



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	050100010013
School Name	Auburn High School
School Address	250 Lake Avenue, Auburn, NY 13021
District Name	Auburn Enlarged City School District
School Leader	Brian Morgan
Dates of Review	November 4-5, 2014
School Accountability Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus School
Type of Review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet

School Configuration (2014-15 data)				
Grade Configuration	9-12	Total Enrollment	1 3 0 4	SIG Recipient
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2014-15)				
# Transitional Bilingual	0	# Dual Language	0	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language
				1
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2014-15)				
# Special Classes	18	# SETSS	15	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching
				2
Types and Number of Special Classes (2014-15)				
# Visual Arts	0	# Music	0	# Drama
# Foreign Language	0	# Dance	0	# CTE
				0
				0
School Composition (most recent data)				
% Title I Population		% Attendance Rate		90.74
% Free Lunch	42.7	% Reduced Lunch		7.2
% Limited English Proficient	1	% Students with Disabilities		11.8
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)				
% American Indian or Alaska Native	.38	% Black or African American		11
% Hispanic or Latino	2.0	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		1.3
% White	83.8	% Multi-Racial		1.4
Personnel (most recent data)				
Years Principal Assigned to School	6	# of Assistant Principals		3
# of Deans	0	# of Counselors/Social Workers		6/1
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0	% Teaching Out of Certification		0
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	6%	Average Teacher Absences		12
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)				
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)		Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)		
Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)				
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	74.3	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		53.6
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)				
% of 1st year students who earned 10+ credits	2	% of 2nd year students who earned 10+ credits		68.3
% of 3rd year students who earned 10+ credits	88.1	4 Year Graduation Rate		77.21
6 Year Graduation Rate	81.1			
Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2013-14)				
Reward		Recognition		
In Good Standing		Local Assistance Plan		
Focus District		Focus School Identified by a Focus District		X
Priority School				

Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (2012-13)			
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			
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (2012-13)			
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			
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (2012-13)			
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			

SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:

1. Increase collaboration among teachers to create common lessons focused on the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS).
2. Create and administer common interim assessments for evaluating student performance.

Information about the review

- The review was co-led by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from the New York State Education Department (NYSED). The team also included a district representative, and a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SEIS) representative.
- The review team visited a total of 46 classrooms during the two-day review.
- Reviewers conducted focus groups with students, staff, and parents.
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including curriculum maps, lesson plans, school-wide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- The school provided results of a student survey that 467 students (35 percent) completed.
- The school provided results of a staff survey that 54 staff members (64 percent) completed.

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).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	(CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.				
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:			D	

Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: Visionary leaders create a school community and culture that lead to success, well-being, and high academic outcomes for all students via systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement.	Tenet Rating	D
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The school has received a rating of **Developing for** Tenet 2 – School Leader Practices and Decisions.

- While Auburn High School has shown improving trends in key school performance indicators, the school leader has not ensured that the goals in the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) are framed in a way that provide clear direction toward continued progress. The SCEP goals are focused on activities to be implemented and are not results-oriented, omitting details on the intended impact on student outcomes. Five of the seven goals listed in the SCEP refer to the strategy of using common planning time for ninth and tenth grade teachers as the means by which common curriculum plans, common assessments, and review of student data will be accomplished. While common planning time can be a valuable strategy, the school leader has not ensured that the plan describes how the products created by the teacher teams will be evaluated after implementation to insure they reflect both the content alignment and instructional practices defined in the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Further, the school leader has not included in the plan progress benchmarks for completion of the curriculum elements. Without a clear plan with measurable outcomes that contributes to strong results for students of all abilities, school staff are not focused on common goals with a unified effort.
- The school leader and staff cited three key actions that contributed to a rise in the school’s graduation rate that included stronger attendance, increased course offerings, and a change in service delivery and added credit-bearing courses for students with disabilities. According to the most recent state data, the school’s four-year graduation rate for all students surpassed the state average (Auburn High School = 78 percent; New York State = 74.9 percent), up from 68 percent in 2008-09. However, while improving, a graduation rate at 42 percent for students with disabilities and 64 percent for economically disadvantaged students remains below the rate for all students and the state average.
- The school leader is credited by the staff for establishing procedures to ensure that strategies contributing to gains in the graduation rate mentioned above continue to have a positive impact on student outcomes. Successful appeals by the school leader to the district and school board for needed personnel and resources enabled the school to expand the variety of courses and supports for all students. The school leader explained that, while the school is proud of its improvement to date, it hopes to continue its progress to reach even higher rates of success.
- The school leader has shared the school’s mission with parents, staff, and students who were all able to describe it as including college and career readiness in a safe and caring environment. However, the school leader has not involved staff, parents, and students in formulating school-wide goals. As a result, neither parents nor students were familiar with the school’s improvement goals, which include specific steps to address weaknesses in curriculum, instruction, and data use. Teachers cited the development of community relationships, including a cooperative education experience for students, as one school goal, although it is not listed in the SCEP. Based on interviews, reviewers found that members of the school community have different understandings of the actions they must take to help the school ensure all students reach their highest goals.
- The school leaders are implementing the approved district Annual Professional Performance Review

(APPR) process as designed. School leaders complete one formal and two informal evaluation visits per year for each tenured teacher using the approved rubric. The informal visits focus on a subset of five performance indicators chosen in consultation with the staff that include questioning techniques, differentiated instruction, formative assessment, interactions with students, and engagement of students. While the review team noted few examples of differentiation, formative assessment, and student engagement during classroom visits, school leaders recorded generally favorable ratings of teachers in these areas. The school leader reported that the contract language refers to a minimum of three observations per year, but also detailed the scheduling challenges faced by building leaders that keep them from spending more time in classrooms. As a result, the school leaders have no process in place to check that recommendations from evaluators to address less than effective instructional practices are heeded. In addition, further evidence in the area of teacher practices showed a consistent use of teacher-centered rather than student-focused instruction, which points to an imperfect understanding of how recommended instructional practices are to be implemented in high school classrooms.

Recommendation:

- Monitor and document the consistent use of the five essential instructional practices defined in the short informal visit, also known as a walkthrough, through inter-classroom visitations, school leader walkthroughs, teacher self-reports, and student surveys. Self-reports and student surveys should focus on the impact of classroom practices; for instance, solicit agreement or disagreement with the sentence, “My teacher asks questions during a lesson that help me think hard about the topic.”
- Reinforce the development of a common vision of the five instructional practices by using a checklist format to document teacher use of the five core practices, aggregating the evidence across the school. Track changes in the use of the five best practices across the year; use suitable data tools and methods to correlate identified changes in classroom practice and subsequent improvements in student achievement and engagement.

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

The school has received a rating of **Developing** for Tenet 3 – Curriculum Development and Support.

- The school is in the beginning stages of a process to create a comprehensive documented curriculum. During 2013-14, ninth-grade teachers used common planning time to create assessments and common lessons as part of a consistent, guaranteed curriculum to be implemented in the 2014-15 school year. The process continues this year with tenth-grade teachers scheduled for common planning time, again with an intended outcome of a collection of common assessments and lesson plans that afford all students consistent opportunities to meet the NYS CCLS.
- Only five of the 46 lessons observed by reviewers were guided by plans that included instructional practices defined by the CCLS, which include explicit learning intentions, instructional strategies that foster student active participation and require higher-order thinking, differentiation strategies to address diverse student learning needs, and regular, frequent assessments to monitor student

progress toward mastery. As a result, as students in the focus group confirmed, core classes for most students do not challenge them to excel to the same level as that needed for success in advanced classes. Reviewed lesson plans rarely included differentiation strategies, so implemented lessons had all students working on the same task using the same process and completing the same products at the same pace, limiting the potential for student success, especially for students with disabilities.

- The absence of a documented curriculum across grades and subject areas precludes interdisciplinary planning among Auburn High School staff. While school staff cited a few instances of collaborative planning, there is neither scheduled time nor a structured plan to foster the development of cross-content area lessons, units, or projects that can promote better opportunities for student success.
- Teachers monitor student progress with classroom tests and quizzes and, to some extent, Regents examinations. Recently, the common assessments developed by ninth- and tenth-grade teachers during their common planning time add to the data available to teachers, but neither lesson plans nor implemented lessons reflected the use of data as a form of feedback to help students take ownership of their learning. While embedded formative assessments such as bell ringers or exit tickets were documented in several of the sample lesson plans reviewed by the team, they were observed in only three of the 46 lessons viewed. As a result, students are passive recipients rather than active participants in their coursework.

Recommendation:

- To deliver a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students, teachers should continue to use common planning time and other opportunities to fully develop and expand the documented curricula. The documented curricula should include at minimum the same components as the sample curricula developed by EngageNY, which include explicit student learning outcomes; lesson activities that require high levels of student participation and engagement; specific differentiation strategies to address student needs; and sample formative and summative common assessments. The immediate focus should be on tenth-grade core content teachers with expansion to other departments, as resources are available.
- Establish a list of progress benchmarks for completion of the curriculum, listing the units to be completed across the year, so that each core subject area will have at minimum a draft annual plan that will be consistently implemented during the 2015-16 school year.

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

The school has received a rating of **Developing** for Tenet 4 – Teacher Practices and Decisions.

- The typical student at Auburn High School has limited opportunities to experience lessons that engage them in challenging learning and lead them to develop the problem-solving and higher-level thinking skills needed to be successful in college and future careers. Across the 46 lessons visited by reviewers, there was widespread evidence of alignment of the lesson content to CCLS and NYS core curricula. However, there was little evidence of alignment with the CCLS instructional practices or the instructional practices identified as the focus of the school’s short informal classroom visit tool; namely, the use of high-level questioning techniques, differentiation of instruction, use of formative

assessments, interactions with students, and active engagement of students. With the exception of some of the advanced courses, project-based classes, and several classes serving students with disabilities, instruction was teacher-directed, whole class, and undifferentiated in process, product or pace. Teacher questions were closed-ended, typically requiring students to recall a term, definition, or formula. Teachers expected students to copy notes, write down information, or complete a worksheet, activities that required little cognitive effort on their part. Members of the student focus group claimed that some teachers do not push students to higher levels of effort, and that the work in regular classes is many times easier than in advanced classes. As a result, students in regular classes have fewer opportunities than those in advanced classes to become actively involved in their own learning.

- The typical learning environment observed by reviewers in all but a few classes is uniform and consistent, showing little real-time instructional adjustment in response to evidence of gaps in student understanding or insufficient mastery of skills taught in the lesson. Teachers reported using tests, quizzes, and sometimes homework to check student progress toward the learning objectives; however, reviewers found that teachers rarely adjust instruction when students find work too difficult or too easy, but continue with the planned lesson, addressing gaps by offering individual extra help after school or during study halls. Fifty percent of the students responding to the October 2014 survey disagreed with the statement, “Teachers will check to see if everyone understands what is taught before moving to the next lesson,” confirming team observations. During interviews, students with disabilities reported they were not comfortable asking questions during class, and across the school, only a handful of students in each class volunteered to answer a question or initiated a comment. In classrooms with a predetermined sequence and pace that does not respond to varied needs, students who cannot keep up continue to fall behind their peers.
- Opportunities for students to take ownership of their learning and use feedback to improve their work vary from teacher to teacher, according to students interviewed during the review. Survey responses confirmed team observations during classroom visits. Thirty-one percent of students disagreed with the statement, “Teachers will go back and re-explain something if I make a mistake.” To the sentence, “Teachers explain material in a different way when I do not understand,” 34 percent of students disagreed. Samples of student work showing feedback from teachers included a check mark indicating acceptable completion, or a grade or score, but offered no guidance on how to correct errors. Four research paper samples included a common rubric, but only two of the four had annotations on the rubric to indicate where the student could improve. Without useable feedback from teachers on ways to improve their learning, students remain passive recipients, rather than active participants in their education.

Recommendation:

- To improve teachers’ instruction and student achievement, generate a common vision of effective instructional practices by dedicating a portion of each faculty meeting to a demonstration of an exemplary practice via video, role-play, or simulation.
- Focus on familiar practices, such as the five indicators on the district’s short informal classroom visit rubric. Use resources available through New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), EngageNY, the Regents Research Group, and other organizations that visually present authentic classroom scenarios in short, five to eight minute segments that reflect the desired operational practices.

- Include a brief, five to ten minute think-pair-share component in each monthly meeting to provide teachers with frequent and regular opportunities to discuss exemplary practices and share strategies, varying the groupings to include both within-department and cross-departmental conversations.
- Allocate an additional five to ten minutes to invite teachers to complete a reflection on the exemplar, using protocols such as “3, 2, 1,” three things you found out, two interesting thoughts, and one question you still have. Facilitate a brisk, lively sharing of selected responses to the reflection.

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

The school has received a rating of **Developing** for Tenet 5 – Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health.

- The systems at the school for addressing students’ social and emotional developmental health are grounded in the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) model. In keeping with the model, student support personnel conduct a comprehensive needs assessment every three years. The spring 2014 needs assessment identified student goal setting as an interest and need. As a result, and in addition to other trainings and events such as college fairs, scholarship information nights, health and wellness training for teachers, and optional workshops on social and emotional health issues, counselors visited ninth-grade English classes in September 2014 and facilitated goal-setting activities with students. As a follow-up to the effort, English teachers will assign a reflective writing task asking students to report on the attainment of their personal goals; student support staff reported they would review the essays to assess whether the goal setting had a positive impact on students.
- While the school has multiple systems in place to identify students with social and emotional developmental health needs and offers a number of activities to help students navigate the myriad of personal and interpersonal challenges they encounter, surveys, focus groups, and other data revealed that students continue to struggle with troubling conflicts that hinder their success. On the October 2014 survey, 74 percent of students disagreed with the statement, “At this school, students rarely get in fights or hurt each other,” and 78 percent disagreed with the sentence, “Students do not bully each other in this school.” In addition, 77 percent of student respondents disagreed with the statement, “Students in this school behave respectfully.” Students in the focus group agreed that the survey results are accurate, that bullying and fights occur at the school. Members of the student support staff confirmed that their school climate data agrees with the October 2014 survey and with the student focus group. Despite the presence of multiple approaches to creating a positive environment supportive of student learning, challenges to a productive learning experience persist at the school and some students are unable to flourish.
- The school has experienced a strong upward trend in its graduation rate over the past six years. The student support staff and teacher focus group reported that key factors included a more strictly enforced attendance policy, adjusting the daily schedule to include nine periods per day, which enabled expanded course offerings, and adding more credit bearing courses for students with disabilities. To continue the positive trends in school performance, the social worker, counselors, and psychologists initiated an early intervention process in which they review attendance data to identify at-risk students, assigning one person to reach out to intervene with the student to identify issues

contributing to their absences. Student support staff estimated that they consider 40 to 50 students per month for early intervention, and, while data is not yet collected to assess the impact of this early intervention strategy, they expressed optimism that better attendance will contribute to even higher graduation rates.

- Parents interviewed during the visit spoke favorably about the quarterly Guidance Newsletter that includes information about services available for families and students. However, several parents admitted they do not always recall the services when they or their children experience a challenge. Similarly, only three of the eight students in the focus group were familiar with student support services beyond the counselors. Students indicated that these services are needed because students do experience bullying, but theorized that many do not seek out help because they do not know where to go. While systems and services to ensure students’ social and emotional developmental health are provided by the school, students and families who are unaware of them do not take full advantage of the supports.

Recommendation:

In an effort to build student ownership of the school culture and ensure all students and families are aware of supports and services to address their social and emotional needs, make use of available student support staff, such as counselors, psychologists, the social worker, assistant principals, and school resource officers to:

- convene focus groups of students at each grade level using convenience groupings such as lunch periods and study halls, along with purposeful groups like National Honor Society and class officers; conduct facilitated discussions with staff and students of the findings of the October 2014 student survey, particularly those responses in the areas of within-school student interactions, to explore the root causes, patterns, trends, and potential solutions and resolutions of ongoing issues; and
- for the 2015-16 school year, engage student leaders and staff in implementing strategies to ensure a positive, safe, productive school and classroom environment, monitoring the impact of any new strategies and initiatives through quarterly focus groups and brief student, staff, and parent surveys.

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

The school has received a rating of **Developing** for Tenet 6 – Family and Community Engagement.

- Parents, students, and staff agreed that the school makes frequent use of multiple means of communication to share academic expectations with families. The online SchoolTool Parent Portal, letters, emails, phone calls, and conferences were cited as vehicles used to let families know about class grades, course assignments, attendance, and opportunities to attend information sessions offering guidance for the college bound. Parents reported initiating communication with the school, and expressed appreciation for the prompt responses they receive from counselors, school leaders, and teachers. However, several parents admitted they do not feel they can make best use of the information they receive to help their children succeed. All agreed that the quarterly Guidance Newsletter provides helpful information about community services for families and students, but

several noted that information about in-school services, such as tutoring, is not familiar to them or to their children. In the focus group, parents applauded the school's support for college preparation, while others raised concerns about attention for struggling students. Seven of 13 parents expressed a desire for more details to enable parents to be helpful partners in ensuring their child's academic success.

- While the student support staff at Auburn High School collect and make use of rich data about students across a range of factors related to social and emotional developmental health, parents referenced receiving information primarily on the academic performance of their child. Two parents recalled contact from the school about their child's attendance or behavior, and several parents recalled invitations to complete two surveys asking their input; however, several parents also reported that school-wide performance data are not shared. In the focus group, parents expressed clear interest in learning how to build their skills in helping their children acquire the qualities needed to be successful, such as diligence, attentiveness, and organization, along with critical academic skills.
- Counselors, psychologists, nurses, and the social worker reported providing numerous information sessions for parents and staff on a range of topics to promote student health and safety. Teachers have the option to request more in-depth training to build their skills in supporting student social and emotional developmental health and physical health and safety in areas such as suicide prevention, bullying, or attention deficit strategies, and student support staff reported responding to a few additional requests from staff. However, none of the school staff described plans to provide training for parents and staff in a systematic way aimed at strengthening home-school partnerships to ensure student success. Parent training is listed as a goal in the school's SCEP, but the plan does not specify the objectives or intended outcomes of the proposed training sessions. Based on comments offered in interviews, training parents to be active partners is, as yet, an unmet need at the school.

Recommendation:

- Use existing relationships with high school parents through activities such as band boosters, the Autism Support Network, or sports booster clubs, and opportunities on the calendar such as scholarship information nights, to gather information about parents' needs and interests. Determine their availability and preferred mode of learning/access, such as in-person or web-based, to establish and strengthen home-school partnerships and parent involvement.
- Design varied activities that provide explicit strategies parents can use to improve their child's success, such as common core practice tests, addressing risky behaviors, and firm but fair consequences, and structure the sessions to allow parents to practice the strategies to build their confidence and ability to be effective advocates for their children. Include parents of students at all ability levels, including college-bound, career-focused, and economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities.