

P.S. 49 Willis Avenue

FINAL REPORT



New York City Department of Education External School Curriculum Audit | August 2011

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Introduction

About This Report

This final report is the result of an external school curriculum audit (ESCA) of P.S. 49 Willis Avenue conducted by Learning Point Associates, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research. This audit was conducted in response to the school being identified as being in corrective action (year 1) under the New York State Education Department (NYSED) differentiated accountability plan, pursuant to the accountability requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act. The utilized ESCA process was developed for and carried out under the auspices of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) Office of School Development, within the Division of Portfolio Planning.

About P.S. 49 Willis Avenue

Located in the Bronx, P.S. 49 (X049) is an elementary school serving 616 students in Grades PK–5. Almost all students (98 percent) are eligible for free lunch. Approximately 71 percent of the students are Hispanic/Latino, and 28 percent are black/African American. Nearly one fourth of the students (23 percent) are classified as limited English proficient, and 10 percent are students with disabilities. The average attendance rate for the 2009–10 school year was 91 percent.

In 2009–10, P.S. 49 Willis Avenue did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in English language arts (ELA) for students in the black/African-American subgroup. In 2010–11, P.S. 49 Willis Avenue's state accountability status was designated as corrective action (year 1).

Audit Process at P.S. 49 Willis Avenue

The ESCA approach utilized at the elementary school level examines six topic areas related to literacy: student engagement, instruction, academic interventions and supports, professional learning and collaboration, curriculum, and assessments and their use. Data were collected at the school level through teacher surveys, administrator interviews, classroom observations, and an analysis of documents submitted by P.S. 49 Willis Avenue. From these data, Learning Point Associates prepared a series of reports for the school's use.

These reports were presented to the school at a co-interpretationSM meeting on June 4, 2011. During the meeting, 18 stakeholders from the P.S. 49 Willis Avenue community read the reports. Through a facilitated and collaborative group process, they identified individual findings and then developed and prioritized key findings that emerged from information in the reports.

¹ <https://www.nystart.gov/publicweb-rc/2010/b5/AOR-2010-320700010049.pdf>. Retrieved August 22, 2011

The remainder of this report presents the key findings that were developed during the co-interpretation meeting and the actionable recommendations that Learning Point Associates developed in response. Please note that there is not necessarily a one-to-one connection between key findings and recommendations. The recommended strategies are those that we believe are most likely to have the greatest positive impact on student performance at P.S. 49 Willis Avenue.

Key Findings

After considerable thought and discussion, co-interpretation participants determined a set of key findings. These key findings are detailed in this section. The wording of the following key findings matches the wording developed and agreed upon by co-interpretation participants at the meeting.

Critical Key Findings

CRITICAL KEY FINDING 1:

The written curriculum is not addressing certain benchmarks.

Critical Key Finding 1 is supported by information from the review of school-submitted documents, interviews, and classroom observations. According to interview data, *Voices Reading*, a core program published by Zaner-Bloser, is an anchor, not the curriculum. Fourth- and fifth-grade teachers wrote their curriculum, according to interview respondents. In the first-grade writing curriculum, several curricular components are referenced for each unit of study, including the Common Core State Standards, a rationale, key teaching points, materials, and assessments. Not all of these components are completed for each unit. Overall, the school curriculum documents did not specify student benchmarks. Teaching points were not listed on the board in every classroom observed.

CRITICAL KEY FINDING 2:

The workshop model is not being implemented consistently.

Critical Key Finding 2 is supported by information from classroom observations and a review of school-submitted documents. Teachers are expected to implement reading and writing workshops as part of their balanced literacy programs. Observers noted that teaching points were not clearly stated in observed classrooms. In the majority of classrooms observed, instruction was whole group. Small-group instruction, which is a feature of the workshop model, was seldom observed. Guided reading was observed in three classrooms.

CRITICAL KEY FINDING 3:

Effective differentiation is not consistent throughout the school.

Critical Key Finding 3 is supported by information from classroom observations. According to documents, guided reading groups are identified and formed in February for kindergarten, in November for Grade 1, and in September for Grades 2–5. However, in the majority of classrooms observed, instruction was whole group, and small-group instruction was not observed.

Positive Key Findings

POSITIVE KEY FINDING 1:

Vocabulary needs are being addressed.

Positive Key Finding 1 is supported by information from the review of school-submitted documents and classroom observations. Vocabulary words to “model, embed in conversation, encourage and notice” are included on the curriculum documents. The school recognizes the importance of oral language, as evidenced by its use of the Music for the Brain program, which assists with oral language development. One classroom used the morning meeting time to develop oral language. Student work requiring students to complete a frame listing a word, what it means, a sentence using the word, a synonym, and a picture illustrating the word was posted in the hall. One class had learned 100 new vocabulary words for 100 days.

POSITIVE KEY FINDING 2:

Teachers and parents set high expectations for students.

Positive Key Finding 2 is supported by information from the review of school-submitted documents, specifically the school survey administered by the NYCDOE to parents and teachers. According to this survey, 96 percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that P.S. 49 teachers set high standards for student work in their classes, and 95 percent of parents agreed or strongly agreed that the school has high expectations for their children.

POSITIVE KEY FINDING 3:

Some formative assessments are seen in classrooms.

Positive Key Finding 3 is supported by information from classroom observations and teacher surveys. An example of formative assessment was observed when a teacher asked, “How many of you feel you have it now?” followed by, “Let’s do a few more.” A writer’s checklist was posted in one classroom to encourage student self-assessment. Writing in all curriculum areas was displayed on classroom walls and in the hallways. Approximately 50 percent of the surveyed teachers reported that they ask students to write reflections.

Recommendations

Overview of Recommendations

Participants at the P.S. 49 Willis Avenue co-interpretation meeting prioritized several key findings that focused on areas in which the school can improve its ELA instruction and curriculum. They also identified positive key findings that highlight the school's strengths.

Because Critical Key Finding 1 addresses the school's ELA curriculum, the first recommendation refers to the Common Core Standards, which the school has already begun to implement. The recommendation focuses on implementation considerations that support a comprehensive alignment of the curriculum with the standards.

The workshop model was addressed in the second critical key finding. The workshop model is somewhat difficult to implement, and Recommendation 2 articulates strategies and considerations related to the full implementation of the workshop model. The workshop model also is related to Critical Key Finding 3, which addresses differentiated instruction. More systematic implementation of the workshop model will enhance differentiation, and vice versa.

THE THREE RECOMMENDATIONS

With these issues in mind, Learning Point Associates auditors developed the following three recommendations:

1. Develop a multiyear plan to align the school's curriculum, instruction, assessments, and instructional materials to the Common Core Standards.
2. Develop and implement a plan to ensure implementation with fidelity of the workshop model in every classroom.
3. Increase the amount of time teachers differentiate instruction.

These three recommendations are discussed on the following pages. Each recommendation provides a review of research, online resources for additional information, specific actions the school may wish to take during its implementation process, and examples of real-life schools that have successfully implemented strategies. All works cited appear in the References section at the end of this report.

Please note that the order in which these recommendations are presented does not reflect a ranking or prioritization of the recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Common Core

Develop a multiyear plan to align the school's curriculum, instruction, assessments, and instructional materials to the Common Core Standards.

LINK TO RESEARCH

The Common Core State Standards Initiative coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers with the involvement of 48 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands identified what American students need to know and do to be successful in college and careers. These standards are based on best practices in national and international education as well as research and input from numerous sources including scholars, assessment developers, professional organizations, and educators representing all grade levels from kindergarten through postsecondary. These standards are comparable with other countries' expectations and are grounded in available evidence and research.

The state of New York adopted the Common Core State Standards on July 19, 2010.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

1. **Align curriculum to the NYS P-12 Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy.**

The adoption of the Common Core provides an opportunity for teachers at P.S. 49 Willis Avenue to work in collaborative teams to identify what they are currently teaching through a curriculum mapping process. It will be essential for teams to identify redundancies and gaps between what they should be teaching according to the Common Core and what they are teaching.

Teachers in teams should look closely at current student work to determine the discrepancy between that work and the level of performance that the Common Core demands, and then plan the steps needed to close any discrepancies.

Instructional Expectations for 2011–12 require teachers to work together to engage all students in rigorous tasks, embedded in well-crafted instructional units and with appropriate supports. For ELA, these tasks include:

- Teachers of prekindergarten through Grade 2 are expected to engage their students in at least one literacy task aligned to the Common Core Reading Informational Text Standards 1 and 10 and Writing Standard 2 (written response to informational texts through group activities and with prompting and support).
- Teachers of Grades 3–8 are expected to engage their students in at least one literacy task aligned to Common Core Reading Informational Text Standards 1 and 10 (written analysis of informational texts) or Common Core Reading Informational Text Standards 1 and 10 and Writing Standard 1 (written opinion or argument based on an analysis of informational texts).

These tasks are to be embedded in Common Core-aligned curricula and include multiple entry points for all learners, including students with disabilities and English language learners. Through the work of implementing these performance tasks,

QUICK LINKS: Online Sources for More Information

Common Core State Standards

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

Provides pertinent information about the state learning standards for ELA and literacy and the Common Core standards

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov>

Common Core resources

<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary/default.htm>

Resources for strengthening teacher practice

www.arisnyc.org

Common Core Curriculum Mapping Project

<http://commoncore.org>

Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC)

www.parcconline.org

teachers will use the inquiry cycle to adjust their curriculum and instruction to help all students meet the expectations of the Common Core. Because standards are not curriculum, teachers will need a curriculum to assist them in helping students meet the Common Core standards. The New York State Education Department is developing curriculum modules to help teachers develop curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core. These curriculum modules will be available to schools during the 2012–13 school year.

2. Align instructional materials to the Common Core.

Another task related to the Common Core standards is for schools to ensure that the texts for each grade align with the complexity requirements outlined in the Common Core. Schools need to select complex texts that are grade level appropriate and meet the text complexity requirements of the Common Core. These levels of text complexity are significantly higher than the level of texts currently being used in most schools. The expectation of the Common Core is that students have extensive classroom practice with texts at or above grade level. It is the expectation of the Common Core that students who are not reading on grade level should be given the support they need to read texts at the appropriate level of complexity rather than be given less complex texts. Many students will need careful scaffolding to enable them to read at the level of text complexity required by the Common Core.

The Common Core places a great emphasis on informational text, and expects students to read informational text 50 percent of the time and literary text 50 percent of the time. Schools need to ascertain whether enough informational text is available at all grade levels and is being used instructionally.

3. Align instruction to the expectations of the Common Core.

As part of the work outlined in the Citywide Instructional Expectations for 2011–12, teachers need to begin to adjust their instruction to help all students meet the higher expectations of the Common Core. In order to help students meet the standards outlined in the Common Core, several changes in literacy instruction will be necessary.

Literacy Instruction. One of these changes is the focus of literacy instruction. The focus of literacy instruction reflected in the Common Core is careful examination of the text itself, which requires close and careful reading. Schools must provide all students, including those who are behind, with extensive opportunities to encounter and comprehend grade-level complex texts, as required by the standards. Students can access complex texts through read-alouds or as a group reading activity. Schools should consider carefully their read-aloud selections. Students whose decoding ability is developing at a slower rate also need opportunities to read text they can read successfully without extensive extra assistance. All students are expected to have daily opportunities for independent reading. Reading materials should include newspaper and magazine articles and websites.

Type of Questions. Another change is the type of questions teachers ask of students. Eighty to ninety percent of the standards require text dependent analysis.

To help students meet the standards outlined in the Common Core, teachers should ask high quality text dependent questions. Text dependent questions are those that can be answered only by careful scrutiny of the text, with students specifically referring to evidence from the text itself to support the answer and not referring to information or evidence from outside the text. The questions are grounded in the text, and students must think carefully about what they heard or read and draw evidence from the text in support of their ideas about the reading.

Strategy Instruction. Another change in literacy instruction is the role of strategy instruction. The Common Core standards necessitate a reconsideration of the role of reading strategies. Strategies should be embedded in the activity of reading a text rather than being taught separately from texts.

Writing Instruction. Changes in writing instruction may be necessary to help students meet the Common Core standards. Thirty percent of writing instruction should be devoted to opinion pieces, 35 percent to informative/explanatory texts, and 35 percent to narratives. Students should be given extensive practice with short focused research projects.

4. Redesign assessment to reflect the expectations in the Common Core.

During the 2012–13 school year interim assessments based on the Common Core standards will be administered. In addition, items developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), of which the state of New York is a member, will be field tested. The PARCC assessments will be operational during the 2014–15 school year. Presently, the PARCC assessments include two summative assessments, which will measure the full range of the Common Core State Standards at each grade level. One required component that counts toward the summative score includes performance-based assessments in Grades 3–8 administered as close to the end of the year as possible.

Priorities in ELA/literacy will include focusing on writing effectively when analyzing text. Another component that is required and counts toward the summative score includes end-of-year assessments comprised of computer-based machine-scorable items focusing on reading and comprehending complex texts in ELA/literacy. A third required assessment of listening/speaking can be administered at any time of the year. With this in mind, schools need to examine assessments they currently use to determine if they are aligned with the Common Core.

DOING WHAT WORKS: Examples From Real Schools

The Common Core Curriculum Mapping Project provides teachers with a roadmap for translating the Common Core into instruction and resources for developing more detailed curriculum and lesson plans. For most grades, there are six English Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum Maps, each of which contains a list of focus standards taken from the Common Core, specific student objectives, an overview of skills and content the unit will cover, and sample student activities and assessments. Each also includes an essential question that frames the unit, suggested texts (including Common Core exemplar texts), a list of key terminology, and links to additional instructional resources. Future iterations of the maps will include sample student work and scoring rubrics to help teachers who would like to use the sample activities as formative assessment tools.

Recommendation 2: Workshop Model

Develop and implement a plan to ensure implementation with fidelity of the workshop model in every classroom.

LINK TO RESEARCH

Much of the research on effective reading instruction in the elementary grades has focused on the content of reading instruction—teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Research on how to organize literacy instruction is not as clear. The New York City Department of Education recommends the Comprehensive Approach to Balanced Literacy for elementary schools. In the balanced literacy block, phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency and expressiveness, vocabulary, and comprehension use certain instructional methods and formats, including daily read-alouds, independent reading time, reading workshop, writing workshop, and systematic word study instruction. Teachers use the following structures during the block: read-aloud, guided reading, shared reading, interactive writing, and minilessons.

During a reading or writing workshop, the teacher teaches a 10- to 15-minute minilesson, which focuses on a teaching point: a reading or writing strategy or skill. The teacher explicitly models or demonstrates the strategy or skill. Students are then given an opportunity to practice the skill or strategy. This exemplifies the “gradual release of responsibility” model of instruction, which is critical to effective instruction in the workshop model.

Research suggests that effective literacy instruction needs to be sequenced, systematic, intentional, teacher directed, and explicit. Instruction includes explanations, modeling, and scaffolding. The gradual release of responsibility instructional model was introduced by Pearson and Gallagher in 1983 after they reviewed studies on reading comprehension instruction. The researchers found that learning occurred when it happened over time within a repeated instructional cycle that included explanation, guided practice, feedback, independent practice, and application. The gradual release of responsibility model of instruction requires that the teacher shift from assuming “all the responsibility for performing a task...to a situation in which the students assume all of the responsibility” (Duke & Pearson, 2002). Gradual release may occur over a day, a week, a month, or a year. Pearson and Gallagher envisioned instruction that moved from explicit modeling and instruction to guided practice and then to activities that incrementally positioned students for becoming independent learners.

The gradual release of responsibility model of instruction has been documented as an effective approach for improving literacy achievement (Fisher & Frey, 2007), reading comprehension (Lloyd, 2004), and literacy outcomes for English language learners (Kong & Pearson, 2003).

QUICK LINKS: Online Sources for More Information

Reading Workshop: What It Looks Like in My Classroom

http://blogs.scholastic.com/top_teaching/2009/10/reading-workshop.html

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The workshop model consists of several important components, including minilessons (comprising a connection, a teaching point, a demonstration, active engagement, and a link), independent work, small-group work, conferring, sharing, pacing, and differentiation in the workshop. In order to ensure consistent implementation of the workshop model in every classroom, job-embedded, sustained professional learning opportunities focused on the workshop model need to be provided. Needs assessments and teacher assessments of their knowledge and skills related to the workshop components are helpful for setting professional goals and focusing professional development. The school's collaborative inquiry teams can focus on an aspect of the workshop model.

1. Establish study groups at the school on the workshop model.

School-based study groups are an effective way for teachers to learn and move toward shared goals. Several books on the workshop model might be used for professional discussion and learning in the study groups. *Better Learning Through Structured Teaching* by Fisher and Frey provides information about the gradual release of responsibility model of instruction, which is critical to a successful reading or writing workshop. In the book *Reading With Meaning: Teaching Comprehension in the Primary Grades*, Debbie Miller shares her experiences implementing the workshop model in her first-grade classroom. *Happy Reading* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Ly9cRS4Cm8>), videos of Miller in her classroom, are available on YouTube. *Day-to-Day Assessment in the Reading Workshop: Making Informed Instructional Decisions in Grades 3–6* by Franki Sibberson and Karen Szymusiak is a resource for intermediate teachers in implementing the workshop model.

2. Make peer coaching available to teachers.

Peer coaching is another approach for professional learning and support. As part of their professional learning communities, teachers may be trained to coach each other, and a plan for peer observation may then be developed and implemented. The plan should include feedback forms, schedules for peer observations, and clearly communicated expectations related to the observations.

3. Monitor the implementation of the model with walkthroughs.

Monitoring is important to ensure that the workshop model is implemented with fidelity. Classroom walkthroughs that are part of informal and formal evaluations help support consistency in implementation. With walkthroughs, school leaders are able to discern patterns by teacher, grade level, and school.

DOING WHAT WORKS: Examples From Real Schools

As a teacher in the New York City schools for 28 years, Sharon Taberski implemented reading workshop and writing workshop effectively in her diverse classroom of students. In her book *On Solid Ground: Strategies for Teaching Reading K-3* (2000), she helps others think systematically about the components of balanced literacy. Videos of Sharon are available on YouTube, and podcasts of Sharon discussing various aspects of effective literacy instruction are available at www.choiceliteracy.com.

Recommendation 3: Differentiated Instruction

Increase the amount of time teachers differentiate instruction.

LINK TO RESEARCH

Good teachers differentiate their instruction in order to meet the needs of diverse learners. Differentiated instruction has several key steps, including conducting ongoing assessments of student learning, identifying appropriate content based on the assessment results, using flexible grouping arrangements for students, and developing different ways for students to demonstrate proficiency in their learning.

To date, there is no empirical evidence to confirm that this total package of differentiated instruction has a positive impact on student achievement. Lack of evidence is due in part to the fact that no large-scale scientific study of differentiated instruction has been conducted. Differentiated instruction is such a complex instructional approach that it is difficult to implement well and also difficult to study. A practice guide from the What Works Clearinghouse on implementing Response to Intervention (RTI) cites a low level of evidence for differentiated instruction, yet it still urges teachers to use differentiated instruction in their classrooms.

Research is clear, however, on the need to group students for reading instruction. Grouping is especially important for students at risk of reading failure and for the lowest socioeconomic students (Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 2000). For these students to be successful readers, individual or small-group instruction (with no more than four or five students in a group) is essential (Pikulski, 1994). Working on tasks appropriate to the particular student has consistently been found to be highly related to reading achievement (Hiebert, 1983). In their work at the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement, researchers found that effective teachers taught students in small groups far more than did less effective teachers. Taylor et al. (2000) noted that students of effective teachers spent approximately 60 minutes daily in small-group learning activities and 25 minutes in whole-group activities.

Differentiated instruction is a way for teachers to address the three touchstones of good instruction—setting high expectations and delivering challenging instruction, fostering engaging learning environments and meaningful relationships with students, and intentionally matching instructional strategies to learning goals. Differentiated instruction is not easy to do well.

Research suggests that effective literacy instruction needs to be sequenced, systematic, intentional, teacher directed, and explicit in its explanations, modeling, and scaffolding.

Effective literacy instruction includes small-group instruction, differentiation, and response to intervention. Whole-class instruction is not sufficient to improve the literacy achievement of students. To be effective, teachers need to engage students in purposeful instruction designed to meet the needs of individuals and small groups of students. One way to do so is to use a “gradual release of responsibility” model of instruction.

QUICK LINKS: Online Sources for More Information

Pennsylvania Department
of Education

[http://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=N9leUP-yrW8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9leUP-yrW8)

Association for Supervision
and Curriculum Development

<http://www.ascd.org>

University of Virginia's Curry
School of Education

[http://differentiationcentral.
com](http://differentiationcentral.com)

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Schoolwide differentiation is second-order change. First-order change is doing more of or less of something one is already doing. It is reversible. It is incremental and can occur in small steps. It does not require a dramatic departure from the ways things are. It allows teachers to retain current beliefs about teaching and to generally retain current classroom routines and practices. Second-order change is deciding or being forced to do something significantly or fundamentally different from what has been done before (Bergquist, 1993). Second-order change necessitates a dramatic departure from the status quo. It asks teachers to alter their beliefs as well as practices—often dramatically. It is irreversible.

Acknowledgment that differentiation of instruction is a second-order change has many implications for implementation. If the benefits of differentiated instruction are to be fully realized, it is not enough for some individual teachers or small groups of teachers to implement it—differentiated instruction must become a schoolwide reality. The school should guard against superficial implementation. There are a variety of specific instructional strategies useful in differentiating instruction such as compacting, tiered assignments, and contracts. Differentiated instruction is much more than using one of these strategies periodically. Effective differentiation of instruction takes several years.

1. Implement a high-quality curriculum and differentiate instruction.

The foundation of all powerful learning is high-quality curriculum and instruction. These are critical to the school's efforts to increase the amount of differentiation at the school. Differentiation for all students should stem from high-quality curriculum. An aligned, and well-articulated curriculum will provide clarity about what all students should know, understand, and be able to do. In his meta-analysis, Marzano (2003) identified a guaranteed and viable curriculum as the most important school factor influencing student achievement. A school must have a high-quality curriculum in place before teachers are able to differentiate. If not, Tomlinson (1999) warns that “multiple versions of fog” will be the result. In order to have an effect on student achievement, schools need to create high-quality curriculum and then differentiate to enable students to succeed in meeting learning standards.

Differentiated instruction is first and foremost good instruction. Total reliance on whole-class teaching will not provide the differentiation needed for increases in student achievement. Whole-class, small-group, and individual instruction are part of the workshop model. By developing and implementing a plan to ensure the implementation of the workshop model with fidelity in every classroom (Recommendation 2), teachers will be providing more differentiated instruction. The gradual release of responsibility model of instruction provides opportunities for differentiation.

2. School leadership should deploy research-based strategies to support change.

School leadership is critical to bringing about second-order change in the school. The leader ensures that there is an ongoing conversation among the faculty about effective curriculum, student-focused instruction, and the importance of assessment

to guide instructional planning. Good leaders provide vision, time, materials, support, encouragement, and some pressure to accomplish change. The following research-based strategies facilitate change toward more effective differentiated instruction:

- Develop and articulate a vision
- Plan and provide resources
- Invest in professional development
- Assess or monitor progress
- Provide continuous assistance
- Create a context conducive to change

3. Provide ongoing, job-embedded, team-based professional development on differentiated instruction.

Professional development is also critical to bringing about second-order change. Professional development is most effective when it is ongoing, job embedded, and team based. The professional development on differentiated instruction should avoid global talk (“We are going to focus on differentiated instruction”) and should instead pick one specific aspect of differentiation such as small-group reading instruction on which to focus and to which the school commits.

It is important to provide opportunities for teacher collaboration. When teachers meet regularly to learn, plan, and support one another in the process of continuous improvement, a sense of collective teacher efficacy is built. Collective teacher efficacy is the perception of the teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on student learning. Collective teacher efficacy has a positive effect on the differences in student achievement that occur between schools (Goddard, 2000). The positive effects of collective teacher efficacy on student academic performance more than outweigh the negative effects of the students’ low socioeconomic status, according to a study by Bandura (1993).

A study group focused on a book such as *Differentiating Reading Instruction: How to Teach Reading to Meet the Needs of Each Student* (Robb, 2008) can help build collective teacher efficacy in practicing differentiated instruction.

DOING WHAT WORKS: Examples From Real Schools

Judy Rex has taught in a multiage elementary classroom for more than 18 years in the Scottsdale School District in Arizona. Judy turns the theory of differentiation into a reality. Her third-and-fourth grade classroom is featured in the ASCD DVD *A Visit to a Differentiated Classroom*, available at <http://shop.ascd.org/Default.aspx?TabID=55&ProductId=1549>. Judy's classroom illustrates the five important elements for teaching students of differing abilities—(1) she creates a classroom environment that encourages students to take the risk of learning and where students have a sense of safety, belonging, and of contribution; (2) she has a deep understanding of her curriculum; (3) she uses formative assessment skillfully; (4) she has a robust set of strategies and routines that help her address student variability; (5) she leads and manages her classroom with flexibility using elements such as time, space, materials, and groupings flexibly.

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