



The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	140600010119
School	Waterfront Academy School #95
School Address	95 4th Street, Buffalo, NY 14202-2697
District	Buffalo City School District
School Leader	David Hills
Dates of Review	December 5-6, 2012
School Accountability	Priority
Type of Review	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet											
Grade Configuration	PK - 8	Total Enrollment	877	% Title 1 Population	92%	% Attendance Rate	91.8%				
% Free Lunch	90.5%	% Reduced Lunch	5.9%	% Student Sustainability	TBD	% Limited English Proficient	23.0%	% Students with Disabilities	14.5%		
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes											
# Transitional Bilingual	0	# Dual Language	0	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language		6					
Types and Number of Special Education Classes											
# Special Classes	3	# Consultant Teaching	0	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching		7					
# Resource Room	0										
Types and Number Special Classes											
# Visual Arts	9	# Music	12	# Drama	0	# Foreign Language	2	# Dance	0	# CTE	4
Racial/Ethnic Origin											
% American Indian or Alaska Native	1.4%	% Black or African American	46.3%	% Hispanic or Latino	21.0%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	16.6%	% White	11.4%	% Multi-racial	2.7%
Personnel											
Years Principal Assigned to School	2	# of Assistant Principals	2	# of Deans	0	# of Counselors / Social Workers		2.5			
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0%	% Teaching Out of Certification	0%	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.		2%	Average Teacher Absences	10%			
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
School in Good Standing	N/A	Priority School	X	Focus District	X	Focus School Identified by a Focus District	N/A	SIG Recipient (a) (g)	No		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	20.3%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	23.66%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	43.0%	4 Year Graduation Rate (HS Only)		N/A			
Credit Accumulation (High School Only)											
% of 1 st yr. students who earned 10+ credits	N/A	% of 2 nd yr. students who earned 10+ credits	N/A	% of 3 rd yr. students who earned 10+ credits	N/A	6 Year Graduation Rate		N/A			

Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (Mark an "X" in the field(s) where school is identified for not meeting AYP.)			
X	American Indian or Alaska Native	X	Black or African American
X	Hispanic or Latino	X	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
X	White		Multi-racial
X	Students with Disabilities	X	Limited English Proficient
X	Economically Disadvantaged		
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics			
	American Indian or Alaska Native	X	Black or African American
X	Hispanic or Latino	X	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
X	White		Multi-racial
X	Students with Disabilities	X	Limited English Proficient
X	Economically Disadvantaged		
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science			
	American Indian or Alaska Native	X	Black or African American
X	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
	White		Multi-racial
	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
	Economically Disadvantaged		
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective			
X	Limited English Proficiency		

Describe the school's top priorities (no more than 5) based on the school's comprehensive plans (SCEP, SIG, DCIP, etc.):

SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE SCHOOL

1. Increase student achievement for all, including subgroups such as: Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners and Educationally Disadvantaged.
2. Use data to drive instruction, including the differentiation of instruction through the RtI model.
3. Provide a professional learning opportunity cycle focused on: addressing the Common Core Learning Standards through lesson planning and implementation, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), Step Up to Writing, Data driven instruction, improving instructional practices such as "wait time," checking for understanding, promoting higher order thinking skills and questioning, and effective co-teaching. The cycle must include introduction of new material, modeling, practice, assessment through observation and continued growth through the reflective process.
4. Effectively use co-teaching opportunities, including English as a second language, special education and teacher aide/assistant support, to maximize student achievement.
5. Create a culturally responsive, safe, and civil learning environment through developing and implementing the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program.

Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: Visionary leaders create a school community and culture that lead to success, well-being and high academic outcomes for all students via systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement.

Mark an "X" in the box below the appropriate designation for each tenet, and mark in the 'OVERALL RATING' row the final designation for the overall tenet.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
2.2	Leaders ensure an articulated vision, understood and shared across the community, with a shared sense of urgency about achieving school-wide goals aligned with the vision as outlined in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP).		X		
2.3	Leaders effectively use evidence-based systems to examine and improve individual and school-wide practices in the critical areas (student achievement, curriculum & teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health) that make progress toward mission-critical goals.		X		
2.4	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize resources concerning human, programmatic and fiscal capital so that school improvement and student goals are achieved.			X	
2.5	The school leader has a fully functional system in place to conduct targeted and frequent observations; track progress of teacher practices based on student data, feedback and professional development opportunities; and hold administrators and staff accountable for continuous improvement.		X		
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 2:			E		

Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support: The school has rigorous and coherent curricula and assessments that are appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for all students and are modified for identified subgroups in order to maximize teacher instructional practices and student learning outcomes.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
3.2	The school leader and staff support and facilitate the quality implementation of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in Pre K-12.			X	
3.3	Teachers ensure that unit and lesson plans that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS coherent curriculum introduce complex materials that stimulate higher-order thinking and build deep conceptual understanding and knowledge around specific content.				X
3.4	The school leader and teachers ensure that teacher collaboration within and across grades and subjects exists to enable students to have access to a robust curriculum that incorporates the arts, technology and other enrichment opportunities.			X	
3.5	The school leader and teachers develop a data-driven culture based on student needs, assessments and analysis, which leads to strategic action-planning that informs instruction and results in greater student achievement outcomes.			X	

	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 3:			D	
Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions: Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students and pertinent subgroups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.					
#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
4.2	Teachers use instructional practices and strategies organized around annual, unit and daily lesson plans to meet established student goals and promote high levels of student engagement and inquiry.			X	
4.3	Teachers provide coherent, appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students to achieve targeted goals.			X	
4.4	Teachers create a safe environment that is responsive to students' varied experiences, tailored to the strengths and needs of all students, and leads to high levels of student engagement and inquiry.			X	
4.5	Teachers use a variety of data sources including screening, interim measures and progress monitoring to inform lesson planning, develop explicit teacher plans and foster student participation in their own learning process.			X	
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 4:			D	
Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health: The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.					
#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
5.2	The school cultivates the development of overarching systems and partnerships that support and sustain social and emotional developmental health.		X		
5.3	The school articulates and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is connected to learning experiences and results in building a safer and healthier environment for families, teachers and students.		X		
5.4	All school constituents are able to articulate how the school community is safe, conducive to learning and fosters a sense of ownership that leads to greater student outcomes.		X		
5.5	The school leader and student support staff work together to develop teachers' ability to use data to respond to students' social and emotional developmental health needs, so students can become academically and socially successful.			X	
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:		E		

Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement: The school creates a culture of partnership where families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
6.2	The school atmosphere is welcoming and fosters a feeling of belonging and trust, which encourages families to freely and frequently engage with the school, leading to increased student success.			X	
6.3	The school engages in effective planning and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders so that students' strength and needs are identified and used to augment learning.			X	
6.4	The entire school community partners with families and community agencies to promote and provide professional development across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.			X	
6.5	The entire school shares data in a way that empowers and encourages families to use and understand data to promote dialogue between parents, students and school constituents centered on student learning and success.			X	
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:				D	

School Review Narrative:

Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: Visionary leaders create a school community and culture that lead to success, well-being and high academic outcomes for all students via systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement.	Tenet Rating	E
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Debriefing Statement: The school has a precise and timely system for referring and supporting students, managed by the School Support Team (SST) that allows for regular monitoring of students and identification of problem areas to be addressed. Students generally feel safe and secure, supported by the growing use of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and partnerships. However, there was partial evidence of how behavioral data is directly linked to academic success.

Strengths:

2.2 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** Leaders ensure an articulated vision, understood and shared across the community, with a shared sense of urgency about achieving school-wide goals aligned with the vision as outlined in the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP).

- Now in his second year at the school, the school leader has helped the school community to develop a well-articulated vision and a set of related SMART goals that are driving school improvement efforts. The focus and goals for the school are clearly listed in the SCEP and in related power points and materials used to share the vision and goals. Teachers and parents articulated that the “school leader’s vision is contagious” and that “there is a clear and positive difference in the direction of the school, compared to two or three years ago.” Teachers described how the school vision of giving every child an opportunity to learn was developed by teachers during the summer. Parents, while unable to specifically articulate the vision verbatim, stated that “you can see the turnaround in the school with the new school leader.” As a result, teachers clearly understand how various initiatives (such as PBIS and the twice-cycle grade-level team meetings), directly relate to the school goals and overall vision for school improvement.

2.3 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** Leaders effectively use evidence-based systems to examine and improve individual and school-wide practices in the critical areas (student achievement; curriculum and teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health) that make progress toward mission-critical goals.

- The school has developed and implemented a number of evidence-based systems intended to support the implementation of key initiatives and attainment of school goals. The development of these systems is intentional and recognized as useful by the majority of school staff members. For instance, the school leader stated that “grade-level team meetings are conducted twice every six day cycle” and that he built the school schedule around the grade-level team meetings. Additional examples of systems observed by the review team include: the development and use of common assessments by grade-level teams; the use of the School Administrator Management (SAMs) Time Track Calendar and SAMs meetings, designed to monitor and increase the amount of time the school leaders spend in classrooms with a focus on instruction; the collaborative development of curriculum maps by teachers; and the use of PBIS data by the SST to provide proactive support to students and subsequently monitor the effectiveness of support activities prior to taking additional steps. As a result, grade-level team meetings and SST meetings are informed by the use of data, and meeting activities are aligned with school goals as listed in the SCEP.

2.5 The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice: The school leader has a fully functional system in place to conduct targeted and frequent observations; track progress of teacher practices based on student data, feedback and professional development opportunities; and hold administrators and staff accountable for continuous improvement.

- The use of SAMs Time Track Calendar and SAMs meetings serves as a fully functional system to conduct frequent observations. The goal of SAMs is for the school leader to spend over 50 percent of his time in the classroom. The SAMs team consists of the school leader, an Assistant principal, a mathematics teacher and an external coach. The SAMs team monitors and holds the school leader accountable for tracking his time in visiting classrooms and meeting stated goals, e.g., to spend 47 percent or more of his time in classrooms. A review of SAMs data confirms that the school leader is at or near the stated goal. The school leader noted that the inclusion of a teacher as part of the SAMs team was intentional and a way to impress upon the staff that they are all in this work together. The aforementioned grade-level team meetings are taking place twice a cycle, across all grades, and provide opportunities for feedback and professional development (PD). The school leader participates in the majority (over 90 percent) of grade-level team meeting that are typically led by the mathematics teacher or the reading coach. An additional system used to hold teachers accountable for continuous improvement is the collection of PBIS tickets by the SST in order to identify which teachers are actively using PBIS. As a result, the school leader is actively visiting classrooms, teachers expect that the school leader is visible across the school and in classrooms, and there is a schoolwide sense of internal accountability, a necessary component in successful turnaround/improvement efforts.

Areas for Improvement:

2.4 The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice: Leaders make strategic decisions to organize resources concerning human, programmatic and fiscal capital so that school improvement and student goals are achieved.

- Due to the District's current collective bargaining agreement and a reduction in fiscal resources available to the school, the leader has little control or ability to make strategic decisions to organize human, programmatic, and fiscal capital. When a teaching position opens due to a retirement or movement of staff the position is first open to staff currently in the District. In this case, the school leader is able to participate in the interview process by having a "conversation" with the candidate and providing input to the District if he feels that the candidate is not a good fit; however, the school leader does not have the autonomy to make hiring decisions. The school leader can make some programmatic decisions within the parameters of the budget provided to the school but has little input as to the actual budget. A key issue at Waterfront is the recent loss of its afterschool program and the related fact that its application for a School Improvement Grant (SIG) was not successful. As a result as noted by the school leader, teachers, and parents, there are significant numbers of students leaving school at the end of the regular school day and going to "empty" homes where the parents may not be home until later in the evening. The lack of an after school program to supplement students academic and social-emotional health is undermining the school's improvement effort.

Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support: The school has rigorous and coherent curriculum and assessments that are appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for all students and are modified for identified subgroups in order to maximize teacher instructional practices and student-learning outcomes.	Tenet Rating	D
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Debriefing Statement: The school leader has intentionally created opportunities for teachers to collaborate and engage in discussions around curriculum, instruction, and the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). These grade-level team meetings are held twice a cycle and include teachers, special education teachers, English as a second language (ESL) teachers, and provide an opportunity for teacher collaboration, trust-building, and analysis of data. However, team meetings are not consistently used to develop lesson plans and/or use data to examine and modify instruction.

Strengths:
 All ratings for this Tenet are either **Developing** or **Ineffective** and therefore, comments are listed under **Areas for Improvement**.

Areas for Improvement:

3.2 The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice: The school leader and staff support and facilitate the quality implementation of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in Pre K-12.

- Teachers are being supported in developing and implementing curricula that is aligned to CCLS. The review team found evidence in agendas and through observations that grade-level team meetings are focusing on the six shifts in the CCLS and their implications for instructional practice. The SCEP provides evidence that during grade-level team meetings teachers have received training in the District-prepared CCLS modules. However, when visiting classes, the team found disparate evidence of teachers employing the six shifts and implementing CCLS. Some curricula and instructional strategies are aligned with CCLS while the instruction in other classes was not aligned. As a result, the implementation of a rigorous and coherent curriculum is still developing, and many students are not receiving appropriate, high-quality instruction.

3.3 The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* for this Statement of Practice: Teachers ensure that unit and lesson plans that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS coherent curriculum introduce complex materials that stimulate higher-order thinking and build deep conceptual understanding and knowledge around specific content.

- Grade-level team meetings are scheduled twice every six-day cycle and provide time for teachers to collaboratively develop aligned curriculum unit plans. The school’s work on curriculum mapping and grade-level meetings has provided some support for the formal development of CCLS aligned lesson plans. However, there is evidence of inconsistent use of CCLS aligned lesson plans across grades. Grade-level meeting agendas show that some, but not all, grade-levels have spent time on lesson plan development. Also (as noted in 3.4), the co-planning among special education, ESL and regular teachers is not formalized, resulting in inconsistent development of lesson plans across grades. Lesson plans are not of the same quality across classrooms and teachers, resulting in varied instructional quality from one classroom to the next and even within classrooms among students with different needs.

3.4 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader and teachers ensure that teacher collaboration within and across grades and subjects exists to enable students to have access to a robust curriculum that incorporates the arts, technology and other enrichment opportunities.

- Grade-level team meetings include classroom teachers, ESL and special education teachers. The grade-level team meetings are primarily used to review student data, e.g., common assessments, and initiate discussions regarding the implementation of CCLS. Grade-level team meetings do not provide focused time for regular teacher and ESL or special education teachers to co-plan lessons; however, many teachers find other opportunities to discuss co-teaching strategies. The school leader intentionally located the ESL teachers in close proximity to teachers with whom ESL teachers work with regularly so that they can plan together (when they find the time, often informally during the day or after school). In addition, special area teachers, i.e., art and technology, are not routinely participating in these meetings, and teachers are not always incorporating art and/or technology into their lessons. As a result, teachers are developing strong grade-level teams and do use planning time to discuss student work; however, co-planning teaching strategies and the development of integrated lessons have not yet been instituted as a formal part of grade-level team meetings.

3.5. **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader and teachers develop a data-driven culture based on student needs, assessments and analysis, which leads to strategic action-planning that informs instruction and results in greater student achievement outcomes.

- The school has been developing a data-driven culture over the past year based on student needs and assessments that is resulting in strategic action-planning. Teachers recently completed curriculum mapping, and many grade-level teams are developing common formative assessments that are administered and then used during grade-level team meetings. Teachers have a half-day release time each quarter to design common formative assessments in mathematics and ELA. Teachers described (in focus groups) how the common assessments match the State assessments, and that they are working to use the data from the assessments to drive instruction. However, the full use of common assessments and other sources of data to drive instruction is not yet formalized in all grades and among all teachers, as evidenced by grade-level meeting agendas and teachers noting that they are still working to figure out how to best use the common assessments, given that they are new this year. As a result, school leaders and teachers are making strides and working hard to use data, and have instituted structures and processes to do so, but still have much work to do to refine how data is used so that classroom instruction is quickly and appropriately modified to meet the needs of students.

Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions: Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students and pertinent sub-groups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.

Tenet Rating	D
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Debriefing Statement: Teachers use instructional practices that are generally aligned to the District’s curricular expectations; however, instruction is generic and lesson planning is not always evident or data driven, limiting the ways that students are able to access learning.

Strengths:

All ratings for this Tenet are either **Developing** or **Ineffective** and therefore, comments are listed under **Areas**

for improvement.

Areas for Improvement:

4.2 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** Teachers use instructional practices and strategies organized around annual, unit and daily lesson plans to meet established student goals and promote high levels of student engagement and inquiry.

- Unit and daily lesson plans are developed by teachers but are used inconsistently across the school. In focus groups, teachers described how lesson plans are developed and used, and that the recent curriculum mapping contributed to lesson planning. In classrooms visits, the review team found evidence of varied and inconsistent instructional practices. In some classes, teachers had lesson plans and instructional strategies organized around the lesson plans, but instruction was not aligned with CCLS. In other classes, teachers were focusing on academic vocabulary and providing an engaging lesson but may not have had a clearly written lesson plan. Similarly, in some classrooms clear content and language objectives for the lesson were displayed, while in other classrooms objectives were not visibly displayed. As a result, some students are receiving high-quality instruction while other students, predominately in the lower grade-levels and in classrooms with students new to the school or District, are not receiving consistent CCLS curricula and instruction.

4.3 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** Teachers provide coherent, appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) - based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students to achieve targeted goals.

- There is considerable variance among teachers and classrooms in the provision of coherent, appropriately aligned CCLS-based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students. The school is in the midst of incorporating CCLS in lesson plans; as a result, the capacity of all teachers to provide CCLS-based instruction is growing, but not yet effective across all classrooms. The review team observed multiple classrooms (especially in kindergarten through grade 3) in which students moved from whole group instruction to small group or centers, and multiple students were pulled out to receive targeted reading instruction, using the District-provided reading interventions. Whole and small group instruction was provided with little or no evidence of ongoing use of data to differentiate instruction. According to teachers, assessments are used to target interventions (including pull-out reading interventions), but there was little evidence of daily or ongoing use of data to differentiate instruction. As a result, the instruction provided to many students does not provide multiple entry points of access.

4.4 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** Teachers create a safe environment that is responsive to students' varied experiences, tailored to the strengths and needs of all students, and leads to high levels of student engagement and inquiry.

- The staff and school leader have addressed the school environment issues over the past two years by strongly supporting the implementation of a PBIS system and the SST to actively use data to track students, identify potential issues prior to referral, and take direct action with students. The school has developed videos (see Strengths in Tenet 5) that demonstrate that the school is making an effort to collectively change the culture in the school and create a safe environment for learning. In student focus groups, students noted that the school is safer and that there is less bullying than three or four years ago, although "there is still some bullying." Teachers noted that student behavior has improved and attributed the improvement to the school leader and the implementation of PBIS. Parents stated that they understood PBIS and that "the school was a safe place and that students can address any

bullying issues with teachers.” There is a growing understanding and recognition of acceptable and safe behaviors, and teachers are using strategies that are sensitive to the needs of diverse students; however, review team members noted a few instances of behavioral issues in classrooms and a lack of implementation of PBIS, e.g., lack of distribution of super surfer tickets in some classrooms. Evidence of active student involvement (apart from the student videos) in providing students with a voice in co-creating their educational experience was not observed. As a result, some students are not fully engaged, and student input is not fully taken into consideration in the development of units and lessons.

4.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** Teachers use a variety of data sources including screening, interim measures and progress monitoring to inform lesson planning, develop explicit teacher plans and foster student participation in their own learning process.

- Teachers are using a variety of data sources, e.g., Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), common assessments, unit tests and systems that include interim measures and progress monitoring. A formal system of Response to Intervention (RTI) is used to monitor all students and provide structured, dedicated and varied support to all students for one hour a day in grades one through six, and every other day for students in grades seven and eight. Some students described their understanding of the common assessments and explained how teachers used the formative assessments to provide them with direct feedback and support. However, observed written feedback on student work lacked specificity and provided a single grade or superficial feedback, such as “good work.” Active use of rubrics or other tools through which students could reflect on their own work was not observed. While data sources and systems (such as the use of grade-level team meetings) have been developed, the school is not yet using data to make real-time adjustments to instruction or to the coaching and support needed by teachers in order to accelerate improvement efforts. As a result, the effectiveness of instructional practices varies from class to class, teacher instruction is not quickly modified to meet the needs of students, and students are not able to monitor their own progress.

Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health: The school community identifies, promotes and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.

Tenet Rating

E

Debriefing Statement: The school has a precise and timely system for student referral and support that is managed by the SST, allows for regular monitoring of students, and identifies problem areas to be addressed. Students generally feel safe and secure, supported by the growing use of PBIS and partnerships. There was partial evidence of how behavioral data is directly linked to academic success.

Strengths:

5.2 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** The school cultivates the development of overarching systems and partnerships that support and sustain social and emotional developmental health.

- The school has a well established Tier 1 and Tier 2 PBIS system, which includes referral and support systems, to enable the SST, leaders, the social worker, and teachers to address the social and emotional developmental health needs of students. The core of the support system is the SST. The SST members interviewed during the focus group articulated a precise and timely system for referring and

supporting students. The SST meets as a team twice every six-day cycle. Teachers directly refer students to the SST as needed. Once students are referred for any reason, the SST discusses the needs of the student and uses its first line intervention, a daily check-in/check-out system through which students check-in with an adult. The check-in/check-out intervention provides for a daily and personal connection with identified students. The SST monitors the effectiveness of the PBIS system by collecting the Super Surfer student tickets (which are linked to teachers) for each classroom and monitoring how well teachers are using the system. Videos (see 5.3) have been created and shared around the important management issues. A partnership with Western NY provides in-house support and tutoring, through a dedicated on-site prevention specialist who monitors the “Mentor Academic Support Tutors” working with at-risk students. These interventions are beneficial to sustain and support school improvement.

5.3 The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice: The school articulates and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is connected to learning experiences and results in building a safer and healthier environment for families, teachers and students.

- The school developed a set of “cool tools” to promote positive behavior and incentives that have been positively received by the school community, including teachers, students and parents. To communicate the school vision for social and emotional health and related behavior expectations, teachers and students created three videos that are posted on the school website: <http://www.buffaloschools.org/WaterfrontElementary95.cfm?subpage=75503>. The videos are as follows: HALL: Hands to yourself, Always Silent, Listen, Line; CAFÉ: Clean up, At your seat, Face your Table/Feet under the Table, Exit Silently; and SPICE: Sit down as soon as you get on the bus, Patiently wait, In your group as you walk to the bus, Care for others, Exit quickly. The SST team meets twice a cycle to address academic and behavioral concerns and an in-house suspension room provides a space to address issues internally, without suspending students. Suspensions and office referrals have been reduced significantly. The school leader holds lunch meetings with small groups of students and there is a check-in/check-out system linking caring adults to students, resulting in a proactive approach to addressing social-emotional needs.

5.4 The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice: All school constituents are able to articulate how the school community is safe, conducive to learning and fosters a sense of ownership that leads to greater student outcomes.

- The school provides a safe environment that is conducive to student learning. Students, teachers, and parents described a strong sense of pride and ownership of the school as a positive learning environment for students. In focus groups, students expressed a high sense of security and stated that they feel supported by their teachers. Teachers and students described the development of “cool tools” as a way that teachers and staff are taking ownership of aspects of the PBIS system and shared expectations for the school. Teachers also described how the school has become better managed over the past two years and that they are creating common understanding of acceptable and safe behaviors through the use of PBIS surfer tickets. The SST described how they proactively use data to identify potential problem areas and then address these issues, e.g., data indicated increased behavioral issues outside of the girls locker room and identified that the issue was that the hallway monitor in that area was male (and unable to enter the locker room). The SST used this information to recommend a change in assignment that led to a decrease in behavioral issues in that area of the school. Data shows that suspensions have decreased and that referrals are more efficiently handled than in past years. As a result, an improved learning environment throughout the school has reduced the number of behavioral issues that can lead to greater student outcomes.

Areas for Improvement:

5.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader and student support staff work together to develop teachers' ability to use data to respond to students' social and emotional developmental health needs, so students can become academically and socially successful.

- The work of the SST team, the recent implementation of PBIS, and a growing use of data in grade-level team meetings supports teachers' ability to use data to respond to student social-emotional needs. However, the implementation of PBIS, i.e., a culture of respect and use of positive behavioral strategies, needs to be further developed, as evidenced by inconsistent use of PBIS language and related instructional strategies in all classrooms across the school. As a result, some problem behaviors among students are repeated and learning time is compromised.

Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement: The school creates a culture of partnership where families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well being.

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: The school provides a welcoming and respectful environment for students and parents, including a respect for different cultures. A few parent involvement activities have been well attended. However, barriers to parent involvement remain significant. There is little to no direct communication between parents and teachers beyond correspondence that teachers might put in notebooks and homework, and it is predominantly in English.

Strengths:

All ratings for this Tenet are either **Developing** or **Ineffective** and therefore, comments are listed under **Areas for Improvement**.

Areas for Improvement:

6.2 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school atmosphere is welcoming and fosters a feeling of belonging and trust, which encourages families to freely and frequently engage with the school, leading to increased student success.

- The school continues to have challenges in fully engaging parents and the surrounding community. Due in part to the lack of an afterschool program and the fact that students come from different parts of the city, parent involvement is an ongoing challenge. Parents reported that they feel welcome in the school and that they are greeted by teachers and know parents by their names, but parents also noted that it helps if you are an "active" parent. The school has made multiple efforts to engage parents in volunteer activities. School literature and information is routinely communicated to families in English and is not routinely translated into other languages. Interpreters are not secured for parent meetings, and there was no evidence that the school actively reaches out to parents who do not speak English. As a result, parents who are unable to spend time at the school or play an active role in their child's learning may not feel welcome at the school.

6.3 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school engages in effective planning and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders so that students' strength and needs are identified and used to augment learning.

- The school has an intentional and strategic plan for communicating with family and community stakeholders; however, engagement with families whose home language is not English is still under development. Parents noted that the school does attend to the diversity in the school and those students and teachers actively help other students (from different backgrounds or cultures). Parents and teachers noted that the school routinely communicates with families in English and translation is available if necessary, but is not a common practice. Specifically, parents talked about how: “The goal is to build a strong relationship with families; to help all students succeed; but I do not see our vision being actualized, because there is so much going on ... our status as a low-performing school, our ELL students, our suspensions ... this takes a lot of energy, which means we cannot get to our vision. There is a good relationship with some parents, but many don’t show up.” Another parent noted that: “one thing that has always remained consistent, is that any issues that we have with teachers have been resolved. The experience that I have with the school is all positive. The lack of funding and increase in number of classrooms with no support, and teachers being pulled out of the classroom, lead to behavioral issues... with the cuts to staff, there is a lack of support for students that may need some additional attention.” Parents and leaders noted that their vision is being challenged due to lack of resources and continued declarations that their school is underperforming. The school leaders and teachers described an intentional system to stay in touch with parents, through the Infinite Campus Reporting and Parent Portal and School Connect Calls that inform parents of their child’s academic status. Parents noted that the phone calls can be translated upon request. However, review team members found no evidence of translation. As a result, some groups of parents are excluded from meaningful participation.

6.4 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for the Statement of Practice:** The entire school community partners with families and community agencies to promote and provide professional development across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.

- The school is actively working with community partners around a variety of initiatives, i.e. Journey’s End and Catholic Charities, which provide items for the parent room and Canisius College, which provide tutors and helpers to the school. Partnerships with community agencies are being sought to address the lack of access to a population of speakers of languages other than English or Spanish. The school also partnered with external organizations as part of its application for SIG funding that was unsuccessful. The school is open throughout the afternoon and evening for community groups and athletics; however, these activities are not directly linked to academics. According to school leaders, teachers have been offered limited opportunities for PD related to parent engagement and how to seek partnerships with parents. Additionally, the school has an active partnership with Western NY to provide tutoring and support services to students. However, the school’s efforts to engage the broader community remain challenged, resulting in little direct input from the community regarding the focus and direction of the school.

6.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The entire school shares data in a way that empowers and encourages families to use and understand data to promote dialogue between parents, students and school constituents centered on learning and success.

- The school’s ability to share data with families and the broader community is compromised by low levels of parents engagement and ongoing uncertainty regarding the status of the school. Data is shared with parents through traditional means, e.g., school report cards, student report cards, targeted calls to parents, but the school staff has not developed data sharing mechanisms that empowers parents and, thus, active dialogue among parents, students, and school constituents is not being promoted.

Recommendations:

Tenet 2: School Leader Practices and Decisions

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 2 the school should:

- 2.4: Work with the District on revisions to District Policy so that school leaders have more input into making strategic decisions around organizing human, programmatic, and fiscal resources so that school improvement and student goals are achieved.

Tenet 3: Curriculum Development and Support

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 3 the school should:

- 3.2: Facilitate the consistent quality implementation of rigorous and coherent CCLS-aligned curricula.
- 3.3: Support teacher use of a consistent planning tool for unit and lesson plans that is appropriately aligned to the CCLS.
- 3.4: Provide sufficient co-planning time for all teachers in the school, including special education, ESL, and special area teachers for the consistent development of planning lessons that incorporates all aspects of the curriculum and includes remedial, extension, and enrichment opportunities that will address varied student needs.
- 3.5: Support teacher use of commonly developed assessments and other sources of data that identify student needs and use the information collected to drive instruction and promote high levels of student engagement.

Tenet 4: Teacher Practices and Decisions

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 4 the school should:

- 4.2: Ensure that teachers have a plan that is informed by data and that instructional strategies are aligned with plans and goals for students and include accommodations for English language learners.
- 4.3: Provide teachers with support in using instructional practices that are systemic and explicitly aligned to the developed CCLS curriculum maps.
- 4.4: Support teachers in providing a safe, secure, risk-free environment in which students are allowed input into and are more engaged in their learning.
- 4.5: Ensure support for teachers in using data to inform instructional decision-making, adjust student groupings, and provide feedback to students.

Tenet 5: Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 5 the school should:

- 5.5: Ensure that all classrooms fully implement the PBIS system; see that additional training is provided to teachers to build capacity to respond to student social and emotional developmental health and ensure that the school leaders and student support staff expect that teachers and staff members use data to track student academic and behavioral activity as it relates to their social/emotional developmental health needs.

Tenet 6: Family and Community Engagement

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 6 the school should:

- 6.2: Increase opportunities for families to volunteer and engage with the school focused on student learning and development.
- 6.3: Ensure that all materials sent home and/or communicated to parents are translated as necessary.
- 6.4: Provide PD for school staff on how to actively seek and sustain healthy partnership with families.
- 6.5: Provide a wide range of learning opportunities for families and share data with families in ways in which families can understand student learning needs.