.

MATHEMATICS

The adopted math programs contain provisions for varied instructional options, but they were not included in the district's curriculum guides. A general instructional practices policy and one issued by the district's math were included in the school handbook, but there was little evidence to show that there are other school-based procedures have been implemented to insure that varied instructional strategies are intentionally planned and utilized. Most administrative feedback comments (relative to plan book reviews, classroom walk-throughs, and formal lesson observations) targeted managerial issues rather than differentiation of instruction. Many plan books listed the varied routines that occur on a daily basis, but relatively few specified instructional options, differentiated instructional provisions, or interdisciplinary connections related to the remainder of the lesson. As noted earlier in this report, math instruction in *Everyday Mathematics* classrooms is still more teacher- than child-centered with students operating for most of the instructional time as collections of individuals engaged in review/ practice activities rather than in inquiry-based, problem-solving tasks that require the use of higher order thinking skills. Evidence also suggests that students and teachers are still struggling with the problem-based curriculum found in the *Connected Mathematics* program.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

During special education classroom visitations, six of the eight presentations were teacher-directed/whole group instruction. Two students and two aides were observed using computers, and only one aide was viewed working one-on-one with a student. It was observed in one class that various learning styles were addressed based on varied activities for students to graph and work with fractions. Some of the lessons observed were standards-based.

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

FINDINGS:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY:

The district curriculum does not align all of the district-adopted resources. The school does not contain a functioning body able to perform this task. As a result, many teachers in the school align their instructional strategies only to the CRP. This instructional material along with the district novel assessment and SLT writing tasks allow students to complete activities similar to those on state assessments. There is minimal evidence that instructional strategies are informed by ongoing analysis of these informal assessments.

MATHEMATICS

As noted in standard 2, most of the available assessment data has limited ability to effectively inform instruction because the data lacks specificity, is rarely based on authentic assessment, and is not usually organized or re-organized to a clear alignment to the math sub-clusters of the NJ CCCS. Commercial materials produced in formats similar to those found on the NJ-ASK/GEPA tests are used during the school day as well as in extended day/Saturday workshops, but interviews indicate that most teachers (especially in grades where state assessments are administered) see these materials as a

separate test-besting components not seamlessly connected to the developmental instructional sequence contained in the district's adopted programs.

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

FINDINGS:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY:

As mentioned earlier, the district mandates and the school implements multiple LAL assessments. PDAs demonstrate that student needs in numerous areas (i.e., fluency, phonics, etc.) have been identified. Classroom instruction and many reviewed artifacts do not reveal a connection between this data and instruction. There is minimal evidence of an intentional effort, on the part of school leadership, to monitor instruction for the implementation of strategies and techniques supported by brain research as effective for various learning styles and multiple intelligences.

MATHEMATICS

As noted in 3.1, there is little evidence to indicate that differentiated instructional strategies are intentionally selected to accommodate various learning styles, multiple intelligences, and brain research. During many classroom visitations, instruction did not always proceed from the concrete to the abstract and require students to use higher-order thinking or problem-solving strategies. On occasions when problem-based learning was used, both teachers and pupils were seen struggling with their roles. When interviewed many teachers indicate that they informally try to give additional help to pupils who demonstrate difficulty after a lesson is presented, but there was little or no differentiation of instruction demonstrated during most classroom visitations and most plans that were reviewed did not contain notations relative to specific accommodations to address individual/group needs. In addition, there is no clear evidence that the administration monitors classroom instruction on an ongoing basis to ensure that diverse student needs are addressed, since the frequency of math classroom walk-throughs was not delineated and comments relative to differentiated instruction were not found on most walk-through weekback sheets that were reviewed.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education teachers submit their lesson plans bi-weekly to the building administration. The ones viewed are generic in nature and do not indicate varied strategies on assessment. There are not appropriate feedback noted on plans from administrators.

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

FINDINGS:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY:

The majority of the staff are tenured and/or highly qualified, by NCLB standards. While teachers participate in the required hours of district professional development, professional practice is not always updated. School level professional development is infrequently aligned to identified staff and student needs. The lack of daily planning for scaffolded instruction, the sporadic use of teacher

feedback, and the prevalence of teacher-centered instruction provides evidence that teachers do not internalize the effect of their expectations on student achievement.

There are four computer labs in the building and two/three computers in each classroom. Many teachers have students use computers for word processing. Some teachers use overhead projectors and taped stories to differentiate instruction.

MATHEMATICS

Evidence indicates that most teachers and administrators do not possess enough math content knowledge to effectively implement a curriculum where problem-based tasks, with key math ideas embedded in them, are used as the vehicle for helping children construct key mathematical ideas. This is not unique to the school or district, has been identified and explored in various research studies, and represents a major instructional shift from the way most teachers and administrators were taught math and most or were trained to teach it. Listed below are some observations (based on information gleaned from the documentation presented for review, staff interviews, and classroom visitations) relative to how the situation noted above currently impacts the school's ability to challenge pupils and move them to higher levels of learning--

- a. most stakeholders still see the curriculum as a collection of spiraling specific skills rather than big, overriding ideas that are supported by relationships between and among the various conceptual and procedural areas of math knowledge and they focus their instructional planning, implementation, and monitoring efforts accordingly
- b. instruction is still more teacher than child-centered
- c. students operate primarily as a collection of individuals
- d. most instructional time in many classes is used to review/practice skills rather than engage students in problem-based tasks that require collaboration, the use of higher-order thinking and problem-solving strategies, and justification of solution strategies
- e. administrators' feedback comments tend to focus on general management issues rather than on the mathematical content or best practices for mathematics instruction.

Both school leadership and the district's mathematics department recognize the need for ongoing, job-focused, professional development and allocate resources to support it. District math department staff phased the adopted math program into the schools over a multi-year period, supported by ongoing professional development activities, because they know that it takes time to help administrators and teachers gain a deeper understanding of key math ideas embedded in the curriculum and their connections to specific skills and procedures. Since a large portion of mandatory staff development time was mainly allocated to program orientation and management issues, the more intensive content institutes had to be scheduled during the voluntary weekend sessions. (Note: This also indicative of type the 2005-06 schedule of math staff development activities.) Fortunately, this marks the first year that they will be able to make the process more classroom-embedded due to the addition of a full-time, school based, math coach whose can provide in-class coaching/ mentoring/team teaching activities.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education teachers are expected to teach at least two different grade levels as well as individual student levels in a self-contained class. At least two of the nine special education teachers are on emergency certification and taking required classes for certification. This precludes them from taking other professional development classes to expand knowledge and expand strategies. Many of the staff

said they have availed themselves of some of the PD courses. Others indicated that they need more assistance in math instruction. Teacher aides express a need to know more of what is occurring in the classroom.

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

FINDINGS:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY:

School leadership expects each classroom to be scheduled into the computer lab for at least one class period each week. Some teachers incorporate the use of technology into their classroom instruction. The district E-pals and E-board are available to expand the classroom into the community. Accelerated Reader and Read 180 are implemented in the building. The former program forms the basis of the school's reading incentive program while the latter has become primary instruction for several students due to scheduling.

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

MATHEMATICS

The building-based technology coordinator is working hard to help teachers infuse computers into their instructional programs, but there was no documentation to show how often classroom or lab computers are/have been used for math-related activities. All classrooms have a minimum of three networked, Internet accessible computers. Students in the lower grades are scheduled into one lab on a regular basis and the lab used by those teaching in grades 4 and above operates on sign-up basis. The coordinator has also prepared an e-board with some math-related Internet sites and has acquired a variety of drill and practice software programs, but documentation relative to the frequency and effectiveness of their use was not available for review. Overhead projectors and calculators were observed in use during some classroom visitation sessions

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Each special education class is wired for technology and contains a minimum of two computers. The school has a number of tech labs as well as a technology coordinator who is available to assist staff in their use of computers and materials. Classes are assigned to a computer lab time slot and have access to the special education Read 180 [lab] room. Where computers are also available. Though materials and computers are available, staff needs assistance in how to integrate the computer into their instruction and use it to enhance student learning. In two of the eight visitations, students were using computers. They were also observed in use in the art room.

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

FINDINGS:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY:

The district has adopted reading programs and purchased these along with other resources to support the balanced literacy curriculum. The majority of the Kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms have a library that exceeds state requirements. In some classrooms, there are insufficient leveled texts to supplement instruction. There is minimal evidence of a process at the school to address this deficit.

MATHEMATICS

Teachers report that the principal has made a concerted effort to outfit their classrooms with a sufficient supply and variety of teacher and student resources. The district's approved math programs have a variety of components and many teachers noted that the learning curve for learning how to manage them has taken much of their time and effort. Test-preparation materials containing items similar in format to those found on the NJ state assessments are used in some grades and students in many classrooms (especially those in grades 3 and above) have a rubric for assessing open-ended problems secured to their desktops for reference. Age and developmentally appropriate manipulatives were available in classrooms and some were observed in use during lessons. Because of the nature of mathematics, many of the manipulatives used tend to be generic (rather than culturally responsive) so that attention can be focused on concept formation and the connection to skills and procedures. As noted in the findings for indicator 3.5, technology exists in various forms, but the specific and intentional infusion of technological literacy in the mathematics instructional program has not been clearly delineated and formalized as yet (i.e., currently technology use seems to center on tutorial and drill and practice activities).

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Interviews with the staff/teacher aides reveal that many do not know what services are available or how they can be acquired.

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

FINDINGS:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY:

Teachers have been provided with numerous trainings on protocols for analyzing student work in the areas of reading and writing. In the area of writing, the district has introduced the conferencing process. The SLT in which the school is located requires conference logs to be submitted with writing assessments in order to monitor teacher use of this technique. Review of several samples of both logs and submitted assessments provides evidence that teachers are not fully implementing these processes for analyzing student work.

As discussed earlier, embedded opportunities for teacher collaboration and for individualized professional development are not maximized in the school. Where collaborative development of PDAs does occur, needs for instruction are not aligned to lesson planning and embedded professional development.

MATHEMATICS

Some student work samples were displayed in classrooms and hallways. Teachers indicate that they are beginning to collaboratively explore and analyze them, but there is no formalized short or long-term plan that identifies training and articulation focus areas that will be addressed and establishes procedures for how the results will be used to inform/adjust instruction.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

There is limited collaboration observed in the classes visited. However, in speaking with the students and staff, there are occasions when collaboration takes place.

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

FINDINGS:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY:

As mentioned earlier, lesson plans are allowed to be submitted in a manner that does not require daily planning. Therefore, daily linkage of homework assignments to classroom instruction is not intentionally planned. Most samples available in student folders are dittos and CRP workbook pages that are designed for reinforcement and not to extend student learning. Instructional follow-up or specific teacher feedback is sometimes provided. Regarding the assignment of homework, district policy and school procedures are included in organizational documents provided to each teacher.

MATHEMATICS

Homework assignments were posted in most classrooms that were visited and relevant notations were found in the plan books that were reviewed (and this was often the only area delineated in those plans that consisted of a general overview of instruction covering a period of a week or more). Based on the evidence presented, it appears that most of the homework is focused on review/practice activities rather than on extending learning, providing opportunities for authentic application or the use of higher-order thinking skills and problem-solving in authentic contexts.

Special Education

Homework folders were noted in special education classes. Students and teachers indicated that homework was assigned on a regular basis and related to the class assignment. This was verified in visitations to the classrooms as the assignments were listed on the chalkboard. Grading policy has been distributed by the building administration.

STANDARD 3 NEXT STEPS

1. School leadership should require the SLT V lesson plan form to be used for daily lesson planning. Daily plans should identify homework and (3.1)
2. Dedicate some grade-level meeting time, facilitated by the math coach, to a focus on differentiated instruction and collaborate on preparing a listing of possible options for teacher reference and possible future use in lesson planning/implementation activities. (3.1, 3.3)

3. Provide more written administrative feedback comments on lesson plan reviews, class-room walk-through follow-up sheets, and formal observations that speak to the way the curriculum is being planned/delivered rather than to general managerial issues. (3.1)

DISTRICT

1. Provide consultation and in-class shadowing for the new math coach so that she can receive feedback regarding (a) the identification of key math ideas underlying the specific skills and procedures covered in lessons; (b) planning for in-class sessions; and (c) the activities she implements during in-class coaching/mentoring/team teaching sessions. (3.4)

STANDARD 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY:

1. All teachers, including special education teachers, should receive scaffolded training on differentiated instruction, guided reading and the use of rubrics in order to gain the required skills and confidence level to effectively implement these strategies. Leadership walkthroughs should monitor lesson plans and classroom instruction to ensure the practices are evenly implemented. (3.1)
2. School leadership should monitor lesson plans of all teachers and conduct targeted walkthroughs to ensure that teachers regularly use varied instructional strategies along with multiple forms of technology during classroom instruction in order to address diverse learning needs and to develop students' technological literacies. (3.1, 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5)
3. School leadership should ensure the development of classroom libraries that reflect the diverse instructional levels of the students. (3.6)

MATHEMATICS

1. Develop a comprehensive, formalized, school-based plan for continuing to make the shift away from the traditional view of math teaching and learning begin to show evidence of the shift in lesson planning, teaching, and curriculum monitoring activities.
2. School administrators should seek out and utilize resources that will help all teachers, including special education teachers, become familiar with best practices for math instruction and translate the information received into constructive feedback comments relative to classroom walk-through forms, lesson plan reviews, and formal observations.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. Workshops are needed for both teacher aides and teachers as to the role of the assistants and how they can be utilized to support what is happening in the classroom. (3.1, 3.2)
2. [Workshops are needed for both aides and teachers as to the role of the aide and how they can be utilized to support what is happening in the classroom. (3.2)]
3. In order to increase knowledge of teachers, given circumstances that preclude them from regular PD opportunities, Utilize and expand the opportunities provided by the resource teacher coordinators from math, literacy, and special education for technical assistance in curriculum, assessment, and instruction. (3.4)

4. Staff requires ongoing professional development and training in how to integrate the computer into instruction, use it to enhance student learning. This will help in time management so they can work with other students in small groups. (3.5)
5. Ensure that the Read 180 program is operating appropriately and effectively for those youngsters needing intervention in grades 6-8. (3.5)

DISTRICT

1. Continue and refine the mathematics professional development program by—
 - (a) expanding the number of mandatory professional development workshops for teachers and administrators that focus on gaining a deeper understanding of key math ideas embedded in the curriculum; what we now know about how children learn math; and best practices for math instruction (3.4)
 - (b) providing additional, separate, and job-specific in-service activities for math coaches focusing on the effective planning and implementation of in-class modeling/ coaching/team teaching activities and the facilitation of activities that effectively inform instruction so that that appropriate adjustments/modifications can be made to address group and individual needs). (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.7)
2. Create a curriculum delivery monitoring task force (composed of one member of SLT-V's leadership team, a district math supervisor, and the building principal) and have them work collaboratively to develop and implement a formalized plan for monitoring and supporting South Seventeenth Street School's progress toward addressing the disconnect between the written and implemented math curricula. (3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.7)

STANDARD 4 – SCHOOL CULTURE

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

EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:

- Teacher, student, support staff, administrator, student and parent interviews
- Classroom and hallway observations
- Review of school safety plan, student handbook, administration walkthrough observation findings, school and community perception survey, school report card, SLC minutes, disaggregated test data

STANDARD 4 INDICATORS

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

FINDINGS:

All those interviewed state that they feel safe in the school building, particularly due to the high visibility of the security guards. However, on several occasions the external doors were found

unlocked. Although the building is an older structure, requiring continuing wall, roof and pipe repairs, it is freshly painted and generally clean, with two notable exceptions: the student bathrooms are not always properly maintained and some students say that tables in the cafeteria aren't always adequately cleaned between lunch sessions.

The student handbook adopts the district policy on discipline. There are a number of staff resources to assist with student behavioral problems: guidance counselor (generally upper grades), social worker (lower grades), crisis intervention teacher (special needs), SAC (substance abuse), and attendance officer. There has been limited in-service training or modeling to share strategies of these staff with classroom teachers. The evidence suggests that these staff generally act independently of each other rather than as a coordinated team.

Although public announcements are intended to be only in the morning and late day, teachers state, and the team observed, that there are frequent loudspeaker interruptions, thereby disrupting the flow of instruction and learning. Another disruption occurs when students are regularly pulled out of classes, such as social studies, to attend tutoring, thereby affecting the small group dynamics of the missed class, and causing the tutored student to miss the content of the required class. There is some indication that data on the learning environment is collected.

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

FINDINGS:

Staff, students, parents and teachers themselves state that teachers have high expectations for student behavior and academic achievement, but it is not always clear what those expectations are. Routine use of rubrics is not generally evident; student work displayed in the hallways give no helpful explanation for different grades. There is limited evidence that students are aware of benchmarks by which to measure their own progress and promote higher achievement; in fact, several students said that more frequent tests would help them know how they are performing. Staff and students cite the after-school homework assistance program as evidence that teachers care about them, allowing students to get the kind of individualized help they sometimes need.

There are frequent and meaningful interactions between students and staff, creating a nurturing environment; the majority of teachers use appropriate praise and positive reinforcement to motivate students.

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

FINDINGS:

The school leadership and teachers express the belief that many of the factors affecting student performance are external to the school system. Although there are numerous references (in interviews and written materials) to test scores and student performance, the perception survey indicates that a

majority of the respondents do not believe that disaggregated test scores are used to identify problems with the curriculum and to adjust instruction.

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

FINDINGS:

Access to all classes is not available to all students; special needs students and some of those receiving intervention services have limited access to all mainstream programs. Student groupings are not flexible and only sometimes provide for grouping based on instructional need; regrouping of students based on assessments does not usually fit into the schedule. The staff schedule is based on teacher needs, rather than student needs. Class size and the faculty: student ratio is appropriate.

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

FINDINGS:

Staff members recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of students for academic success. Some student work is showcased for recognition in some content areas and shared with families. There is an extensive science fair, social studies awards, and a reading competition with awards. Student work is sometimes displayed, though it is not usually accompanied by rubrics and therefore not clearly designed to guide student self-reflection; some of the student work given high grades contains errors without explanation or teacher comments; much of it is graded quiz or test papers. and some of the hallway banners and signs included misspellings.

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

FINDINGS:

In interviews, the school community expresses an awareness of diversity. The district has a multi-cultural curriculum. The school community sometimes implements practices demonstrating an appreciation of diversity. During this visit there was little visual evidence of diversity in lesson plans or bulletin boards.

STANDARD 4 NEXT STEPS

1. Address the issue of cleanliness in the bathrooms and cafeteria. (4.1)
2. Target loudspeaker announcements to only the scheduled room of the person desired. (4.1)
3. Ensure that outside doors are locked appropriately. (4.1)

STANDARD 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Review student schedules that pull them from required classes to receive additional tutoring. Redeploy staff to meet tutoring needs without limiting student access to required classes. (4.1)
2. Integrate student support staff services to [encourage teamwork and] make their strengths [of each approach] available to the whole school. For example, schedule faculty meeting in-service training to formally present effective classroom strategies and insights based on the approaches of the various specialties. (4.1)
3. Provide on-going professional development to all teachers in the appropriate and consistent use of rubrics so that students build their awareness of proficient and advanced work expectations. (4.2)
4. Develop a system of teacher accountability that links teacher efficacy with student performance. Institute regular meetings for the analysis of student data, resulting in action plans to implement instructional and curricular changes; convene on-going forums to evaluate the impact of these changes. (4.3)
5. Increase the numbers of special needs students and provide more opportunities for special needs students to be included in general education grade level classes as well as increased integration into general school activities. Explore opportunities for special needs teachers and their students to work on common grade level projects with general education teachers and their students. (4.4, 3.4, 2.3, 1.4)
6. Develop guidelines and standards for what student work is to be displayed in the different content areas. Review public displays to ensure spelling is correct, setting a positive model for student work. (4.5)
7. Ensure that diversity and multicultural education activities are appropriately delivered as per the district curriculum [infused into the curriculum]. (4.6)

STANDARD 5 - STUDENT, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The school works with families and community groups to remove barriers to learning in an effort to meet the intellectual, social, career, and developmental needs of students consistent with 6A:10A-3.6 Supports for Parents and Families and NCLB §1118 Parental Involvement.

EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:

- Interviews with staff, parents and students
- Review of community involvement programs, walk-through observations, perception survey, newsletters, three-year operational plan, school handbook, list of SLC members, technology plan, homework, parent involvement policy
- Classroom visitation

STANDARD 5 INDICATORS

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

FINDINGS:

There is a new parent liaison who is very active with distributing flyers and planning community projects. After a few years without a parent organization, it was revived this year. Training for parents is offered by the school in both English and Spanish (e.g. Every Parent Influence a Child (EPIC)). School leadership has formed partnerships with the community and families to remove barriers to learning for all students. (e.g. homework policy, reviewing student work). Through an open door policy, parents are allowed to access computers for training, and meet with teachers. There are strategies in place that promote interaction between parents and teachers to evaluate student performance (Parent teacher conferences, Open house). Some parents interviewed are active in the classrooms, the cafeteria, on trips and the PTO. There are two parents on the School Leadership Council (SLC) team. Community and school programs are offered to all students. There is low participation of parents of special education students who are living in areas outside of these neighborhoods.

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

FINDINGS:

The school leadership has a procedure in place to communicate with parents on a regular basis (e.g. phone, e-board, visits, flyers, E-Pal) to discuss student progress. Most teachers contact families according to district policy to discuss student work. There is little evidence that teachers involve students in reporting student progress to families. Parents interviewed had contact with the school to discuss student progress (phone calls, notes, home visits).

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

FINDINGS:

Families are welcome to participate in the various workshops offered by the school and the district. There are two to three computers in every classroom. There are four computer labs that are available all day for instructional use. Student participation data is not used as the entrance criteria for extended day/year programs. Enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis and is offered to all students (After School Youth Development, Lego Robotics, and Family Friendly). The school offers NJASK3, NJASK4, and GEPA sessions for students. There is no evidence to determine if the neediest students are able to attend the programs appropriate for them. There is no written evidence provided that data is analyzed to ensure the effectiveness of the after-school programs.

The district provides disaggregated test scores to the school. This information is provided to the teacher by the building administration. Although they are used to identify curriculum gaps, the special

education staff does not always understand how to interpret these scores to adjust instructional practices. School counselors focus on administrative issues than on student learning.

Special needs students have available to them the same range of services provided to the regular education population. Any newly adopted curriculum is part of the special needs classes; however, they are not up to date in the training necessary for true program implementation.

Though school guidance with the Child Study Team (CST) and teachers regarding the high school application process, there is need for more assistance with special needs children. CST and the crisis intervention teacher demonstrate commitment to the special needs classes.

There is a multitude of after school and Saturday programs open to special education students. They range from tutoring, GEPA to recreational activities. Busses can be provided for students wishing to participate in the programs. However, not all staff are aware of the bussing opportunities.

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

FINDINGS:

The school offers additional support to all students. The school and community collaborate to provide all students with opportunities for learning.(e.g. Science Club, Write to Read). The student support services program collaboration focuses mostly on behavior and discipline issues.

There is no written evidence that support programs are developed and coordinated to address student needs bases on analyzed data. The student support services program collaboration focuses mostly on behavior and discipline issues. However, the collaboration does not fully address closing achievement gaps across subpopulations. There is a Pupil Resource Committee (PRC) that meets as needed to deliberate over referrals. Most are resolved with a CST referral.

STANDARD 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Leadership and staff should develop clearly defined procedures to increase parental and community involvement in order to measure parent and community involvement in student learning and performance. Student referral procedures to after-school and Saturday programs should be developed, implemented and monitored consistently to ensure that all students in greatest need are attending appropriate programs. (5.4)
2. Provide all staff and parents with information regarding the after school and Saturday program which are available to children and the procedures for students to access bussing. (5.3)
3. Provide time for the support staff should to meet together and clarify how their tasks support each other. They should describe their duties and responsibilities at the beginning of the year at a faculty meeting so that their services and skills can be utilized appropriately. (5.4, 3.6) (Cross reference with Standard 4, LAL recommendation #2)

4. The LDTC should review scores with the special education teachers and discuss techniques and strategies for program improvement. (5.3) (Cross reference with Standard 2, Special Education recommendation #2)
5. The school should support the efforts of the new parent liaison staff member and provide her with additional ideas for getting parent data and instituting additional programs based upon the information gathered. (5.1)
6. Provide an evaluation procedure for all supplemental programs. (5.4)

STANDARD 6 - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The school provides research-based, results driven professional development opportunities for staff and implements performance evaluation procedures in order to improve teaching and learning.

EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:

- Administrative, staff interviews
- Review of Teacher Professional Improvement Plans (PIPs), planning documents, Annual Teacher Evaluations, Grade Level meeting (GLM) observations
- Classroom visitation

STANDARD 6 INDICATORS

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

FINDINGS:

There is a generic school filled-out professional development plan form. This document does not connect the components that include district-based, school-based and the job-embedded opportunities which are provided through the school math and literacy coaches and the district RTCs. It does not focus the services of a literacy consultant that the school provides.

There are weekly formal opportunities for teachers to meet at grade level meetings. The plan for these meetings rotates the monthly foci among math, literacy, technology and general areas. Special Education teachers are only able to attend one of these meetings although their classes are multi-grade. There is evidence that minutes of these meetings are now being taken.

Although there are vertical GLMs for 5-6 and 7-8, there is no regular vertical articulation for those teachers 3-8 who teach literacy and those who teach math.

The district and SLT V professional development opportunities for teachers in math and literacy are based on the results of the analysis of student needs as identified by ASK and GEPA reports. There are clearly identified opportunities at the SLT V level for teachers to address the identified areas, e.g., all math teachers meet by grade levels at the SLT office to work on math PDAs which involves analysis of student work and planning strategies for teaching to the needs identified. Teachers state that, occasionally, there are opportunities at the school site to analyze student achievement data.

GLMs are generally led by administrators and coaches and those meetings visited during the CAPA week were structured as presentations of information for teachers.

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

FINDINGS:

There are various plans completed by the school that identify foci for school achievement, student achievement and professional direction. No two plans are connected and there is a lack of a clearly identified set of priorities in the school that guide professional development.

In one plan, the school has identified areas of need in literacy, math and science, however, the goals identified for student achievement are too general and not specific to the identified needs for student improvement, e.g. the area of need identified for student improvement in reading in grades 3-5 states the need as “working with text and critiquing text,” yet the goal does not address what will be specific about students working with or critiquing text; rather the goal is “that by June 2005 students in grades 3-8 will achieve 75 percent academic growth in literacy.” The professional development activities remain generic and unfocused as well.

Another set of focus areas this school year for S. 17th Street school is presented in Organization Day Agenda which identifies 13 areas for the Instruction Focus. There are no specific goals attached to these and there is no mention of a connection to the school-based professional development plan for the year.

A third plan is the Action Plan for Improving Literacy and Math, created September 7, 2005 which identifies 4 general foci :

- a consistent plan for student assessment of each grade level
- using data to drive instruction
- developing a lesson plan that helps teachers to maintain a certain pace and is aligned to the CCCS,
- monitoring substitute teachers;

and three foci specific to literacy

- conferencing with students in order to improve writing
- adhere to the SLT V writing focus each month
- guided reading with Running Records must be implemented;

but no specific foci for math.

A final document which was prepared at the request of the SLT for professional development needs to inform the SLT professional development offerings identifies more clearly the professional development needs for the school such as the need for new teachers to have a review of the CLI program but these are not referenced in the other plans or vice versa.

When asked, teachers give varying answers to the questions what is the instructional focus this year; some say writing, some say GEPA math, others say student achievement.

Teachers report that they are aware of general school improvement goals but their PIPs do not clearly identify the connection to school improvement targets.

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

FINDINGS:

Professional development opportunities for teachers are varied, including on-site GLMs as well as the on-site services of coaches and RTCs.. The district provides for 6 full-day and 2 ½ days for staff development in the school year calendar as well as staff development opportunities during the summer and on weekends. In addition, there are pull-out days for district and SLT workshops held to assist teachers with specific content. Coaches, both literacy and math, as well as the Office of Teaching and Learning district personnel and SLT RTCs are assigned to the school to provide assistance to teachers. Evidence of a clear follow-up to professional development was not provided. Teachers share that they informally bring their new learnings back to their colleagues but this is not a structured expectation.

GLMs are led by administrators, coaches or other coordinators. The observed meetings were leader-led and provided minimal opportunities for collaboration and problem solving on the part of the teachers. There is some evidence that some meetings are tailored to needs of teachers as identified by student work, e.g., one meeting attended addressed how to prepare students for the persuasive essay writing task when the evidence from student work showed that students did poorly on the persuasive essay writing sample. Minutes provided for GLMs do not describe time for reflection.

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

FINDINGS: The employee evaluation form is directly connected to the four domains of teaching as identified by Charlotte Danielson. The written evaluations provided for review show that these domains are assessed. Some teachers reported that PIPs are written by teachers with administrative review. However, PIPs provided for review were identical.

There is no reference to the goals identified in the in the reviewed written PIPs nor to classroom goals. As per district expectation, the areas identified were general categories from the evaluation, e.g., ensure language arts/literacy instruction is implemented to meet the needs of all students but no specific identified goals tied to specific needs of the teacher tied to student needs were further identified. The activities described for professional development are descriptions of teacher practice but not activities that develop teacher skill or competence in order to better deliver this teacher practice. There is no clear mechanism in place to evaluate the teachers' PIP implementation

STANDARD 6 NEXT STEPS

1. Take all three plans for this year, analyze with assistance from the SLT V office and make one plan that has a clear instructional focus that connects specific student goals with the professional development needs of teachers. (6.2, 6.4)

STANDARD 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop the GLMS into true collaborative sessions. Leadership should model collaborative problem solving and discussions at GLMs. Use coaches and administrators to provide opportunities for teachers to analyze student work and strategize to develop plans for improvement for students; increase opportunities for teachers to take the lead at these meetings thus consider following the structure of SMART teams or similar staff development processes. (6.1, 6.3)
2. Investigate ways to expand the planning time to a larger block of minutes to allow enough time for collaboration to happen. Provide opportunities at GLMs for cross-curriculum/ interdisciplinary project planning. (In conjunction with Standard 1 District Recommendation #3)
3. Provide vertical meetings for departmentalized meetings for math and literacy teachers 3-5 and 6-8 at least once a month. Continue to take minutes and include specific outcomes for decisions about instruction that are determined at meetings so that follow-up can be focused. (6.1) (Cross reference with Standard 1, LAL recommendation #1)
4. Provide opportunities for teacher reflection on practice as an integral part of the GLM and administrator meetings. (6.1)
5. Identify a clear process for appropriate school leadership, including coaches, to follow-up on professional development activities to support implementation in classrooms. Share this information with the school leadership council at regular intervals. Provide opportunities for teachers share new learning to develop their instructional leadership skills. (6.3)
6. Provide clear expectations for PIPs that include goals that are connected to student outcomes and a mechanism for follow-up on the effectiveness of the PIP (6.4)

DISTRICT

1. Provide assistance to schools leaders to provide guidance in developing PIPs that are directly goals as identified in *Two Year Instructional Priorities Plan* and which are connected to student outcomes in their classrooms. (6.2)
2. Assist the school leadership to model coaching strategies that encourage collaborative problem solving and discussions at GLMs. (6.3)

STANDARD 7 - EFFICIENCY, ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

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

EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON

- Review of School Leadership Committee agendas notes, data analysis, perception survey, Teacher Professional improvement Plans, School Improvement Plan, professional development plan and staff requests for professional development
- Interviews principal, vice principals, literacy math coaches, student, SLC members, staff,
- Classroom visitations

STANDARD 7 INDICATORS

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

FINDINGS:

The SLC has just completed elections for this year and begun to reconstitute itself. The members and the principal confirm that the committee did not function for the past two years. They are currently completing the Two year Operational Plan that is due December 1, 2005. Even after completing the election process, many interviews clearly showed that many staff members have a lack of understanding of the role of this group. Interviews and documentation show that the SLC did not have a focus on student achievement last year and could not get past setting a goal and developing action plans to accomplish the goal. The principal provides data to the staff. The administrative team and coaches meet on a weekly basis to prepare for the weekly grade level meetings, which are allocated to one per month for literacy, math, technology and administrative matters. Documentation for these meetings was not available.

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

FINDINGS:

Teachers receive extensive data prepared for them by the Newark Public School District and School Leadership Team V. There are additional data bases that teachers are required to gather, specific to curricular areas. The plan for the use of the data is specifically prescribed by both the district and SLT. A Progressive Data Analysis is completed by each teacher in literacy. The literacy PDA's for the school go to the Literacy Coach and he/she looks for common grade level needs. The coach develops a grade level PD that goes to the principal who forwards that to the assistant superintendent. The process is designed to result in specific instructional interventions based upon the data. In math, the PDA is generated at the SLT monthly meeting attended by all SLT district V math teachers. The

monitoring of the implementation of these plans into research based best instructional practices rests with the administrators. The coaching positions are in-house staff development positions to strengthen teacher instructional skills based upon data. Administrative interviews say that the staff needs further training in the use of data to lead to differentiated instructional practice, as well as additional support to improve the individual instructional practices in many classrooms. Classroom observations and interviews do not show an instructional delivery pattern of direct connection between specific data results and instructional modification using differentiated instructional strategies as opposed to the observed whole group, teacher directed, drill and practice methodology. During interviews with the administrative team the need for increased monitoring of staff classroom instructional practices is consistently mentioned. What is not mentioned is a plan to assist the staff in improving their knowledge of and ability to use best practices of differentiated instruction. There is recognition by the staff of the existence of the sub-group population of males who consistently achieve below females, and a 25 percent mobility population that also suffers from limited academic improvement. However, data is not available to show specific building action plans to address these populations.

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

FINDINGS

The administrative team conducts SLT V required walk-throughs, as well as all prescribed observation and evaluation procedures and reports. Resources are allocated to programs according to funding sources and certification. Some changes have been instituted regarding teacher grade level placement, looping of certain teachers to continue with a class for two years, as well as a return to self contained classes in grade two, which had been departmentalized previously. The school administrative team is a work in progress since one vice principal is beginning year two and the other vice principal arrived late last spring. The additional instructional support person in the math coach position is new and the literacy coach is beginning year two. Students clearly state that teachers want them to be successful and give them class and homework as learning activities and practice, and some feedback about their progress. They told us that student lavatories and the lunchroom areas are often not appropriately maintained. They see examples of inappropriate student behaviors that result in school suspension, but they are unaware of specific programs to attempt to change those behaviors and teach new appropriate ways to respond toward others.

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

FINDINGS:

The district has provided the school with extensive personnel resources in non-classroom positions designed to support a positive learning environment that is instructionally rich. This includes a principal, two vice principals, literacy and math coaches, literacy and math tutors, technology coordinator, lead science teacher, media specialist, crisis teacher, social worker, guidance counselor, student assistance counselor, nurse and three security guards. Staff schedules and interviews show that the coordination of the use of these positions and time to meet together to build specific action plans based upon student data, is not maximizing the skills of the individuals or the numbers of people

available to support the building outcome goals. Grade level and staff meeting agendas list a large number of topics for each meeting, making it difficult to deal in depth with any one issue.

STANDARD 7 NEXT STEPS

SCHOOL

1. Administrative Team should seek the assistance of the appropriate SLT V and district personnel in undertaking a Needs Assessment of their level of understanding of data analysis connected to instructional practice. This will be a first step of a professional development plan which is critical to their ability to assist the faculty in this critical area. (7.2, 6.2, 6.4)

STANDARD 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

SCHOOL

1. The School Leadership Committee must reach out for the assistance of appropriate persons beyond the building level, to assist it in the process of becoming a fully functioning committee, with appropriate sub-committees, with its primary focus of improving student academic accomplishment. This consultative relationship will also focus on preventing the current SLC from falling into the pattern of being unable to create an action plan for a specific goal and not carrying through on the steps of the plan. Since they were unable to move themselves out of that pattern last year, and since they are very vocal in the desire to be successful this year, this ongoing assistance is especially important. (7.1, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3)
2. The administrative team should ask the appropriate personnel from the Office of Teaching and Learning, the SLT V Office, the office of Special Education, and/or the Office of Planning and Evaluation, to assist them in a thorough needs assessment to determine the level of staff skill in delivering differentiated instruction based upon student data. The results of the assessment should become the basis for a minimum of a two-year school action plan to improve student achievement through the delivery of improved instructional practices. (7.2)
3. The principal should build an action plan to create an operational instructional leadership team, effectively using the many personnel position available in the building. This plan should also be designed to create appropriate connections to the resource staff available through the SLT V office. (7.3)
4. The principal should review the current building instructional and operational practices to determine overlap and/or gaps in services, and then build a framework for working together. (7.4)

DISTRICT

1. The district should provide its ongoing consultative support to the reinstated SLC until it is a fully functioning body with functioning sub-committees.
2. The district should join with the school administrative team in an assessment of the instructional delivery skill level capacity of the staff and the staff development plan that results from that assessment.

STANDARD 8 - ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

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

EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:

- Review of teacher schedules, perception survey, staff and grade level agendas and notes,
- Interviews with staff and administrative team
- Classroom visitations

STANDARD 8 INDICATORS

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

FINDINGS:

Staff members are appropriately assigned based upon certification requirements. The school and district collaborate to ensure that staff members complete requirements to move from emergency or provisional status to permanent status. Support staff personnel are placed in the area appropriate to the funding source and required student need. Classroom assignments allow for some resource sharing but much of what does occur is outside of the formal structure and time frame of the school day. The principal has changed teacher grade level placements to deal with student achievement data. A variety of patterns exist regarding what subjects a teacher teaches at a particular grade level, based upon numbers of positions available on the grade as well as teacher preference.

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

FINDINGS:

A review of the teacher schedules available to the CAPA team showed that specific protected instructional time in literacy and mathematics was not consistently listed. In addition, since many math modules are wrapped around lunch or a special activity class, instructional time is lost in the going to and returning from that class. The science laboratory was unavailable for instruction for four days this week because the science modules used by classroom teachers for this first part of the year were not picked up and removed from the building. No other location had been designated for their storage and there was no evidence of an emergency plan to deliver an alternative science lesson in the grade level classrooms. During classroom visits, teachers often stated that they had not finished instruction in a particular curricular area acknowledging that another area was being shorted in time. . In world language, one class meeting per week is insufficient time to reach the program goal of fluency at level one by the end of grade eight. While literacy and mathematics have a required number of daily minutes of instruction, classroom visits shows that each of the component parts of those two curricular/instructional areas are not being regularly/appropriately provided for.

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

FINDINGS:

Grade level meetings are held on a weekly basis. In addition, general; education teachers in grades 7-8 and 5-6 are each scheduled to meet across grade level. The special education teachers have multiple grade level students in their self-contained classes so they can only meet with one of their general education grade level colleagues. If a teacher is the only one teaching a content area in a grade that does not enjoy a common planning time with another grade level, there is no opportunity for sharing in that curricular area. Overall articulation vertically by grade level and content area is very limited and cross-disciplinary instructional opportunities are little evidenced. The school vision is communicated in the building; however, there is no systematic process for sharing lesson plans among teachers. Lesson plans are submitted to the designated administrator on a regular two- week basis. A review of the plans shows some written with daily goals and objectives, while others are generalized for a two week or multiple month basis. Instructional aides are not systematically trained with, or provided with common planning time to, work with their classroom teacher partner. There is evidence that program changes are not always initiated with sufficient time for those staff members involved to absorb the learning before it is put into practice, nor with sufficient coaching support to increase their comfort level with the new program delivery during the early stages of implementation. Teachers report that they receive support in the forms of materials needed or access to a workshop, but very little direct instructional assistance in the modeling of specific teaching strategies and almost no collaborative co-teaching and reflection opportunities.

STANDARD 8 NEXT STEPS

SCHOOL

1. The administrative team should review the instructional components of the literacy and mathematics programs for their understanding of the programs. (8.2)
2. The administrative team should review the components of the literacy and mathematics instructional programs with all staff at the grade level meetings. (8.2)
3. Teacher schedules should designate specific time parameters for literacy and mathematics instruction. (8.2)
4. A building space should be designated for the collection of science modules, so as to keep the science laboratory free for continued instruction.

STANDARD 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The principal should prepare a visual master schedule for the building. He should invite a committee of the SLC to undertake a thorough analysis of what is provided for and what gaps are evident. Another sub-committee of the SLC should be asked to review alternate schedule patterns. The results of this analysis should be brought to the entire SLC and then the entire staff for appropriate decisions regarding the selection of a building schedule that best provides for the needs of this school, given the reality constraints particular to this school.

(8.1; 8.2; 8.3) (Cross reference with Standard 6, Recommendation #2, and Standard 1 District Recommendation #3)

2. The administrative team should monitor the delivery of the specific components of the literacy and mathematics programs to ensure that the program is understood by the staff and is being implemented according to the prescribed design and best practices. Lesson plans should also be reviewed to ensure that each of the component areas of the curriculum is addressed. (8.2, 8.3)
3. The instructional leadership team should assist staff in creating cross-disciplinary instructional activities to provide required instructional time and reinforcement of learning.
4. The administrative team and content coaches should engage in periodic collaborative co-teaching and reflective process with staff members who are willing to join in such a venture. This will create both the joint ownership of instructional improvement and a staff professional development process within the school. (8.2; 8.3)

STANDARD 9: COMPREHENSIVE AND EFFECTIVE PLANNING

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

EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:

- Interviews of administrators, student, faculty meeting
- Review of mission statement, GLM agendas and minutes, SLC agendas
- Classroom observations

STANDARD 9 INDICATORS

9.1 Leadership facilitates a collaborative process to develop a shared mission, vision, values and goals which are understood and ingrained in the school's culture.

FINDINGS:

The vision/mission statement is posted throughout the school; however, there is little evidence which shows that the staff has a consistent focus on the statements in the mission. There is no clear connection between the vision/mission, the *Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities* (Three-year Operation Plan), staff development and school level instructional goals. Approximately four years ago the school operated under the Accelerated School Model which required the development of a shared vision and an extensive needs assessment. There is no documentation to show that the mission has been updated or revised in light of current trends and needs shown in the school's data.

9.2 There is evidence that the School Leadership Council (SLC) or NCLB Planning Committee analyzes multiple forms of data update the comprehensive needs assessment and to develop the Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities or the NCLB School Improvement Plan.

FINDINGS:

The SLC recently completed an election process in which five new members were elected. Prior to this the SLC functioned without full representation of all constituent groups. The SLC during the past two years has focused on facility issues including building cleanliness. SLC subcommittees have not functioned for at least two years as well. The evidence does not indicate the way in which the school implemented, monitored or adjusted the *Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities* (Three-year Operational Plan) over the past two years. A comprehensive needs assessment does not exist.

9.3 Strategies in the Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities or NCLB School Improvement Plan are aligned with the school's vision and student and school goals.

FINDINGS:

The evidence shows no clear alignment of the *Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities* (Three-year Operational Plan) to the school's vision/mission. Documentation collected demonstrates a lack of focus on the implementation of the Three-year Operational Plan. The SLC subcommittees have not reported on the progress that the school has made concerning the implementation of programs. Although classrooms are monitored both formally and informally, there is no clear link between this monitoring and the Three-year Operational Plan. There is not written evidence provided that shows that programs are evaluated and adjusted based on data. Only one instructional goal, for math, has been articulated. A review of documents and teacher interviews does not show that clear goals have been established for literacy, math (other than eighth grade), science, cross-curricular study, nor integration of technology into instruction.

STANDARD 9 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The school, led by the SLC, should review the school's mission statement to ensure that it reflects the current needs of the student population. (9.1)
2. The SLC should conduct an extensive review of its bylaws to ensure that student achievement and implementation of the *Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities* (the Three-year Operational Plan update) remains its central focus. (9.2)
3. The school leadership should assess the effectiveness of each program reflected in the *Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities* (Three-year Operational Plan update). This analysis will serve as a basis for the development of the two-year plan due December 1, 2005 (9.3)
4. Provide professional development opportunities for the SLC subcommittees to develop their ability to oversee the specific activities of each sub-committee. (9.2)

IN CONCLUSION

Members of the CAPA review team express their appreciation to the staff and community of South Seventeenth Street 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. First, what is our main focus for this year and how can we systematically and intentionally plan to address it?
2. Then, how do we live that plan and assess it often enough to ensure that every resource, including time, materials, personnel, programs, data analysis, professional development, is maximized to move us forward?
3. What are the obstacles that we must overcome to create a culture of effective shared leadership in the school? How do we address each of them? How can leadership be redefined to be inclusive of all stakeholders?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

District	Newark Public Schools	
School	South Seventeenth Street School	
Principal Name – Years in Building	David Wright - 8 years	
Grade Levels	PK-8	
Number of Teachers meeting NCLB HQT		
Number of Teachers with Emergency Certification	3	
Total Number of Classrooms	42	
Percent Special Education	12%	
Number – Self Contained Classrooms	8	
Number of Inclusive Classrooms		
Percent Bilingual	0%	
Number of Bilingual Classrooms	0	
Number of Students	2004 – 520	2005 – 500
School Leadership Council (SLC) or Title I Planning Committee (PC) Meets Monthly	yes	
SLC or Title I PC has complete representation	yes	
Intensive Early Literacy Visit and Complete Plan		
Percent Parent Involvement	10%	
Abbott only – Whole School Reform (WSR) Model	District model	
Abbott only - Status of WSR Contract	NA	
Persistently Dangerous “Warning”	NA	
Most Current Number of Students reading at grade level in 3 rd and 4 th grades.	40.4% - 18 students	Test: NJ ASK 3
Language Arts Program/Textbook	K-5 Harcourt Brace; 6-8 McDougal Little	
Mathematics Program/Textbook	Everyday Math K-5; Connected Math 6-8	
Number of Students Offered Choice Option in 2005-2006	none	
Number of Students Receiving Supplemental Services in 2004-2005	80	