



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code/DBN	580403030014
School	J. Taylor Finley Middle School
School Address	20 Greenlawn Road, Huntington, NY 11743
District	Huntington Union Free School District (UFSD)
School Leader	John Amato
Dates of Review	April 29 – 30, 2013
School Accountability	Focus
Type of Review	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet											
Grade Configuration	7 - 8	Total Enrollment	678	% Title 1 Population	N/A	% Attendance Rate	96%				
% Free Lunch	19%	% Reduced Lunch	3%	% Student Sustainability	95%	% Limited English Proficient	7%	% Students with Disabilities	11%		
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes											
# Transitional Bilingual	0	# Dual Language	0	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language		5					
Types and Number of Special Education Classes											
# Special Classes	2	# Consultant Teaching	0	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching		5					
# Resource Room	2										
Types and Number Special Classes											
# Visual Arts	2	# Music	4	# Drama	0	# Foreign Language	3	# Dance	2	#Music	4
Racial/Ethnic Origin											
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	% Black or African American	11%	% Hispanic or Latino	28%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	0%	% White	58%	% Multi-racial	2%
Personnel											
Years Principal Assigned to School	7	# of Assistant Principals	1	# of Deans	0	# of Counselors / Social Workers		3			
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0%	% Teaching Out of Certification	0%	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.		.50%	Average Teacher Absences	5%			
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
School in Good Standing		Priority School		Focus District		Focus School Identified by a Focus District	X	SIG Recipient (a)		SIG Recipient (g)	NA
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	61/60	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	77/73	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4		4 Year Graduation Rate (HS Only)		NA			
Credit Accumulation (High School Only)											
% of 1 st yr. students who earned 10+ credits	NA	% of 2 nd yr. students who earned 10+ credits	NA	% of 3 rd yr. students who earned 10+ credits	NA	6 Year Graduation Rate		NA			

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	X	Limited English Proficient
	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. Improve English language arts performance for targeted subgroups: students with disabilities, Black, and limited English proficient.
2. Improve math performance for targeted subgroups: students with disabilities.
3. Improve curriculum in English language arts and math for grades seven and eight.

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:					I

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:				D	

School Review Narrative:

Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: Visionary leaders create a school community and culture that lead to success, well-being and high academic outcomes for all students via systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement.	Tenet Rating	D
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Debriefing Statement: The school leader has created a philosophy that focuses on the academic and behavioral needs of students. The school leader has not communicated this philosophy or the related student achievement goals with the entire school community. A lack of communication among all stakeholders affects the achievement of students.

Strengths:

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

Areas for Improvement:

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).

- The school does not have a shared vision or mission that is understood across the school community. The school leader stated that he has created a mission, but has not shared it with the entire school community. His mission is to provide “a well-rounded educational experience for all students, which includes strong academics, strong arts, athletics, and strong relationships with kids.” However, the school leader could not articulate a vision for the school connected to this mission. Moreover, none of the stakeholders interviewed could voice an understanding of the school leader’s mission and vision for the school. Staff, students, and parents stated that they believed the mission of the school was to improve student performance. The school has academic goals for the core subject areas and for student discipline, as evidenced through a review of documentation and staff interviews, but the school does not have specific or measurable social-emotional goals. Without a clearly defined and articulated global vision to guide the creation of measureable academic and social-emotional goals, the school leader is unable to ensure that the mission to achieve school-wide goals is aligned with the vision for the entire school community.

2.3 The **school has received a rating of *Ineffective* 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 does not have evidenced-based systems in place to examine and improve individual and school-wide practices, particularly in the area of curriculum and teacher practices. Grade level teams meet daily, subject teams meet monthly, and the instructional support teams

meet three times per week by grade level. However, although staff and the school leader stated that these meetings take place, reviewed agendas did not highlight a focus on instructional practices. Additionally, Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) observation of the grade level/subject team meeting did not show time allowed for discussion of best practices for instructional improvement. The school does not have systems in place to ensure that common planning time supports and results in continual improvements in instruction and overall school-wide practices. For example, the grade/subject teacher meeting observation revealed that although the staff discusses results of assessments, student behavior issues, and family contact plans, they do not discuss differentiated approaches to instruction or use of materials to improve student understanding and performance. In addition, based on classroom visits and reviews of lesson and unit plans there was no differentiation in instruction for struggling students or high-performing students. Teachers do not discuss instructional strategies, nor address differentiation for students based on data; as a result, students are not consistently receiving instruction that meets their needs.

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

- The school leader has made some strategic decisions to organize fiscal capital to support school improvement. The school uses the Read 180 Program and has a Saturday Institute open to all grades for students in need of reading and mathematics supports. The school leader reported reallocating funds to purchase content area reading materials to improve student performance in English language arts (ELA). Regarding human capital, the school leader does not link the hiring of personnel with student needs. The school leader asserted that he currently uses only one staff member to assist with Spanish translation services, since losing two non-core staff due to budget cuts. However, these services do not include French, which is also a dominant language for many families in the school. The school leader oversees the programming for students and teachers, but does not have a system that considers individual students' needs or supports when determining programming aimed at increasing student achievement. A review of documents showed, and staff reported, that the school has 60 students who earn high school credit through an accelerated visual arts course. In addition, the school supports three ensemble groups (band, orchestra, and chorus), junior varsity sports, two afterschool math competition groups, a national history day team, and the school newspaper. Review team classroom observations revealed that the school leader does not provide data support for staff teaching family and consumer sciences, reading, and technology education. The school leader's rigid approach to directing resources to address student, staff, and school needs limits the potential for improvement in instructional practices and academic performance for all student groups.

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 school leaders and staff accountable for continuous improvement.

- The school provided a sample of formal and informal teacher observations and feedback for IIT review. A schedule of the teacher observations conducted was provided by the school leader; the

Danielson rubric was used as the framework for these observations. A review of teacher observation feedback showed that the school leader and other administrators are inconsistent in using the Danielson rubric to provide feedback on teacher practices. A majority of feedback asked teachers to make modifications to the lesson content, but not to the instructional practices. None of the teacher feedback reports included comments related to the use of data. The lack of a system to provide teacher feedback that is inclusive of student performance data and instructional practices limits the information communicated to promote effective instructional practices, relevant professional development (PD) opportunities, and staff accountability for continuous overall school improvement.

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 provided unit plans reflective of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). In addition, the school uses district consensus maps, which target specific areas in each discipline, and across disciplines, that are to be addressed with consistency and flexibility in each school. However, inconsistent use of the consensus maps was used to develop daily lesson plans incorporating the CCLS shifts. As a result, students are not receiving the rigorous curriculum outlined in the CCLS.

Strengths:

All ratings for this Tenet are **Developing** 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 leader explained that the school has a curricular goal to evaluate how the school is progressing, according to the scope and sequence. He stated that he participates in district-facilitated monthly department meetings on CCLS implementation. Staff reported that they have received PD on the implementation of curricula and the use of the EngageNY modules for ELA and math. Staff also shared that the implementation of the CCLS has been a struggle and the implementation has created a high stress level for the entire school. Although the school leader stated the school is following the State’s implementation timeline, at the time of the visit he was unable to recall the number of units implemented in ELA and math, to date. The lack of an overall school plan for implementing the CCLS limits the school’s ability to facilitate and implement appropriately aligned CCLS curriculum.

3.3 **The school has 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.

- Document reviews found that the 12 district unit plans provided showed instructional support for alignment to the CCLS. However, at the school building level, a review of lesson plans showed that there is not a system to ensure that lesson plans are CCLS-aligned. In addition, documents provided did not indicate that the consensus maps supplied by the district are used or the information in the consensus maps leveraged within the lesson plans. The school leader was unable to share how he ensures that staff use or develop lesson plans from the maps. Without an accountability procedure to check for CCLS-aligned curriculum implementation and impact, the school cannot ensure that students receive a coherent curriculum targeting what students need to know and learn.

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.

- The school leader and staff shared that the school offers art, technology, and sports enrichment opportunities; however, such opportunities did not appear to align with the school’s curriculum. During interviews, staff reported that team meetings are a venue to talk about students, their class performance, and to confer about CCLS implementation. However, they also stated that grade level teams are disorganized with an unclear focus and purpose. During IIT observation of the grade-level team meeting, staff discussed student academic and social-emotional needs, but only collaborated on how to address social-emotional needs. In addition, there was no discussion of how to address these needs in an instructional setting. Finally, the meeting observed did not focus on lesson plan development or revisions to curriculum content. Without clear expectations and outcomes for team meetings that include discussions of curriculum content and implementation of instructional strategies in areas of deficiency, teachers are unable to effectively strategize to increase student achievement and improve instructional content and delivery.

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 staff analyze data using various tools provided by the school such as, I-Ready, Castle Learning, NYStart, and Read 180. Staff reported that the cycle for reviewing data is October, January, and June. However, at the time of the visit, no schedule of completed or planned data reviews was provided showing when teachers conducted data analysis on individual student progress. Teachers stated that analysis of individual student data is constantly performed in daily lessons. They explained that teachers work collaboratively by grade level on formative and summative assessments. During the grade/subject team meeting observed, staff discussed student performance results, but did not share the relevance of the data to inform instructional strategies. The review team saw no evidence of data-driven decision making based on student needs. As a result, a lack data use to inform instruction and improvements limits any strategic affect supporting gains in student achievement.

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	I
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Debriefing Statement: The school offers PD addressing instructional practices; however, lessons do not include high levels of engagement or use of data to drive instruction. Inconsistent use of data and limited student engagement does not promote student conceptual understanding of content and higher-order thinking.

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.

- The school leader reported that unit plans are developed after interim assessments are administered. However, a review of unit plans and classroom observations did not indicate that the results of the interim assessments informed the development of instructional planning. During classroom visits, the IIT observed inconsistent student engagement, differentiation, and academic rigor. Lessons were primarily teacher-directed, and offered few opportunities for students to experience high levels of engagement. None of the teacher observation feedback from school leaders included comments related to the use of data. Students were unable to articulate any established student achievement goals that teacher provided data-based feedback to the student would provide. The lack of a plan regarding data usage to inform instructional practices hinders the development of goal-oriented unit and lesson plans.

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.

- IIT review of unit plans provided by the school showed that 12 unit plans addressed the CCLS. However, during the visit the IIT reviewed lesson plans that used inconsistent formats and alignment to the CCLS. Documents reviewed indicated some teachers use resources provided by EngageNY to plan daily activities reflective of CCLS alignment and rigor. However, classrooms observed were primarily teacher-directed, and offered few opportunities for students to experience high levels of engagement. Questions posed in several classrooms garnered one or two-word responses from students. Some classrooms used the round robin strategy for reading, with limited follow-up questioning to stimulate deeper content understanding; other classrooms included no questioning at all. The IIT visited ten self-contained classrooms implementing modeling of task completion and self-monitoring strategies. In two classrooms visited, every student participated in checking sentence structure and use of vocabulary from word banks during a review of homework.

The IIT did not see differentiated instruction in a majority of the classrooms visited. The IIT noticed inconsistent implementation of CCLS instructional strategies in a majority of the classrooms and limited evidence of data analysis used in the creation of lessons. Varied instructional practices used in the same grade level and subject area classrooms limits the impact of CCLS strategies and curriculum, and therefore, the academic outcomes of students.

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 leader informed the IIT that staff shares “Words of Wisdom” with students every morning via handouts. Staff reported that Response to Intervention (RTI) referrals have tripled in the last year. The school has also implemented the Positive Behavior Improvement System (PBIS) model. However, in interviews conducted by the IIT, students and staff reported that there is an inconsistent application of PBIS relative to the safety conditions of the school. For example, students and staff shared that the school has an inconsistent use of the discipline policy for various negative behaviors; one student will get a phone call home, and another student will have no consequence for the same infraction. In addition, the IIT visited accelerated classrooms in science, math, and art, and observed minimal student engagement, leading students to engage in off-task behaviors. The inconsistent communication of behavioral expectations hinders positive student outcomes, effective student engagement, and the maintenance of a safe school environment.

4.5 **The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* 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 has and uses various data analysis tools, such as I-Ready, Castle Learning, NYStart, and Read 180. However, the school does not have a protocol and process for analyzing the data to inform instruction. According to the school leaders and staff, the school issues performance reports three times a year as part of the report card process, and progress reports every five weeks. Some teachers reported sending home more frequent subject-based progress reports. Based on a review of lesson plans and classroom visits, it is not evident that all teachers use data analysis results to develop explicit lesson plans to adjust instruction and foster increases in student achievement. This gap between data analysis and data use prevents students from receiving appropriate feedback and instruction in critical content areas.

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 student social and emotional growth, and a system to recognize student achievement that promotes student involvement through self-monitoring. However, an inconsistent application of classroom behavioral expectations and consequences affects the quality of learning for all students.

Strengths:

All ratings for this Tenet are **Developing** 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.

- The school leader reported that the school has several partnerships, such as the Huntington Youth Bureau, which offers counselor-run enrichment programs; the Tri-Community Youth Association (CYA), which provides an in-district boys and girls club; the Family Service League, which offers crisis intervention for students and families; and the Pederson-Krag Center, which provides one social worker onsite to handle counseling and offsite referrals from the school. The school did not share its system for referring students to these social-emotional support partners. According to the school leader, the school does not have established social-emotional goals or use data to identify student social-emotional needs. During the grade/subject team meeting observed, staff discussed the next steps in addressing the academic, social, and behavioral issues of students. However, there was no discussion addressing the meeting of such needs during instructional time or methods to revise instructional strategies. The lack of explicit social-emotional goals connected to a written service referral system limits student opportunity to receive high quality and targeted social-emotional supports that positively affect student academic achievement.

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.

- According to school leaders, the district has improved its safety plan for the school building. Staff has received PD in RTI and the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA). Staff reported that the My Learning Plan online platform allows them to select PD from a menu of options that includes topics related to supporting students with their social and emotional issues. However, according to school leaders, the school does not have a vision that includes development of the social and emotional health of students. Additionally, the IIT found that the school does not use data to link trends in academic performance and instructional practices to the social-emotional health of students. The lack of an articulated vision for students' social and emotional developmental health, and the lack of a systematic plan for using data to connect academic performance with social-emotional issues of students prevents teachers, school leaders, and student support services from making an impact on student performance and well-being. Staff explained that many students are leaving the district because the school and district cannot meet their needs. Minimal staff for student support and the lack of data collection linking students' social and emotional development with academic progress limits progress and growth in student social-emotional health and academic achievement.

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, parents, teachers and school leaders reported that the school is safe. Teachers shared that their classrooms are open all day, allowing students the opportunity throughout the day to receive extra help. However, it was not evident to the IIT that safety policies support teaching and learning in the classroom. Interviews did not provide evidence of a shared sense of ownership by teachers and school leaders. For example, students and staff shared concerns that if an incident occurs in the hallway during a class period, there is no one available to help. Parents, students, and staff reported that emergency phones in the hallways are not helpful. The school recently added two security guards, installed a buzzer at the main entrance door, and separated the seventh and eighth graders, which students and teachers reported created more order in the school hallways. No one interviewed could state an understanding of the school leader’s mission and vision for the school as it relates to having a safer school environment. As a result, the school does not have an effective strategy for staff, students, and parents to have meaningful connections that support a safe and positive school environment.

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 leader reported that he does not have a system for holding teachers accountable for using data to inform instruction. According to teachers and school leaders, the school does not use data to respond to students’ social and emotional developmental health needs. Staff explained that students who are not performing well have mandatory extra help sessions after school. Teachers must meet with students identified as struggling twice a month to check in on student progress. Without a formal structured system for assessing, referring, tracking, and transitioning student support needs, the school cannot support the academic and social success of all students.

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
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Debriefing Statement: There is a welcoming relationship between families and the school. The school has multiple methods for communicating with families regarding the progress of students. However, it is unclear how the entire school community uses a cohesive approach to collaborate toward improving student academic success.

Strengths:

6.2 The school has 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 has a welcoming atmosphere, and uses various modes of communication to inform parents about their students’ progress. The school leader, staff, students, and parents reported that families receive information via email, telephone calls, progress reports, the Parent Portal, and

through parent-teacher meetings. A full-time instructional staff person provides translation services in Spanish. Verbal translation services are also provided in Haitian Creole, when requested. Parents stated that if they have a problem they know with whom to communicate (e.g., school leader or guidance counselors). Students and parents reported that although parents do not have specific volunteer assignments, they feel welcome to volunteer in the school. A welcoming atmosphere encourages family engagement and partnership, which leads to student improvement.

Areas for Improvement:

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

- The school did not share any evidence showing an effective method for reciprocal communication between teachers, families, and community stakeholders. Staff shared that the school addresses student needs in the Individual Student Team (IST) meetings. However, the school did not provide evidence of these meetings during document review and staff interviews. Teachers explained that the school staff contact parents upon referring students for RTI or special education services. However, it was not clear how the school communicates that students must participate in mandatory extra help sessions. Parents shared that they can contact the school leader or guidance counselors with any issues they have within the school. However, parents were unable to attest to consistent communication with teachers. One parent shared that her child had an issue in the classroom, but was unaware of the incident until the situation escalated and the school leader became involved. An inconsistent approach to family communication hinders the school's ability to foster consistent reciprocal communication with its teachers, families, and community stakeholders. As a result, the school and its community are unable to effectively work together to support efforts to increase student achievement.

6.4 The school has received a rating of *Developing* 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 leader stated that he initiated a relationship with a neighboring non-focus district that has similar demographics, performance, and structure. The purpose was to identify areas of best practices and potentially learn useful improvement methods and instructional practices. Documents reviewed by the IIT highlighted the school's PD on family engagement, which was provided by the district to the school. Parents reported that the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) hosts a test preparation night, where the school leader and guidance counselors discuss exams that students take during the school year and arrangements the school has made to prepare students to excel. Staff interviews confirmed that the school leader and guidance counselors are the primary contacts for parents. The lack of a targeted plan for family engagement diminishes the role of families in supporting student improvement.

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 communicates student achievement data to its community through email, team meetings, and phone calls to parents. In addition, they provide updates through quarterly progress reports, EdModo, an educational social networking site, e-Board, the Parent Portal, and at parent meetings. Although the school shares its data, families do not receive training or explicit explanations on how to interpret the shared data. Therefore, the school does not share data in a way that empowers and encourages families to use the information to support their students. Parents and students explained that the school sends out progress reports, and hosts two parent-teacher nights where families can ask teachers questions about the performance of students. Parents also reported that the PTA hosts a test preparation night. However, documents reviewed by the IIT did not indicate that these meetings were used to teach or train families to analyze or interpret data to assist students. Without explicit training to assist families in understanding and assessing student performance data, families have limited ability to support students effectively.

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 clearly defined, written, and shared mission aimed at achieving school-wide goals aligned with a school-wide vision.
- 2.3: Develop a system for consistently using data results to examine and improve school-wide practices to improve student performance.
- 2.4: Develop a strategic and balanced approach to using fiscal, human and programmatic resources to address stakeholder and school needs toward increasing improvement in instructional practices. Include targeted grade-level student performance for all student groups.
- 2.5: Implement a teacher feedback system that communicates an expectation for effective instructional practices, germane PD opportunities, and the use of student performance data. Ensure the feedback system connects to an accountability system for continuous overall 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: Develop a school plan for implementing the CCLS that anticipates and addresses the change process, but facilitates appropriately aligned CCLS curriculum across grades and subject areas.
- 3.3: Within the written implementation plan, include a method or tool for teachers to crosswalk with their lesson plans, as a self-check, for CCLS alignment, to ensure that students receive a coherent curriculum targeting what they need to know and learn at their respective grade levels.
- 3.4: Develop clear written expectations and outcomes for grade-level team meetings. Include critical areas that must be covered, such as curriculum content, data analysis, and instructional strategies, to ensure that student needs are addressed and progress targets are met.
- 3.5: Within the written implementation plan, include a method or tool for teachers to use data within their lesson plans to inform and improve instruction, to sustain a focused action plan for greater improvement outcomes.

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 a written plan for the school that consists of a method or tool for school leader use to monitor the use of data by teachers to inform instructional practices and strategies, to garner goal-oriented lesson plans.
- 4.3: Create consistent grade level and/or subject area lesson plan expectations. The plan must allow teachers to explain instructional strategies to ensure that students at different levels of understanding have multiple points of access and engagement.

- 4.4: Develop a tracking system that monitors student referrals and consequences for all behavioral interventions. It must measure consistency with rewards, consequences, expectations, communication, and outcomes, to ensure the school enhances student engagement and responsiveness.
- 4.5: Develop clearly written expectations that include a method or tool for teachers to provide consistent and continuous data-based feedback to students and their families, to promote and sustain a focused action plan for greater improvement outcomes.

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: Develop a written referral plan that includes a transitional system to address the needs of students, track progress, and measure outcomes. Ensure the school sustains social and emotional developmental health progress.
- 5.3: Create a data team to analyze and correlate data throughout the school. Develop a school-wide systematic plan for data usage that allows each area of student support (academic, behavioral, social, and emotional) to interconnect to achieve the vision and address critical areas for improvement. Develop written operation procedures prior to the loss of any staff, so operations will not be limited and any progress to address the social-emotional health and behavior of all students will be maintained.
- 5.4: Develop a strategy to ensure that staff, students, and parents have meaningful connections to support a safe and positive school environment. Create venues for reciprocal communication of feedback on the roles of stakeholders in maintaining school safety.
- 5.5: Develop a written referral plan that includes a transitional system to ensure the school addresses all aspects of student academic and social 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:

- 6.3: Create written communication protocols to establish clear home-school partnerships, and to communicate the need for family involvement to improve student learning.
- 6.4: Develop a method or tool for all staff that includes frequent check-ins with students and families to foster effective plans with teachers, families, and community stakeholders in a consistent manner. Monitor and revise, as needed, so the school can close the communication gap and families can participate in and support efforts toward student improvement.
- 6.5: In partnership with the PTA, create student data (academic, behavioral, social, and emotional) understanding and analysis training sessions. Provide families with explicit training for the skills needed to participate actively, advocate, and support the school in improving student learning and overall school success.