



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code/DBN	440901040004
School	Highland Falls Intermediate School
School Address	52 Mountain Avenue, Highland Falls, NY 10928
District	Highland Falls - Fort Montgomery Central School District (CSD)
School Leader	Mrs. Bethany Negersmith
Dates of Review	May 14-15, 2013
School Accountability	Priority X Focus
Type of Review	X SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet											
Grade Configuration	3-8	Total Enrollment	372	% Title 1 Population	62%	% Attendance Rate	95%				
% Free Lunch	27%	% Reduced Lunch	10%	% Student Sustainability	70%	% Limited English Proficient	7%	% Students with Disabilities	14.4%		
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes											
# Transitional Bilingual	0	# Dual Language	0	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	0						
Types and Number of Special Education Classes											
# Special Classes	1	# Consultant Teaching		# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	14						
# Resource Room	11										
Types and Number Special Classes											
# Visual Arts	1	# Music	3	# Drama	0	# Foreign Language	2	# Dance	0	# CTE	0
Racial/Ethnic Origin											
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	% Black or African American	13%	% Hispanic or Latino	29%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	4%	% White	52%	% Multi-racial	3%
Personnel											
Years Principal Assigned to School	0.75	# of Assistant Principals	1	# of Deans	0	# of Counselors / Social Workers	1				
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0	% Teaching Out of Certification	0	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.	7	Average Teacher Absences	10.87				
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
School in Good Standing		Priority School		Focus District	X	Focus School Identified by a Focus District	X	SIG Recipient (a) (g)	N/A		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	43%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	52%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	85%	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.)			
	American Indian or Alaska Native	X	Black or African American
	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
	White		Multi-racial
X	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
X	Economically Disadvantaged		
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics			
	American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American
	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
	White		Multi-racial
X	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
	Economically Disadvantaged		
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science			
	American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American
	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			
	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. Use instructional rounds as a method to develop consistent and effective teaching practices.
2. Provide timely and regular low-inference feedback to teachers based upon informal observations.
3. Promote rigorous instruction based upon the common core learning standards and adopt curriculum based upon Engage NY modules.
4. Develop protocol for teacher team meetings.

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:				D	

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:			D	

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:				X	

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	D
<p><u>Debriefing Statement:</u> There is a vision that the school leader is able to articulate. It does not translate to successful outcomes and high levels of achievement for all students. Ongoing analysis of student performance data does not inform teacher feedback in formal and informal structures, professional development (PD) opportunities, or ongoing accountability structures for improvement. The lack of results-driven school-wide goals prevents the school community from understanding why and how to improve instructional practices to ensure student success.</p> <p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <p>2.4 <u>The school has received a rating of <i>Effective</i> for this Statement of Practice:</u> Leaders make strategic decisions to organize resources concerning human, programmatic and fiscal capital so that school improvement and student goals are achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school leader has made staffing, programmatic, and fiscal decisions to ensure that she uses resources available to address the instructional gaps within the English language arts (ELA) and mathematics subject areas. The school served grades five through eight until two years ago, when it began to serve grades three through eight. The school leader has been with the school for eight years, first as a teacher and then as an assistant principal. In October 2012, she became principal. The district provided a retired professor from Fordham University as her mentor. The school leader reported that since becoming the principal, she reassigned staff to address critical gaps. The school leader requested and the district has approved hiring a scheduler for the school, who will work with the school leader to ensure that student programming, teacher common planning time, and enrichment activities are built into the schedule for the next school year. The school leader reported that since her strength and background are in mathematics and data analysis, she persuaded the district to hire an assistant principal to focus on ELA instructional practices. Within her first two months, the school leader analyzed the school needs, staff schedule, funding resources, and the programming requirements. The school leader analyzes data trends for decision-making. For example, after reviewing school data, the school leader advocated that the district provide funding so she could implement the Olweus Anti-Bullying program at the school. The district agreed to fund the program at the school this year. The school leader also participates in the weekly district council meetings, where she shares issues, concerns, and suggestions. . In addition, the school leader restructured the use of Title I funds to address student academic needs and fund three teachers to provide after school support services to low performing and at-risk students. The program occurs three days a week across grades in ELA and mathematics. The school leader’s strategic use of human, programmatic, and fiscal resources addresses school needs and reflects the system for continuous review of and improvement in student performance. <p><u>Areas for Improvement:</u></p>		

2.2 The school has received a rating of *Developing* 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).

- During interviews with the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT or "the review team"), the school leader and staff shared their understanding of the school vision, which is to inspire, engage, challenge, and meet 21st century global competitive needs. Although she has been in her position less than a year, the school leader was able to generate support among staff, students, and parents for achieving the vision. The school motto, "we are all on the same bus" [traveling toward success] is used frequently by the school leader to promote a sense of shared ownership. However, the vision does not explicitly address the need for overall school improvement. During interviews with the IIT, the school leader and staff members were unable to identify specific, measurable, results-oriented, and timely goals aligned to the school vision. The school leader and teachers did not share how the school addresses the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) goals of having students comprehend and evaluate complex texts. Teachers also did not articulate the SCEP goals that students would read at grade level and that state assessment results would increase by 20 percent. As a result, not all students, staff, and parents have a clear understanding of the school vision and how to achieve school-wide goals.

2.3 The school has received a rating of *Developing* 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 leader uses minimum evidenced-based systems in some areas to improve instructional practices within the school community. The school leader reported that she approves teachers' requests for PD through the My Learning Plan portal. The school leader also facilitates parent meetings and communicates with families via email, phone, and face-to-face meetings to understand the social and emotional needs of the students and their families. During interviews with the IIT, support staff shared that they have ongoing conversations with the school leader, who is responsive to individual and student group needs based on the referral data that she reviews. The school leader reported that teachers submit lesson plans weekly. She also regularly reviews student and school performance data reports. While the review team did observe a grade five ELA team meeting where teachers analyzed student data and revised lesson plans, this was the only grade level team in the school that has formal meetings. Other grade and subject teachers meet informally, and there is minimal data analysis occurring during those meetings. In addition, the teacher observation reports reviewed by the IIT did not reflect feedback that correlated to any school-wide goals. For example, none of the feedback specifically addressed the SCEP goal to review, analyze, and interpret data to inform teaching and learning. The documents reviewed and interview responses provided to the IIT indicate there is a gap in the ability of staff to address the critical areas of connecting student progress to teacher practice, resulting in a lack of alignment

between student needs and instructional planning to ensure continuous student improvement. Because few evidence-based systems to examine school-wide practices and provide clear feedback to staff with regard to school-wide goals and best practices are in place, progress toward achieving mission-critical goals and increasing student achievement is limited.

2.5 The school has received a rating of *Developing* 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 school leader has a system to conduct frequent teacher observations and track teacher practices but does not provide clear and frequent feedback to teachers regarding student data trends. Teachers shared with the IIT that the school leaders conduct at least four formal classroom observations per year and numerous informal classroom visits. The documents reviewed by the IIT contained feedback and communication related to instructional practices and lesson content. However, none of the reports indicated that the school leader provided specific feedback on instructional practices connected to findings based on student performance data. Staff interviewed by the IIT indicated there has been some basic training on data correlation, and this provided teachers with strategies to analyze data and differentiate instruction based on student data. However, the lack of a feedback system that is inclusive of student performance data limits the information communicated to promote effective instructional practices. Consequently, the ability of the school leader to hold staff accountable for continuous improvement is reduced.

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

Debriefing Statement: The school uses the CCLS modules posted on the New York State Education Department (NYSED) website for unit plans in ELA and mathematics. However, there was inconsistent implementation of the CCLS in the instructional strategies used by staff and limited evidence of a shared sense of urgency or skills for improving instruction and student learning. There is a lack of adequate and appropriate time for both horizontal and vertical unit and lesson planning. As a result, students are not receiving the rigorous curriculum outlined in the CCLS.

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 CCLS in Pre K-12.

- The school uses the New York State Education Department (NYSED) CCLS modules for its ELA and mathematics curricula. Staff has received PD on the implementation of the CCLS and the use of the modules for implementing the ELA and mathematics instructional shifts in the curricula of the school. The school leader reported that teachers integrate the NYSED CCLS modules into the school's existing curriculum. The school leader and teachers report that the restructured curriculum reflects the CCLS. Teachers expressed appreciation for the PD offered at the school. The school leader and staff reported that teachers track their respective PD plan through an online system known as My Learning Plan. Staff interviewed by the IIT shared that they felt that the PD offered was helpful in moving instructional practices forward. While the teachers interviewed by the IIT reported they understood the expectations for implementing the CCLS across grades and subject areas, this was not evident throughout the 22 classrooms the IIT observed. Several classrooms had instruction that focused on reading aloud, and only a few classrooms had students engaging in hands-on activities and teachers questioning for content understanding. Because of the inconsistent implementation of the CCLS, not all students are experiencing the academic rigor needed for high levels of student achievement.

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.

- There was inconsistent CCLS alignment in the ten lesson plans reviewed by the IIT. For example, only six of the ten lesson plans reviewed explicitly noted strategies for assessing student comprehension of specific content. The review team found that teachers were providing targeted assistance to students who were visibly struggling in only a few of the classrooms visited. In other classrooms, students who appeared to be disengaged or struggling with the lesson were not offered assistance from teachers. During the document review, the review team found some lesson plans were unclear and omitted pertinent information, such as how the lessons would introduce complex materials that stimulate higher-order thinking. Lesson plans that the IIT reviewed also lacked a clear indication of how teachers were using assessments to monitor achievement. The absence of clearly designed lessons aligned to the CCLS results in students not receiving the instruction they need to stimulate higher-order thinking and build deep conceptual understanding.

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.

- Teachers collaborate as part of the Hudson Valley Writing Project, in faculty meetings, in social studies/science curriculum development sessions, and during summer curriculum planning time. The school has not established formal grade level meetings, with the exception of the grade five ELA team, which meets once a week. For the other staff, there are informal 15-minute subject-area and grade-level meetings once a week from 7:45 to 8:00 a.m. Staff shared with the IIT that several

teachers are periodically unable to attend due to the bus-monitoring schedule. While there are no formal structures to ensure that music and art teachers will collaborate with other teachers, the students have music and art classes during the school day, and teachers of those classes have established student learning objectives (SLOs) in these areas. However, the lack of common planning opportunities limits the ability of teachers to provide a robust curriculum that connects across classrooms.

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 a system for collecting data, but the school staff does not connect these data sources to other each other to inform instructional plans. The school also uses a Parent Portal to provide descriptive progress reports. The school has a data inquiry team that looks at data and indicates problem areas. In interviews with the IIT, the school leader explained that she assesses trends and that data sharing occurs regularly with teachers. During the interviews with the IIT, not all teachers articulated how they use formative assessments during each class period to make immediate modifications. Teachers indicated that they refer students for Academic Intervention Services (AIS) who scored low on the interim assessments given approximately every five weeks, and those the teachers identified as struggling based on additional classroom assessments. However, the teachers did not articulate how they assessed student progress based on the AIS supports. There is limited evidence of how data are used to inform instructional practices for ongoing student improvement. Teachers group students in classrooms, and students shared that the classrooms have small or special groups for students who need help. However, lesson plans reviewed by the IIT had notes that indicated groups did not meet because of various reasons, such as scheduling conflicts, student absences, and the inability to fund substitute teachers. In addition, during interviews with the IIT, staff shared that the school does not have a school-wide tracking system for student support services. Each staff member keeps her/his own log of interactions with students; however, it was unclear to the IIT what the school does with these communication logs and how they connect with RTI data. The inconsistent use of data to inform and improve instruction hinders the development and communication of a focused action plan for improvement, negatively affecting student achievement outcomes.

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

Debriefing Statement: There is inconsistent evidence of effective student engagement, differentiation, and academic rigor. The lack of continuous use of data limits teachers’ ability to deliver lessons that promote students’ conceptual understanding and higher order thinking and multiple points of access for varied learners.

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 *Ineffective* 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.

- During interviews with the IIT, teachers shared that they are trying to incorporate data and differentiate while focusing on the CCLS. While the IIT observed student work displayed throughout the hallways, the review team saw very few displays in classrooms. Classrooms had SMART Boards, laptops for teacher use, and a large assortment of trade books. However in many of the classrooms visited, the review team found that the instruction lacked differentiation and rigor. It was not apparent to the review team how instructional practices engaged all subgroups of students or included accommodations for varied learners, especially for the students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs). While students have a writing component in every class across grades and subject areas, the lesson plans provided to the IIT did not include explicit methods, adjustments, or goals for varied learners. Students reported that study hall occurs during the school day where students can get extra help. Several classrooms had instruction that focused on reading aloud, with only a few students engaging in hands-on activities. In the majority of classrooms, the review team did not observe academically challenging tasks, and student provided minimal responses when asked questions by teachers. In the majority of classrooms observed, the instruction was teacher-centered, with the teachers doing most of the talking. The lack of lesson plans and instructional practices that reflect the diverse needs of each class limits the ability of the school to ensure that all students are receiving instruction that promotes high levels of engagement or independent thinking skills.

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.

- In conjunction with its existing curriculum, the school uses the NYSED CCLS modules for its ELA and mathematics curricula; however, the review team found inconsistent alignment with the lesson plans reviewed. Some lesson plans consisted of a schedule of topics to be covered or outlines, with some standards indicated. The review team did not observe academically challenging tasks, and student responses to questions were minimal and inconsistent. There was little differentiated instruction to meet the needs of the diverse learners within the classrooms. A review of the lesson plans and feedback from formal and informal observations by the IIT provided limited evidence of differentiated instruction with multiple entry points and scaffolding to engage all learners, including students with disabilities and ELLs. The classrooms visited by the IIT did not exhibit clear implementation of the CCLS instructional shifts. The lack of coherent instruction with multiple access points limits students' ability to achieve targeted goals and be college and career ready.

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 school has established expectations of acceptable behaviors. Behavior management throughout the halls and classrooms appeared strong. However, during the large student group interviews conducted by the IIT, one student reported that a bullying incident occurred the morning of the IIT visit. Students and parents reported that the school staff approach is varied, and at times has been unresponsive. The application of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system also appears inconsistent. In addition, teachers assigned students low-level tasks that did not garner high levels of engagement. During classroom visitations, the review team found that the handouts, questions, and group activities did not stimulate high levels of student thinking and learning. At the time of the review, the majority of the instructional materials did not contain high levels of text and content complexity. While staff expressed they are working towards building students' writing skills, and the school leader is developing methods to ensure students have a greater voice in their educational experience, the review team found that many students were not engaged in the classrooms the team visited. The lack of student engagement in instruction limits the school's ability to ensure that students are invested in their learning.

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.

- The school provides teachers with a variety of data sources that allows students to monitor their progress in writing. However, it is not evident that all teachers use the data to develop explicit lesson plans that foster high expectations for student achievement. The review team did not see or hear how teachers provide frequent and relevant feedback based on the analysis of timely data so that students could then reflect upon, adjust and assess their own learning. In addition, lesson plans do not reference methods for assessing what students know and need to learn. The grade five meeting observed by the review team included a discussion of student work outcomes and the instructional gaps that existed. During the meeting, the teachers identified the next steps they would complete to address those gaps before next week's meeting. However, formalized planning meetings do not occur in any of the other grades or subject areas at the school. The informal meetings that take place once a week are voluntary, and only last fifteen minutes, which is insufficient time to adequately assess and plan lessons. Consequently, students are not receiving continual data based feedback and instruction in critical content areas, which limits student participation in their own learning.

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

D

Debriefing Statement: The school has partnerships to support the social and emotional growth of students.

The school has yet to design and implement a school-wide system to track and share, across all grades and subject areas, the supports provided to all its students. In addition, the lack of a system to correlate student performance data to social and emotional intervention supports and development limits the optimal planning and learning for all members of the school's diverse community.

Strengths:

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

Areas for Improvement:

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

- Documents reviewed by the IIT indicated there is a system for referring students for Response to Intervention (RTI), PBIS, the Committee on Special Education (CSE), and Dignity for All Students (DASA) services. At the time of the IIT visit, addressing bullying was a priority in the school. The school leader reported that the school uses Olweus primarily for its Anti-Bullying Program, and her goal is to have all staff trained, including bus drivers and custodians. The school has several resources available to students, including food bank, clinical counseling services, family support, Big Brothers/Big Sisters mentoring program, peer mediation, advisory period, and lunch groups. The advisory period is scheduled during the school day; however, at the time of the visit, no curriculum or protocols were established. The school has data to use for referrals for PBIS, DASA, and RTI, but staff did not articulate how the data informs instruction or school-wide changes. There are checklists for behaviors and flipcharts for interventions, but there is no formal paperwork until students go before the CSE. The school leader explained that she does not correlate student performance data to their social and emotional intervention supports, but she does use social and emotional data for decision making. Her analysis of data led her to bring the Olweus program to the building. However, the lack of a comprehensive and formalized system to use the existing resources and partnerships to serve all school constituents prevents the school from cultivating a culture that supports students in their social and emotional developmental health needs so that they can become academically and socially successful.

5.3 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* 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 encourages positive behavior by awarding Pride Tickets to students for being exemplary citizens of the school. Many staff, parents, and students reported to the IIT that they feel the school is safe. However, several individuals shared instances that indicate the school is not always a physically safe environment. While the school does not have a vision for social and emotional health of students, the school adopted the Olweus program goals to reduce the rate of bullying, prevent new bullying incidents from occurring, and create better peer relations. Students and parents were able to articulate the expectations of the program. The school also uses PBIS to support the Olweus expectations. Several students shared that the occasional bullying they

experience is primarily on the bus. The school leader reported that the school promotes the district's vision for student social/emotional development and health, which is for all students to have a safe, healthy learning environment in the district. Documents reviewed by the IIT indicated that the school does not use data to correlate the trends that connect students' learning experiences with their social/emotional experiences. As a result of the staff's limited approach that does not systemically address the social and emotional developmental health of students, the ability to build a safer and healthier environment for families, teachers, and students is diminished.

5.4 The school has received a rating of *Developing* 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.

- Students shared that they have respect and appreciation for their teachers. Eighth grade students explained Ms. Martinez has small student groups to discuss social/emotional issues and get academic assistance. The school does not have a vision for the social and emotional health of students but uses the Olweus program to provide some support in this area. Students and parents understand the expectations of the Olweus program, and teachers explained that PBIS supports the expectations. The school has an advisory period scheduled but, at the time of the visit, no curriculum or protocols were established. The school has several resources available to students, including the food bank, clinical counseling services, family support, Big Brothers/Big Sisters mentoring program, and peer mediation. Based on documents reviewed and interview responses, the IIT found that in most cases involving disciplinary incidents, there is a gap in communication with the key stakeholders, particularly in the follow-up with parents. Several parents and students were concerned with the level of bullying throughout the school community. Several parents shared that school has systems for building safety, but these systems do not go far enough. For example, there is a sign-in book when parents enter the school, but they do not sign out, so there is no way of knowing if the parent left the building. The unease that students and parents feel about safety at the school provides a distraction that limits their ability to focus on improved student outcomes.

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 school has a team that reviews data, including referrals for PBIS, DASA, and RTI. However, there was no evidence that the data team used data to coordinate school-wide responses to students' social and emotional developmental health needs. Staff did not articulate to the IIT how the data informs instruction or school wide changes. Based on Interview responses, the IIT determined that some staff would like to understand the limitations on referrals. Teachers shared that they had PD on RTI, DASA, and logging their interventions with students. However, teachers did not articulate how the training translated into the consistent analysis of data to influence instructional planning across all grades and subject areas. Some teachers suggested that the support staff should deny RTI referrals until teachers demonstrate they provided the proper interventions and document the outcomes of those interventions. In addition, the school does not have support services to sustain

the performance of its high achieving students. Several parents shared that they feel their children are not getting the support they need because they are high achievers. Interviewees reported that accelerated students are left sitting in class and have to listen to instruction they already know. The school leader reported that the district hired a scheduler for the upcoming school year to assist with scheduling students and staff to meet all academic and social/emotional needs. Because the school does not ensure a structured system for staff to use data to assess and respond to students' social and emotional needs, some student needs are not being addressed, negatively impacting their academic and social success.

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 has multiple methods for communicating with families regarding the progress of their children. The school has various systems to address students' academic needs. However, the absence of a cohesive approach, inclusive of opportunities for families to participate within the school and school-wide goals connected to student learning objectives, hinders the ability to increase student achievement and parental involvement.

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 has various modes of communicating with parents about their child's progress. Many staff members reported that they have lived in the community for years, and some attended the school when they were children. The Parent Portal helps communicate with families by allowing parents to access the grades and the homework assignments of their children. Students can also use the account of their parents to view their performance data and assignments. However, the school lacks volunteer opportunities for families to participate in their child's academic and social emotional development. Several parents reported feeling either unwelcome in the building or unclear about how to contribute. The lack of frequent contact with parents and volunteer opportunities within the school limits families sense of belonging, negatively influencing student development.

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.

- No systematic parent outreach plan is in place. The school leader reported that since her start date, she has made targeted efforts to reach outside the school walls to engage with parents, including holding a parent meeting at a local restaurant. The school has a parent group that is still developing its family community outreach. In addition, teachers use inconsistent practices with families to engage in reciprocal communication. Some parents indicated they receive frequent communication in various modes, while other parents indicated they do not receive information. Some families have regular email exchanges with some teachers. The school leader shared that the school has had an increase in ELLs admitted to the school, which includes Arabic-speaking students from Yemen. While the school leader has relied on her staff to assist translating Spanish, translations services for all languages spoken in the school are not available. The school leader has reached out to personal contacts to assist with translation. The school leader asked a family member who spoke the Yemini Arabic language to translate several correspondences for the students and their families. The school leader requested additional translation services from the district; however, the school has not yet received any additional services. The limited approach to reciprocal communication hinders the school's ability to engage fully with the school community, which limits support for student success.

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.

- While, the school leader pursued additional funds for academic supports for low performing and at-risk students, there was no evidence that any of the funds were used to provide PD on developing relationships/partnerships with families. Teachers interviewed by the IIT shared that the school leader expects all staff to reach out to families regularly to foster positive relationships. Teachers explained that the school leader wants to reduce the number of families receiving contacts only about negative incidents. The school has several partners throughout the community, including partnerships with neighboring school districts, its BOCES, local clinics, and the local food bank. Support staff interviewed by the IIT articulated the need to sustain the community partnerships and the importance of those partnerships for student learning. Some teachers shared their knowledge of the partners, but other teachers could not explain how the school promotes or sustains the partnerships. Staff interviewed by the IIT said they share the information about food banks with students and families. The limited school involvement in promoting partnerships with families and community agencies and using the expertise of these agencies for PD diminishes the ability for all students to receive consistent academic, social, and emotional supports.

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 provides some opportunities for families to understand student data. Parents did not articulate any knowledge of the data resources beyond the State examinations and the

accountability designation of the district and school as a Focus District and Focus School. During the interviews conducted by the IIT, parents indicated that they have not heard anything further about the school or district plan to address the accountability designation. The school leader reported that she held a data meeting with families to share the performance results. However, the school does not provide workshops for families to understand student data. One parent of a student with disabilities indicated that while she is aware of information concerning her child's Individualized Education Program (IEP), communication from the school is late. Another parent shared there were access problems with the Parent Portal. While parents believed the school leader is working toward improving the flow of information between the school and home, the flow is less than optimal. Because the school provides families with minimal learning opportunities to understand how to use data, and the dialogue between home and family is limited, many parents are not empowered to advocate for the needs of their children.

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:

- 2.2: Develop a vision concerning student achievement and measured outcomes that is uniformly seen, heard, and known across the school community and include community stakeholders in developing the vision for the school. Develop school-wide goals, supported by specific targets, that align to a results oriented vision.
- 2.3: Use data systems that are inter-connected, correlated to identify trends, and lead to the collection and analysis of outcomes that include on-going formal and informal conversations with families and staff.
- 2.5: Include in the teacher feedback system a component that promotes effective instructional practices. Tailor and differentiate PD opportunities and/or accountability based on needs identified.

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: Develop a system for all teachers to self-monitor the degree to which they are using engaging instructional strategies that include hands-on activities and questioning techniques that ensure that all student groups are understanding content. Ensure that staff lesson plans are rigorous, coherent, and aligned to the CCLS. Create a policy that requires instructional staff to make sure their units and lessons support the CCLS, use grade level appropriate materials, are geared to the appropriate complexity level, and include methods for summative and formative assessments of the instructional content. Ensure policy expectations for instructional planning are consistent across all grades and subject areas.
- 3.3: Ensure that subject area teachers formally participate in grade-level or vertical subject meetings to collaboratively create and examine CCLS aligned curriculum unit plans. Develop appropriately aligned CCLS

pacing calendars and unit plans across all grades, content areas, and classes that expose students to a progression of sequenced complex materials that promote higher-order thinking skills and help students analyze information. Provide PD on lesson delivery aligned to the CCLS, and reinforce the expectations in teacher feedback reports that lessons should promote high levels of student engagement and be rigorous. Have school leaders observe lessons and review assessments to ensure consistent alignment with CCLS.

- 3.4: Create regular opportunities for all teachers to work in partnerships within and across grades and subjects, targeting what is taught and how it is taught. Ensure that students have exposure to a standards-based aligned curriculum. Use instructional rounds to provide feedback for teachers on best practices and effective teaching strategies.
- 3.5: Develop a system for all teachers to use data to identify individual and group learning trends and map out a clear and timely path for student progress and growth. Provide opportunities for staff to regularly meet and discuss the data and its impact on student transitioning and articulation to high school and college.

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 teachers have lesson plans that are informed by data and grade-level goals for all groups of students. Ensure teachers use instructional best practices and strategies aligned to plans, include accommodations for students with disabilities, and provide instructional interventions to all students that lead to inquiry and engagement. Create short- and long-term goals for groups of students based on grade-level benchmarks that lead to student involvement in their own learning.
- 4.3: Continue to incorporate the CCLS into the school's existing curriculum. Develop expectations for instructional practices based on the CCLS instructional shifts for all curricular areas. Ensure regular and frequent communication among staff to develop activities rigorous enough to push students to do more in-depth analysis and challenge students to produce higher-level work products.
- 4.4: Provide coaching, modeling, and training for teachers regarding classroom management strategies along with higher-order thinking questioning that encourages discussion and higher levels of student engagement.
- 4.5: Ensure teachers use various data sources and analyze information provided from such sources to inform instructional decision-making, including student grouping and instructional strategies.

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:

- 5.2: Create a comprehensive and formalized system to use the existing resources/partnerships for the benefit of all school constituents. Develop forms and policies for all referrals. Develop a systematic approach to sustain supports for students in addressing their emotional developmental health needs that transitions with the students throughout each grade level at the school. Develop a method of sharing with all staff behavioral and social/emotional data to inform instructional planning. Develop protocols for staff to correlate these data

elements with the academic data to assess trends and potential implications for individual and groups of students across all grades and subject areas.

- 5.3: Provide staff PD that builds staff capacity to support all students in their social and emotional developmental health needs that results in a safer, more respectful learning community for everyone.
- 5.4: Develop a communication protocol that includes following up with the student, teacher, and parent to ensure all involved parties are aware of expectations and outcomes. Develop a reciprocal communication protocol for school staff and parents that provides opportunities for parents to be active partners within the school.
- 5.5: Ensure that the school leader and student support staff work with teachers to develop an understanding of how to use data to address students' social and emotional developmental health needs that align to academic and social success. Develop a structured system for assessing, referring, tracking, and transitioning student support needs so all students can become academically and socially successful. Continue to implement the PBIS model to ensure consistency with the behavioral intervention plans, monitoring of student success, and positive decision making of the school community.

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: Provide families various opportunities to volunteer and engage within the school, focused on student learning and development. Develop an open-door policy related to volunteerism to ensure appropriate access to school leaders and staff throughout the school day.
- 6.3: Continue to develop the family outreach initiatives (e.g., hosting meetings outside the school building) started during the 2012-13 school year. Develop a communication protocol that includes structured planning with the student, teacher, and parent to ensure consistent expectations for academic progress.
- 6.4: Provide PD opportunities for targeted school staff on how to actively seek and sustain partnerships with families and community organizations that are linked to student needs.
- 6.5: Provide multiple training opportunities to families on how to understand data to promote a more informed among between parents, students, and school constituents centered on student learning and successful transition to high school and beyond.