



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

**DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)**



<b>BEDS Code/DBN</b>	41-18-00-01-0020
<b>School</b>	Rome Free Academy (HS)
<b>School Address</b>	95 Dart Circle, Rome, NY 13441
<b>District</b>	Rome City School District
<b>School Leader</b>	Mr. Mark Benson
<b>Dates of Review</b>	March 5-7, 2013
<b>School Accountability</b>	Focus
<b>Type of Review</b>	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet																							
Grade Configuration		9-12		Total Enrollment		1,371		% Title 1 Population		NP		% Attendance Rate		92									
% Free Lunch		27%		% Reduced Lunch		9%		% Student Sustainability		98%		% Limited English Proficient		1%		% Students with Disabilities		17%					
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes																							
# Transitional Bilingual		NP		# Dual Language		NP		# Self-Contained English as a Second Language															
Types and Number of Special Education Classes																							
# Special Classes		NP		# Consultant Teaching				# Integrated Collaborative Teaching															
# Resource Room																							
Types and Number Special Classes																							
# Visual Arts		NP		# Music		NP		# Drama		NP		# Foreign Language		NP		# Dance		NP		# CTE		NP	
Racial/Ethnic Origin																							
% American Indian or Alaska Native		1%		% Black or African American		9%		% Hispanic or Latino		4%		% Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander		2%		% White		83%		% Multi-racial		1%	
Personnel																							
Years Principal Assigned to School		NP		# of Assistant Principals		NP		# of Deans		NP		# of Counselors / Social Workers		NP									
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate		0		% Teaching Out of Certification		1%		% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.		0		Average Teacher Absences											
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)				(g)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4				Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4				Science Performance at levels 3 & 4				4 Year Graduation Rate (HS Only)		NP									
Credit Accumulation (High School Only)																							
% of 1 <sup>st</sup> yr. students who earned 10+ credits		NP		% of 2 <sup>nd</sup> yr. students who earned 10+ credits		NP		% of 3 <sup>rd</sup> yr. students who earned 10+ credits		NP		6 Year Graduation Rate		NP									

NP = Not Provided

<b>Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA</b> <b>(Mark an "X" in the field(s) where school is identified for not meeting AYP.)</b>			
	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		
<b>Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics</b>			
	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		
<b>Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science</b>			
	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		
<b>Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective</b>			
	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. Implement Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) using differentiated instruction strategies.
2. Develop and implement systems that support student social and emotional developmental health.
3. Work in partnership with outside agencies to develop strategies that will encourage family and community engagement.
4. Engage teachers in strategic planning to address the gap between what students need to know and be able to do to attain higher levels of achievement.
5. Develop systems that will allow teachers to collect and analyze a variety of data to make decisions about school improvement and increase the graduation rate.

**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	
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 2:</b>				<b>D</b>	

**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			X	

	thinking and build deep conceptual understanding and knowledge around specific content.				
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	
	<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 3:</b>			<b>D</b>	

**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	
	<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 4:</b>			<b>D</b>	

**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			X	

	and emotional developmental health.				
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	
	<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:</b>			<b>D</b>	
<b>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.</b>					
#	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' strengths and needs are identified and used to augment learning.			X	
6.4	The entire school community collaborates with families and community agencies to promote and provide professional development across all areas (academic, 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
	<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:</b>			<b>D</b>	

<b>Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions:</b> 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.	<b>Tenet Rating</b>	<b>D</b>
--	---------------------	----------

**Debriefing Statement:** The school leaders have not clearly articulated a vision aligned to the school-wide goals outlined in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP). The school does not engage school and community stakeholders to create and develop the goals. As a result, there is the absence of a shared sense of urgency among all stakeholders to create changes and take actions that lead to school improvement and increased student achievement.

**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 leaders informed the members of the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that the School Leadership Team developed the annual school goals. Interviews conducted by the IIT indicated that students, staff, and parents did not have a clear understanding of the school’s priorities. A review of the SCEP by the IIT showed that an action plan was included in the SCEP. However, the IIT found no evidence of the implementation of the action plan through document review and interviews with school leaders, staff, and parents. The staff reported in interviews that they were unaware of the existence of an action plan. However, staff members indicated that more initiatives were in place during the current school year, compared to the previous years, but did not identify what those initiatives were when asked. The absence of a strategic vision that known and understood by all stakeholders’ limits the participation of the school community to work collaboratively toward school improvement and toward achieving the goals outlined in the SCEP.

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

- The school leaders and staff are in the beginning stages of using data to examine and improve student achievement. The school leader indicated that some data analysis occurs at the end of the year. Formal benchmarking or progress monitoring occurs in some mathematics classes but is not consistent across all departments. The school leader indicated that the school uses the Learning Focused Schools Model designed to improve student achievement. A review of the framework of this model by the IIT indicated it required school-wide changes that included planning through

learning communities, mapping curriculum, effective use of graphic organizers, using vocabulary within context, summarizing strategies, and extending thinking. However, during class visits, members of the IIT did not observe consistent implementation of any one of these strategies by teachers. In the absence of evidence-based systems to coordinate, monitor, and administer frequent follow-up on the extent to which schoolwide initiatives align with the program expectations, progress toward school-wide goals about increasing student achievement is limited.

**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 established a collaborative relationship with the district office to identify, recruit, and hire qualified staff. The school leaders support the staff by optimizing instructional resources to improve teaching and learning. The school leaders were resourceful in engaging district support for planning, implementing, and organizing a formal after-school academic support program. A review of the teacher survey by the IIT indicated that a substantial number of teachers agreed that the school leader procures resources for the school to improve technology and professional development. However, the school leader did not provide the members of the IIT with evidence to support the ways in which the resources improved teaching practices and learning outcomes or evidence that students are achieving at higher levels of achievement as stated in SCEP goals. In the absence of a comprehensive plan to align people and resources strategically to provide all students with rigorous academic programs that meet or exceed State standards, the school has not accomplished the articulated goals toward school improvement.

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

- Although school leaders indicated that they have a plan for conducting regular classroom observations, they have not consistently implemented the plan. Both teachers and school leaders indicated that while they have a plan to conduct walkthroughs and provide feedback to teachers, they were unable to implement the plan resulting in a lapse in the systematic observation of teachers. School leaders stated that the district’s transition to the new APPR system created some confusion about whether to use the previously used plan for teacher observations or the newly developed plan, which resulted in delays to completing observations. Consequently, teachers have not received feedback on their teaching practices, which inhibits instructional improvement and identification of appropriate professional development for the staff.

**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

**Tenet Rating**

**D**

**Debriefing Statement:** The school is in the initial stages of aligning the curriculum with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Teacher groups are beginning to collaborate on creating curriculum that supports the CCLS in order to support improved student outcomes. However, teachers are unsure about how to plan CCLS instruction to meet the needs of targeted subgroup of students. In the absence of a professional development plan that is targeted to address teachers' needs for the implementation of rigorous and coherent CCLS curricula across all grades, their ability to improve student-learning outcomes is limited.

**Strengths:**

3.4 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* 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.

- School leaders and teachers reported that teacher collaboration occurs regularly through scheduled department meetings and on collaboration days. During these meetings, staff discuss and align curriculum with the CCLS. Science teachers indicated that at a recent department meeting, they reviewed the expectations of the newly adopted lesson plan format derived from *Learning Focused Schools* training. The IIT reviewed the school's course offerings and noted that students have the opportunity to select from a large and varied course menu, including Advanced Placement (AP) courses, dual college-credit courses, and comprehensive art and technology programs. The team also reviewed AP prerequisites and noted that open enrollment provides access to students, including those not in the honors program, to enroll in college level courses. During building walkthroughs, the IIT saw extensive displays of student artwork. The collaboration that occurs during regularly scheduled department meetings helps provide students with access to curricula that support the CCLS and prepare students for success.

**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.

- School leaders informed the IIT reviewers that teachers were in the process of revising curricula toward alignment with the CCLS. They also indicated that they provided support to facilitate teachers' efforts to align school-based curricula with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). The school leader further indicated that there are regularly scheduled department meetings and teachers have release-time, by departments, to attend meetings throughout the year. However, the IIT reviewers observed that the actual curricula did not consistently reflect the CCLS. The IIT observed one of the planning sessions where teachers in the mathematics department and ELA department worked as independent teams to align aspects of the geometry, algebra, and English

curricula to the CCLS respectively. While department meetings and released time ensure opportunities for teachers to collaborate to develop a more rigorous curriculum that supports the CCLS, lack of clarity around how school leaders monitor curriculum development and implementation results in inconsistently aligned lessons and a lack of instructional rigor in classrooms.

**3.3 The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Standard 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.

- Teachers use unit and lesson plans that do not fully support the CCLS and do not consistently introduce students to complex materials or promote higher-order thinking. During interviews, school leaders and teachers indicated that they are still developing curricula that achieve these goals. Although the IIT observed some teachers in the mathematics department using complex materials and providing opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking, this is not yet a school-wide standard. Teachers’ unit and lesson plans, while aligned to previous grade level standards, are not consistently aligned to the CCLS across all subject areas, resulting in instruction that does not adequately challenge students to develop deep conceptual knowledge around content.

**3.5 The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Standard of Practice.** The school leaders 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 is in the beginning stages of learning to use and analyze data to adjust their practices. Teachers reported that school leaders supplied them with student data sheets at the beginning of the year. Some teachers, including those in the mathematics department, use common interim assessments to monitor student progress and adjust instruction. The school is starting to use data for decision-making, adjustments, and interventions through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). However, while school leaders and teachers agree that there is much data available, the school does not have a system in place to identify the most relevant data and how the school could use the data to make decisions about data-driven instruction. The current processes have not yet resulted in a data-driven culture that informs instructional decisions, addresses the needs of all students, and leads to targeted, measurable 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**

**D**

**Debriefing Statement:** Some teachers are beginning to use data to inform instruction. Teachers use generic

lesson plans, which include some pre-determined classroom strategies. However, these strategies do not arise from student performance data. As a result, teachers are unable to track student progress to make instructional decisions for improving student learning and academic growth.

### **Strengths:**

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

### **Areas for Improvement**

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

- The IIT reviewed teacher lesson plans and observed instruction that related to strategies and practices connected to the Learning Focused Schools Model. However, most lesson plans did not reflect the use of student data to align instructional strategies to address the individual needs of all students, including those in targeted subgroups such as English language learners (ELLs). The IIT reviewers observed, during classroom visitations, that most teachers posted essential questions in the classrooms, but did not reference the questions during the lesson. The team also observed that in the majority of classes, students were not engaged in the lesson beyond choral responses to Level-1, depth of knowledge (DOK) questions, which are basic recall questions. This type of questioning resulted in a few students dominating the lessons and limited information for the teachers about how each student understood the concepts. Reviewers observed few instances of higher order questioning, Levels-3 and Level-4 DOK, during classroom visitations. While teachers' instruction is organized around their lesson plans, neither their plans nor the instruction reflected the use of data to align instruction to address the individual needs of all students, which limits student engagement and involvement in their own learning.

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

- The school is in the initial stages of aligning instruction to the CCLS. However, because the process to align curricula to the CCLS is slow, timely implementation of the CCLS instructional shifts is not widespread. While the school provides release time for teacher collaboration to discuss student work, the IIT noted that teacher practices are not informed by relevant student data to meet the needs of targeted student groups. During classroom visitations, the IIT observed that teachers did not use reference-based systems to engage students in active participation, such as through questioning techniques or intentional grouping of students. In the majority of classrooms, students did not have opportunities to make independent decisions or have a good understanding about what they were learning. In the majority of classrooms, the IIT observed that teachers do not structure most activities to provide multiple means to assess student performance such as

observations and progress toward explicit goals, nor do they intentionally develop student leaders. In classes visited by the IIT, teacher-directed instruction was the norm with few instances of student-directed learning. The IIT noted while students were tasked with taking notes, they did not have the opportunity to make independent decisions, have a good understanding of what they were learning or take responsibility for their own learning. Because the majority of lessons provided to students do not include consistent use of multiple points of access for students, student progress toward targeted goals and lesson objectives is limited.

**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 was clean and welcoming, and classroom environments were safe, orderly, and conducive to learning. During class visits, the team observed that most students understood and followed classroom routines. Many classrooms were set up with seating of two to three students at small tables to encourage student interaction. However, the team observed that despite the seating arrangement, whole group instruction was the predominant method of delivering instruction. When students were off-task, teachers attended to them and redirected them accordingly. These classroom environments provided the opportunity for students to learn with minimal distractions or disruptions. However, many students were not actively engaged in the learning process, and the team noted that some students were off task. While the school environment is safe and orderly, the lack of instructional practices that are responsive to the strengths and needs of all students limits high levels of student engagement and inquiry.

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

- Teachers have some classroom data available to make instructional decisions but they do not consistently use formative and summative assessment data to inform planning and foster student participation in their own learning. Some teachers indicated that they receive data sheets at the beginning of the year, but these teachers did not indicate how they use this data to inform planning. Although mathematics teachers use common interim assessments to monitor student progress and adjust instruction, this was not common practice for teachers in other departments. The limited use of data to measure student progress, inform lesson planning, develop student goals, and provide feedback to students is negatively impacting teacher effectiveness and student ownership of their learning process.

<p><b>Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health:</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>Tenet Rating</b></p>	<p><b>D</b></p>
---	----------------------------	-----------------

**Debriefing Statement:** The school environment is regarded as safe by school constituents and there are supportive adults in the school who are available to assist students in need. While the student support staff is developing systems to use data to better address the social and emotional needs of students, the current lack of a widely communicated vision for student social and emotional developmental health, and systems to support the vision, limits the school's ability to create a learning environment that is consistently respectful and conducive to positive learning experiences.

**Strengths:**

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

**Areas for Improvement:**

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

- The school leverages internal and external resources to support student social and emotional health; however, overarching systems to coordinate and monitor services are in the early stages of development. In interviews with the IIT, the student support staff reported that each student is assigned a guidance counselor and added that the members of the student support staff reach out to mental health practitioners in the community for student referrals. School leaders reported that there is some use of data to identify areas of need and that the school has cultivated some partnerships with community organizations to help address those needs. During the student interview with the IIT, some students indicated that their teachers cared about them, and that some teachers knew about their academic progress and their personal interests. However, other students in the focus group expressed concern that there was a difference between students who "have and have not." The "have not" students do not seem to participate in school activities, according to students. Another student expressed that bullying of students with disabilities occurred and that awareness assemblies had helped with bullying in the past. During interviews with the student support team, one staff member indicated that additional awareness about bullying and diversity continued to be an area of need, especially as it relates to students with disabilities. The IIT noted that the school did not have a system for referring students with behavior problems. The absence of overarching systems to coordinate services, inclusive of a discipline referral plan and procedures to reflect equity and respect for diversity in all areas, hinders the school's ability to create a school culture that promotes and sustains the social, emotional, and developmental health needs of all students.

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 Improvement Team (SIT) recently developed initiatives that support the development of healthy social and emotional behaviors and teachers are developing skills to reach students and promote healthy student behavior. However, the school leader did not provide a clearly articulated vision associated with the SIT initiatives. During interviews, the school leader described a plan to obtain training for a Student Leadership Academy and to obtain an outside speaker to address students on topics such as respect. The agenda and minutes of the SIT January meeting indicated plans were in place to invite a well-known speaker to meet with students. Documents reviewed by the IIT indicated the school plans to implement the Respectful, Follow agenda, Actively listen (RFA-Way) initiative. During the Science Department meeting, teachers reported they were aware of and supported of the RFA-Way initiative. While there are plans in place to develop additional learning opportunities for students to increase the health and safety of all school constituents, the school's current lack of a widely communicated vision for student health and well-being results in an inconsistently respectful environment for all students.

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 school community seems to have an increasing awareness and understanding of the importance of a safe school community. Students expressed that the staff tries to support their social and emotional well-being and that they feel safe in this school. However, some students expressed concern to the IIT that some students were disengaged from school activities. They added that bullying of students, particularly bullying of students with disabilities occurred in the school. During interviews with the student support team, one staff indicated that additional awareness about bullying and diversity continued to be an area of need, especially as it relates to students with disabilities. The IIT noted that the school did not have a system for referring students with behavior problems. During the meeting with the IIT, parents expressed an awareness of the school's efforts to support student social and emotional developmental health. The parents also indicated teachers, counselors, school leaders, and other staff care about the students, but were unable to articulate how these efforts connect to the school's vision. Across the school community, awareness is developing of the relationship between the social and emotional developmental health of students and academic outcomes. However, while students, staff, and parents believe the school is safe, there is less agreement on the school's vision to promote students' emotional and developmental health. Also there are concerns among some constituents about equity and fairness that reflect a learning environment that does not always foster students' sense of ownership and student success.

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 that students can become academically and socially successful.

- Current use of data to respond to the social and emotional developmental health needs of students is limited. The school leader indicated that he encouraged department coordinators to use formative and summative assessment data to address students' social and emotional needs. During

interviews, teachers noted that they have access to students' academic records; however, in other interviews, some support staff were not clear regarding data available to support students in this area. Support staff members noted that they used data to review student profiles prior to meeting with parents, teachers, and students. Teachers also reported that the school nurse is available as a resource to assist them in meeting student needs. The limited use of available data and the newness of the current intervention system impede the ability of the school staff to work together to support student social and emotional developmental health needs which impacts student academic and social success.

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

**Tenet Rating**

**D**

**Debriefing Statement:** The school environment is welcoming and generally safe. The school fosters positive relationships with families; however, the school does not provide multiple opportunities to engage all parents and families in school activities and programs. This limits the number of families and community members who can provide support for academic achievement of students and contribute to the overall improvement of the school.

**Strengths:**

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

**Areas for Improvement:**

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

- The school is welcoming and provides parents with opportunities to interact with staff during parent-teacher conferences, parent advisory committee meetings, and other special events. The school leader indicated that some parents volunteer for school initiatives when the school specifies that parental involvement is necessary. He also noted that the school has a parent portal to enable parents to interact with the school. Some students reported that families are engaged in school, indicating that parents attend school activities like open houses, and staff contact families through phone calls home. However, other students indicated that some teachers do not call or interact with parents unless there is a problem. Students added that these parents would only come to school when requested or for a scheduled open house. While the school has started to put structures in place to make the school welcoming to families, current efforts have not yet resulted in frequent engagement between families and school staff to support academic achievement, which negatively impacts 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 leader and staff reported that the student body is diverse and represents several cultures and languages. The school provides opportunities for parent involvement at select times during the year. The student support staff listed parent-teacher conferences as one of the activities that involve parents of non-English speaking students. The school leader indicated that the school informs all parents about their children's progress by providing ten-week marking period report cards and interim assessment reports at five week intervals. The school leaders also stated that parents have the opportunity to request additional reports including weekly progress reports. The student support staff reported that correspondence to parents is designated for translation, though it was unclear whether translations were provided in all the various languages spoken in students' homes. While the school provides some means of reciprocal communication with families about their child's progress, the lack of consistent translation services in all languages spoken at home results in the inability of some parents to engage with school staff to help support their children's success.

**6.4 The school has received a rating of *Developing* for the Statement of Practice:**

The entire school community partners with families and community agencies to promote and provide professional development across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.

- The school and district collaborate with various post-secondary institutions to support student learning. The district has a website that parents can access to learn about activities occurring in schools. During an interview with the student support team, staff indicated that the school has developed community relationships with local colleges, including Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC), The University at Albany (SUNY), Rochester Institute of Technology (RTI), and Syracuse University. School leaders stated that dual credit courses are available to students through MVCC. However, the parents reported in an interview with the IIT that they were not aware of all of the resources these agencies provide. The school does not offer PD for staff to support open communications with all families, including those in the identified subgroups. The lack of a comprehensive strategy to communicate the out-of-school opportunities and resources available to support student success hinders parent and family engagement in their children's education.

**6.5 The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* 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 student data to parents in the form of report cards. In addition, parents can access the parent portal to view student data online. During the review team meeting with the parent group, some parents could not recall when families were informed about how student data was used by the school, or about how this data would help them understand student progress and support their children. Current practices regarding parent access to and training around the use of

data are limited, making it difficult for all parents to track student progress and support the school's efforts to improve student learning. Since the school does not share data in a way that provides learning opportunities for families to understand student data, families cannot use this data to understand students' learning needs, and cannot promote student 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: Engage all stakeholders to collaboratively develop the vision statement and S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, ambitious, results-oriented, and timely) goals for the school.
- 2.3: Create evidence-based systems to coordinate, monitor, and administer frequent follow-up on the extent to which school-wide initiatives align with the school expectations, and the school-wide goals about increasing student achievement. Establish a timeline and benchmarks to monitor school progress and keep all stakeholders informed.
- 2.4: Provide an actionable long-range strategic plan that aligns financial resources with specific goals. Strategically align professional development with the goals for instructional improvements and provide targeted measures for success. Ensure that teachers are actively implementing what they are learning in professional development and embed professional development into a culture of continuous improvement that reflects the actual gains in student achievement data across grades and subgroups.
- 2.5: Implement the designed APPR procedures to ensure consistent classroom observations and walkthroughs for all staff and provide timely and appropriate feedback and follow-up toward meeting the overall goals for 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: Engage all members of the instructional staff in planning for and offering a CCLS curriculum aligned to grade-level and college and career readiness standards, aligning classroom assessments to those standards and providing students with the support necessary to succeed.
- 3.3: Provide PD opportunities for staff focused on alignment of local curriculum with the CCLS. Furthermore, provide the PD necessary for all staff to understand and be able to implement teaching strategies and lessons that promote higher-order thinking skills.
- 3.5: Develop a system of regular collection, dissemination, and analysis of data in all subject areas, similar to the mathematics department's progress monitoring and the use of common interim assessments. Use the information from student assessments to make decisions about adapting instruction based on identified student needs.

### **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: Establish learning targets for all students based on formative and summative assessment data and then establish timelines and benchmarks with individual students. Provide PD to enable teachers to use all available data including Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) results when developing individual student goals and learning activities. Identify specific practices and strategies that teachers can use to help students achieve their goals and be more involved in their own learning.
- 4.3: Provide PD to enable teachers to incorporate instruction that supports CCLS. Ensure teachers plan and implement lessons that provide students with multiple points of access to achieve their targeted goals.
- 4.4: Provide PD focused on effective questioning techniques that encourage student participation and challenge student higher-order thinking skills.
- 4.5: Provide PD to enable staff to use assessment data to determine the level of understanding or mastery for each student regarding interim benchmarks and unit goals. Develop procedures to enable teachers to provide specific, ongoing feedback to students throughout the learning process and engage them in their own learning.

### **Tenet 5: Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health**

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

- 5.2: Develop systems that allow teachers to partner with guidance counselors in coordinating programs that provide for the social and emotional developmental health needs of students.
- 5.3: Develop a discipline referral plan that supports a social and emotional developmental health agenda for the school community that includes the needs of students in all subgroups of the school.
- 5.4: Develop a clear vision and communicate the vision to all constituents about the school's role in fostering the social, emotional, and developmental health needs of students.
- 5.5: Establish a system of data indicators that all staff can use to support the social and emotional developmental health of all students. Provide PD for all staff to enable them to use the data to support all students, including those from diverse backgrounds and those from identified subgroups.

### **Tenet 6: Family and Community Engagement**

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

- 6.2: Continue to engage families using different methods and strive to involve those parents who are not engaged in the activities of the school. Investigate additional resources, including seeking the assistance of current community partners, to enable the school to reach and support minimally engaged families as well as deepen support for the families that are currently involved in the school.
- 6.3: Work with community partners to establish ways to consistently communicate about school issues and concerns in languages other than English, as needed. Provide staff with PD focused on engaging diverse families and community members. Create a variety of home-school activities that appeal to the diverse groups of families within the school community.

- 6.4: Develop and implement an online communication system that would advise parents, students and community stakeholders of different expectations and options to students that will enhance and expand their educational opportunities. Continue to work with the present group of community agencies and seek additional targeted services for students and their families. Communicate with families and link them with these agencies. Seek outside help to provide PD to staff on how to attract parents who feel marginalized so that they will consider themselves partners with the school in the education process.
- 6.5: Provide opportunities for families to learn about what data the school collects; how staff use data to track student progress; and how families can access the Parent Portal and other data sources to support student academic growth. Increase the involvement of families in the school to foster a partnership toward increasing student achievement. Create opportunities for curriculum nights and grade level conferences for the diverse family groups to increase understanding of their children's grades, school assessment data, and school progress reports.