

**CAPA REVIEW**  
**MONTCLAIR SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**MONTCLAIR HIGH SCHOOL**

**May 19 – 22, 2008**

**Introduction**

The New Jersey Department of Education conducted a CAPA (Collaborative Assessment for Planning and Achievement) review of **Montclair High School** on May 19-22, 2008. 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 summary report identifies areas of strength and concern for districts and schools using the *2007-2008 CAPA Teaching and Learning Tool*. The tool uses indicators of effective school practice (from CAPA) in the following seven standard areas: curriculum, assessment/evaluation, instruction, school culture, student/family/community support, professional development/evaluation, and leadership. Essential questions are answered regarding the accomplishment of each indicator.

The CAPA Review team activities included:

- A review of the documents collected for the school portfolio and data profile;
- 39 classroom visitations;
- 5 general observations, such as morning and afternoon arrival and dismissal, lunch in the cafeteria, and student restrooms;
- 44 interviews with teachers;
- 8 interviews with building leadership and administrators;
- 8 interviews with district administrators;
- 73 interviews with students;
- 27 interviews with school and student support staff; and
- 15 interviews with parents.

The School is in Year 3 of improvement status for language arts literacy and mathematics. The language arts literacy AYP benchmark targets were missed by students with disabilities. The mathematics AYP benchmark targets were missed by students with disabilities, African-American students, and economically disadvantaged students. The focus of the team’s work is the identification of root causes of the lack of student achievement for these groups. The team found that the school as a system is not functioning for all students. The team has identified two root causes for this dysfunction:

- There is little evidence of a systemic understanding among the school community of the relationships between and among structure, freedom, academic excellence, and maturation.
- There is no formal process of communication between the school and community or within the school.

## FINDINGS, KEY EVIDENCE, AND RECOMMENDATIONS MONTCLAIR HIGH SCHOOL

### STANDARD 1: CURRICULUM

The district's rigorous, intentional, and aligned curriculum is fully implemented at the school.

#### *1.1 Is there a district curriculum that is aligned with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJ CCCS)?*

The NJ CCCS are aligned in the curriculum. All curricula lack accommodations for special education and ESL students and benchmark data. There are strong mathematics curricula that are fully aligned with the NJ CCCS and provide support and challenge for all students along the achievement continuum. The district special education curriculum is aligned with the NJCCCS.

#### **Strengths:**

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

- The curriculum contains a variety of literature providing students with rich reading and writing experiences and offers teachers flexibility in planning thematic units of instruction.

##### **Mathematics:**

- The high school offers four levels of college preparatory courses and supplemental support programs.
- The curricular choices provide the opportunity for students to achieve college credits.

#### **Challenges:**

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

- The curriculum content of all courses is based on reading and writing skills without accommodations that would facilitate skill mastery for subgroups in the student population.
- The current curriculum of some courses has not been updated in a timely manner, although assignments have been made to accomplish this by June 2008.
- Several curricula do not contain benchmark levels of proficiency or specific links to life and career options.
- The key concepts of the curriculum are not detailed or spiraled by grade and subject.

##### **Special Education:**

- The content area curricula do not provide modifications/adaptations for special education students.

### ***1.2 Do all teachers use the curriculum in planning instruction?***

Some English teachers use the curriculum to plan instruction as evidenced by some lesson plans. It is evident from mathematics classes visited and from discussions that teachers use the curriculum in planning instruction. All special education teachers use the curriculum in planning instruction. Teachers in replacement English, mathematics, and self-contained classrooms modify the curriculum to meet the needs of their students.

#### **Strengths:**

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

- Regular horizontal and vertical discussions are held in English department meetings. These discussions are initiated and facilitated by the English supervisor.

##### **Mathematics:**

- There is evidence that curriculum standards are discussed in monthly department meetings. Faculty members are engaged in the review of curriculum on a regular basis.

##### **Special Education:**

- A regularly scheduled special education department meeting is held each month. Some of these meetings include discussion of curriculum standards and related activities and other issues regarding curriculum modifications.
- “Curriculum Thursdays” are scheduled quarterly to discuss curriculum standards and their articulation across grade levels and content areas.

#### **Challenges:**

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

- The school’s lack of a uniform lesson plan format inhibits consistent identification of applicable curriculum standards.

##### **Special Education:**

- Special education teachers do not routinely attend content area curriculum meetings with general education staff.
- It is not a routine practice for tenured staff to submit lesson plans for review.

### ***1.3 Is there a process to ensure that the curriculum is fully implemented?***

No evidence was produced of a process for monitoring language arts curriculum implementation; data analysis is not performed at regular intervals in the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades during the school year so that instruction can be adjusted as necessary. The formal evaluation process is one tool that is used to monitor the implementation of the mathematics curriculum. In addition, there are common exams by level and by course that are administered in the high school and middle schools. The analysis of these exams is used to monitor implementation of the pacing of the curriculum. Other than the mandated formal observation and evaluation, there is no process to systematically monitor the implementation of the special education curriculum.

**Strengths:**

**Language Arts Literacy:**

- Curriculum implementation is monitored through regular classroom visits and regular department meetings of the English staff. All stakeholders attend these meetings.
- The Ninth Grade Academy regularly assesses writing samples of that population and distributes the data to classroom teachers.

**Mathematics:**

- The use of common exams by level and by course in both the high school and middle schools provides consistency of grading and contributes to appropriate placement of students in courses and levels.

**Challenges:**

**Mathematics:**

- There is no formal process involving structured walkthroughs to gather, analyze, and apply data about curriculum implementation (among other practices).

**Special Education:**

- The special education supervisor does walkthroughs; however, they are not routinely scheduled, documented, or analyzed to monitor the effective implementation of the curriculum or to identify developing trends that could impact instruction.

**1.4 *What evidence exists that all students have access to the district's common academic core?***

The academic core is provided for all students in self-contained special education and ESL classes. In both types of classes, accommodations are made for the learning needs of these students. ESL students are provided with access to the regular English curriculum as well as specialized curriculum. Students are placed in 9<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics courses based on their GEPA and TerraNova scores, final grades, and teacher recommendations. All students are placed in classes that are part of the common academic core. While there are prerequisites for courses, students may elect a higher level course if they feel they can meet the challenge. All special education students have access to the district's common academic core, as evidenced in classroom visits, lesson plans, and a review of various assessments administered by the teachers.

**Strengths:**

**Language Arts Literacy:**

- IMANI (Improving Montclair Achievement Network Initiative) communicates with the English supervisor consistently to provide support and encouragement to the African-American male population.

**Mathematics:**

- The rigorous course offerings and levels, including regular, honors, high honors, and advanced placement, provide opportunities for most students.

**Special Education:**

- The implemented curriculum in the self-contained and resource replacement classes is modified to meet the needs of the students in these respective classes.

**Challenges:**

**Language Arts Literacy:**

- Where special education and ESL students have been mainstreamed, there is evidence that only some teachers modify lessons or institute supports to accommodate student needs.
- Although all students have access to course offerings, there is little evidence that the majority of African-American or ESL students are provided academic or social supports that would enable the majority of these populations to successfully take advantage of more rigorous courses.
- Although all courses are open to all students, the African-American population is not actively encouraged and supported to enroll in more rigorous courses.

**Mathematics:**

- The current processes do not produce evidence that special education students have access to the district's common academic core.
- There is an overrepresentation of African-American boys in the special education population.

**Special Education:**

- Due to a limited number of regular level sections offered, there is a high concentration of special education students in in-class support (ICS) classes (e.g., class of 16 with nine special education students).
- There is no ICS in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade English classes. As a result, some students move back to replacement classes and a more restrictive environment.

## **STANDARD 2: CLASSROOM EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT**

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

### ***2.1 Are assessments designed to measure performance in ways that advance learning through the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills?***

Assessments consistently measure student critical-thinking or problem-solving ability through writing. English teachers do not use data from benchmark assessments to plan and modify assignments as necessary. Some teachers provide meaningful comments that allow students to revise their written work effectively. In mathematics, common exams by level and by course are used in the high school and the middle schools. Multiple classroom assessments are used to measure special education student performance. The assessments viewed are rigorous and challenging to the students being assessed.

**Strengths:**

**Language Arts Literacy:**

- Teachers collaborate to evaluate writing by having developed and implemented an evaluation of shared formative assessments.

**Mathematics:**

- There are common benchmark assessments by level and by course. The common assessments are used in the middle schools where students are taking high school-level classes.

**Special Education:**

- Teachers use a variety of assessments to monitor student progress. These assessments include unit tests, quizzes, projects, and performance tasks.
- Frequent, informal assessments are used to gauge student performance in special education classes.

**Challenges:**

**Language Arts Literacy:**

- In English meetings, there is some formal, regularly scheduled discussion among teachers of student performance, methods, and/or content mastery, although these discussions do not result in data being used to impact instruction.
- Some teachers do not use assessment strategies embedded in instruction.
- Some student writing demonstrates growth over time. Portfolio assessments are not uniformly maintained.

**Mathematics:**

- Classroom delivery is largely lecture format, and assessments during class are in the form of whole-group questions and choral response.

**Special Education:**

- Teacher interviews and documentation reveal the lack of common, frequent assessments to benchmark key concepts and skills.
- There is no evidence of school- or district-created benchmark assessments used to gauge performance at regular intervals.
- Portfolio assessments to assess student growth over time are not evident in the classes visited.

***2.2 How do students know what is expected, and are they able to articulate expectations, share their work, and reflect on others' work?***

The majority of interviewed students are able to state explicitly what they are expected to know and to articulate quality standards of performance. Students know the requirements to achieve grades in their various mathematics courses. The use of rubrics and exemplars is not evident. Some special education classes have a learning objective written on the board. Some students are able to articulate what is expected of them.

**Challenges:**

**Language Arts Literacy:**

- Some teachers use standards-based exemplars.
- Teachers and students state that rubrics are used but their use is combined with letter grades.
- Teachers have received in-service in the use of rubric scoring using student papers; however, the implementation of rubric scoring has not been institutionalized.

**Mathematics:**

- While there are rubrics displayed in many classrooms, there is little other evidence that they are used.
- Teachers indicate a need to learn how to use rubrics, how to create them, and how to integrate the rubric scores into grades.
- There is little evidence that students engage in peer assessment.

**Special Education:**

- There is little evidence in classrooms visited that teachers use standards-based exemplars, scored with rubric scores, to show students what high quality work looks like.
- Writing rubrics are noted in some students' folders, along with work that is scored with the rubric.
- Some comments are made by the teachers on students' work; however, evidence of the revisions made by students is not available.
- During interviews, a few teachers refer to the use of peer assessment as a classroom practice; however, it is not a common practice in most special education classrooms.

***2.3 How is assessment data used to drive instructional practice and student placement and to address student needs?***

Assessment data does not drive English instruction, nor is it used to address student needs in a systematic, formal manner based on data. Analysis of assessment data is used to place students in mathematics. The analysis of scores on common assessments by level and by course is used to inform instructional pace. GEPA scores along with teacher recommendations are used to determine special education students' placement. Most often, student assessment results are not used to identify student deficiencies and adjust instruction.

**Strength:**

**Mathematics:**

- There are common benchmark assessments by level and by course. The common assessments are used in the middle schools where students are taking high-school-level classes.

**Challenges:**

**Language Arts Literacy:**

- Teachers do not consistently and regularly use disaggregated data to plan effective lessons.
- Vertical and horizontal articulation is scheduled by the English supervisor; however, implementation of effective best practices in most classrooms has not been institutionalized.
- Benchmark assessments are not administered, and most teachers are unaware of the specificity of information that can be obtained from this type of assessment.

**Mathematics:**

- The rigor of the collaboration of teachers analyzing data is at an emergent stage.

**Special Education:**

- Although standardized assessment results are reviewed with teachers at the beginning of the school year, additional data is not collected, analyzed, or used to identify skill deficiencies or modify instructional practices throughout the school year.
- Most in-class resource teachers assigned to ICS classes do not have a common planning time with the general education teacher. Collaboration is informal and minimal.

## STANDARD 3: INSTRUCTION

**Effective and varied instructional strategies/activities are used in all classrooms and are continuously monitored and aligned with individual student needs.**

***3.1 To what extent are all students engaged in learning? To what extent do special program teachers (e.g., ELL, Title I, special education, gifted and talented) collaborate with regular education teachers?***

Some students state that they are active learners based on their personal preference for either the teacher or the class. The majority of instruction is teacher- directed. There is evidence that English teachers formally collaborate in structured, regularly scheduled meetings with the English supervisor. Although most mathematics classes are taught in a traditional lecture method, many students are engaged in learning. There is little opportunity for special program teachers to collaborate with regular education teachers. Most students observed are engaged in learning; however, the regular level classes most often are less challenging to students. Collaboration between special education and general education is not routine and occurs informally for most teachers.

**Strengths:**

**Language Arts Literacy:**

- The Ninth Grade Academy provides students with rigorous instruction and support in appropriately decorated classrooms filled with student and subject artifacts, creating an atmosphere conducive to learning.
- The Civics and Government Institute, which includes self-governance, provides students with rigorous instruction, an intimate knowledge of parliamentary procedure, and the opportunity to perform community service and demonstrate metacognition.

**Mathematics:**

- Teachers make deliberate connections to prior learning and to homework.

**Challenges:**

**Language Arts Literacy:**

- Instructional time is sometimes not used effectively.

- The majority of teachers use direct instruction.
- There is little evidence of differentiated instruction or the use of cooperative groups in most classrooms.
- Although most teachers ask questions at the level of analysis and synthesis, and there is verbal evidence by students and teachers of choices offered to students, there is little consistent evidence of hands-on learning or significant projects.
- Effective reading strategies are not consistently used in the English classes that accommodate students in need.
- Differentiated instruction is not used in all classes.
- Best practices for co-teaching are not consistently implemented, and interdisciplinary connections are not systematically made in the majority of classrooms.
- Lab classes in The Center for Social Justice do not consistently offer a high degree of rigor in content or project choice.

**Mathematics:**

- There is evidence that the traditional lecture methodology is effective with students in higher level courses. However, students indicate that the teachers present the material and they have to learn on their own.

**Special Education:**

- Differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, and the use of manipulatives are not observed during classroom visits
- A common set of instructional strategies and activities have not been developed to support the diverse population.
- The inclusion program is not standardized throughout the building. Co-teaching in inclusion classes is practiced by a few teachers; most are in-class resource teachers who assist students individually and modify assessments when appropriate.

***3.2 Have learning goals for each student been developed and prioritized according to NJ CCCS?  
How are the goals developed?***

Learning goals are not developed for each student in classrooms outside of the special education department. Some teachers post goals on the blackboard. This technology is available to all teachers. Mathematics students have individual, personal achievement goals; there is little evidence that individual learning goals have been developed for each student. The individual educational plan (IEP) process ensures that special education student learning goals are developed and prioritized according to NJ CCCS.

**Strengths:**

**Language Arts Literacy:**

- The majority of students are able to articulate individual learning goals purposefully.

**Mathematics:**

- There is a strong achievement ethic evident in the behaviors and attitudes of many students.

**Special Education:**

- Goals and objectives are identified by the special education teacher within a content area to focus and inform instruction.
- Many teachers use “Do Now” as an opening activity for the day’s lesson.

**Challenges:**

**Language Arts Literacy:**

- Teachers do not consistently write learning goals and post them in the classroom.
- Instructional delivery is most often teacher-directed. Few teachers communicate explicitly why concepts are taught.
- The majority of teachers do not review prior knowledge or use it as a basis for expansion of a lesson.
- The majority of students are not able to articulate why a lesson is being taught but state that they receive an excellent education.

**Mathematics:**

- Class learning goals are not evident in most class rooms.

**Special Education:**

- Most students are unable to communicate why a particular concept is being taught.
- Although the learning goals are developed and prioritized in the IEP, there is a lack of consistent, effective implementation in the instructional program.

***3.3 What evidence is there that all teachers have a deep knowledge and understanding of their content and how to teach it?***

All English teachers are certified in the subject, and most have obtained subject-related master’s degrees; however, the demonstration of an effective level of proficiency in appropriate pedagogy is uneven. All teachers in the mathematics department have the content knowledge to teach all classes, including the most advanced classes; the pedagogy demonstrated is largely traditional lecture style. Special education teachers and paraprofessionals meet the state highly qualified teacher (HQT) standards. At the interview sessions, teachers speak of many best practices used in the classroom.

**Strengths:**

**Language Arts Literacy:**

- As a department, teachers are highly qualified in subject area and professionalism.

**Mathematics:**

- Teachers demonstrate rigorous, deep understanding of their content.

**Special Education:**

- Interviewed teachers speak at length regarding the importance of what they are responsible for teaching and how it affects students’ achievement.
- Many paraprofessionals have bachelor’s degrees, and a few have advanced degrees.

**Challenges:**

**Language Arts Literacy:**

- Few teachers consistently and effectively demonstrate best practices in the delivery of key concepts.
- There is little evidence of consistent use of interdisciplinary instruction in most English classrooms.
- Some teachers demonstrate effective best practices pedagogy.

**Mathematics:**

- Many teachers continue to use traditional lecture format, even though research in best practices indicate that newer pedagogical strategies would benefit more students.
- Student success in spite of the teaching methodology makes change in methodology difficult to effect.

**Special Education:**

- The use of an interdisciplinary approach to teaching real-world problems is not observed in the classes visited.

***3.4 How is technology used in the organizational and instructional practices of the school?***

The technology plan is written as an adjunct to instructional practice and a complement to administrative practices; however, maintenance and replacement issues hinder effective implementation in the classrooms. Resources such as laptops, the creation of math labs, the judicious purchase of software, and professional development have been provided to all math teachers to encourage and support their integration of technology into instruction. Some teachers are using technology to a high degree. The school uses technology in its communications with staff and parents. The technology used in the building is for various organizational purposes and for some instructional application.

**Strengths:**

**Language Arts Literacy:**

- The technology plan clearly identifies an instructional purpose and focus in the school.
- General-use and subject-specific laboratories have been established.
- Software provides an effective supplement to some classes.

**Challenges:**

**Language Arts Literacy:**

- The use of research engines, eBoards, and other advanced technologies are not uniformly available to all departments.
- The infrastructure is insufficient to accommodate additional hardware.
- English classrooms are provided with one to two computers.

**Mathematics:**

- Many teachers rely on lecture format and have not incorporated technology into their lessons or work.

**Special Education:**

- Other than the use of an overhead projector, the use of technology to deliver instruction is not evident.
- Technology is underutilized in most classrooms.

## STANDARD 4: SCHOOL CULTURE

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

### ***4.1 Are clear and fair rules and policies in place to support a safe, equitable, and healthy learning environment?***

Clear policies and practices to ensure a safe environment are in place. All students and parents receive handbooks that detail the school rules and consequences. There is concern about how well and equitably the policies are enforced by all. Support staff members provide many opportunities for students to address their concerns. Support groups provided by trained staff meet regularly to assist students in many identified areas of need. The addition of the school resource officers to the school is viewed by support staff as very beneficial for students personally, and contributes to a more orderly environment.

**Challenge:**

- There are many expressions of concern across all stakeholders as to the consistency and equity of addressing discipline issues.

### ***4.2 How does the school community express high expectations for all its members?***

There are clear expectations set for student academic and social behavior. There is evidence that staff expects many students in the school to perform successfully to the level of these expectations. There is little clear evidence that all school staff hold the same expectations for all students.

**Strengths:**

- Students perceive that teachers in high level classes are very concerned for their achievement and are readily available for assistance.
- Students are encouraged to advocate for themselves, and those who do demonstrate great maturity and competence.

**Challenges:**

- There is little differentiated teaching to address the various learning needs of students in the classes visited. Interviewees among support staff feel that the lack of rigor and/or support for students in need in these classes contributes to students' lateness and cutting classes, which then spills out into some unruliness in hallways during class time.

- Students who advocate for themselves are in a better position to receive needed services. Other support service personnel provide needed interventions, but not as many as might be optimal for those students in greater need and who are not advocates for themselves.
- While it is the avowed philosophy of Montclair residents that the school provide a college preparation experience for all students, school support staff are concerned that all the supports, academic and social/emotional, are not present in great enough quantity for those students most in need of these services. There is also concern that there is not enough support for these students to make an informed choice about whether to choose college, or, if they choose not to go to college, that not enough is offered to prepare them for other life/work choices.
- Some support staff feel that some teachers have a narrow view of their jobs and that some of the services that students need are not perceived to be part of that job.
- There is no forum for a coordinated approach to providing services for students, particularly those who have been identified as in need.

***4.3 Has this school intentionally personalized its environment? What evidence do we have that students are satisfied with the school?***

The school's avowed intention is to address the needs of all students. There is not a formal organizational structure that supports a personalized environment for all students; but there are five small learning communities, some of which are better organized than others, to deliver very personalized services to students and, indeed, are models of this. While some students and parents express concern for some of the practices in the school, most students and parents respond positively to being or having their children in this school.

**Strengths:**

- There are many projects that students engage in to serve their community.
- The school has contracted with Rutgers DSACS (Developing Safe and Civil Schools) to assist in improving the social-emotional learning (SEL) in the school for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and teachers. A second survey is being provided to determine the outcomes of the interventions in the SEL area.
- Parents and students interviewed commend the school for its preparation of its highest achieving students.
- There are five SLC communities established. One of these has developed the characteristics and components of an SLC to a high degree of sophistication. The Ninth Grade Academy provides a strong foundation for its students.
- The Montclair community provides many opportunities through various organizations to assist and mentor high school students. There is a goal within these organizations to provide services to enable all students to achieve to the highest levels possible.
- There are many opportunities for students to demonstrate maturity: senior option, open lunch, choice of classes and SLCs, and engagement in service/community projects. Students value this "freedom."

**Challenges:**

- While classes observed reveal adequate levels of student engagement, students interviewed indicate that they experience considerable differences in expectations between high honors and AP classes

and those that are not high honors or AP. A number of students interviewed indicate that they find only approximately 50% of their classes challenging for them.

- There is evidence of many stakeholders' concern about the difference in achievement between the general population and special needs students, and between the white and African-American populations, particularly black males, as well as the economically disadvantaged students.
- The school does not have an overall, formalized mentoring program; however, there are many opportunities provided within the school for specific mentoring, such as student-to-student, within some SLCs, and within the small group sessions, as well as opportunities created by the guidance department that enlists outside resources to provide mentors for a group of 9<sup>th</sup> grade male students from single parent homes. All of these efforts are not coordinated, so that there is not an overall plan ensuring that all students are afforded the chance to form positive relationships with adults who can assist them in making informed choices about their futures. Students interviewed also state that they choose mentors for themselves. These students, however, express concern that not all students are as aware of the need to find a mentor and therefore are not afforded the advantages of this kind of a relationship.
- The DSCAS survey that is used to measure SEL in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade is not currently given to upper grades.
- The school has not conducted other surveys of perceptions from other stakeholder groups: teachers, parents, other school staff, and community members.
- Students interviewed do not feel that they have a voice in significant decisions made in the school.

## **STANDARD 5: STUDENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

**The school community develops alliances with families, higher education, and community organizations to enhance and support the well-being of children.**

*5.1 Does the school have a program of aligned support services that fully support the well-being of children? What structures are in place for serving special populations (e.g., ELL, Title I, special education, gifted and talented students)? To what extent are staff members trained to meet the needs of these special populations?*

There are well-planned services offered for AP, honors, and special education students during the school day. Teachers are prepared for these specialized populations within these specialized classes.

### **Strengths:**

- There are honors and AP classes offered in all academic areas and some related arts areas.
- AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) is offered to the mid-range students to support them in gaining the skills and knowledge to succeed in higher level classes.

### **Challenges:**

- It is not evident in classes visited that there is small-group targeted instruction that would provide for the differentiated needs of students.

- Students identified as experiencing less success in some classes express a desire for instruction in their classes that is more engaging, clearly presented, and connected to real-life applications.
- The database of all supports offered to students should continue to be developed to determine overlap and gaps in services.

***5.2 To what extent does the school maintain a positive relationship with parents and communicate frequently about their children, including the need for supplemental services and providers that are available?***

The school is very responsive to parental concerns, providing regular communication about school goals and student progress toward those goals.

**Strengths:**

- There are many opportunities offered to all parents to enable them to assist their children with future planning for college. The school also provides career fairs.
- There are many parents who are actively engaged in the school in a variety of ways, including tutoring, school events, and parent organizations.

**Challenges:**

- Parents interviewed do not feel that there is enough communication regarding student progress. They express a desire for more available, timely information about curriculum, grades, expectations, and problems via teacher websites.
- There is need to address the needs of hard-to-reach parents and those less equipped to provide quality educational support for their children.

***5.3 Who works in partnership with the school? What do the partners contribute?***

The school has partnered with community and university groups in support of the school programs and students.

**Strengths:**

- The school has established many partnerships with community groups that provide a variety of needed services to the school. Among these are the Montclair Fund for Educational Excellence (MFEE), which provides grants for teachers; the Improving Montclair Achievement Network Initiative (IMANI), which provides many activities to support students in higher level classes; and Christ Church, which provides tutoring. All of these organizations benefit from improving the quality of education for Montclair students. There is also a variety of relationships with Montclair State University, one involving the preparation of student teachers in which both partners reap benefits.
- The special education department places some students in a number of work-related experiences that provide students with opportunities to apply their knowledge. The businesses benefit by having skill development provided for these “student employees” by school personnel. They are also able to judge the quality of the potential these students have as future full-time employees.

**Challenges:**

- There is currently no specific partnership to support the use of technology in the school and involve students in real-world technology experiences.
- There is no organized gathering of these providers to act as an advisory board for the continued development of partnerships, as well as for the assessment of the outcomes of, and possible improvements to, these partnerships.

***5.4 How does the district support the school's instructional staff and leadership?***

The district provides support to the school through its district content supervisors and school-based supervisors. The district also provides funds for professional development for the school's faculty and leadership.

**Challenge:**

- The current structure of district support does not maximize the talents and contributions of the district personnel to best support the school in its efforts to continually improve the school.

**STANDARD 6: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & EVALUATION**

**The school provides for staff research-based, results-driven professional development opportunities that are consistent with the district's professional development plans, and implements performance evaluation procedures in order to improve teaching and learning.**

***6.1 Is there evidence that professional learning to advance student achievement is valued? What professional development opportunities do teachers receive to assist them in implementing the curriculum?***

There is no evidence that a coherent, systemic process exists to support the development of professional learning plans designed to increase faculty competence in order to advance student achievement.

**Strength:**

- Individual supervisors provide high-level professional development opportunities for their teachers.

**Challenge:**

- There is no evidence that a plan exists to provide differentiated professional development based on assessed student need and teacher competency.

***6.2 What evidence is there that student learning is tied to teacher learning? Do teachers feel they receive adequate professional development?***

There is no systemic evidence that teacher learning is tied to student learning. There is no line item for professional development in the school's budget.

**Challenges:**

- While the professional improvement plans (PIPs) and evaluations reviewed are well-constructed, there is little evidence that teacher learning is tied to the students' assessed needs.
- During interviews, many teachers express the need for additional professional development in instructional strategies.

## **STANDARD 7: LEADERSHIP**

The school leaders have organized the school by focusing on teaching and learning through (a) the communication of a clear vision, mission, and goals; (b) maximizing use of all available resources; (c) creating a learning culture with high performance expectations; and (d) effective planning with input from all stakeholders.

***7.1 Are the school administrators educational leaders who understand the linkages among educational leadership, a productive school, and positive outcomes for children?***

Some members of the administrative team (which includes principal, assistant principals, assistant superintendent, supervisors, and department chairs) demonstrate an understanding of the linkages among educational leadership, a productive school, and positive outcomes for students.

**Strength:**

- Review of documents, interviews, administrative walkthroughs, and debriefing sessions provide evidence that most of the school's administrative staff are motivated and competent to assess their strengths and weaknesses to better serve the MHS community.

**Challenges:**

- The challenge is for the administrative team to identify systematically effective best instructional practices and programs to advance the academic performance of all students, with special emphasis on the special education and African-American subgroups.
- There is little evidence that a structured collaborative approach exists to create and utilize effectively a governance structure that supports the academic purpose of the school.
- Although there is a vision statement unique to the school, it is not referenced in written documentation, classroom walkthroughs, or interviews. The district goals are the school's goals, and the school has not personalized the goals to its population and needs. The administrative team has not purposefully created detailed action plans to address these goals.

***7.2 Is the principal an educational leader who understands that formal leadership is a complex and multi-faceted role that requires moral courage, knowledge of governance and change, and the ability to share leadership?***

This principal is in his fourth year at MHS. He understands the requirements and complexity of the role of principal. The most urgent challenge is to deepen the culture of high teaching and learning expectations for each student and staff member.

**Challenge:**

- The evidence gathered does not support that there is a systematic focus on the accepted best organizational practices. There is no formal strategic action plan including:
  1. A designed vision based on internal audit, environmental scan, and established school priorities;
  2. Benchmark assessments and guidelines to monitor progress of goals; and
  3. A structured final assessment/rubric to assess the effectiveness of each organizational practice identified as critical.

Three of the practices identified as urgent concerns are:

1. A schedule that allows for structured collaborative planning time and embedded professional development;
2. An action plan to address absenteeism and “cutting;” and
3. An action plan for regular administrative walkthroughs.

***7.3 Have key school leaders established a culture of trust and institutionalized a commitment to continuous improvement and accountability for performance?***

Although some administrators have established a sense of trust and an expectation for accountability within a department or a unit, there is no evidence that a culture of trust or accountability for performance is pervasive or systemic.

**Challenge:**

- Evidence does not support that there is a systematic process for reviewing essential practices in the following areas:
  1. Professional development;
  2. Data collection, analysis, and applications;
  3. Focused/planned teacher collaboration to improve teaching and learning; and
  4. Comprehensive and strategic action planning for all significant initiatives.

***7.4 How is distributed leadership demonstrated, and what evidence do you have that it is effective?***

The present leadership/governance structure is not effective in addressing the teaching and learning process for all students.

**Challenge:**

- The evidence does not support that a school improvement committee with full representation of all stakeholders has been established.

## SUMMARY OF CLASSROOM VISITS

The results of the classroom visits provide a view of instruction within the building. This summary is a cross-section or snapshot of instruction. Several rounds of classroom walkthroughs were conducted to provide a representative and thorough understanding of the nature of instruction in the school.

The language arts literacy subteam visited 12 classrooms. Some classrooms exhibited effective elements of instruction, including some best practices in reading and writing. Lessons were appropriately content-focused in the majority of classes. Also observed was active class participation in the World Literature support class and a class in the Civics and Government Institute. Overall, the delivery method for instruction was teacher-directed.

Of note is the lack of systematic strategic instruction to address the academic needs of the African-American student population whose performance does not demonstrate mastery of key reading and writing skills. Interviews with teachers suggest that a lack of training in effective strategies applicable to significantly impacting low performance may be responsible for the widening discrepancy in performance of this subgroup when compared to others in the school. Collaboration between the English and special education departments is strongly suggested.

Students interviewed were articulate about their concept of the great degree of freedom afforded them on the campus and their belief that that freedom and the responsibility for its constructive use were essential to their development of maturity and preparation for college.

The mathematics subteam visited 15 classrooms, including classrooms from all grades and levels. There were a number of indicators in which most classrooms exhibited good practices, including (1) students exhibiting a sense of comfort and respect toward the teacher, (2) orderly and well-maintained classrooms, and (3) lessons that were appropriately paced to maintain student focus. There were fewer cases of (1) team teaching, (2) students engaging in self-reflection, and (3) communicating why the lesson is being taught. Overall, the style of instruction was whole-group and lecture.

Of note is the lack of systematic strategic instruction to address the academic needs of the African-American student population whose performance does not demonstrate mastery of key mathematics skills. Interviews with teachers suggest that a lack of training in how to implement effective strategies applicable to significantly impacting low performance may be responsible for the widening discrepancy in performance of this subgroup when compared to others in the school. Collaboration between the mathematics and special education departments is strongly suggested.

The special education subteam visited seven classrooms. A variety of special education programs were observed. Instructional delivery in most classes was either whole-group or individualized. In most classes, teachers engaged students in discussion through questions designed to provoke higher-level thinking skills. Most students were attentive to the tasks presented and were respectful to the teacher. Co-teaching was observed in a few classes; however, most teachers functioned as in-class resource teachers. Due to scheduling limitations, collaboration occurs informally between the special education teachers and general education teachers.

The regular level classes are viewed by most general education students to be less challenging. Many of these classes have a predominance of special education students due to a lack of sessions offered. The child study team is very active in the building, supporting students in numerous ways. Academic and

behavioral interventions by the team support academic and social success. Teachers are motivated and eager to provide a quality education for their students; however, they are seeking guidance and support from the building leaders.

The school culture subteam visited five classrooms during the visit. There were a number of indicators in which most classrooms exhibited good practices, including (1) students exhibiting a sense of comfort and respect toward the teacher and each other, and (2) orderly classrooms. Students interviewed during these visits were able to identify the “what” of the lesson, and while some were able to identify the “why” of the lesson, not all were sure of the purpose of learning this content. Most students did not identify internalized strategies or peers or other resources to help them with problems; rather they would ask the teacher if they needed help. Student interviews disclose that most students feel that their high-level classes are challenging, but that the most interesting classes are where the teacher is able to make the class “fun” by providing hands-on or concrete examples or where the teachers makes the content connect to their experiences.

Student surveys for 9<sup>th</sup> graders and teachers from 2007 show that these Academy students and teachers rate the social-emotional learning (SEL) indicators as positive. The results for this year are not available for comparison as of this writing.

The leadership subteam visited five classrooms, including classrooms from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade levels. There were a number of indicators in which most classrooms exhibited good practices, including (1) students consistently asking questions for clarity throughout the lesson, (2) students exhibiting a sense of comfort and respect toward the teacher and the teacher toward the students, (3) orderly and well-maintained classrooms, and (4) lessons that were appropriately paced to maintain student focus. There were fewer cases of (1) varied instructional strategies being used to accommodate diverse learning styles, (2) students engaging in self-reflection, and (3) the use of technology other than very basic modes to support instruction. Overall, most instruction observed was teacher-directed.

## SUMMARY OF DOCUMENTATION REVIEW

The team activities included a review of the documents collected for the school portfolio and data profile, including:

### **Language Arts Literacy:**

- Technology Plan
- English Department meeting minutes
- Evaluation and PIP forms
- English curriculum
- Montclair School Report Card
- Faculty meeting agendas
- School Leadership Team report
- District Professional Development Plan
- Formative Assessment (student writing)
- Formative Classroom Assessment

### **Mathematics:**

- Mathematics curricula
- Summer program descriptions
- PIPs and evaluations
- Student handbook
- Faculty handbook
- Program Planning guides
- 3-Year Mathematics Plan
- PowerPoint presentation of math program
- Math department meeting minutes
- School Report Card
- Faculty meeting agendas

### **Special Education:**

- English and math curricula
- Student IEPs
- Special education meeting agendas
- Evaluations and PIPs
- Lesson plans
- I&RS referral forms and action plans

### **School Culture:**

- District Parent Policy
- DSACS student survey results
- Brochures and descriptions of SLCs
- Student handbook
- Faculty handbook
- Health and wellness materials
- Documents from IMANI
- PTA newsletters
- Suspension data

Folder on community partners  
*Design for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* – 2000-2001 Report

**Leadership:**

New Jersey School Report Cards  
School improvement strategies  
Teacher and principal surveys  
Technology Report  
Faculty Handbook  
PTA newsletter  
Certified staff observation and evaluation forms  
Montclair HS CAPA visit presentation: “Working Together to Inspire Excellence”  
CAPA Team Lead data documents  
School Leadership Committee notes and minutes  
Special education reports  
Student handbook

## **SCHOOL AND DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY, MATHEMATICS, SPECIAL EDUCATION***

1. In order to meet the needs of all students and provide a student-centered environment, develop and implement an action plan delineating mandatory professional development in the areas of: (1) teacher expectation and its relationship to student achievement, (2) strategic instruction impacting student performance and achievement, (3) data – its collection, analysis, and applications, (4) differentiation based on regularly administered, formal benchmark assessments, (5) implementation of portfolios to assess student progress, and (6) integration of technology into instruction.

The plan should specify:

- Timelines for implementation;
- Regular monitoring and feedback for adjustment, as necessary;
- Use of protocols for the analysis of the results of benchmark assessments; and
- Intentional integration for special education faculty, staff, and students.

### ***LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY***

1. Until additional small learning communities (SLCs) are created in response to the Secondary Education Initiative (SEI), develop for students electing a traditional tenth grade English class outside of the SLCs a course modeled after the ninth grade interdisciplinary world literature course. The course would include a rigorous study of literature providing academic support in reading and writing. Instruction would be strategic and based on best practices, and would include regular standardized assessment to document growth.

### ***MATHEMATICS***

1. It is recommended that the district provide focused, rigorous professional development in the integration of technology and the use of best practice instructional and assessment strategies in order to meet the needs of all students and provide a student-centered environment.

### ***SPECIAL EDUCATION***

1. Develop a strategic plan to address the intentional integration of the special education population, including staff and students, into all areas of the school. This strategic plan should address values and beliefs about students with special needs and their capacities. The following organizational, instructional, and leadership practices are some of the areas that should be addressed using research-based best practices:

Integration of the Special Education Department into the mainstream of the building:

- Establish building-wide policies and practices that promote collaboration and integration of the general education and special education staff and students.
- Relocate self-contained and replacement special education classrooms throughout the building.

Expand and enhance academic and career program options for special education students in the following areas:

- Ensure that students are placed in the least restrictive environment (ICS classes).

- Provide an additional reading program for low-level readers and non-readers.
- Offer programs in career training (practical arts) that would prepare students with employable skills.

Inclusion Program:

- Define preferred in-class-support model and standardize inclusive practice throughout the building. Provide professional development for general education and special education teachers in the designated model and communicate practice to entire faculty.

### ***SCHOOL CULTURE***

1. Revisit the school's existing SLC designs. Compare these designs with the SEI to be implemented for the 2009-2010 school year. Determine how to ensure that all the critical aspects of this initiative are delivered within the existing SLCs, and consider the possible addition of other SLCs so that all students are afforded the benefits of the SEI desired outcomes, such as personalization and student voice.
2. Consider the creation of an advisory board for all support services to students. Part of the task will be to determine which students are receiving services and who are not, and then to ensure that all students are assisted in accessing the services offered. Another task would be to revisit the many student support initiatives and programs that have been in place at Montclair High School, and evaluate what might be of value to revive in light of the SEI.
3. Consider providing an organized in-school suspension (ISS) program such as the one provided at Lawrence High School, which offers students an opportunity to truly reflect on and recognize the behaviors that led them to the consequence of ISS.

### ***LEADERSHIP***

The team found that the school as a system is not functioning for all students. The team has identified two root causes for this dysfunction:

- There is little evidence of a systemic understanding among the school community of the relationships between and among structure, freedom, academic excellence, and maturation.
- There is no formal process of communication between the school and community or within the school that facilitates a consistent sharing of information, best practices, programs, and expectations.

1. It is recommended that the leadership team develop an exhaustive strategic plan for Montclair High School that addresses the Domains, Standards, and Indicators of the CAPA Teaching and Learning Tool and that includes the requirements of the NJDOE Secondary Education Initiative. The strategic plan should have action plans for each of the CAPA standards. These action plans should be intentionally specific in identifying strategies, activities, and timelines. There should also be an action plan for communications. The cohesiveness of one action plan to another must also be intentional. (References: Chapter Six of *The School Portfolio Toolkit*, Victoria Bernhardt; and *Transforming Schools Through Powerful Planning*, Psencik and Hirsh)

In order to create the strategic plan, it is recommended that the leadership team (principal, assistant principals, assistant superintendent, supervisors, and department chairs) receive training in systems

thinking and strategic planning as soon as possible so that this school can move to the next level of excellence in the academic performance of all students. An action plan for this training should be developed by the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction and the principal in consultation with a recognized staff development organization, for example NSDC. This training should be rigorous (a week in the summer with benchmark training sessions during the school year).

2. It is recommended that the school deepen its focus on the academic purpose of schooling – teaching and learning – for the upcoming school year to address more fully the school’s and district’s goals, which are:
  - a. To improve mathematics instruction for all students while reducing the minority (African-American) achievement gap (it is recommended that this goal be expanded to include literacy, science, and social studies);
  - b. To eliminate over-representation of African-American males in special education; and
  - c. To infuse technology into the curriculum in meaningful ways to promote future-oriented skill sets.

To this end, it is recommended that the Montclair High School Leadership Team receive professional development in the following areas:

- a. How to create a strategic plan and write focused action plans for teaching and learning goals;
- b. How to ensure that all classrooms are student-centered;
- c. How to create a schedule that allows for focused, protocol-driven common planning time;
- d. How to create protocol-driven professional learning meetings;
- e. How to ensure that school goals, teacher competency (evaluations), PIPs, and professional development are driven by assessed student needs across the school;
- f. How to increase and deepen the use of data to improve student learning; and
- g. How to move the professional development standards of the National Staff Development Council into practice at Montclair High School.

It is further recommended that this professional development be initiated before the opening of the new school year and that an action plan be developed to benchmark assess the effectiveness of administrative professional development throughout the school year.

(Resources: *Transforming Schools Through Powerful Planning*, Psencik and Hirsh; *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning*, editor Lois Brown Easton; *Using Data to Improve Student Learning in High Schools*, Victoria Bernhardt; *Moving NSDC’s Staff Development Standards into Practice: Innovation Configurations*; NSDC: National Staff Development Council; SEDL: Southwest Educational Development Lab; *School Reform from the Inside Out: Policy, Practice, and Performance*, Elmore)

## ***DISTRICT***

1. The district should review the present leadership policy, practice, and performance at the high school to ensure that:
  - The best people are in the most critical leadership positions;
  - The leadership team intentionally share values and beliefs about curriculum, instruction, organizational practices, and academic and behavioral expectations for students and teachers;
  - A common understanding of the purpose of public education at Montclair High School is shared and articulated; and
  - Ideas that challenge the status quo about better ways of doing things are heard and expected.

2. The district should consider giving the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction the power of supervision and evaluation of personnel and programs related to curriculum and instruction.
3. It is recommended that the district require that teachers who teach mathematics in the special education classes have mathematics certification.
4. It is recommended that the district hire an instructional mathematics coach to support the teachers in the implementation of technology and best practices.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

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

<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION FORM</b>	
School	Montclair High School
Principal/Lead Person – Years in Building	Dr. Melvin Katz-4 years
Grade Levels	9-12
Number of Teachers in Building	176
Number of Teachers meeting NCLB HQT	99%
Number of Teachers with Emergency Certification and Subject Area	1-Guidance Counselor (fill-in for maternity leave)
Are classrooms departmentalized? If yes, what grade levels? Include special education.	All classrooms are departmentalized except for four special ed. self-contained classes.
Teacher Mobility Rate	3.2%
Teacher Attendance Rate	97.5%
Total Number of Classrooms	Main bldg.-77 Annex-38
Percent Special Education Students	319
Percent Special Education Students in Inclusive Classrooms	Math LAL Does not apply to high school Science Specials
Percent Special Education Students in Out-of-School Placement	56
Number of Special Education Students in Inclusive Classrooms	240-are in the presence of general ed. students 40% of the time.
Number of Special Education Self-Contained Classrooms	4
Number of Inclusive Classrooms and Grade Levels	Does not apply to high school
Percent LEP	18 students=.009
Percent of LEP Students in Building for Less than One Year	13 students=.006
Number of Bilingual Classrooms	0
Number of Students Receiving Bilingual Services	0
Number of Students Receiving ESL Services	18
Student Attendance	96.7%
Student Mobility	0%
Student Suspensions	Information provided in school portfolio
Student Discipline Referrals	Information provided in school portfolio
School Leadership Council (SLC) or Title I Planning Committee (PC) Meets Monthly	We are not a Title I school. SLC (aka School Review) meets monthly.
SLC or Title I Committee has complete representation including parent	We are not a Title 1 school. SLC is composed of administration, staff, and parents.
Percent Parent Involvement	Not Applicable

<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION FORM</b>	
Major School Improvement Strategy(ies)	AVID, IMANI, Agile Mind, SRA Process, National Honor Society Tutors
Has the School Received a Persistently Dangerous "Warning?"	No
Most Current Number of Students Reading at Grade Level	Difficult to ascertain at a high school.
Provide a List of Benchmark Assessments Administered and the Timeline for Each	HSPA TerraNova
AYP Subgroups Status:	The four areas listed below represent the areas in which we were deficient.
AYP Content Areas Missed	SPEC. ED-LAL      SPEC. ED-MATH EC. DIS.-MATH    AFR-AM.-MATH
Language Arts Program/Textbook	See Attached List
Mathematics Program/Textbook	See Attached List
Number of Students Offered Choice Option in 2006- 2007 and 2007-2008	Last Year This year      DOES NOT APPLY
Number of Students Receiving Choice Option	Last Year This year      DOES NOT APPLY
Number of Students Receiving Supplemental Services in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008	Last Year This year      DOES NOT APPLY
Number of Students Eligible to Receive Supplemental Services in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008	Last Year This year      DOES NOT APPLY
Number of Students Attending Basic Skills Courses	DOES NOT APPLY

<b>CAPA DISTRICT AND SCHOOL “CORE” STANDARDS AND INDICATORS</b>		
<b>STANDARD 1: CURRICULUM</b>		
<b>The district’s rigorous, intentional, and aligned curriculum is fully implemented at the school.</b>		
1	1.1	The district curriculum is aligned with the NJ CCCS (that provide a coherent vision for what students should know and be able to do) and specifies the content to be mastered.
2	1.2	The district curriculum is implemented at the school.
3	1.3	There is a process to monitor the implementation of the curriculum.
4	1.4	The school ensures that all students have access to the district’s common academic core.
<b>STANDARD 2: CLASSROOM EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT</b>		
<b>Multiple evaluation and assessment strategies are used to continuously monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work.</b>		
5	2.1	Multiple classroom assessments are frequent, rigorous, and aligned with core content standards.
6	2.2	Students can articulate the expectations, know requirements, and assess their own and others’ work.
7	2.3	Test scores are used to identify gaps and adjust instructional practice for all subgroups.
<b>STANDARD 3: INSTRUCTION</b>		
<b>Effective and varied instructional strategies/activities are used in all classrooms and are continuously monitored and aligned with individual student needs.</b>		
8	3.1	Instructional strategies include a variety of challenging and engaging activities.
9	3.2	Learning goals are evident and provide focus for student learning.
10	3.3	Teachers demonstrate necessary content knowledge and pedagogy.
11	3.4	Technology is incorporated into the school organizational and instructional practices.
<b>STANDARD 4: SCHOOL CULTURE</b>		
<b>The school functions as an effective learning community and supports a climate conducive to performance excellence.</b>		
12	4.1	The school community supports a safe, equitable, and healthy learning environment.
13	4.2	The members of the school community, including school leadership, instructional staff, students, parents/guardians, and partners, possess and cultivate the collective will to persevere, believing it is their business to produce increased achievement and advancement of all students.
14	4.3	A personalized environment is purposefully established for students in order for them to (a) learn about their strengths (intellectual, ethical, social, and physical); (b) discover and demonstrate their own competence; and (c) plan for their future.
<b>STANDARD 5: STUDENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT</b>		
<b>The school community develops alliances with families, higher education, and community organizations to enhance and support the well-being of children.</b>		
15	5.1	There is a program of educational support services for student support.
16	5.2	There is a program of family/adult caregiver support services.
17	5.3	There is a program of community partnership and support.
18	5.4	There is a program of district support for the school.
<b>STANDARD 6: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT &amp; EVALUATION</b>		
<b>The school provides for staff research-based, results-driven professional development opportunities that are consistent with the district’s professional development plan, and implements performance evaluation procedures in order to improve teaching and learning.</b>		
19	6.1	The school and district devote resources to content-rich professional development that is connected to reaching and sustaining the school vision and goals for increasing student achievement and is differentiated by teacher and student needs.

<b>CAPA DISTRICT AND SCHOOL “CORE” STANDARDS AND INDICATORS</b>		
20	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 (PIPs) and evaluations of teachers and the Professional Growth Plans of principals.
<b>STANDARD 7: LEADERSHIP</b>		
<p><b>The school leaders have organized the school by focusing on teaching and learning through (a) the communication of a clear vision, mission, and goals; (b) maximizing use of all available resources; (c) creating a learning culture with high performance expectations; and (d) effective planning with input from all stakeholders.</b></p>		
21	7.1	Key leaders in the school facilitate a collaborative process to develop a shared mission, vision, values, and goals that are understood and ingrained in the school’s culture.
22	7.2	There is a demonstrated and unrelenting focus on evidence-based teaching and learning.
23	7.3	There is a culture of trust, continuous improvement, and accountability for performance.
24	7.4	School leadership and the NCLB school improvement committee plan effectively by communicating a clear purpose, direction, and strategies focused on teaching and learning through the development, implementation, and evaluation of the following: vision, goals, and the NCLB school improvement plan.

<b>TEAM POSITION</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>AFFILIATION</b>
<b>EXTERNAL TEAM</b>		
Team Leader	Chris Rennie	Educational Consultant
Principal	Margaret Mary Dalton	Educational Consultant
Language Arts Literacy Specialist	Pat Burwell	Educational Consultant
Mathematics Specialist	Chris Rennie	Educational Consultant
Special Education Specialist	Fran Borkes	Educational Consultant
School Culture Specialist	Elizabeth Domigan	Educational Consultant
<b>INTERNAL TEAM</b>		
District Liaison	Terry Trigg-Scales	Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction
Principal	Mel Katz	Principal
Language Arts Literacy Specialist	Cenithia Bilal James Aquavia	Teacher on Special Assignment, Dept. of Instruction English Supervisor 9-12
Mathematics Specialist	George Fox Joan Moriarity	HS Math Chair District Math Supervisor
Special Education Specialist	Stephanie Bowen	Supervisor Special Education
School Culture Specialist	Joanne Petrigliano – partic. in part of the visit	District Arts Supervisor

## ACTION STEP 1

It is to be noted that the principal who was present during the CAPA visit (May 19 – 22, 2008) resigned during the summer. An interim principal has been hired and has begun work, based on her observations and the external reports available. These Action Steps are designed to narrow the recommendations made by the CAPA team and respond to the needs identified by the district and the interim principal: focus on teaching and learning and establishing a culture of accountability and support for students.

### CAPA ACTION STEPS TO IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

**STANDARD(S)** 4, 7                      **INDICATOR(S)** 4.1, 4.2, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3                      **CONTENT AREA:** All

**SUBTEAM:** School Culture, Leadership

**Briefly Describe the Action Step—What needs to be done?:**

- Establish a system of accountability in the district and school leadership teams.

**What is the Rationale for Selection of this particular Action Step—Root Causes:**

- That the school deepen its focus on the academic purpose of schooling – teaching and learning – for the upcoming school year to more fully address the school and district goals.

**What AYP data support selection of the Action Step?**

- The school is in Year 3. The subgroups not meeting the AYP benchmarks are Students with Disabilities (Math and English), African-American (Math), Economically Disadvantaged (Math).

**What is the measurable goal (% or number) related to this Action Step?**

- There will be a 10% decrease in the number of students who are partially proficient in targeted subgroups.

**What is the name of the research-based strategy(ies) or best practice(s) to be implemented that will achieve the desired goal?**

- Sound organizational practices
- Strategic Planning using the framework of Systems Thinking

**List other strategies already implemented in the school and/or district that directly contribute to accomplishment of this Action Step:**

- The senior members of school and district staffs will participate in a four-day retreat, where they will present their plans to focus on formative assessment and the application of the results of data analysis to drive instruction.

**List other schools/classrooms (within or outside the district) where this strategy is successfully implemented and achieving the desired results. Is it possible to visit the school or classroom to see the strategy in action?**

- The middle and elementary schools in the district.
- Yes, it is possible to visit them.

**What are the possible costs for implementing the strategy(ies)?**

- Tuition
- Stipend for teacher leaders to attend workshops
- Materials – books, DVDs
- Travel costs
- Consultant Fees

**DELIVERY: How are we going to get there?**

*Detail the specific tasks to be completed in order to implement successfully each of the research-based or promising strategies you selected. Use additional rows as needed. As a result of the selection of the action steps, the Title 1 School Improvement Plan should be revised.*

<b>Specific Actions necessary to implement the selected Research-Based Strategy</b> <i>Specific actions to improve educational practices</i>		<b>By when?</b> <i>Start / End Date</i>	<b>By whom?</b> <i>Persons Involved</i> (*' denotes lead person)	<b>With what?</b> <i>Resources required and funding source(s)</i>	<b>What evidence?</b> <i>How will we know the strategies are working?</i> <b>How do we track our progress?</b>
1	Establish weekly meetings of content and specialty area supervisors, with the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction attending every other week.	8/1/08 – 9/15/08	+Interim principal	0 funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting agendas and minutes</li> <li>• Meeting attendance records</li> </ul>
2	Establish a practice that professional development focused on differentiated instructional practices will be part of every faculty and department meeting.	8/1/08 – 9/15/08	+Interim principal	0 funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting agendas and minutes</li> <li>• Meeting attendance records</li> </ul>
3	Establish the practice that each department supervisor will document their goals and detail their plans using the CAPA action planning form.	8/1/08 – 9/15/08	+Interim principal	0 funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action Planning form for each department</li> </ul>
4	Provide training for department supervisors and building administrators in the effective use of the CAPA walkthrough protocol.	9/08 – 10/08	+ Assistant supt. of curriculum and instruction	School funds if provider is external	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda for training</li> <li>• Schedule of training sessions, with attendance records</li> <li>• Schedule for periodic calibration of trends observed.</li> </ul>
5	Provide monthly seminars for new and non-tenured teachers, using the Critical Friends model.	Monthly	+ Assistant supt. of curriculum and instruction Interim principal	0 funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda for training</li> <li>• Schedule of training sessions, with attendance records</li> </ul>

**DELIVERY: How are we going to get there?**

*Detail the specific tasks to be completed in order to implement successfully each of the research-based or promising strategies you selected. Use additional rows as needed. As a result of the selection of the action steps, the Title 1 School Improvement Plan should be revised.*

<p><b>Specific Actions necessary to implement the selected Research-Based Strategy</b> <i>Specific actions to improve educational practices</i></p>	<p><b>By when?</b> <i>Start /End Date</i></p>	<p><b>By whom?</b> <i>Persons Involved</i> (* denotes lead person)</p>	<p><b>With what?</b> <i>Resources required and funding source(s)</i></p>	<p><b>What evidence?</b> <i>How will we know the strategies are working?</i> <b>How do we track our progress?</b></p>
<p>6 Document a collaborative coaching cycle to be used for new teachers to observe an effective teacher, have dialogue before and after the visit, and focus the visit.</p>	<p>9/1/08 – 10/15/08</p>	<p>+ Assistant supt. of curriculum and instruction Department supervisors</p>	<p>School funds if provider is external</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of collaborative coaching cycle</li> <li>• Schedule of classroom visits by new and nontenured teachers, including pre- and post-visit conferencing</li> <li>• Completed reflection forms from all teachers involved</li> <li>• Analysis of reflection forms</li> </ul>
<p>7 Develop a school-based strategic plan that identifies key goals and objectives, integrates strategies and activities, and provides a structure for sustaining the identified practices.</p>	<p>3/09 – 5/09</p>	<p>+ Assistant supt. of curriculum and instruction New principal Department supervisors</p>	<p>School funds if facilitator of plan development is external</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive school strategic plan</li> </ul>
<p>8 Contract with National Staff Development Council (NSDC) to provide training for administrative team of the high school and the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction in Systems Thinking and Strategic Planning.</p>	<p>7/1/08</p>	<p>+Assistant supt. of curriculum and instruction</p>	<p>School funds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement with NSDC</li> <li>• Scheduled for February 2009</li> </ul>

**ACTION STEP 2**

It is to be noted that the principal who was present during the CAPA visit (May 19 – 22, 2008) resigned during the summer. An interim principal has been hired and has begun work, based on her observations and the external reports available. These Action Steps are designed to narrow the recommendations made by the CAPA team and respond to the needs identified by the district and the interim principal: focus on teaching and learning and establishing a culture of accountability and support for students.

**CAPA ACTION STEPS  
TO IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

**STANDARD(S)** 4, 5                      **INDICATOR(S)** 4.1, 5.1                      **CONTENT AREA:** All

**SUBTEAM:** School Culture

**Briefly describe the Action Step—What needs to be done?**

- Establish a safe, supportive learning environment for all students.

**What is the rationale for selection of this particular Action Step (root causes)?**

- There is little evidence of a systemic understanding among the school community of the educational need for structure to support academic excellence.

**What AYP data support selection of the Action Step?**

- The school is in Year 3. The subgroups not meeting the AYP benchmarks are Students with Disabilities (Math and English), African-American (Math), Economically Disadvantaged (Math).

**What is the measurable goal (% or number) related to this Action Step?**

- There will be a 10% decrease in the number of students who are partially proficient in targeted subgroups, particularly African-American males and student athletes.

**What is the name of the research-based strategy(ies) or best practice(s) to be implemented that will achieve the desired goal?**

- In-school suspension program that provides instructional time for students as well as remediation of poor behavior
- Attendance policy that is known and supported by all in the school community

**List other strategies already implemented in the school and/or district that directly contribute to accomplishment of this Action Step:**

- There are school rules and policies that directly impact this step.

**List other schools/classrooms (within or outside the district) where this strategy is successfully implemented and achieving the desired results. Is it possible to visit the school or classroom to see the strategy in action?**

- The middle and elementary schools in the district.
- Yes, these schools can be visited.

**What are the possible costs for implementing the strategy(ies)?**

- Tuition
- Stipend for teacher leaders to attend workshops
- Materials – books, DVDs
- Travel costs
- Consultant fees

**DELIVERY: How are we going to get there?**

*Detail the specific tasks to be completed in order to implement successfully each of the research-based or promising strategies you selected. Use additional rows as needed. As a result of the selection of the action steps, the Title 1 School Improvement Plan should be revised.*

	<b>Specific Actions necessary to implement the selected Research-Based Strategy</b> <i>Specific actions to improve educational practices</i>	<b>By when?</b> <i>Start /End Date</i>	<b>By whom?</b> <i>Persons Involved ('+' denotes lead person)</i>	<b>With what?</b> <i>Resources required and funding source(s)</i>	<b>What evidence?</b> <i>How will we know the strategies are working? How do we track our progress?</i>
1	Research in-school suspension programs that work, e.g. Lawrence High School.	08/01/08 – 09/01/08	+ Interim principal	0 funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report of evaluation of programs/strategies</li> <li>• Selection of preferred program/strategy</li> </ul>
2	Develop an implementation plan for in-school suspension program	09/01/08 – 09/15/08	+ Interim principal	0 funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of plan</li> </ul>
3	Develop an academic support program for athletes who are not succeeding in academics. Identify a coordinator. Involve coaches in ownership of the program. Involve athletes and parents in ownership of the program. Involve the child study team in ownership of the program. Promote idea of <u>student</u> -athletes.	08/01/08 – 10/15/09	+Interim principal Program coordinator Coaches Athletes and parents Child study team	School funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of the program, including goals, objectives, strategies and actions, measures, and communication strategies</li> </ul>
4	Revise attendance policy.	07/08	+Interim principal	0 funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement of policy</li> </ul>
5	Establish a dean of attendance, with full-time responsibilities.	08/08	+Interim Principal	0 funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job description</li> <li>• Name of dean</li> </ul>
6	Establish procedures, roles, and responsibilities to support attendance policy.	07/08 – 08/08	+Interim principal Dean of attendance Department supervisors School leadership team	0 funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement of procedures, roles, and responsibilities</li> </ul>

**DELIVERY: How are we going to get there?**

*Detail the specific tasks to be completed in order to implement successfully each of the research-based or promising strategies you selected. Use additional rows as needed. As a result of the selection of the action steps, the Title 1 School Improvement Plan should be revised.*

	<b>Specific Actions necessary to implement the selected Research-Based Strategy</b> <i>Specific actions to improve educational practices</i>	<b>By when?</b> <i>Start /End Date</i>	<b>By whom?</b> <i>Persons Involved</i> <i>('+' denotes lead person)</i>	<b>With what?</b> <i>Resources required and funding source(s)</i>	<b>What evidence?</b> <i>How will we know the strategies are working?</i> <b>How do we track our progress?</b>
7	Communicate new policies and procedures to school community.	9/02/08	+Interim principal Dean of attendance	0 funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda of opening faculty meeting</li> <li>• Copy of communications</li> </ul>