



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



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| BEDS Code | 140600010098 |
| School Name | McKinley Vocational High School |
| School Address | 1500 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, New York 14207 |
| District Name | Buffalo Public Schools |
| School Leader | Crystal Boling-Barton |
| Dates of Review | May 20-21, 2014 |
| School Accountability Status | Priority School |
| Type of Review | SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) |

| School Information Sheet | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------|--|------|--|-------|---|-------|----------------------------|-------|--------------|-----|
| Grade Configuration | 9-12 | Total Enrollment | 1046 | Title 1 Population | 77.7% | Attendance Rate | 83% | | | | |
| Free Lunch | 100% | Reduced Lunch | 0% | Student Sustainability | 100% | Limited English Proficient | 11% | Students with Disabilities | 18% | | |
| Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes | | | | | | | | | | | |
| #Transitional Bilingual | | #Dual Language | | #Self-Contained English as a Second Language | 11 | | | | | | |
| Types and Number of Special Education Classes | | | | | | | | | | | |
| #Special Classes | 12 | #Consultant Teaching | 0 | #Integrated Collaborative Teaching | 37 | | | | | | |
| # Resource Room | 25 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Types and Number Special Classes | | | | | | | | | | | |
| #Visual Arts | 5 | #Music | 8 | #Drama | 0 | # Foreign Language | 19 | # Dance | 0 | CTE | # |
| Racial/Ethnic Origin | | | | | | | | | | | |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 2.4% | Black or African American | 60% | Hispanic or Latino | 18.2% | Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander | 4.4% | White | 14.4% | Multi-racial | .6% |
| Personnel | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Years Principal Assigned to School | 20+ | # of Assistant Principals | 3 | # of Deans | 1 | # of Counselors / Social Workers | 5 | | | | |
| % of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate | 3% | % Teaching Out of Certification | 6% | % Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp. | 7% | Average Teacher Absences | 13% | | | | |
| Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| School in Good Standing | | Priority School | X | Focus District | | Focus School Identified by a Focus District | | SIG Recipient | | | |
| ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4 | 65% | Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4 | 44% | Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 | 49% | 4 Year Graduation Rate (HS Only) | 70% | | | | |
| Credit Accumulation (High School Only) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| % of 1 st yr. students who earned 10+ credits | 0.0% | % of 2 nd yr. students who earned 10+ credits | 0.0% | % of 3 rd yr. students who earned 10+ credits | 89.0% | 6 Year Graduation Rate | 71.7% | | | | |

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

SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE SCHOOL:

1. Ensure that school based teams trained in data-driven instruction use data to inform their practices and increase student academic achievement on the New York State English language arts, mathematics, science, and history assessments.
2. Provide comprehensive professional development for teachers and support staff so that they understand and implement the district’s curriculum and instructional practices with fidelity through the use of data.
3. Increase the number of support systems for students.
4. Increase school attendance by 2 percent each year with a target of 88 percent for the 2013-14 academic year.
5. Decrease the suspension rate by increasing involvement with student support staff and outside agencies.

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 Statement of Practice. Provide the letter rating in the **OVERALL RATING** row as the final overall tenet rating.

| # | 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 promote and provide training across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success. | | | | X |
| 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 – Findings, Evidence, Impact and Recommendations:

| | | |
|---|---------------------|----------|
| 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 |
|---|---------------------|----------|

Debriefing Statement: Though the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) drives many school initiatives, most goals are process based; furthermore, many stakeholders were unable to speak to the SCEP contents and did not understand how it drives school activities. While the school leader uses available resources to support the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), the school lacks systems to evaluate the effectiveness of current practices. Additionally, there is a lack of ongoing formative feedback provided to teachers to ensure that their practice is improving. As a result, school systems meant to improve student achievement are limited.

Strengths:

2.3 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.

Overall Finding:

The school leader makes decisions that support many of the school’s staffing and programming needs.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school leader added an attendance teacher to help meet the SCEP goal of increasing student attendance this school year. As a result of this addition to the staff, student attendance has risen by four points, from 84 percent to 88 percent.
- The school leader added a Dean of Students position as a way to create more time for the three assistant principals (APs) to focus on their role as the school’s instructional leaders. This staff addition allows the APs to work with teachers without being diverted for issues relating to student discipline and classroom management. As a result of this hire, the school leader, APs, and several teachers noted that APs have had more time to work with teachers on pedagogical issues.
- One new AP that the school leader hired is a certified math teacher. Reviewers found that this was a strategic hire, as the school leader determined using data that math teachers required additional support. As a result, the school leader and teachers stated that this hire has bolstered support for the math department.
- The school leader assigns counselors to work with the same students for the duration of their high school career. As a result, students have at least one consistent staff member who knows them well and can support them throughout high school. During interviews with students and the student support team (SST), both groups spoke positively of this model and stated that it allowed students to maximize the relationships and supports they receive from their counselors.

Impact Statement:

The school leader makes decisions that ensure resources are allocated to meet the immediate needs of the school community.

Areas for Improvement:

2.2 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** 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).

Overall Finding:

The school has had a limited buy-in to SCEP initiatives from stakeholder groups. Additionally, communication of this plan to school stakeholders has been limited and uneven.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Several stakeholder groups were unable to describe the contents of the SCEP or stakeholder involvement in the SCEP development process. Two of four parents interviewed by Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) reviewers were able to describe key aspects of the SCEP; however, these parents were school employees. The other two parents were unable to describe the SCEP or its contents. Only one of 11 teachers interviewed in the vertical teacher focus group interview reported being consulted in the development of SCEP content; the remainder of the teachers stated that they were emailed the SCEP after the school year began. A lack of stakeholder input and communication limits stakeholder buy-in to the SCEP, and minimizes its impact on school decisions.
- The SCEP's Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) goals are primarily process oriented with few outcome measures identified. For example, adding an instructional coach to facilitate the implementation of the CCLS is a SCEP goal; instead of stating that increased student achievement in math is the goal, the process of hiring a coach is the stated objective. As such, this does not qualify as a SMART goal. A lack of SMART goals limits the school's ability to define desired outcomes, and instead focuses the school on process.
- During IIT interview, support staff was unable to describe the mission or vision of the school. One staff member stated that SCEP input was requested during a staff meeting, while others could not recall or confirm this. Inconsistent communication of the SCEP limits stakeholder input and understanding of the school improvement process.

Impact Statement:

The school's process-based goals, limited stakeholder participation in SCEP development, and a lack of communication in regards to SCEP content, has limited the school's ability to galvanize stakeholders to support the school's improvement plan, vision, and mission.

Recommendation (s):

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Provide opportunities for all stakeholders to have input in SCEP development; develop a communication plan in which the SCEP and its goals are made clear to all stakeholder groups.

2.4 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** 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.

Overall Finding:

The school has a system to provide feedback to teachers; however, feedback is not regularly provided, formative in nature, or leading to improved classroom instruction.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- A teacher stated, "I feel that the focus has changed. There is a huge discrepancy between what we have to teach kids and what we are assessed on." According to staff members, this creates "gaps" in terms of what is being taught, how it is taught, and how teachers are evaluated. This uneven process does not lend itself to an instructional program in harmony with its teacher evaluation system.
- The APs noted that they are not supposed to provide "strong" feedback on lesson plans. Though lesson plans are regularly collected and reviewed, the AP stated that the teachers' union has "fought" some forms of written feedback critiquing teacher practices. As a result, the APs stated that they do not want "to fight this battle." Consequently, teachers are not receiving regular formative and comprehensive feedback on the lesson planning that informs their classroom instruction.
- The APs stated that only verbal feedback is given to teachers during post conferences. According to staff members, at the end of the school year written feedback is provided through the Professional Growth System (PGS), an online learning management system; this feedback is delivered to staff members in the form of an email. Though the review team asked to see written formative feedback tied to the school and district's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan, none was provided to the team. The lack of an evaluation system that is regularly administered, reciprocal, and formative limits the school's ability to provide feedback in a way that positively impacts student achievement.

Impact Statement:

The lack of a feedback system that regularly and effectively provides teachers and staff with a standardized, authentic assessment of their work, in conjunction with corresponding strategies to improve their practice, limits the school's ability to increase student achievement.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Ensure that school leaders provide regular, ongoing feedback to all instructional staff to improve their instructional practices; evaluate the impact of observation protocols on improving instruction and student achievement.

2.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** 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).

Overall Finding:

The school does not effectively use evidence based systems to monitor school-wide practices.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school leader was unable to confirm whether the SCEP goal of increasing parental involvement had increased over the previous year. While she believed that it had increased, she could not state this with certainty or cite evidence to show the increase.
- The school leader was able to share a document in which student and class performance data was displayed on a "data dashboard," but could not explain its relevance, and was unable to link the data to the SCEP to demonstrate movement toward its stated academic goals.
- The school leader was unable to describe how the school is progressing toward stated SCEP goals. The school leader believed that about "70 to 75 percent of kids are on track and doing well," though she conceded that until she has the end of the year common formative assessment (CFA) or New York State (NYS) assessment data, she will be unable to determine if goals are on track to be met.
- APs stated that a mid-year SCEP review meeting had been conducted; however, none could cite progress towards any SCEP goals in a quantitative way. One AP could speak to "some academic growth in the English as a second language (ESL) population," but could not specifically state what the growth was or how it was in alignment with SCEP goals.
- An AP stated that the school's professional development (PD) plan was not monitored to determine specific links to increased student achievement. Systems for monitoring and evaluating instruction and student learning are not resulting in notable and quantifiable improvements in student achievement.

Impact Statement:

The lack of overarching systems that provide quantifiable, statistical evidence in support of school activities hinders the school's ability to monitor progress towards school improvement goals.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school

should:

- Communicate SCEP goals so that all stakeholders know what the school’s goals are; rigorously monitor progress toward attainment of the goals and, where applicable, demonstrate with statistical evidence the rate of improvement.

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 is currently developing protocols and capacity to support the shift to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and the use of data to differentiate curriculum and instruction.

Strengths:

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

Areas for Improvement:

3.2 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader 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.

Overall Finding:

The support, implementation and planning for the CCLS and instructional shifts is unevenly applied and not entirely understood by all staff.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Some teachers stated that, although they are using the NYS modules, “Teachers are not modifying them much” and there is a “need to adapt them for special education.” Six of ten teachers interviewed during a focus group stated that they “modify modules on a regular basis.” However, reviewers found limited evidence of the use of any modified plans. Modifications were noted in 10 percent of the 29 classrooms visited by reviewers, and 25 percent of the 16 lesson plans reviewed.
- Some teachers stated that full implementation of the NYS modules will continue to be an area in need of improvement. Interviewees stated that the curriculum has changed three times this year, “from EngageNY, to the Odell Education model, and now the module modifications.” They reported that they need more time to “understand the scope and sequence of the curriculum.” Changes to the school curriculum have limited the staff’s ability to apply the CCLS and shifts to their classroom practice.
- When asked how they knew if the school PD plan was working, one of the APs acknowledged that,

“There is no way to determine if PD is working.” The lack of an evaluative measure to determine the effectiveness of the PD program limits the school’s ability to modify its plans to meet staff needs.

- Though the school cited in its SCEP that “learning walks” drive PD needs, the APs acknowledged that learning walk data is not tracked or used in a systematic way to drive the school’s PD plan. Additionally, an AP stated that the walkthrough data “does not take place on a formal scale,” stating that there is no fixed set of criteria used to evaluate or provide feedback to teachers.
- The school leader made two hires to facilitate CCLS implementation. A new AP is a certified math teacher charged with providing leadership to the math department in the areas of improved planning and instruction based on the CCLS and instructional shifts. Additionally, the school leader created and filled a new dean of students position, which has allowed the APs to focus more on pedagogical issues and less on student discipline issues. Teachers who cited the additional support provided by these two new staff members lauded both additions. However, evidence from lesson observations indicated that teachers are not yet consistently implementing the CCLS despite the extra support provided.

Impact Statement:

The lack of a systematic approach to the CCLS and shift implementation has created an irregular understanding and use of this curriculum.

Recommendation (s):

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Continue to provide teachers with PD and ongoing support to implement the CCLS and instructional shifts.
- Implement a walkthrough protocol that identifies areas aligned to the CCLS; use this template to gather walkthrough data, and use this data to drive both teacher feedback, and needed PD.

3.3 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* or this Statement of Practice:** 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.

Overall Finding:

Although school leaders and staff are aware of the use of data-driven instruction (DDI) practices in curricula aligned to the CCLS, the planning of DDI to modify curriculum and instruction is limited.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- According to some teachers, “Academic Intervention Services (AIS) has not been effective” and the school district “does not have a curriculum for AIS.” The lack of a robust AIS program limits the school’s ability to provide additional support services to students who are below grade level.
- Although APs and teachers spoke of an elaborate data binder system to ensure that data is used to drive curriculum and instruction, reviewers found limited evidence to support regular DDI use. When asked about using DDI, members of the group stated, “To some extent we do,” although most

conceded that when it comes to the use of data, “some of the teachers are not there yet.”

- Teachers shared numerous tips and strategies during observed grade-level team meetings; however, there was no evidence of formal minute taking, or ways to share information after the meeting was over. Additionally, there was no method of systematic follow-up to determine if teachers are actually using the strategies in their classrooms.
- When asked about support provided to staff concerning CCLS implementation, the school leader stated that staff are expected to implement the CCLS, but have not modified the modules much. Although the school requires teachers to use DDI, she granted, “We have to show them how. The training has been limited, as common planning time is limited.”
- Reviewer analyses of lesson and unit planning showed no concerted approach to ensuring that planning includes the use of higher-order thinking skills or rubrics. Reviewers found little evidence of rigor reflected in the lessons observed during classroom visitations.

Impact Statement:

A limited use of DDI affects the modification of curriculum and instruction, which hinders the school’s ability to teach every child based on their strengths and needs.

Recommendation (s):

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Support a rigorous, targeted AIS program in alignment with the CCLS and district curriculum.
- Provide staff with additional training and oversight on the use of DDI in both the planning and implementation stages; ensure that planning includes the use of higher-order thinking skills.

3.4 **The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* for this Statement of Practice:** 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.

Overall Finding:

The school does not have a plan for teachers to partner across subject areas or grade levels to incorporate interdisciplinary curricula.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Of 16 lesson plans reviewed by the IIT, reviewers found no evidence of interdisciplinary planning across grades or subject areas.
- Discussions with school leaders and teachers revealed no school-wide plan to introduce interdisciplinary curricula. Teachers are not provided with scheduled opportunities to meet or plan the use of core skills across different subjects. Teachers stated that if interdisciplinary learning

occurs, it is ad hoc, and reliant on the initiative of the individual teacher. No instances of integrated learning were observed during the review. Similarly, reviewers observed few instances of teachers making use of technology to enhance the quality of student learning. The APs stated that they were bringing core and interdisciplinary subjects together by “having conversations with Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers. Shifts are starting to happen, not so much math, but in the writing components.” The lack of a formalized interdisciplinary planning process limits the school’s ability to incorporate multiple subjects in lessons.

Impact Statement:

The lack of a plan to incorporate interdisciplinary curricula across grades and subject areas limits the school’s ability to increase students’ academic success.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Provide staff with PD that promotes interdisciplinary curricula.
- Provide regular time for teachers to plan across content areas and grade levels.

3.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** 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.

Overall Finding:

Although the school administers multiple assessments to measure student performance, the data collected is not systematically used to drive curriculum and instructional changes.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Some teachers stated that they have not found a way to “follow up and reteach students.” One staff member reported, “It is frustrating to give a CFA when students do not know all the content.” Additionally, the teacher stated that the district pacing guide does not include scaffolding to support students below grade level; it only contains time guidelines that tell teachers what to teach and when to teach it.
- Though the school has started using Illuminate, an assessment management program, to collect and analyze data from common assessments, staff stated that they had just received preliminary training in the use of the program in February 2014; teachers reported they do not fully use the website to take advantage of the full access to individual student data the program allows. “We would be better at differentiating instruction based on DDI, if we improved in its use.” Lesson observations and a review of teacher planning documents confirmed that teachers do not consistently analyze data from assessments to make curricular modifications. Reviewers found that teachers carry out some ongoing assessments in the classrooms, but the information is not used to adjust planning or instruction.

- Discussions with students and analyses of student work showed that teacher use of data based feedback to help students learn how to improve is not a common feature of instruction. Few teachers use assessment data to illustrate to students the aspects of their work or academic performance that are in need of improvement. Students are not provided with opportunities to self-assess, track their performance, or reflect on what they have learned. These missed opportunities deny students the ability to identify areas for improvement and take greater ownership and responsibility for their own learning.

Impact Statement:

The lack of a systematic approach to using assessments to inform instruction limits the school’s ability to meet the needs of every child.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Provide PD on the use of formative and summative assessments to drive curricular and instructional modifications; ensure that feedback from assessments is provided to students to explain how they can improve academically.

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

Debriefing Statement: The school is in the process of developing practices surrounding the implementation of the CCLS in all or its classrooms, and is beginning to use assessments to inform instructional planning and strategies to meet the needs of its learners. Student groupings are evident in some classrooms, though the use of data to create these groupings was not always evident.

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:** 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.

Overall Finding:

The planning and implementation of lessons designed to meet the needs of all learners is limited.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- When asked if teachers ever group students based on their learning levels, the 11 students interviewed by the IIT agreed, “everyone is taught the same way,” and none believed that data was used “to teach everyone differently.” Of the 16 lesson plans reviewed, only four contained elements of differentiation, none showed evidence of being informed by DDI, and only three referred to scaffolding to provide supports for low-level learners. During 29 classroom visits, reviewers found no evidence of DDI, three examples of differentiation, and very few examples of scaffolded instruction to support struggling learners. Most instruction was lecture based with students working in groups or alone, but following teacher instructions. When grouped, the materials and strategies used were not differentiated.
- Many reviewed lesson plans did not address the specific needs of all learners. One lesson plan addressed differentiated instruction with directions to simply have lower-level learners do fewer questions. In another lesson plan, under the heading, “formative assessment,” reviewers found instructions to ask a variety of questions. APs acknowledged that there is no uniform template or common expectation for lesson plans.
- Discussions with teachers and students showed no school-wide approach to goal setting for students. Interviewed students could not identify any specific long- or short-term goals and could only talk about academic aspirations in generic terms.

Impact Statement:

The school’s lack of planning and implementation of an instructional program that regularly uses a differentiated approach to meet the needs of all learners limits student achievement.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Deliver a greater focus on the use of data to drive instructional strategies; ensure that students are provided with challenging and specific goals to help them improve their academic achievement.

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

Overall Finding:

The school does not regularly provide engaging, rigorous lessons that promote the CCLS and the instructional shifts.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The review team observed instances of high student engagement in about half the classes visited, or 52 percent of classrooms. In many classes, students were talking with one another socially, or in other ways distracted. On several occasions, the teacher stopped instruction to wait for all students

to focus on the task. In 41 percent of the classrooms visited, student misconduct interfered with the instructional process. Negative conduct limits the amount of quality learning time provided to students.

- Academic writing, aligned to the CCLS, was noted in only ten percent of the classes visited; a citation of textual evidence was viewed in 21 percent of classrooms; and academic vocabulary was used in 14 percent. A lack of writing, close reading, and vocabulary, all of which are related to the CCLS shifts, limits the school's ability to promote literacy and high academic achievement.
- The learning environment was deemed rigorous in 28 percent of the classrooms visited by the review team, with the modalities of evaluation, synthesis, analysis, or application apparent. In 72 percent of the classrooms visited, the teacher taught lessons emphasizing only fact or comprehension. A similar number of lessons showed an absence of higher-order thinking and questioning skills. Instead, teachers often asked low-level questions that required minimal thought and minimal response. This level of teaching and learning does not engage students on a level that positively influences student achievement.
- Rubrics, scoring scales, or exemplars used to set expectations for various types of work were used in 10 percent of the classrooms visited by reviewers. This limits the school's ability to show students what high quality work looks like.

Impact Statement:

The school's lack of engaging, rigorous lessons that incorporate the CCLS and shifts limits both student engagement and increased achievement.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Provide teachers with additional guidance and higher expectations to routinely use CCLS shifts, such as higher-order questioning, academic writing, academic vocabulary, and the citation of textual evidence in their planning and instruction to increase the level of student engagement, literacy, and rigor during instruction.
- Rigorously monitor instruction and planning documentation to ensure that all teachers rise to the level of expectation and rigor required.

4.4 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** 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.

Overall Finding:

The school does not have a formal, practiced system for classroom management; students generally feel academically safe in their instructional settings.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Interviewed teachers and students agreed that there is no system in place for classroom management. Teachers stated, “Occasionally, misbehavior gets in the way,” and acknowledged that there is no universal, uniform protocol to handle classroom management; teachers further stated, “we each have our own way.” Students believed that while most teachers establish standards and consequences for classroom behaviors, “some teachers let certain things go,” and stated that consequences depend on the teacher because “some teachers are more lenient than others.” The lack of a formal classroom management system prevents teachers and students from maximizing classroom instruction and learning time.
- School staff reported that the school has recently adopted the Safe and Civil Schools model; however, it is not consistently practiced and very few stakeholders could describe it. The review team noted that learning disruptions occurred in about 40 percent of classrooms visits. Students noted that one of their main challenges was to ignore negative student behaviors and maintain a focus on instruction.
- Students stated that they feel intellectually safe in their classes, although they reported that they could not speak for their peers. All interviewed students stated that they see no threat in asking or answering questions, and that while some students contribute in class, others do not. Students also stated that learning is not always challenging or engaging, and when it lacks these qualities, they become passive in their responses. Reviewers observed confirmation of this during lesson visitations.

Impact Statement:

Teaching and learning time is not maximized in a large percentage of classes, which limits academic success.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Ensure a consistent system of behavior management in all classes; encourage instruction that engages and meets the academic needs of all students.

4.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** 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).

Overall Finding:

The school does not provide regular, ongoing feedback to students to help them improve their academic performance.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Formative assessments were used in only three of 29 classrooms visited by the review team, and in those three classes, classroom instruction was not modified based on the assessments. Discussions

with teachers, evaluation of planning documentation, and lesson observations showed that most teachers do not use data to group students or adjust instructional strategies.

- The review team met with four students to review samples of their work with teacher comments, grades, and other forms of feedback. Students reported that feedback varied considerably in regularity and content, stating that it depended on the individual teacher. Often students stated that feedback gave them little guidance on what was needed to show improvement. Of the 21 pieces of student work evaluated by reviewers, none had comments tied to a rubric or scoring scale that would provide students with an example of high quality work. The vast majority of pieces reviewed had only a number or letter grade affixed, or contained short comments, such as “good examples.” Only one sample had comments attached that were formative in nature and specifically noted what the student needed to do to get a better grade. Several students stated that the feedback they received from their teachers was “mostly verbal.”

Impact Statement:

The lack of a formalized feedback system limits student achievement.

Recommendation (s):

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Ensure teachers use informative feedback to promote student ownership of learning, increase student engagement, and improve student academic performance.
- Establish expectations for teachers to use data to group students, and to guide and adjust instructional strategies.

Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health: The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: The school currently provides some social and emotional support to its students and is developing a means to communicate this system to all of its stakeholders so that they understand both their role in students’ social and emotional health, as well as how to identify students with social and emotional needs.

Strengths:

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

Areas for Improvement:

5.2 **The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader establishes overarching systems and understandings of how to support and sustain student social and emotional developmental health and academic success.

Overall Finding:

The school lacks a well-understood and systematic approach to identifying and providing supports to students with social and emotional needs.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- IIT discussions with school leaders and support staff indicated that data is not well used to identify students in need or track the effectiveness of interventions and supports. Teachers stated that no training was provided to regular education teachers on identifying student social and emotional issues. Teachers reported that there is a tracking sheet used to guide the referral process, but most were not conversant about the form or the formal identification process. Additionally, staff reported that there was no systematic follow-up to determine if intervention strategies are effective. The lack of a well-known social and emotional identification process limits the school's ability to provide supports to all students with social and emotional needs.
- Students stated that they were aware of adults to consult with concerns, but were not sure if these systems were formal or informal.

Impact Statement:

The implemented systems do not fully address barriers to students' social and emotional developmental health.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Ensure an overarching system, understood by all stakeholders, is established to meet the social and emotional developmental health needs of all students.
- Ensure that formalized systems are in place for all students to be well known by a designated adult.

5.3 **The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* for this Statement of Practice:** 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.

Overall Finding:

The school does not have a systematic vision or teaching program to meet the social and emotional developmental health needs of students.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Negative classroom conduct interrupted the instructional process in 12 of 29 classroom visits conducted by the review team. On multiple occasions, review team members noted that students talked over their teachers, which prevented teachers from conducting their lessons. Students stated that these types of interruptions impede their ability to learn.
- In addition to the lack of an established system that is consistently applied to meet the behavioral challenges and needs of students, the school does not have a curriculum or program in place to support the teaching of social and emotional developmental health. There is no systematic, recognized school vision to address the social and emotional well-being of students. IIT discussions with teachers and support staff indicated that there is no formalized PD program in place to build adult capacity to support the behavioral, and social and emotional needs of students.

Impact Statement:

The lack of a systematic and widely understood vision for student social and emotional health limits the school's ability to provide an environment that maximizes learning time and promotes social and emotional health.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Implement and monitor a program to support the teaching of student social and emotional developmental health.
- Provide training for staff to enable them to manage inappropriate behaviors and meet the social and emotional needs of students.

5.4 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** 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.

Overall Finding:

The school lacks a cohesive approach to making the school community safe and conducive to learning.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Not all interviewed stakeholders felt that they are given a voice in the school community, and others reported they are unsure of the roles they are expected to play in creating a safe school environment. All of the 11 students interviewed agreed that they have a limited student voice in the school decision-making process. One student stated, "This is a dictatorship." Several students cited examples of limited student voice in the clubs and field trips proposed by students and approved by school leaders. A lack of student voice limits student ownership of school-wide

decisions.

- All four interviewed parents stated that they believed the school was safe. While staff members stated that it was important to advocate for students with social and emotional needs, they could not specifically describe their role in the process. Although staff members were able to identify personnel in the school they could refer students to, the lack of specific staff roles limits the school's ability to provide support for students' social and emotional needs.

Impact Statement:

A lack of ownership limits student "buy-in" to school based decisions.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Provide a venue for students to take ownership of and provide feedback about some areas of their school experience.
- Develop a written protocol, shared with the entire school community, that identifies the role of each stakeholder, as well as the systems used to support the social and emotional needs of students; provide ongoing training for all staff members in the application of the written protocols.

5.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** 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.

Overall Finding:

The school and staff do not systematically use data and formal structures to respond to student needs in a timely fashion.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Reviewers found a limited use of data structures to respond to the social, emotional, and academic needs of students; there are no formal systems in place to identify students who are failing or missing school, and no formal system to collect and analyze student behavioral data to use in determining programming or staff PD.
- Reviewers found that the school does not identify students who are not on track to graduate until they have started their senior year; consequently, parents are also unaware that their child may not graduate until this time. School staff members reported starting senior reviews at the beginning of September, which provides a window to where students stand academically. The late identification affects the ability of students and their families to address credit accumulation with the goal of a four-year graduation time frame in a timely manner.
- School staff uses the senior review process to identify students to participate in the school's credit recovery program. Staff reported that students who are behind in credit hours are provided the opportunity to make up credit hours and get back on track.

Impact Statement:

The lack of a systematic approach to gathering data limits the school’s ability to support its student body and increase student success.

Recommendation (s):

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Develop a plan to use data to identify students who need additional supports; use the data system to deliver needed services and supports.

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: McKinley High School has a welcoming environment, but does not have a system to ensure all parents have clear and regular guidance to help them develop the skills to support their child’s success in academic, social and emotional development. Although communication with parents and families is occurring, it is not creating the reciprocal communication that the school desires.

Strengths:

All ratings for this Tenet are **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 leader ensures that regular communication with students and families fosters their high expectations for student academic achievement.

Overall Finding:

The school does not regularly communicate with families in ways that promote high academic expectations.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school does not notify families that their children lack credit hours until their senior year. As a result, some parents find out too late to help their child take action to gain the credits required for high school graduation within four years. This practice is reflective of the school’s effort to communicate expectations to parents about academic achievement. Although the school communicates with parents through letters, newsletters, phone calls, and email, it does not capitalize on these opportunities to reinforce academic expectations. Parents stated that some individual teachers emphasize the importance of academic success, but do not share ways parents

can contribute to their child's academic improvement. These types of conversations are dependent on individual teachers, rather than driven by a concerted school-wide policy.

Impact Statement:

The family-school relationship has not been prioritized and few expectations for academic success are consistently communicated to students and families, which limits student ability to achieve college and career readiness.

Recommendation (s):

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Develop a system in which the school regularly communicates its expectations for academic success; evaluate the effectiveness of these communications and make improvements when weaknesses are identified.

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 student strength and needs are identified and used to augment learning.

Overall Finding:

The school has limited reciprocal communication and engagement with families.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- School stakeholders estimated the percentage of parents attending school events in 2012-13 at five percent; school leaders did not have the data necessary to provide 2013-14 parent involvement numbers, although increasing parent participation was a SCEP goal.
- According to the school leader, the school has a parent facilitator whose main duty is to reach out to parents for participation in the school's site based management team; the parent facilitator does not call parents to attend parent-teacher conferences or consistently encourage them to attend other school-wide events. The school leader was unable to cite any increasing parental engagement that derived from this position. As a result, reviewers found that parents are not regularly encouraged to support their child's educational success through increased school involvement.
- In describing the school's ability to provide parents with information through the parent facilitator, the school leader noted, "We do our best to keep our parent facilitator informed." The lack of a systematic approach to providing regular, ongoing communication through the parent facilitator limits the school's ability to engage the school community and keep them abreast of important information. The school has done little to evaluate and improve its strategies for communicating with parents.

Impact Statement:

Reciprocal communication between home and school is limited and does little to support academic success for all students.

Recommendation (s):

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Put in place a formal plan to engage parents as full stakeholders in the school community.
- Formally explore new strategies for communicating with parents and adopt best practices to form stronger bonds between school and home.

6.4 **The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* for this Statement of Practice:** The school community partners with families and community agencies to promote and provide training across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.

Overall Finding:

The school does not systematically provide families with regular information and supports involving community agencies that offer social, emotional, and academic supports.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Teachers stated that staff had received no training in the area of forming partnerships with families to promote student achievement and social and emotional health. Additionally, staff reported that no training was provided for teachers on strategies for working with families who live in poverty. Consequently, teachers do not use a systematic approach to partner with families to promote students' social, emotional, and academic success. Discussions with parents, staff, and school leaders confirmed that there is no formalized plan or training to provide supports, tips, or strategies to help parents in supporting their child's educational development.
- None of the parents interviewed by reviewers could identify any community agencies available to provide supports for their child or family. Although the parent facilitator reported wanting to "build greater bridges" for families to access community agencies, he acknowledged that there is "no system in place" and could not describe how the referral process for community services takes place.

Impact Statement:

A lack of training and support that prepares parents and staff to work in unison to better meet the needs of students hinders student opportunities for academic and social success.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Provide PD for staff on building and sustaining working partnerships with parents; deliver guidance and supports that empower parents to be partners with the school in advocating for their child's education.

6.5 **The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* for this Statement of Practice:** 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.

Overall Finding:

The school does not provide families with data or information they can understand and use to promote student achievement.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Parents are not provided with information on the school's interim assessments. The CFA data is provided only to parents that request it. As a result, most families are unaware of their child's progress in relation to school district and CCLS expectations. Parents stated that the school does not review assessment data with them, and that they are generally unaware of how their child is progressing academically. Parents also stated that they are not trained in the use of data to understand whether their child is making adequate progress. A lack of understanding about student progress limits the ability of families to seek out and provide support so their children succeed.
- The school does not provide parents with training about the CCLS or student data. As a result, parents are unable to promote the CCLS at home in conjunction with the school's expectations.

Impact Statement:

Families are not provided with student performance data, and do not receive training on how to understand performance data. This limits parents' ability to take action in support of greater student achievement.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Prioritize the sharing of data with parents; provide parents with guidance on understanding school performance data so they can support school efforts and help their child become academically successful.