



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	41-23-00-01-0023
School Name	James H. Donovan Middle School
School Address	1701 Noyes Street
District Name	Utica City School District
School Leader	Ann Marie Palladino
Dates of Review	June 10-12, 2013
School Accountability Status	Focus School
Type of Review	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet											
Grade Configuration	7-8	Total Enrollment	734	SIG Recipient	<input type="checkbox"/>	Title 1 Population	71.4 %	Attendance Rate	93.3%		
Free Lunch	78%	Reduced Lunch	7%			Limited English Proficient	16%	Students with Disabilities	22%		
Number of English Language Learner Classes											
#Transitional Bilingual	0		#Dual Language	0							
Number of Special Education Classes											
#Self-Contained			#Consultant Teaching			#Integrated Collaborative Teaching	16				
#Resource Room	12										
Number Special Classes											
#Visual Arts	0	#Music	14	#Drama	0	#Foreign Language	24	#Dance	0	#CTE	27
Racial/Ethnic Origin											
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	Black or African American	31%	Hispanic or Latino	18.5%	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	17%	White	31.2%	Multi-racial	2.2 %
Personnel											
Years Principal Assigned to School	3		# of Assistant Principals	2		# of Deans	0		# of Counselors / Social Workers	2/.5	
Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0%		Teaching Out of Certification	0%		Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.	.3%		Average Teacher Absences	5	
Credit Accumulation (High School Only) and Performance Rates											
% of 1 st yr. students who earned 10+ credits			% of 2 nd yr. students who earned 10+ credits			% of 3 rd yr. students who earned 10+ credits			4 Year Graduation Rate	NA	
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	NP		Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	NP		Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	NP		6 Year Graduation Rate	NA	

NP = Not Provided

Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA			
	American Indian or Alaska Native	X	Black or African American
X	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
X	White		Multi-racial
	Students with Disabilities	X	Limited English Proficient
X	Economically Disadvantaged		All Students
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Math			
	American Indian or Alaska Native	X	Black or African American
X	Hispanic or Latino	X	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
X	White		Multi-racial
	Students with Disabilities	X	Limited English Proficient
X	Economically Disadvantaged		All Students
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science			
	American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American
X	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
X	White		Multi-racial
X	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
x	Economically Disadvantaged		All Students
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective			
X	Limited English Proficiency		

SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE SCHOOL:

1. Common Core Learning Standards, research-based strategies promoting critical thinking/problem solving, differentiated provided at least 8 professional development opportunities in the areas of student engagement and parent communication.
2. All teachers will utilize interim assessment data to drive instruction at least three times per year. School-Based Inquiry Team will monitor interim data provided by team leaders during monthly meetings.
3. All parents will have an opportunity to participate in school life and support their child's learning.
4. By September 20, an Anti-Bullying Committee will develop a program that will teach social and emotional competencies to students.
5. By September 20, a Parent Advisory Committee will develop a plan that to ensure parents have the instruction, and Close Reads are incorporated in lesson plans, which will be monitored by school leaders via at least 6 Instructional Walks, 2 formal observations, and weekly collection of lesson plans.

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	The school leader ensures that the school community shares the Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) goals/mission, and long-term vision inclusive of core values that address the priorities outlined in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP).			X	
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.			X	
2.4	The school leader has a fully functional system in place aligned to the district's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) to conduct targeted and frequent observation and track progress of teacher practices based on student data and feedback.		X		
2.5	Leaders effectively use evidence-based systems and structures to examine and improve critical individual and school-wide practices as defined in the SCEP (student achievement, curriculum and teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health).		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 ensures and supports the quality implementation of a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.			X	
3.3	Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans used include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.			X	
3.4	The school leader and teachers have developed a comprehensive plan for teachers to partner within and across all grades and subjects to create interdisciplinary curricula targeting the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities.			X	
3.5	Teachers implement a comprehensive system for using formative and summative assessments for strategic short and long-range curriculum planning that involves student reflection, tracking of, and ownership of learning.			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	School and teacher leaders ensure that instructional practices and strategies are organized around annual, unit, and daily lesson plans that address all student goals and needs.			X	
4.3	Teachers provide coherent, and appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students.			X	
4.4	Teachers and students work together to implement a program/plan to create a learning environment that is responsive to students' varied experiences and tailored to the strengths and needs of all students.			X	
4.5	Teachers inform planning and foster student participation in their own learning process by using a variety of summative and formative data sources (e.g., screening, interim measures, and progress monitoring).			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 leader establishes overarching systems and understandings of how to support and sustain student social and emotional developmental health and academic success.		X		
5.3	The school articulates and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is aligned to a curriculum or program that provides learning experiences and a safe and healthy school environment for families, teachers, and students.			X	
5.4	All school stakeholders' work together to develop a common understanding of the importance of their contributions in creating a school community that is safe, conducive to learning, and fostering of a sense of ownership for providing social and emotional developmental health supports tied to the school's vision.			X	
5.5	The school leader and student support staff work together with teachers to establish structures to support the use of data to respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs.			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 leader ensures that regular communication with students and families fosters their high expectations for student academic achievement.			X	
6.3	The school engages in effective planning and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders so that student strength and needs are identified and used to augment learning.			X	
6.4	The school community partners with families and community agencies to			X	

	promote and provide training across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.				
6.5	The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.			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 a vision and mission based on a set of school-wide goals that focus on improving student performance on the New York State (NYS) English language arts (ELA) and mathematics assessments, decreasing suspensions, and increasing attendance. The school has some structures in place to improve practices to support student outcomes in these critical areas. However, the vision, mission, and school-wide goals are not always clearly understood and shared across the school community, which limits student achievement and school improvement.

Strengths:

2.4 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* 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 actively managed resources to create, improve, and sustain programs to advance the school-wide goals of increased student achievement and an improved school experience for students. The school leader reported that she used fiscal resources to support professional development (PD) for teachers and academic support and social and emotional health interventions for students. Documents examined by the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) confirmed that an extended-learning time program is in place for high-needs students. The program includes all identified student subgroups: students with disabilities, English language learners (ELLs), Asian students, and Black students, and students scoring at Level 1 or 2 on the ELA or mathematics assessments in the previous academic year. The school leader’s coordinated and effective use of resources to address school needs contributes to continued school improvement and achievement of school goals.

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

- The school leader has a functioning and effective system in place to conduct teacher observations, monitor teacher practices, and provide teachers with appropriate feedback and PD. The school leader reported that she conducts regular instructional walks and provides feedback to teachers based on her observations. The IIT noted evidence of the instructional walks and feedback in the teachers’ Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) folders. During interviews with the IIT, teachers stated that the school leaders conduct required observations, provide feedback, assist with planning, and answer e-mails. The school leader and the School-Based Inquiry Team developed a yearlong PD program focused on areas of need identified during teacher observations and instructional walks. A review of the program plan indicated goals, objectives, and strategies for providing PD, as well as a timeline for PD activities. The school leader stated that Madison-Oneida

BOCES provided teachers with PD and turnkey training in the “Close Read” process. The Student Support Team reported that Madison-Oneida BOCES trainers provided PD in the following areas: Response to Intervention (RtI), active engaged learning techniques, APPRs, student learning objectives, and evaluator training. The IIT examined reports that listed the attendance at each PD activity and how each was tied to the school goals. Targeted and timely teacher observation and feedback, active progress monitoring of teacher practices, and the availability of PD to support identified needs enables the school leader to hold staff accountable for continuous 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 leader has a written vision and mission statement and has defined school-wide goals in the areas of academics, behavior, attendance, and parent involvement and engagement. The vision and goals are shared with staff and at parent meetings. However, the IIT found that they are not widely known by all constituents. Document review by the IIT confirmed that the school leader has communicated the vision, mission, and goals to staff members and established a plan for achieving the goals. Meeting agendas and minutes indicated that the school holds regular monthly staff and School-Based Inquiry Team meetings and that team leaders review and monitor goals. While Parents for Donovan meeting agendas included information about the school-wide goals, the IIT found that the school vision is not widely known and understood by parents. During the IIT visit, teachers identified increasing family and community involvement, improving ELA and mathematics examination scores, decreasing the suspension rate, increasing use of data analysis, complying with APPR process, and implementing Close Reading with literacy across the curriculum as their school goals. Because not all constituents know or understand the school’s vision, a sense of urgency about achieving school-wide goals is limited.

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

- The school leaders have some systems in place to evaluate and promote progress toward school-wide goals; however, the systems are not interconnected. The school uses software to track student behavior and holds regular School-Based Inquiry Team and Instructional Support Team meetings. Documents reviewed by the IIT and interview responses indicated that systems to evaluate and improve school-wide practices are not fully developed. Staff reported that the School-Based Inquiry Team meets to monitor data and improve instruction. In interviews, teachers stated to the IIT that School-Based Inquiry Team discussions about data have resulted in curriculum revisions and the

identification of students in need of extra help. Staff reported that the grade-level Instructional Support Teams meet monthly to discuss behavioral records and then collaborate with the guidance department to address behavioral and attendance issues. The Student Support Team reported that the guidance department checks on students quarterly, monitoring failing grades, providing avenues for academic support, and following up at home. Student Support Team members reported that the school has implemented a behavior intervention plan that provides parents of approximately 15 identified students with behavior-monitoring sheets containing teachers' feedback. Consequently, the lack of comprehensive school-wide evidence-based systems to examine and improve practices in areas of critical need impedes progress toward meeting mission critical goals.

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.

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: The school has integrated teacher-developed Close Reading and CCLS deliverables into instruction and will implement the CCLS modules, as they are made available. Instructional walks are conducted by school leaders to monitor implementation of CCLS curriculum. The school is providing PD on instructional practices to assist teachers in meeting the needs of all students. Effective use of data and data analysis is being discussed to identify and provide support to students who are not meeting standards. The lack of full implementation of the CCLS limits students' exposure to learning needed for success,

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 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in Pre K-12.

- The school leadership and staff provide support for developing curricula that aligns with the CCLS in some subject areas. There is a particular focus on the implementation and monitoring of the district-approved ELA curriculum and the integration of Close Reading techniques into instruction. The school presented no evidence to the IIT about developing curricula that support the CCLS in other subjects. Teachers reported that the school leader has provided numerous opportunities for PD focused on developing student learning objectives and planning curricula that support the CCLS. English as a second language (ESL) and Sheltered ESL teachers reported they attended two weeks of summer PD in writing curricula that support the CCLS and the Close Reading strategies and have opportunities for continuing PD. ELA teachers reported having completed twenty days of PD on the CCLS during the school year. ESL and art teachers indicated that they also sought PD opportunities on Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol and additional Close Reading strategies. Reports indicated that teachers had participated in PD on the following topics: using higher-order thinking

skills in the classroom, differentiated instruction, and the implementation of the CCLS. One Sheltered ESL instructor received training in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol. The IIT reviewed numerous Close Reading binders containing evidence of a school-wide Close Reading initiative as part of CCLS implementation. An instructional coach is available in the teacher workroom to work directly with teachers. However, the school has not established a clear system for providing follow up on PD. The Student Support Team stated that they need additional support from the school leader in curriculum map development and scheduled common planning time to facilitate curriculum development and implementation. The school leader reported that she conducts instructional walks to monitor and support CCLS curricula. Instructional Walk sheets provided to the IIT and detailed lesson plans showed the implementation of the CCLS in ELA classrooms. In addition, reviews of student work samples indicated that Close Reading activities occur in all classrooms. The inconsistent implementation of curricula that support the CCLS is creating an uneven academic experience for some students, which limits student learning.

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.

- Some teachers use lesson plans with strategies reflecting the CCLS. However, in many classes, lesson plans do not reflect the CCLS or include complex text. The IIT observed ELA teachers discussing CCLS and Close Reading across the school, and during an ELA team meeting, teachers shared questioning strategies and techniques appropriate to fiction and non-fiction reading selections. The school leader reported that common planning time is now built into special education staff schedules. The school leader stated that one of the school goals was for all teachers to deliver one Close Reading strategy in the fall and another in the spring. Teachers interviewed confirmed this goal and shared how they accomplished this in their classrooms. Students interviewed reported to the IIT that Close Reading takes place in all classes and provided samples of their work. These reports also indicated that flip charts were distributed to teachers for use with students in the development of higher-order thinking skills. Two of three sheltered English classes use Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol strategies, such as vocabulary development, underlining key words, and connecting visuals with vocabulary and concepts. However, only one of five lessons observed by the IIT clearly reflected the CCLS and used complex materials, such as reading passages incorporating Close Reading strategies. Teachers in two ESL classrooms used Close Reading strategies, with one lesson devoted to understanding Close Reading strategies for the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). The inconsistent development and use of lesson plans that support the CCLS, limit teachers' ability to stimulate higher-order thinking and deep conceptual content knowledge needed for academic success.

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.

- Scheduled meeting times for teachers to collaborate in the development of curricula that integrate

the arts, technology and other enrichment opportunities are limited. During classroom observations, the IIT found little evidence that teachers incorporate the arts, technology and other enrichment opportunities in their lessons. The Student Support Team stated that staff needs additional time dedicated to vertical team meetings and a scheduled common planning time to facilitate curriculum development and implementation. ESL teachers reported meeting horizontally and vertically across grades to address CCLS alignment and rigor, while sheltered ESL teachers reported having only informal contact with ESL instructors. While two ESL teachers stated that they were able to meet formally twice a month, and informally almost daily, to discuss curriculum and CCLS, such collaboration was not common. Professional Learning Community (PLC) reports from music, technology, home and careers, physical education, and art classes demonstrate the disconnect between instruction in core content areas and content areas without standardized testing. In three of four classrooms visited by the IIT, students were not given the opportunity to discover, create or communicate information in such a way as to develop their own individual technology skills, whereas other visits showed students exposed to a standards-based curriculum using SMART Boards and overheads. Consequently, the lack of structured common planning time and systematic collaboration among teachers to integrate the arts, technology, and other enrichment areas into the curriculum hinders students' exposure to additional learning opportunities needed for their success.

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 leader collects and distributes data from formative and summative assessments to inform instruction. However, data are not used consistently to identify patterns of student learning or to develop plans for student growth. The school leader stated to the IIT that the School-Based Inquiry Team, which includes seven monitors and teachers from across all grade levels and subject areas, meets formally once a month. Meeting agendas and minutes examined by the IIT showed that meetings take place and data are analyzed and used to inform instruction. Teachers reported that the school uses i-Ready, an online diagnostic and instruction tool, to provide reading assessment data three times yearly to inform instruction. In addition, quarterly "data days" are scheduled to discuss mathematics, ELA, and science results, and Developmental Reading Assessments and running records are used to inform classroom instruction, remediation, and Academic Intervention Services (AIS). Teachers receive ongoing information regarding progress on student learning objectives and ten-week assessments to identify student needs. The school leader reported that re-teaching of content is planned using gap-analysis data based on student performance on the NYS assessments in ELA and mathematics. Because data are not consistently used to identify patterns of student learning and map out paths for student growth, teachers' ability to engage in strategic action-planning that informs instruction is limited, which impedes greater student achievement outcomes.

Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions: Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn, so that all students and pertinent subgroups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking, and achievement.	Tenet Rating	D
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Debriefing Statement: Teachers receive PD to improve lesson plans to reflect the CCLS and increase student engagement and inquiry. Classroom visits showed varying levels of instruction, higher-order questioning, and differentiation. Teacher-directed lessons offer few opportunities for students to be engaged in strategic instruction at deep conceptual levels to achieve the targeted learning goals.

Strengths:

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

Areas for Improvement:

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

- While strategies and practices designed to meet the instructional needs of various groups of students have been put in place in the school, they are not incorporated consistently in teachers' lesson plans. The school leader reported to the IIT that teachers use a lesson plan template that provides space for differentiated-instructional planning. At an ELA team meeting, teachers discussed the use of Close Reading and the challenging nature of multiple-choice questions but did not discuss scaffolding for ELLs or differentiation of instruction for students with disabilities. In a sheltered social studies and science classroom, the teacher differentiated instruction using visuals, underlining, and targeting specific vocabulary. Only one ESL and one sheltered English class used Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol strategies and journal writing. Other strategies observed by the IIT include use of background knowledge, building on previous learning, comprehensible input, underlining key concepts, practice and application, and interactions such as "networking." Because lesson plans do not consistently incorporate instructional strategies that meet the needs of all students, especially ELLs and students with disabilities, the ability of teachers to promote high levels of student engagement and inquiry is limited.

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.

- Instruction neither consistently supports the CCLS nor provides students with multiple points of access. The Student Support Team stated to the IIT that they need additional support from the school leader in curriculum map development. During classroom visits, not all teachers used instructional practices that support the CCLS, develop higher-order thinking skills, promote student-led discovery, or formative instruction. In one of five classes visited by the IIT, the teacher stimulated student thinking by using higher-level questioning and content complexity. In one ESL

class, instruction reflected the CCLS and the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol. During the Student Support Team interview, staff reported that the school employs push-in and co-teaching models, but that scheduling is a challenge for ESL and special education teachers and students. Consequently, the inconsistent alignment of instruction to the CCLS and lack of instructional differentiation result in limited opportunities for multiple points of access for students to achieve instructional outcomes and related goals.

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

- The school has established expectations regarding student behavior, and there is a common understanding and recognition of acceptable and safe behaviors in classrooms. However, teachers do not routinely stimulate student thinking by asking questions that relate to materials with complex text. The IIT observed expected behaviors posted in most classrooms. Documents examined by the IIT indicated that a school-wide management plan is distributed to, and signed by students and their parents, and that school leaders review the district code of conduct and the Dignity for All Students Act with all staff and students. During classroom visitations, the IIT found that not all teachers used instructional practices that promoted higher-order thinking skills or were tailored to meet the diverse needs of students. In one of five classes visited by the IIT, the teacher stimulated student thinking by using high-level questioning and content complexity. Because instruction is not consistently tailored to the strengths and needs of all students, high levels of student engagement and inquiry are limited.

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

- The school leaders provide teachers with data from a variety of sources. The school uses on-line software to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses. Teachers, however, do not consistently use data to adjust student groupings and instructional strategies and provide feedback to students. According to the school leader, students are assigned to AIS in mathematics based on data from an online diagnostic and instruction tool, i-Ready. Teachers reported that they analyze i-Ready program data and provide individualized and continuous support to students, as needed. In a resource room visited by the IIT, five students worked independently at computers using i-Ready software. In other classrooms, students were observed taking a variety of mathematics and reading quizzes to assess knowledge, understanding, comprehension, and fluency. In four of five classrooms observed by the IIT, there was no evidence of data-based plans for student grouping or instructional strategies. The IIT observed that ESL teachers used NYSESLAT scores to establish groupings. The inconsistent use of data-driven plans for instruction, student grouping, or student feedback impedes student participation 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 for all constituents.	Tenet Rating	D
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Debriefing Statement: The school community has a structure in place to support the social and emotional growth of students. Although the school collects data reflecting student social and emotional developmental health, the school does not have a comprehensive plan for the implementation of effective strategies aimed at reducing suspensions in the school. As a result, the quality of the learning environment for the school community is negatively impacted.

Strengths:

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

- The systems to address students’ social and emotional developmental health are primarily concerned with conduct issues. The school is initiating an RtI model and collects and monitors school climate data. The school partners with community organizations to support the needs of ELLs and refugee students. School-wide codes of conduct with a clear referral procedure are in place, and a summary of the school’s code of conduct is distributed to all students with the goal of decreasing disciplinary referrals and suspensions. Gear Up Student Groups and Advantage After-School Student Groups support students in dealing with problems. The school leader stated that the Instructional Support Team is transitioning to an RtI model to identify and support students with academic and behavioral needs. Documents indicated that the School-Based Inquiry Team collects and monitors school performance and climate data, with a particular focus on students with disabilities and ELLs, and that teachers of self-contained classrooms are expected to use daily behavior charts. The school has an ongoing partnership with the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees to support families in need of translation services, and ESL teachers regularly use the Refugee Center as a resource for supporting non-English speaking students and to seek resources to support refugee families. The expectations, systems, and partnerships that the school has in place enhance the school’s ability to meet the social and emotional needs of students.

Areas for Improvement:

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

- The school does not have a comprehensive vision and system for teaching, supporting, and measuring all aspects of students’ social and emotional developmental health. The IIT did not find evidence that the school offers PD that builds adult capacity to support students’ social and emotional health. Examination of documents by the IIT indicated that the school’s management

plan is distributed to, and signed by students and their parents, and that the district code of conduct and the Dignity for All Students Act are reviewed with all staff and students. School leaders reported that staff is expected to enforce the code of conduct and posted school-wide rules: “Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe.” Teachers have received PD on RtI and the Dignity for All Students Act. The absence of a comprehensive school-wide vision and system for supporting social and emotional developmental health limits the school’s ability to build a safer and healthier environment for all constituents.

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.

- The Student Support Team reported that they perceived that students generally feel safe in the building, and that hallway safety passes are given to students who report feeling unsafe in congested hallways. However, some students and parents reported that the school has problems with fighting and bullying incidents. Students indicated that fights that start outside of the building are sometimes brought into the school. They indicated this occurred even though students are aware of the student code of conduct. Some parents interviewed by the IIT noted that more control was needed in the hallways. Teachers did not clearly articulate their role in promoting students’ social and emotional health, and parents were not able to describe how the school’s work is linked to the social and emotional health of children. Stakeholders’ inconsistent feelings of safety and the lack of understanding of constituent roles regarding social and emotional health limits more positive student outcomes.

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

- The school has a data team, and teachers reported that school leaders maintain discipline data and intervention reports for at-risk students. However, there is no indication that the data team uses data to coordinate responses to students’ social and emotional developmental health needs. The IIT did not find evidence that school leaders or teachers use data or intervention outcomes to effectively address student needs. The lack of expectations and training regarding teacher and staff use of data to respond to students’ social and emotional developmental health needs hinders the schools ability to help students become academically and socially successful.

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: The school is a welcoming place, with a parent organization and two parent liaisons. However, not all parents are engaged with the school. Some steps have been initiated to provide translation services for families to increase communication and parent participation. Consequently, not all parents are able to support the progress and well-being of their children.

Strengths:

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

Areas for Improvement:

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

- While some parents reported feeling welcome at the school, parent participation is low. In interviews with the IIT, parents reported that they feel welcome in the school and described their relationship with the school as trusting and respectful. One of the parents interviewed by the IIT reported that although her family feels welcome at the school, she can only communicate with the principal if an interpreter is present. The school guidance counselor stated that an orientation process for new families might be helpful. The school leader reported that she has a plan in place to increase parental involvement in school-wide initiatives and decision-making processes. Parents stated to the IIT that there is minimal parental involvement in school-wide functions, although some parents have participated in the parent-teacher organization, book fairs, and other events. The Student Support Team reported to the IIT that the school struggles to achieve greater parental participation in school activities. The school has a Title I Parent Engagement Program and holds joint Parents for Donovan/Shared Decision Making Team meetings. Teachers indicated that two parent liaisons, acting as part of the Instructional Support Team, were very involved in getting children to school and tackling attendance issues. While the school is welcoming to families who are more visible and take the initiative to be involved, there are groups of parents who are not engaging with the school, which limits their ability to support student success.

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' strengths and needs are identified and used to augment learning.

- The school's efforts to promote communication between the school and families are limited, particularly for non-English speaking families. The school communicates with families through several media, including the School Messenger notification system and an online parent portal. The school leader reported that quarterly report cards are mailed home to parents, and AIS progress reports are sent home to parents every five weeks and must be signed by the parents and returned to the school. Limited translation of documents hampers communication with families who are not proficient in English. The school makes limited efforts to acknowledge the diversity of the community. The IIT observed no visible celebrations of diversity in the hallways or at afterschool activities. The school guidance counselor stated that there is limited understanding of families whose native language is not English. The school leader stated that she has allocated resources to the school library for the purchase of multilingual titles to support ELL students. Review of requisitions and library circulation records by the IIT indicated that the school purchased these titles

and students borrow them. The Student Support Team reported that district-generated memos are translated and that AIS meetings always have a translator present. ESL teachers reported that some translation services are provided, but the school district itself does not provide translation of materials and documents. The Student Support Team stated that parents have access to computers at the Refugee Center to view information pertaining to their child's education, school events, and parental involvement and educational opportunities; however, materials are not translated. Parents interviewed by the IIT reported that they receive calendars, newsletters, progress reports, and pre-recorded calls from the school, but communication is often sporadic and more translations would be helpful. One parent of an ESL student indicated that translated materials are not provided, while another stated that information is received but is never translated. One family whose native language is not English reported that they are able to communicate with teachers regarding their children's progress and that they understand progress reports and report cards, but they do not understand other materials sent home. Another parent reported that parents would be more visible at the school and participate in more school events if an interpreter were always available. Another parent reported that she did not understand the school's expectations for dropping off her children, how to support her children's learning, or what options are available to her children, specifically related to afterschool tutoring or other teacher communications. The absence of programs to acknowledge diversity and the lack of translation services hampers reciprocal communication with some families, which limits parents' ability to identify their children's strengths and needs to augment learning.

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 has formed partnerships with community organizations to provide services to students. Participation in these programs is limited by lack of communication with families and lack of PD for teachers on developing partnerships with families. The Student Support Team reported that the school collaborates with outside agencies to offer programs, such as Young Scholars (Utica College), the Gear Up Program (Mohawk Community College), the Advantage afterschool program, and Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Students can access grade eight summer offerings through Mohawk Community College. The school leader indicated that the Young Scholars program supports expanded learning for student success; a review of the roster of participants and program brochures by the IIT indicated student participation in these programs. The school leader also reported resources, such as a confidential health clinic and a Best Buddies program. Sheltered ESL teachers, ESL teachers, and the guidance counselor reported that there is a strong connection to the Mohawk Valley Refugee Center, which arranges translators for teachers. A parent of an ESL student noted that information regarding community resources available to families is very limited. The PD plan and teacher binders showed no evidence that staff is receiving PD on how to seek partnerships with families and community organizations. Limited school outreach to connect families and community agencies and the lack of PD for staff on the development of partnerships with parents and the community hinders support for student success.

6.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The entire school

shares data in a way that empowers and encourages families to use and understand data to promote dialogue between parents, students and school constituents centered on learning and success.

- The school provides few opportunities for families to understand the information on school and student performance provided to them. The IIT observed grading policies and the student handbook on the district website, which is accessible to parents. However, the school provided no evidence to the IIT that it provides workshops or other learning opportunities for parents to understand school and student data. Parents interviewed by the IIT reported that student data needs to be explained more thoroughly. ESL teachers and families with ESL students reported that the school needs to overcome language barriers to enable parents to understand student data and support student learning. The lack of efforts by the school to help families understand student and school data impedes parents' ability to advocate on behalf of their children's learning and success.

Recommendations:

Tenet 2: School Leader Practices and Decisions

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

- 2.2: Ensure that school staff and families review the vision and have an opportunity to suggest changes. Ensure that the goals are specific, measurable, ambitious, results oriented, and timely (SMART), and align the goals with the vision. Communicate the vision and goals to all stakeholders to ensure a shared sense of urgency regarding student achievement.
- 2.3: Ensure that systems for analyzing outcomes are dynamic, adaptive, interconnected and are used to inform practices. Ensure, through PD and monitoring, that all teachers use evidence-based practices that foster student progress and achievement. Establish feedback loops to continuously evaluate practices.

Tenet 3: Curriculum Development and Support

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

- 3.2: Ensure that school leaders provide teachers the necessary resources—PD, materials, and collaboration time—to develop and implement curricula that support the CCLS in all subjects. Ensure, through monitoring and PD, that staff use clear, descriptive units of study that support the standards and consider what students need to know.
- 3.3: Ensure that the schedule provides meeting time for teachers to collaboratively create and examine curriculum unit plans that support the CCLS. Ensure, through PD and monitoring, that teachers use pacing calendars and unit plans that support the CCLS and expose students to a progression of sequenced complex materials. Ensure, through PD and monitoring, that teachers use lesson plans that promote higher-order thinking skills and help students analyze information.
- 3.4: Ensure that teachers across grades meet together and with special area teachers to build a curriculum that exposes students to the arts, technology, and other enrichment subjects.
- 3.5: Revise the data system to be user friendly so teachers can more effectively use data to drive instruction. Ensure, through PD and monitoring, that instructional staff uses data to assess school effectiveness, identify student needs, identify patterns of student learning, and adapt instruction.

Tenet 4: Teacher Practices and Decisions

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

- 4.2: Ensure, through PD and monitoring, that teachers develop and use plans that are informed by data and provide accommodations for students with disabilities and ELLs. Ensure that teachers set grade-level goals for all groups of students and create short- and long-term goals based on the grade-level goals. Ensure that teachers implement instructional interventions that encourage student participation in their own learning experience.

- 4.3: Ensure, through PD and monitoring, that teachers use instructional practices that are appropriately aligned to CCLS curriculum maps and provide multiple points of access for all students to achieve targeted goals.
- 4.4: Explicitly teach and reinforce behavioral expectations throughout the school. Ensure, through PD and monitoring, that teachers use strategies that are sensitive to the needs of diverse student groups. Ensure, through PD and monitoring, that teacher use instructional materials that contain high levels of text and content complexity and ask questions related to that content.
- 4.5: Ensure, through PD and monitoring, that staff uses assessment data effectively to inform instructional decision-making, student grouping, and lesson planning. Use formative assessments, progress monitoring, and frequent feedback to students to empower and encourage them to actively participate in, and take ownership of, their own learning process.

Tenet 5: Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health

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

- 5.3: Develop, with selected stakeholders, a school vision for student social and emotional developmental health. Communicate the vision and how it connects to academic success to all stakeholders. Implement a rigorous and transparent curriculum to teach and measure student skills and behaviors that build social and emotional health. Provide PD and training for all stakeholders to build adult capacity to support students' social and emotional health.
- 5.4: Develop an evidence-based plan for implementing the school's vision for social and emotional developmental health. Share this plan with staff, families, and community stakeholders and explain how it links to the social and emotional developmental health of children and positive student outcomes.
- 5.5: Develop a system to provide school leaders and staff PD and support in using data to respond to students' social and emotional health needs.

Tenet 6: Family and Community Engagement

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

- 6.2: Implement a plan for ensuring that parents feel welcome and motivated to engage with the school. Ensure that access to school leaders and staff is not limited by language barriers. Develop volunteer activities for families.
- 6.3: Develop programs that acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of the school community. Ensure that all school communications with families are translated into the appropriate languages. Develop a system where all families can communicate in a language they understand with teachers and other staff members about their child's academic, social, and emotional developmental health progress.
- 6.4: Develop a plan to ensure that families know about and have access to community resources. Provide PD for staff members on how to seek and sustain healthy partnerships linked to student needs with families and community organizations.
- 6.5: Provide PD to staff on understanding and communicating school and individual student data. Develop strategies to share school and individual data with parents in a way that enables families to understand student

learning needs and successes. Foster greater family engagement in their children's educational experience through more frequent teacher-initiated contact with parents.