



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code/DBN	641301060001
School	Hudson Falls High School
School Address	80 E. LaBarge Street, Hudson Falls, NY 12839
District	Hudson Falls Central School District
School Leader	James Bennefield
Dates of Review	May 1 – 3, 2013
School Accountability	Focus
Type of Review	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet											
Grade Configuration	9-12	Total Enrollment	26.83%	Title 1 Population	17%	Attendance Rate	92.69%				
Free Lunch	30%	Reduced Lunch	11%	Student Sustainability	87.9%	Limited English Proficient	0.16%	Students with Disabilities	13.57%		
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes											
#Transitional Bilingual	1	#Dual Language	--	#Self-Contained English as a Second Language		--					
Types and Number of Special Education Classes											
#Special Classes	5	#Consultant Teaching	0	#Integrated Collaborative Teaching		4					
# Resource Room	27										
Types and Number Special Classes											
#Visual Arts	9	#Music	4	#Drama	--	# Foreign Language	9	# Dance	--	CTE	# 96
Racial/Ethnic Origin											
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.16%	Black or African American	1.4%	Hispanic or Latino	0.62%	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.62%	White	96.26%	Multi-racial	0.94%
Personnel											
Years Principal Assigned to School	2 nd Year	# of Assistant Principals	1.4	# of Deans	---	# of Counselors / Social Workers		4.5			
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0	% Teaching Out of Certification	0	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.		0	Average Teacher Absences		6.96		
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
School in Good Standing	X	Priority School		Focus District	X	Focus School Identified by a Focus District	X	SIG Recipient (a)		YES	
								SIG Recipient (b)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	N/A	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	N/A	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	N/A	4 Year Graduation Rate (HS Only)		72% 2006 Cohort			
Credit Accumulation (High School Only)											
% of 1 st yr. students who earned 10+ credits	0%	% of 2 nd yr. students who earned 10+ credits	75%	% of 3 rd yr. students who earned 10+ credits	78%	5 Year Graduation Rate		73% 2006 Cohort			

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		Black or African American
	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
	White		Multi-racial
	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
	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
X	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:

There are four top priorities for the Hudson Falls School District and the Hudson Falls High School. These four priorities are the shared vision and the collaborative product of the Shared Decision Making Team (SDMT), the High School Building Team (BT), the Department Chairs that are comprised of Middle and High School teachers, Building Administrators, the Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent. The four priorities were derived from the District Comprehensive Improvement Plan, the Capital I Area School Development Association (CASDA) review of the Special Education K-12 continuum and the District Professional Development Plan. The following are the four priorities for both the Hudson Falls School District and the Hudson Falls High School.

- Increase academic achievement for all students in all academic areas
- Increase the graduation rate to meet and/or exceed the NYS graduation rate
- Implement the Common Core State Standards
- Implement Data Driven Instruction (DDI)

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			X	

	results in greater student achievement outcomes.				
	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:		E		

<p>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.</p>	<p>Tenet Rating</p>	<p>D</p>
<p><u>Debriefing Statement:</u> The school leader has embraced the District vision as the school vision and this vision is known by staff and students. There are goals, but these goals do not include specific data or timelines to ensure that progress is measurable. The school leader encourages staff to collect and analyze outcomes, but the use of data to inform instructional practices is just emerging as are the systems needed to support these efforts. The lack of commonly understood goals and systems for collecting and analyzing data in a meaningful way hinders the school’s efforts to provide curriculum planning and instructional practices that result in sustainable school improvement.</p> <p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <p>2.4 <u>The school 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 participates in the school level recruitment and selection process in conjunction with the District and ensures that appropriate staff are assigned to the school to meet the academic and social emotional needs of the students and school. It was reported to the IIT by the school leader that he participates in the selection and placement of staff in the school. The IIT found, through documents reviewed and interviews, that the school leader created and used systems and structures, e.g., the Child Study Team (CST), Attendance Review Team, and the Guidance Team, for programming students and staff to support student achievement. Based on documents reviewed, the IIT became aware of other activities and systems used to assist students in reaching targeted goals. These include AP courses; distance learning; visits to colleges; alternative education program for “at-risk” freshman and sophomores; and school tools for scheduling and tracking of cohort data and responding to deficits. Because the school leader makes strategic decisions to program students and staff to best align with resources to meet student needs and makes funding decisions based on student data, resources are provided to support school improvement and the achievement of student goals. <p>2.5 <u>The school received a rating of <i>Effective</i> for this Statement of Practice:</u> The building 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff observations, both formal and informal, were being conducted on all the teachers in the school. Based on a review of documents, the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) concluded that the evaluations demonstrated that the leader has an understanding of how to track progress of staff practices based on student data. According to interviews and a review of documents, the school leader had been fully trained in the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process and a District-wide APPR system was implemented in the fall of 2012. It was reported to the IIT that all school leaders participated in the BOCES lead evaluators training, completed all these trainings, and participated in Danielson Model Rubric training. The school leader reported and documents supported that frequent scheduled and unscheduled 		

observations and staff and school leader feedback meetings had occurred. Staff reported that feedback from these observations was targeted and helpful to support and improve their teaching practices and that the school leader checks in with them periodically. The school leader stated that the results of observations are entered into a database and analyzed on both aggregate and individual levels to determine professional development (PD) needs for the school and staff. Because the school leader employs an observation process that includes tracking staff practices, providing pertinent feedback, arranging check-ins with specific staff members, and using observations to inform PD, administrators and staff are held accountable for continuous school improvement.

Areas for Improvement:

2.2 The school 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 Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP).

- Although the District mission and goals are posted throughout the school, there is no articulated school vision. The school motto as stated by the school leader, staff, students and parents during interviews with the IIT is, “We do our best, so you can do your best.” Parents stated that “getting kids to graduate” is the school vision. Although staff report that increasing the graduation rate and student achievement are goals, there are no specific, measurable, ambitious, results oriented, timely (SMART) goals aligned to a school vision or the SCEP. The lack of a school vision that contains SMART goals inhibits the development of a shared sense of urgency regarding student achievement and the achievement of school-wide goals across the school community.

2.3 The school 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 & teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health) that make progress toward mission-critical goals.

- The school leader encourages staff, through the SCEP and during various meetings (e.g. APPR conferences, faculty meetings) to use systems that lead to the collection and analysis of student performance data and school outcomes. The school leader stated in an interview with the IIT that the use of best practices connected with student achievement is expected by school and District leadership of all staff; however, a school vision is absent and SMART goals have yet to be developed by the staff and community. Staff interviewed could only articulate two specific school-wide goals: increased graduation rate and increased student achievement for all students including subgroups. The IIT reviewed documents that referenced the development of benchmark assessments for all departments in the school; however, this initiative is in the emerging stages and is not yet connected to a school vision or school goals. The lack of specific, measurable and rigorous school-wide goals that are known by the staff and community impedes the assessment of progress toward these goals and impairs the provision of support to ensure the accomplishment of these goals.

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

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subgroups in order to maximize teacher instructional practices and student-learning outcomes.

Debriefing Statement: The school has begun to implement curricula that support the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS); however, CCLS focus is not evident in the instructional practices of all staff. Staff are provided with time to collaborate at the department level. Not all staff use summative and formative assessment data to identify patterns of student learning and therefore, the adaptation of instructional plans for groups of students and individual students is limited.

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 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.

- The school has begun the process of developing cohesive, comprehensive curricula that include clear, descriptive units of studies and are designed to be appropriately aligned to the CCLS. According to documents reviewed and interviews held by the IIT, there is on-going discussion of CCLS at school level and department meetings and staff have access to EngageNY (the New York State Education Department website that includes CCLS-aligned resources). The ELA and mathematics departments have received PD in CCLS during the past and current school years; however, the school does not have a plan to support the development or full implementation of new curricula across all instructional settings. During classroom visits, the review team noted inconsistent implementation of CCLS-aligned instructional classroom practices. Rigorous curricula were not used in all classrooms, as seen during IIT class visits, and accommodations to address the needs and strengths of all students were not always evident in all instructional settings. The lack of a plan and provision of supports to ensure the development and implementation of rigorous curricula designed to align with the CCLS and meet the needs of the entire student population have resulted in instruction that is not uniformly rigorous and effective for all students.

3.3 **The school received a rating of *Developing* 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.

- Although staff formally participate in department meetings to collaboratively create and examine coherent CCLS curricula, during classroom visitations the review team noted that there was not consistent implementation of rigorous and coherent curricula in all classrooms. According to documents reviewed by the IIT, some departments were creating lesson plans to support the CCLS using the Understanding by Design (UbD) Model. However, in most classes visited by the IIT, lesson objectives were not posted and teachers did not have written lesson plans available or what was indicated to be the lesson plan was a list of activities that the teacher planned to do with the students. The IIT reviewed documentation that indicated that some departments were working on increasing the rigor in everyday practice. Practices

were being introduced included exposing students to the use of text that is aligned with the appropriate Lexile range per grade, promoting higher-order thinking skills that included incorporating close reading allowing for deeper understanding of material, reading complex passages, and making conclusions that were evidenced-based. However, during class visitations, the IIT observed little evidence of differentiation of instruction and instruction did not consistently promote the development of higher-order thinking skills. During classroom visitations, the IIT noted that staff use whole-group lecture as the primary instructional methodology. There was little evidence of staff using specific strategies or varied instructional groupings to meet the diverse needs of students. Higher-level questioning was seen in a small number of classrooms visited and student engagement varied from room to room. The lack of instructional planning of unit and lesson plans and instructional implementation that consistently provide students with appropriately aligned CCLS-coherent curricula hampers students from developing deep conceptual understanding and knowledge around complex content across the curricula.

3.4 The school 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.

- While staff collaboration that results in access to robust curricula is evident in some departments, it is not consistently occurring in all classrooms. The IIT found, based on interviews and documents reviewed, that staff participate in department meetings, but not in grade level meetings. As seen in class visits and heard in interviews, there are some staff that incorporate art and/or technology into their lessons. However, as verified in interviews, art and technology teachers only meet within their own departments. The IIT found through interviews that the lack of common planning time across grades and between content teachers and art and technology specialists results in little time for collaboration and discussion of enrichment opportunities. Because common planning time for teacher collaboration within and across all subjects and grade levels is not provided, instruction does not consistently afford all students with access to robust curricula; enable students to discover, create and communicate information using the arts and technology; or benefit from enrichment opportunities in daily instruction.

3.5 The school 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.

- Department meetings are scheduled to discuss the results of formative and summative assessments of student performance so teachers can identify patterns of student learning and determine instructional plans for students that capture current levels of student achievement. Based on interviews and observations, the IIT found that the analysis and adaptation of instruction to maximize teacher instructional practices and student learning outcomes lacked focus, clarity and consistency across departments. The IIT also found, through interviews with staff and document review, that the analysis of data by departments to determine student needs was inconsistent. Departments were also at different levels of development in terms of tracking student performance. The IIT read and was told that one department tabulates the student assessments and analyzes them to determine student needs and follow student mastery of core concepts in order to inform instruction. The IIT did not read in documents or hear in interviews that other departments were using this practice. As was evident during the majority of IIT classroom visits, instruction in all content areas was not aligned with best instructional strategies to meet specific student needs. The lack of a data-driven culture that ensures the use of data to inform

instruction has led to the inconsistent development and implementation of strategic instructional planning that is targeted to address identified student performance patterns for groups of students and individual 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

Debriefing Statement: Staff have developed grade-level goals, however, not all teachers are analyzing student data to measure student growth, either by groups of students or individuals, to adjust instruction to ensure the attainment of these goals. Staff review student-specific data (both formative and summative) but are not using this data to address the gap between what students know and need to learn. It was evident that not all teachers are differentiating instruction for groups of students or students from all subgroups; therefore, these students have inconsistent opportunities for high-level engagement and achievement.

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 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.

- The school leader reported to the IIT that staff had begun to organize instruction to incorporate CCLS-aligned instructional shifts by incorporating them in the development of Understanding by Design Unit Lessons (UbD), and reviewed documentation showed that staff had participated in UbD PD. However, posted learning objectives were not clearly evident during classroom observations, nor was work differentiated for subgroups with meaning and fidelity. In classes visited by the IIT, there was limited evidence of the use of specific strategies or varied instructional groupings to meet the diverse needs of students. Teachers predominantly used whole-group lecture as their instructional methodology. Teachers did not have instructional plans based on student performance data and there was little evidence of planning for student needs. In most classes visited, objectives were not written on the blackboard and the IIT found that teachers did not have written lesson plans available or what was indicated to be the lesson plan was a list of activities that the teacher planned to do with the students. At the time of the review, the IIT was told during interviews that teachers were learning, through PD, department meetings, and APPR conferences, how to align instruction with class data. However, the IIT noted during interviews with staff that established goals for groups of students were static. Because instruction is not tailored to meet the needs of all students and does not consistently include instructional strategies to promote inquiry or engagement, students' involvement in their own learning is limited.

4.3 **The school 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.

- Staff is beginning to use instructional practices that support the CCLS, specifically in science. During classroom visits, instruction was not consistently organized around the strengths and needs of students and there was little evidence of differentiation of instruction. Multiple points of access were not present in many of the classrooms visited. The IIT did not have documentary evidence that benchmarks, individual student goals or goals for groups of students were in place, and class visitations reinforced this. Because classroom instruction does not provide all students with multiple points of access across all subject areas, and because instruction is not tailored to meet students’ individual or group needs, students’ ability to achieve targeted goals is impeded.

4.4 **The school 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.

- Although staff created a learning environment where students demonstrated compliant behavior, not all teachers explicitly taught behavioral expectations. Students were compliant and well behaved in most classrooms as noted during classroom visits by the IIT; however when students did misbehave, teachers did not teach behavioral expectations. During a meeting with the IIT, students reported that they generally feel safe in the school and in classrooms. Students interviewed reported that they looked forward to classes that promote project-based learning, higher-level thinking skills and those that provide an instructional environment of rigorous instruction with differentiation of instruction. However, the IIT found, during class visits, that these elements were not consistently available to students in all core content areas. In addition, student interaction and inquiry through higher-level thinking and questioning was not consistently fostered. Although classrooms were found to be safe, compliant environments, students were not highly engaged in their own learning. Because instruction is not responsive to students’ varied experiences or tailored to the strengths and needs of all students, student engagement and inquiry are limited.

4.5 **The school 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.

- Based on interviews and documents reviewed, staff were provided with opportunities to review student data from formative and summative assessments through department meetings. However, there was little evidence as to how these data were used to inform lesson planning, student grouping and explicit teaching in all content areas. Students reported that teachers did not consistently use rubrics with them nor were students provided with feedback on the quality of their work. During classroom visitations, the review team noted that not all lesson plans and instruction were explicitly designed around student needs. Without progress monitoring and the use of measures to determine student growth or needs, lessons and instructional decision-making were not being planned to address the needs of students or to promote student involvement in their own learning process.

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

Tenet Rating	E
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Debriefing Statement: At IIT meetings with students and families, it was reported that the school is a safe environment. The school has established a culture that allows each child to be known by many adults in the building and there are systems, including a Child Study Team (CST), that address the social and emotional developmental health and academic needs of the students. The school has established community partnerships that support these efforts in developing social and emotional developmental health, thus creating a respectful, responsive school community that is conducive to learning for constituents.

Strengths:

5.2 The school 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.

- Based on information shared with the IIT through staff interviews and derived from document review, there is a system in place, the CST that allows each child to be well known by this team and a designated adult who coordinates social and emotional developmental health in a program that ensures academic success for all students. Students interviewed reported that they have someone to go to if they need help, and parents interviewed report that the school communicates with them about community supports. Students generally have an understanding of the school expectations to be safe, respectful, responsible, and bully-free. In addition to reviewing referrals and the progress of at-risk students, the CST meets to discuss each transient student as he/she enters the school and each student as he/she leaves the school to ensure that supports are provided for these students in a timely manner. There is a comprehensive system for referral and support for all students that effectively addresses barriers to social and emotional developmental health and academic success. The school, through the CST, uses data to identify areas of need and leverages internal and external resources. These resources include an on-site Capital District Psychiatric Center, Relationship Awareness Program, Teen Awareness Group, Suicide Prevention Program, tracking of at-risk students, and an Attendance Review Board. Because the school cultivates resources and community partnerships and promotes the use of overarching systems to address student and family needs, the school is able to support and sustain the social and emotional developmental health of the school community.

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

- The staff and parents are developing an understanding of the skills and behaviors that connect to social and emotional health and how these behaviors link to academic success. The IIT found through interviews with staff, that staff members were aware of the system and resources in the school that support social and emotional developmental health. Parents were also able to express how the school provides levels of social and emotional health supports to students. Staff reported in interviews that face-to-face communication with parents during home visits is the most effective way to communicate with parents. The school, through the Center for Disease Control Adolescent At-Risk Survey and the District School Health Advisory Committee, reviews data on the social emotional developmental health of students to align community resources to student needs. The IIT also learned from the school leader that the High School began an Alternative Education program for pre-selected freshman who were identified

in grade eight as potential dropouts and that the teachers in this program establish strong personal relationships with these students and use this as a means to support these students as they transition into high school. As a result of the close collaboration of internal and external resources, all constituents work together to build a safer and healthier environment for families, staff and students.

5.5 The school received a rating of *Effective* 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 leader and student support staff work with teachers to develop their ability to use behavioral data to address students’ social and emotional developmental health needs that align to academic and social success. The CST meets regularly to discuss behavioral issues and inputs this information into the Response to Intervention Monitoring system to monitor student progress. The Student Support Team also reported in an interview that they make the effort to guide and teach other staff about the reporting, monitoring, and use of these data. The guidance staff reported that they track student attendance data and meet with staff and parents to resolve attendance issues. Because the school leader and student support staff provide teachers with support on how to use behavioral data to identify student social and emotional developmental health needs and address and monitor student progress in this area, teacher capacity to respond to student needs has been increased.

Areas for Improvement:

5.4 The school 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.

- Not all school constituents were able to express how the school community is conducive to learning. Students interviewed by the IIT reported that they feel safe at school and are aware of the resources available within the school to support their social and emotional developmental health. Students and staff interviewed reported that the vision and goals for the school are that of the District Shared Decision-Making Team and the school motto is “We will do our best, so you can do your best.” All students interviewed in the large student focus group reported that they felt safe and that they had an adult they could go to if needed; however, they did not express feeling a sense of ownership in their learning. Staff interviewed in meetings with the IIT were not able to articulate a clear vision for the school or a clear vision for social emotional developmental health. Parents interviewed were able to express how the school provides levels of social and emotional health supports to students. These parents reported that their children feel safe in the school and that the parents feel welcome in the school and have several staff members they can go to if they need help. However, the parents interviewed did not have a clear understanding of how the supports offered by the school and its partners connected to greater student outcomes. Without a clear understanding among parents and staff of the school’s vision for social and emotional health, and how social and emotional health is connected to learning, the school is limited in its ability to ensure that stakeholders are working together to address children’s needs.

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

Tenet Rating	D
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Debriefing Statement: The school community is welcoming, attempts to foster positive relationships with diverse families, makes connections between the family and community supports and offers multiple opportunities to engage with the school. Families are provided data on student progress through progress reports and report cards. However, they do receive data specific to the academic strengths and needs of their students. Therefore, families are not able to share fully in the responsibility for student academic progress nor are they able to fully understand the relationship between social and emotional developmental health and academic success.

Strengths:

6.2 **The school received a rating of *Effective* 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 is a welcoming space, is responsive to families and community members, and has an open-door policy. Appropriate access to school leaders and staff is ensured through parent meetings, attendance at parent/conferences, email, phone calls and the Parent Portal on the school district's website. According to documents reviewed, the Guidance Department holds the following annual parent nights: 8th Grade Parent Night, College Information Night, 11th Grade Parent Night, and 10th Grade Parent Conferences to start planning for postgraduate plans. The IIT also read that the Athletic Department/Booster Club holds sport recognition nights in the fall, winter and spring to honor all student athletes and in the spring of each year the Booster Club has a Senior Sports Banquet to honor all senior student athletes. The IIT also observed that the High School has placed a homework page, where student homework assignments were available, on the High School website. Parents reported in meetings with the review team that they could reach out to staff if they had problems. The school community espouses a trusting and respectful relationship with diverse families and community stakeholders. As a result, parents feel free to interact with the school and are better able to support student learning and development.

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

- The school staff communicates with families concerning student achievement. The IIT learned through interviews and document review that information is shared regularly with families using multiple tools including: a Parent Portal, Attendance Review Board, Child Study Team, Parent informational nights, Guidance Newsletters, Freshman Orientation and home visits. Parents reported that they are provided with skills to augment their child's learning through material gained from Parent Portal e-mails, meetings with the CST, and Parent Information Nights. The IIT observed that resources and signs for community assistance were posted in the school in Spanish. Through these varied methods of reciprocal communication, families are aware of students' successes and needed areas of improvement, and are equipped with the information needed to support students' learning.

6.4 **The school received a rating of *Effective* for this 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 shares information with families regarding community resources to support student growth. Parents receive child specific letters notifying them of pertinent academic, social and emotional supports available during and after school. The school offers workshops to help parents support their students' success. Examples of this noted by the IIT include the Freshman Orientation for grade nine students and their parents, and Parent Informational Nights: one on sexuality, one on healthy dating relationships, and one on the suicide prevention program. Because the school leadership and support staff raise the capacity of the staff and parents to promote social and emotional growth and link it to academic success, student success is supported by the school, families and community agencies.

Areas for Improvement:

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

- The school community is responsive to parent inquiries on how to understand their child's data.; however, there are few formal learning opportunities for all families to elevate their understanding of student data. Parents report that they receive Individual Progress Reports. Based on a document review, the IIT learned that the school communicates information on attendance and student strengths and needs to parents; however, there was limited evidence to show that the school provides formal learning opportunities for families to understand student data. As articulated during the interviews and focus groups with the IIT, the type and amount of data provided in report cards and progress reports is limited and not all families are able to understand student learning and needs. It was reported to the IIT by the school leader that the Guidance Department holds annual sophomore conferences in which guidance staff and families discuss future plans of students. Information shared at this meeting includes, grades, Regents results, results from the Plan Exam (a pre-test to predict success on a standardized college readiness assessment) and interest inventories completed by their child. The school leader stated that this comprehensive meeting gives parents a good sense of where their child stands academically and where they need and want to be. The lack of clarification on how data is to be interpreted has led to a lack of parent engagement and empowerment in supporting student success.

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, with representation of all stakeholders, school community-wide SMART goals and a school vision for student achievement and well-being. Articulate the school vision and the roles of constituents to realize this vision. Ensure that the vision and roles are shared and understood throughout the school community. Include in this vision a structured, timely feedback loop to staff and families that ensures an understanding of how the vision affects student achievement and fosters a shared sense of urgency in achieving the school vision and goals.
- 2.3: Develop comprehensive evidence-based systems to monitor, examine and improve the individual and school-wide practices that effect progress toward mission-critical goals. Ensure that these systems ensure that school leadership and staff are able to generate and analyze outcomes of school-wide practices, progress to goals, and that systems are in place to use feedback from analysis to inform next steps in continuous school improvement.

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: Ensure that school leadership and staff promote and support a school-wide understanding of the CCLS and CCLS instructional shifts. Develop and implement a plan to ensure staff are able to integrate this understanding in lesson planning and instruction. Develop units of study that are aligned with the CCLS, are rigorous and include differentiation to promote the achievement of all students. Provide resources and supports to ensure the development and implementation of rigorous curricula designed to align with the CCLS and meet the needs of the entire student population across all grades and subjects.
- 3.3: Support the creation of unit and lesson plans that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and are differentiated to meet the diverse learning needs of all students. Organize grade-level and other staff meetings to promote collaboration in the development and implementation of CCLS-aligned curricula and instruction. Ensure instructional plans include learning objectives, in student-friendly terms, higher order questioning strategies, instructional strategies to incorporate the use of sequenced complex materials tailored to meet the needs of all students. Ensure the sharing of learning objectives with students before, during, and at the end of lessons.
- 3.4: Support the collaboration of staff in the development of unit and lesson plans that are aligned with the CCLS, and ensure plans incorporate the arts, technology and other areas of enrichment. Include arts and technology staff in department meetings with the core staff. Institute grade-level meetings and share the agenda and minutes of meetings school-wide.
- 3.5: Ensure staff are provided with opportunities to develop a deeper understanding and ability to implement data-driven instruction and that these opportunities heighten their ability to assess school effectiveness, identify student needs, and promote high levels of student learning and success. Ensure that job-embedded PD is provided to staff with the intent of increasing the school's internal capacity to establish a data-driven culture and map out clear and purposeful paths for student progress and growth. Use department meetings to analyze data

for individuals and groups of students to inform instruction and improve achievement and student engagement. Ensure that staff develop lessons that promote student analysis of information by all students.

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: Develop and implement a PD plan to focus on staff using specific data to create short-term and long-term goals for individual students and groups of students. Include in the PD instruction and support to staff to ensure the development and implementation of curricula that include accommodations in unit and lesson plans for individuals and groups of students and the integration of strategies to promote inquiry and engagement tailored to meet the needs and strengths of all students.
- 4.3: Provide support to staff so that they can routinely adjust lesson plans to ensure that instructional content addresses teaching practices focused on increasing academic rigor and promote greater student inquiry and active student participation in their learning experience. Ensure that instructional lessons are differentiated so that students at differing academic levels can be challenged at all times and instruction accelerates student learning and improvement. Create and implement a plan to adjust school-wide instructional practices to enable students to take ownership of their learning. Develop more opportunities where the students are working and thinking independently to promote student engagement.
- 4.4: Provide professional development for staff on how to use unit and lesson plans reflecting CCLS to implement instructional practices with strategies to promote high levels of student engagement and inquiry. Ensure that behavioral expectations are explicitly taught and understood by all students. Examine lesson plans at department meetings to determine inclusion of higher-level questioning and the provision of opportunities for students to be curious creative and engaged.
- 4.5: Closely monitor instruction to ensure that data driven instructional planning translates into practice; students are able to benefit from more rigorous, connected, explicit lessons based on students' needs; and students receive timely and specific feedback to ensure that they are engaged more in their own learning.

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:

- 5.4: Provide PD to ensure staff are able to articulate a school vision that is connected to students' social and emotional developmental health. Promote this vision throughout the school community and structure PD led by the support staff to clarify the role all staff play in achieving the vision. Identify and use available community resources to support staff and parents in connecting social and emotional developmental health to academic success.

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:

- 6.5: Identify systems to ensure timely, reciprocal and meaningful communication between families and staff about students' academic and social emotional health occurs. Provide learning opportunities for families to understand data and to promote their understanding of their child's learning and growth. Design a report card and progress report forms that identify and communicate both academic and behavioral issues. Promote the use of data by families to advocate for their students' academic and social success.