

Q116 William C. Hughley

FINAL REPORT



Contents

- Introduction 1
 - About This Report 1
 - About Q116 William C. Hughley 1
 - Audit Process at Q116 William C. Hughley..... 1

- Key Findings 3
 - Critical Key Findings 3
 - Positive Key Findings 4

- Recommendations..... 5
 - Overview of Recommendations..... 5
 - Recommendation 1: Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) 6
 - Recommendation 2: Behavior..... 9
 - Recommendation 3: Professional Development..... 14

- References 17

Introduction

About This Report

This final report is the result of an external school curriculum audit (ESCA) of Q116 William C. Hughley conducted by Learning Point Associates, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research (AIR.) This audit was conducted in response to the school being identified as being in corrective action under the New York State Education Department 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.

The audit focused on access to the general education curriculum for students with disabilities (SWDs). It examined curriculum, instruction, professional development, and staffing practices through the multiple lenses of data collection and analysis. Findings in these areas served as a starting point to facilitate conversations among school community staff in order to identify areas for improvement and ways to generate plans for improvement. This report includes an overview of the audit process, a description of the key findings identified in collaboration with the school, and recommendations for addressing these issues. It is entirely up to the school to determine how to implement the recommendations. At the conclusion of each recommendation we have included examples from the field based on the experiences of AIR staff, which we believe illustrate the implementation of an aspect of the recommendation.

About Q116 William C. Hughley

Q116 William C. Hughley is located in New York City, in Queens (Community School District 29). The school serves approximately 841 students in Grades PK–8. Eleven percent of students are identified as SWDs. In 2010–11, Q116 William C. Hughley’s accountability status was “Corrective Action (Year 1),” due, in part, to the failure to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA for its population of SWDs.

Audit Process at Q116 William C. Hughley

The key findings were identified through an audit process. Data were collected using the following guiding themes as the focus of the audit: curriculum, instruction, professional development, and staffing. Following data collection, AIR staff facilitated a co-interpretationSM meeting on June 14, 2011, attended by 11 staff members from Q116 William C. Hughley. Staff members included administrators, teachers, and network and parent representatives.

Co-interpretation is a collaborative process that helps school teams understand and use the data gathered by the audit team to generate findings. During the meeting, the following data reports were presented and reviewed:

- Special Education Site Visit Report (based on a document review, observations, and interviews), which focuses on the special education program and SWDs.
- Special Education Teacher Survey Report, based on compiled responses from surveys completed by 43 teachers, including 27 teachers of SWDs.

The school team studied the individual data reports and used this information to develop key findings about the school's strengths and challenges related to educating students with disabilities. Participants rated the findings based on the following criteria:

- Is the key finding identified as one of the most critical problems faced by the school and addressed by the audit?
- If resolved, would student achievement improve sufficiently to move the school out of corrective action?
- If resolved, will there be a measurable, positive impact?

In the remainder of this report, we describe the key findings that were identified by school staff as their top priorities, and present recommendations for the school to consider incorporating into their Comprehensive Educational Plan.

Key Findings

After considerable thought and discussion, participants at co-interpretation determined a set of final key findings. These key findings, which are based on the voting that occurred during the co-interpretation meeting, are detailed in this section.

Critical Key Findings

These key findings were identified by co-interpretation participants and were prioritized by the group for action planning.

CRITICAL KEY FINDING 1:

The majority of IEPs did not include appropriate instructional accommodations to aid teachers in understanding academic and instructional needs.

Critical Key Finding 1 was identified as a top priority by the majority of the co-interpretation participants. Another key finding related to this key finding—but receiving fewer votes—is as follows:

- Few general education teachers of SWDs report that they use IEPs regularly to plan instruction.

In addition, one positive key finding relating to Critical Key Finding 1 was identified during the co-interpretation process:

- The vast majority of special education teachers report that they use IEPs regularly to plan and deliver instruction.

Critical Key Finding 1 is supported by information from the Special Education Site Visit Report and the Special Education Teacher Survey Report. This key finding refers to the usefulness of IEPs for planning and informing instruction. Documents analyzed for the Site Visit Report show that a low percentage of IEPs specify appropriate instructional accommodations. Survey and interview data reveal that special education teachers rely frequently on IEPs to plan their instruction, but that general education teachers do not. Interview data from the Site Visit Report reveal further that neither special education nor general education teachers described using IEPs to learn about instructional strategies or accommodations that could be helpful in instructing a particular student. Teachers instead looked at IEPs to gather information about students' goals and progress toward achieving those goals.

CRITICAL KEY FINDING 2:

It is unclear whether there is a school-wide behavior plan in place.

Critical Key Finding 2 is supported by data from both reports. A majority of teachers surveyed agreed that there is a school-wide behavior plan in place. However, fewer than half of the staff interviewed agreed. Furthermore, no documentation of a school-wide behavior plan was provided.

CRITICAL KEY FINDING 3:

Only half of the teachers found professional development to be very helpful on specific topics related to the teaching of SWDs.

Critical Key Finding 3 is supported by data from both reports. While a majority of teachers agreed that professional development they received related to the instruction of SWDs was at least moderately helpful, only about half agreed that it was very helpful. Furthermore, a majority of staff expressed a need for more professional development related to the instruction of SWDs.

Positive Key Findings

Positive key findings are listed because it is to the school's advantage to approach its action planning from a strengths-based perspective and to leverage what has been working. AIR encourages the school to realistically acknowledge what it is doing well and effectively and to use those strengths as a springboard for approaching recommendations-based action planning.

The top three positive key findings according to a vote at the co-interpretation were as follows:

1. Teachers feel supported by administrators and other teachers, including when they seek additional support for SWDs.
2. The vast majority of special education teachers report that they use IEPs regularly to plan and deliver instruction.
3. The majority of teachers reported that they differentiate instruction for SWDs.

Recommendations

Overview of Recommendations

The key findings determined through the co-interpretation process with Q116 William C. Hughley led AIR to make three recommendations. For each recommendation, additional information is provided on specific actions that the school may consider during its action-planning process. These recommendations are supported by currently available research and evidence. Resources and references that support these recommendations are provided.

The order does not reflect a ranking or prioritization of the recommendations. Also, there is no one-to-one connection between key findings and recommendations; rather, the key findings were considered as a group, and these recommendations are offered as those that would likely have the greatest positive impact on student performance.

Recommendation 1: Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

AIR recommends that Q116 William C. Hughley take steps to support both general and special education teachers in the effective use of IEPs to inform instruction for SWDs.

LINK TO RESEARCH

For teachers to effectively use students' IEPs to guide instruction, it is critical to include information about appropriate instructional accommodations and modifications. These terms are often confused in general conversations regarding the needs of students with disabilities and should be clearly delineated in the IEP. Accommodations provide access and allow students with disabilities to learn all of the same content as peers in the general education curriculum (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000).

Making decisions about which accommodations will be used by students begins with making good instructional decisions that are informed by gathering and reviewing information about the student, including present level of performance and disability (Thompson, Morse, Sharpe, & Hall, 2005). Accommodations should allow students with disabilities to demonstrate their skill level without being hindered by their disability (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Capizzi, 2005; Thurlow et al., 2005). Accommodations should be available in all content areas related to a student's disability (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000). For example, if a student requires the use of oral and visual instructions for assignments, he or she must have these available in all content classes, as well as in support classes such as art. Accommodations may also be used for testing (i.e., state and local exams) and should be listed in a student's IEP and implemented in the classroom.

Modifications change the expectations of content, learner achievement, and outcomes (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000) and are therefore used for fewer students. An even smaller group of students may require an individualized set of content goals. Modifications that are used for testing must be listed in the student's IEP (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000).

LINK TO FINDINGS

This recommendation links directly to Critical Key Finding 1, in which document data revealed that a large percentage of IEPs reviewed did not include appropriate instructional accommodations. Furthermore, teachers noted that they did not use IEPs to identify and inform decisions about instructional strategies that could be helpful with their SWDs.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The following steps can be used to support teachers in the effective use of IEPs to inform instruction for SWDs:

- 1. Provide professional development to special and general education teachers on the writing and interpretation of IEPs. This action step can be accomplished by:**
 - Offering workshops on IEP writing to special education teachers and other staff who are responsible for writing IEPs. These workshops should focus on designing and including appropriate instructional accommodations for students with disabilities.

QUICK LINKS:

Online Sources for More Information

Contents of the IEP

<http://www.nichcy.org/EducateChildren/IEP/Pages/IEPcontents.aspx>

The IEP Team

<http://www.nichcy.org/EducateChildren/IEP/Pages/team.aspx>

The Short-and-Sweet IEP Overview

<http://www.nichcy.org/EducateChildren/IEP/Pages/overview.aspx>

Writing Quality IEPs: Indicators of Best Practice

http://schools.nyc.gov/documents/d75/iep/Writing_Quality_IEPS.pdf

These instructional accommodations should be based on present levels of performance and processing strengths and weaknesses; they should specifically state strategies to accommodate individual learners.

- Offering workshops on IEP interpretation to all teachers who teach SWDs. Specific attention should be given to explaining and demonstrating the use of the included instructional accommodations in lesson planning and instruction as well as the effectiveness of the accommodations.
- Using staff development meetings periodically to provide refresher trainings and hold discussions about the use of IEPs to inform instruction.

2. Provide support to teachers in the effective use of IEPs. This action step can be accomplished by:

- Ensuring that all teachers have ready access to copies of IEPs for all SWDs in their classrooms, possibly to include a one-page summary sheet of all IEPs written by the special education teacher for the general education teachers of particular students. This summary sheet would include an evaluation summary, present levels of performance, testing accommodations, recommended instructional accommodations, and any anecdotal information in the IEP that would help guide instruction
- Encouraging special education and general education teachers to review IEPs together during common planning time as a way to share effective strategies for teaching students with disabilities.

DOING WHAT WORKS: Examples From Real Schools

Ms. Johnson, the special education coordinator at an urban elementary school, became concerned as she spoke with general education teachers that they were not familiar with the IEPs for SWDs in their classrooms and were not using them to guide instruction. She also conducted a review of the school's IEPs, and found that although testing accommodations and annual goals were well written, many of the school's IEPs lacked appropriate instructional accommodations for students. Ms. Johnson first met with the school's special education teachers and provided professional development on instructional accommodations, asking each teacher to examine the IEPs for their students and revise or write accommodations as appropriate. She then developed an electronic template for a one-page summary of an IEP and asked each special education teacher to use the template to give an IEP summary to each teacher at the school who worked with a student with a disability.

As the summaries were being distributed to teachers, Ms. Johnson held a training session, during a school-wide faculty meeting, on interpreting IEPs and planning for instruction. At this training, she handed out sample lesson plans that directly linked to individual student goals and accommodations. Ms. Johnson also paired each general education teacher with a special education teacher at the same grade level and asked them to meet once a week to make sure that the needs of SWDs in the general education classes were being met.

Through the use of an observation protocol and teacher interviews over a six-month period, Ms. Johnson noticed that general education teachers had significantly increased their use of IEPs to guide instruction and were coming to IEP meetings better informed and more able to discuss the impact of instructional accommodations on the SWDs in their classrooms. She also conducted a second IEP review and found that almost all IEPs included appropriate instructional accommodations.

Recommendation 2: Behavior

AIR recommends that Q116 William C. Hughley take steps to develop and implement a school-wide behavior plan that guides the consistent implementation of strategies for managing student behavior across all classrooms and areas of the school. These strategies should include consequences for negative behavior as well as procedures for rewarding positive behavior.

QUICK LINKS: Online Sources for More Information

Association for Positive
Behavior Support

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

*Positive Behavioral Supports:
Information for Educators*

http://www.nasponline.org/resources/factsheets/pbs_fs.aspx

*Ten principles of positive
behavior support*

<http://www.emstac.org/registered/topics/posbehavior/tenprin.htm>

*Prevention Research and the
IDEA Discipline Provisions:
A Guide for School
Administrators*

<http://www2.ed.gov/offices/OASERS/OSEP/Products/adminbeh.web.pdf>

Technical Assistance Center
on Positive Behavioral
Interventions and Supports

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

Technical Assistance
Center on Social Emotional
Intervention for Young
Children (TACSEI)

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

LINK TO RESEARCH

Research on the development of problem behaviors in youth has shown that serious behavior problems at school are associated with current or future problems in other areas, including school failure, delinquent behavior, problem drinking, and drug use (Ary, Duncan, Duncan, & Hops, 1999; Donovan & Jessor, 1985; Donovan, Jessor, & Costa, 1988; Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992). Thus, the effectiveness of schools' methods for handling students' behaviors may impact future behavior patterns (Bullis & Walker, 1993; Walker, Homer, Sugai, & Bullis, 1996).

Schools often attempt to manage inappropriate behaviors within individual classrooms, leaving decisions regarding expectations and consequences up to the classroom teacher. The inconsistencies present throughout a school without the underpinning of a school-wide system of behavior management, such as punitive school and classroom environments, unclear rules and expectations, and inconsistent application of consequences, have been shown to contribute to increased levels of student antisocial behavior, truancy, and acts of vandalism against the school (Mayer, 1995; Mayer, Butterworth, Nafpaktitis, & Sulzer-Azaroff, 1983; Mayer, Mitchell, Clementi, & Clement-Robertson, 1993; Olweus, 1992).

Research points to several important features of an effective school-wide behavior management approach. These include (1) increasing positive reinforcement for appropriate social behavior (Embry, 1997; Embry, Flannery, Vazsonyi, Powell, & Atha, 1996; Mayer, 1995; Taylor-Greene et al., 1997), (2) actively teaching appropriate social behavior (Colvin, Sugai, & Patching, 1993; Taylor-Greene et al., 1997), (3) clearly communicating a small number of rules (Mayer, 1995), (4) consistently providing corrective consequences for rule violation (Taylor-Greene et al., 1997; Walker et al., 1995), and (5) ongoing monitoring of data about student behavior (e.g., office referrals for misbehavior) to provide feedback on progress and to pinpoint situations that need revision of expectations (Tobin, Sugai, & Colvin, 1996).

LINK TO FINDINGS

This recommendation links directly to Critical Key Finding 2, in which survey and interview data indicate lack of clarity around the existence and implementation of a school-wide behavior plan.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

This recommendation can be carried out through the following action steps:

- 1. Establish a school-level action team to develop and maintain responsibility for implementing the plan.**

This team should include the principal, lead teachers, all ELL and special education specialists, and representation from parents. This action step can be accomplished by:

- Developing a statement of purpose to guide the plan, such as, “We are dedicated to creating and maintaining a safe and supportive academic environment that promotes learning for all students.”
- Writing out a set of guidelines for behavior in the school. Maintain a positive focus on the guidelines so that they can promote feelings of empathy and respect among all students. In addition to regulations for student behavior, the document should include students’ rights and teachers’ responsibilities as well. Many examples of school-wide behavior plans are located online.
- Ensuring that the regulations are clearly communicated to all students, that they are fairly and consistently enforced, and that buy-in among school faculty is established.
- Providing ongoing professional development on behavior management strategies to ensure that everyone understands how to implement a consistent behavior plan appropriately. Identifying staff to monitor fidelity of implementation and offering coaching to staff to support the effective application of behavior management principles.
- Sharing the behavior plan with parents and community to ensure that everyone understands expectations for behavior throughout the school.

2. Implement strategies to promote and reward positive student behaviors, such as:

- Explicitly stating behaviors that are desirable in the classroom, both verbally and, as appropriate, by posting expectations to the walls in all areas of the school.
- Openly recognizing positive behaviors when they occur in the classroom.
- Providing opportunities for leadership for students consistently displaying positive behaviors, such as serving as hall monitors, leading other students in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, or reading the morning or afternoon announcements over the intercom.
- Pairing students who consistently display positive behaviors with peers who do not do so as consistently in group classroom activities to allow for positive modeling.
- Rewarding students demonstrating positive behaviors with extra freedom or privileges in the classroom.
- Ensuring that expectations and rewards, and the guidelines for giving rewards, are consistently applied in all classrooms and non-classroom areas (e.g., cafeteria, hallways, school grounds).
- Maintaining regular communication with parents regarding their children’s positive behaviors.

3. Develop a system of consequences for negative behaviors. This action step can be carried out by:

- As appropriate, allowing students to have a voice in determining the appropriate consequences for guidelines violations.

- Whenever possible, tying the consequence directly to the guidelines infraction to assist with behavioral change. For example, if a student pushes another student down on the playground, his or her recess privileges are revoked for a set period of time.
- Providing opportunities for students who have committed guidelines infractions to demonstrate positive behavior changes. For example, the aforementioned student would be allowed to reenter recess for a short period and to demonstrate how to play constructively with his or her peers.
- Ensuring that consequences are consistently applied in all classrooms and non-classroom areas (e.g., cafeteria, hallways, school grounds).
- Communicating regularly with parents regarding their children's negative behaviors and providing them opportunities to support efforts to help the children demonstrate positive behavior changes at home.
- Including a series of more serious consequences for students who commit repeated guidelines infractions, with severe violations resulting in prescribed consequences after the first offense. If it appears to staff that a cascade of consequences is probably not the answer to the child's issues, a referral might be made to the IEP team to discuss the inappropriate and/or disruptive behaviors and begin to solicit and apply professional advice regarding interventions. A classroom observation by a professional special educator or counselor may be in order. Recommendations might be forthcoming for a Functional Behavior Assessment or other measures to try to help the child manage his or her behavior in school.

DOING WHAT WORKS: Examples From Real Schools

The staff at Highland Park Elementary School is concerned about the lack of a school-wide discipline plan at the school. Teachers rely on their own individual classroom behavior plans, some of which are more successful than others. Teachers of subjects such as art, music, and physical education are concerned because every class that comes to them seems to have a different set of behavior standards, which makes it difficult to be consistent. Behavior in the cafeteria and playground is seemingly out of control on some days. Students return to classrooms after lunch and recess too upset or out of control for afternoon instruction. Lack of safe practices on the playground often results in student injuries. It should be noted that many of these students have had disrupted educational experiences because of mobility and have never had a chance to really learn what appropriate school behavior should be.

The entire staff believes that the school needs a system for dealing with disruptive students as well as students who act appropriately. Therefore, the school administration has enrolled the school and its team of volunteer committee members who have agreed to work on this issue in a summer training on Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports (PBIS) sponsored by the State Department of Education. During the training, they learn there that a clear set of expectations for all students is needed in every school, along with a set of positive procedures for teaching and reviewing behavior and for encouraging appropriate behavior rather than focusing on, and paying attention to students who misbehave. They decide they will teach social skills and appropriate behavior strategies explicitly with the same school-wide expectations and set up a system to reward those students who adhere to them.

In order to successfully implement any school-wide behavior management plan successfully, there must be buy-in and support from all stakeholder groups and everyone must be “on board” with the plan as it is devised. Therefore, the school set aside a full day during the week before students returned from the summer vacation to review the plan with staff and elicit any input they might have. Much of the presentation was provided by faculty members so that it did not appear top-down. First, the faculty reviewed the data, which indicated hundreds of office referrals of individual students and groups of students from virtually every setting in the school. There was a review of what had been tried. The faculty then learned about the primary, secondary, and tertiary groups of students and their behavior profiles. Then the research behind and principles of positive behavior management were outlined. The faculty moved into small groups where they outlined the consequences and rewards that might be applied consistently. Their feedback was elicited as to the management of the program and their ideas incorporated. Future faculty meeting dates were set aside to explore student behavior data, evaluate the program, and decide what was working and what was not working and to modify as necessary. The district facilitator was present for most of the meeting to offer future training as needed by the staff.

The school district requires a report to parents on disciplinary procedures. A brochure was prepared to replace that. It explained the program in simplified language and use of diagrams so that it could be understood by a population that lacked literacy skills in both their primary and secondary languages. It was also explained at Back to School Night with time set aside to respond to questions.

In August, when students returned to school, they found that new expectations were in place for behavior in all classroom settings, in the cafeteria, on the playground, in the hallways and bathrooms and for arrival and dismissal times. Students were placed in groups and rotated to stations around the building where behaviors were explicitly taught. For example, the principal was on the playground and he demonstrated safe procedures for using playground equipment, how students were to line up and travel from the building to the playground and back. They noted that the playground had been divided up into activity areas. For example, one area was for jump-rope only, another for a soccer game, another for basketball, and so on. Each area around the building was introduced in a similar manner, with behavior expectations outlined at each. The school mascot is the Hawk, so a positive behavior incentive called the Hawk Bill is invented and used by all staff to reward students for appropriate behavior. They may redeem these at a school store for prizes. Prizes have been donated by local business, and some are purchased from a fund the school has set up. The prizes are small, but students still like them. Especially popular are small pencil sharpeners in the form of NFL football helmets.

Special events are also used to reward positive behavior. The Gobble 'Til You Wobble Party is held the day before Thanksgiving vacation, with movies and popcorn, arts and crafts, and games for students who make it through November without disciplinary infractions. Similarly, as the school year winds down in June, a time when student behavior often begins to deteriorate, the "Party Like a Hawk Star" campaign begins. Students who make it through the last four weeks of school without behavioral issues are invited to the Last Day Lollapalooza, a large event with a teacher DJ and dancing, refreshments donated by a local restaurant, face-painting and games. Special events that reinforce positive behavior are offered all year long.

As a result, the number of behavior problems diminished dramatically. The school kept track of behavior infractions: where they occur, at what time, and what kind. They keep track of office referrals, once in the hundreds, to almost none. Academic engagement time increased, and academic performance improved. Administrators had increased time for instructional support, and suspensions have decreased from more than 50 to less than 10 in one year. Parents were relieved that their students were happier and felt better about coming to school each day, and attendance improved.

QUICK LINKS:
**Online Sources
for More Information**

*Co-Teaching Modules:
Improving Access to
the General Education
Curriculum for Students
With Disabilities Through
Collaborative Teaching*

http://www.k8accesscenter.org/training_resources/Co-TeachingModule.asp

*Enhancing Your Instruction
Through Differentiation
Professional Development
Module*

http://www.k8accesscenter.org/training_resources/differentiationmodule.asp

*Accommodations,
Techniques, and Aids for
Learning*

<http://www.idanatl.org/aboutId/teachers/understanding/accommodations.asp>

*National Center on Response
to Intervention*

<http://www.rti4success.org/>

*National Center on Student
Progress Monitoring*

<http://www.studentprogress.org/default.asp>

(Continued)

Recommendation 3: Professional Development

AIR recommends that Q116 William C. Hughley review its current professional development plan and adjust to ensure appropriate coverage of content relevant to the instruction of SWDs.

LINK TO RESEARCH

Research has found that professional development for teachers is most effective and boosts student achievement most when it is embedded in their daily work and sustained, as opposed to one-time workshops (National Staff Development Council, 2001; Steiner, 2004; Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). Effective professional development also provides teachers with opportunities for collaboration, coaching, and peer observation, which allows them to be actively involved in their own development and to more frequently practice learned skills (Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2006; Joyce & Showers, 2002). In addition, professional development is most effective when it is directly connected to teacher practice and focuses on content (National Staff Development Council, 2001; Wei et al., 2009; Yoon et al., 2007). Content areas should align with school improvement needs and goals to target improvement to those areas.

By refining the process by which professional development is offered; ensuring that it is embedded, is sustained, and allows for active teacher participation; and focusing the development on teacher practice and content, schools can improve teacher practice and student achievement (Wei et al., 2009; Yoon et al., 2007).

LINK TO FINDINGS

This recommendation links directly to Critical Key Finding 3, in which teachers indicated a need for more professional development—specifically on strategies for teaching SWDs.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The following steps can be used to adjust the professional development plan to increase the focus on instruction for SWDs:

- 1. Conduct an in-depth needs assessment among staff regarding professional development needs regarding the instruction of SWDs. This action step can be carried out by:**
 - Conducting a teacher survey asking for specific feedback on previous professional development opportunities related to SWDs and asking teachers to prioritize needs for additional professional development.
 - Reviewing teacher evaluation data regarding the instruction of SWDs to determine areas in which professional development needs are greatest.
 - Using staff development meetings to get detailed feedback and suggestions from staff about needed professional development related to SWDs.

QUICK LINKS:
Continued

*Supports, Modifications,
and Accommodations for
Students*

[http://www.nichcy.org/
educatechildren/supports/
pages/default.aspx](http://www.nichcy.org/educatechildren/supports/pages/default.aspx)

*Accommodations Manual:
How to Select, Administer,
and Evaluate Use of
Accommodations for
Instruction and Assessment
of Students With Disabilities*

[http://www.
osepideasthatwork.org/
toolkit/accommodations_
manual.asp](http://www.osepideasthatwork.org/toolkit/accommodations_manual.asp)

2. Refine offerings of professional development on instructing SWDs, including the following areas of focus:

- How to identify diverse student needs in inclusive classrooms
- How to utilize differentiation strategies, such as flexible grouping or co-teaching, to meet students' individual instructional needs
- How to monitor student progress and adjust instruction based on student performance, using strategies such as response to intervention (RTI)
- How to use instructional modifications and accommodations in the classroom

DOING WHAT WORKS: Examples From Real Schools

Ms. Smith, a principal at a large urban middle school, designed and implemented a year-long plan for professional development designed to support diverse learners at her school who were not making adequate progress. Ms. Smith knew that just targeting specialist teachers would not be enough for students to make gains, so she provided professional development focused on differentiated instruction and reaching individual learners to all teachers at the school.

She began with a day of training on differentiated instruction, school-wide, presented by the school's literacy coach and assistant principal. This was followed with classroom visits and one-on-one sessions with each teacher in the school conducted by the assistant principal, literacy coach, and herself. In the one-on-one sessions, each teacher was asked to develop a plan for differentiating instruction and meeting the individual needs of SWDs and ELLs over the next nine months. Each teacher was observed once a month for the first four months of school and received coaching from an administrator or the literacy coach, including modeling differentiated instructional strategies in the classroom. At each faculty meeting, additional professional development on differentiated instruction was provided to the entire staff, including training on specific strategies to address student needs that teachers had identified and shared during individual coaching sessions.

By January, Ms. Smith saw an increase in the use of differentiated instruction as she visited classrooms. Coaching sessions were shifted to be every other month for the second half of the school year, and teachers were each asked to commit to visiting and providing feedback to one of their fellow teachers. By the end of the year, teachers agreed that their awareness of and comfort with differentiated instruction had increased and that they reported feeling supported by administrators. Ms. Smith convened a group of general education, special education, and ESL teachers to help write the professional development plan for the next school year. She also sent those teachers to training over the summer with the understanding that they would serve as models and peer coaches for the following year.

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