



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

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



<b>BEDS Code</b>	140600010054
<b>School Name</b>	Dr George Blackman School of Excellence No 54
<b>School Address</b>	2358 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14214
<b>District Name</b>	Buffalo Public Schools
<b>School Leader</b>	Geneive Jones- Johnson
<b>Dates of Review</b>	March 10-11, 2015
<b>School Accountability Status</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus School
<b>Type of Review</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

## School Information Sheet

School Configuration (2014-15 data)					
Grade Configuration	PK – G4	Total Enrollment	493	SIG Recipient	0
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2014-15)					
# Transitional Bilingual	0	# Dual Language	0	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	0
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2014-15)					
# Special Classes	5	# SETSS	0	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	5
Types and Number of Special Classes (2014-15)					
# Visual Arts	9	# Music	9	# Drama	0
# Foreign Language	0	# Dance	0	# CTE	0
School Composition (most recent data)					
% Title I Population	83	% Attendance Rate		91	
% Free Lunch	78	% Reduced Lunch		5	
% Limited English Proficient	1	% Students with Disabilities		24	
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native	1	% Black or African American		75	
% Hispanic or Latino	9	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		1	
% White	10	% Multi-Racial		4	
Personnel (most recent data)					
Years Principal Assigned to School	4	# of Assistant Principals		1	
# of Deans	0	# of Counselors/Social Workers		1.5	
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	3	% Teaching Out of Certification		3	
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	3	Average Teacher Absences		12	
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	19	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		18	
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	85	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)		n/a	
Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	n/a	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		n/a	
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)					
% of 1st year students who earned 10+ credits	n/a	% of 2nd year students who earned 10+ credits		n/a	
% of 3rd year students who earned 10+ credits	n/a	4 Year Graduation Rate		n/a	
6 Year Graduation Rate	n/a				
Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2013-14)					
Reward		Recognition			
In Good Standing		Local Assistance Plan			
Focus District	X	Focus School Identified by a Focus District		X	
Priority School					

### Accountability Status – Elementary and Middle Schools

Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (2012-13)				
American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American		NO
Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander		
White		Multi-Racial		
Students with Disabilities	NO	Limited English Proficient		
Economically Disadvantaged	NO			
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (2012-13)				
American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American		YES
Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander		
White		Multi-Racial		
Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient		
Economically Disadvantaged	YES			
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (2012-13)				
American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American		YES
Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander		
White		Multi-Racial		
Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient		
Economically Disadvantaged	YES			

#### SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:

1. Instructional Planning and Preparation – ensure well-planned standards-based (not program-based) instruction aligned to CCLS in every classroom during every lesson.
2. Student management and engagement – engage students in their own learning, holding them accountable while ensuring students receive support based on the district code of conduct.
3. Differentiated instruction and student groupings – use assessment data (both formal and informal) to drive instructional planning and student groupings.

## 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. The team also included a district representative and a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SEIS).
- The review team visited a total of 22 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 128 students in grades 3 and 4 (83 percent) completed.
- The school provided results of a staff survey that 46 members of staff (100 percent) completed.
- There was no parent survey for the review team to scrutinize.

### 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.

#	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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 2:</b>				<b>D</b>	

### Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support: The school has rigorous and coherent curricula and assessments that are appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for all students and are modified for identified subgroups in order to maximize teacher instructional practices and student-learning outcomes.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
3.2	The school leader 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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 3:</b>				<b>D</b>	

**Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions:** Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn, so that all students and pertinent subgroups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking, and achievement.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
4.2	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"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 4:</b>				<b>D</b>	

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
5.2	The school 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:</b>				<b>I</b>
<b>Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement:</b> The school creates a culture of partnership where families, community members, and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being.					
<b>#</b>	<b>Statement of Practice</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>I</b>
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>
	<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:</b>			<b>D</b>	

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

- The school leader acknowledged that the plan that shows the priorities for school improvement does not include school goals that are specific, measurable, ambitious, results-oriented and timely (SMART). The building leadership team and the school-based management team reported they have difficulty measuring and monitoring progress towards achieving school improvement goals because of the lack of precise measures. In addition, the school leader acknowledged and interviews conducted by the review team indicate that not all teachers, student support staff, and parents are aware of a school vision or goals or the role that they need to play to ensure sustainable school improvement in student achievement and social and emotional developmental health.
- Discussions with the school leader show that she makes some strategic decisions to allocate resources that focus on student achievement and instructional practices. The review team found that few decisions relate to improving student social and emotional development. The school leader successfully advocated to district staff to ensure that a recently developed kindergarten self-contained classroom was equipped and designed to meet the specific needs of students assigned to the classroom. The school leader used fiscal resources to appoint an instructional coach to work with staff to improve the quality of instruction and teachers’ understanding of data, one of the school’s goals. The school leader indicated that the school has implemented a daily, expanded learning-time program after school that has been in place for a few months. However, discussions with the school leader and a document review show that just under one-half of the students attend this program. While much of the time is spent on improving student achievement during these sessions, the review team did not find evidence to show that this has had a positive impact on student achievement to date. The review team found that improvement efforts, particularly relating to student achievement and student social and emotional development, are minimized because of the school leader’s limited planning for resource allocation and monitoring of its impact.
- The school leader conducts informal observations as well as formal observations that are in keeping with the mandated Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process. A document review shows that feedback is not consistently specific and often lacks a focus on student learning. There is no clear evidence in the documents reviewed by the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that indicates the school leader uses observation data to provide personalized professional development (PD) opportunities to staff. Teachers interviewed reported they receive oral and written feedback but noted the feedback they receive is not often actionable. They indicated comments do not provide clear pointers specifying how to improve instructional practice or how observations are to be followed up by the school leaders to evaluate improvements in the quality of instruction.
- Discussions with the school leader and a review of documents indicate that although some systems to collect data are in place, the school leader does not often use data for assessing and monitoring actions related to critical areas for school improvement, such as student academic progress and social and emotional developmental health. Discussions with staff and the school leader indicate that while

teachers are beginning to analyze student achievement data, in-depth data analysis of student achievement, discipline referrals, suspensions, and incidents of bullying is minimal and that improvements are slow. School leaders do not analyze data and monitor systems against SMART goals to determine the impact of actions taken to improve the school's performance, which limits the ability of the school leader to determine steps for school improvement and high academic outcomes for all students.

**Recommendation:**

The school leaders should:

- ensure that the building leadership team identify goals that are all specific, measureable, ambitious, results-oriented and timely;
- make sure that both the building leadership team and school-based management team monitor progress monthly toward each goal, and inform all staff and parents through the Wednesday Folders, of the goals and the progress the school is making towards meeting them; and
- during weekly informal observations, focus on two barriers to learning, one academic and one social/emotional, and then provide each teacher with actionable and written feedback and re-visit after two weeks to monitor and evaluate 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**

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

- The school leader has developed a calendar for PD, which is general for all teachers, and the school offers teachers training to develop their understanding of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Teachers have regular opportunities to take part in collaborative planning time, which they report is helpful and enables them to increase their knowledge of CCLS and the use of data. Visits to classrooms show that a published program in English language arts (ELA) and district-adapted New York State modules in mathematics are used to guide staff. A review of lesson plans indicates that although teachers are developing their understanding of curricula that reflects CCLS and instructional shifts, curricula are not consistently adjusted and monitored to meet the needs of all ability groups, which limits college and career readiness.
- Classroom visits show that teachers do not often use data collected on individual students to adjust planning to meet the demands of CCLS. Lesson plans are variable, and the review team found that school leaders do not systematically monitor plans. Teachers do not consistently provide extensions and supports in their planning, such as the development of higher-order thinking skills to enable students to think more deeply or sequenced and scaffolded skills to address the needs of all students. The review team observed few examples of teachers adjusting curricula by planning different activities that mirror the abilities and needs of all students within their classes. As a result, growth in meeting

the demands of CCLS across grade/subject areas and improvements in student achievement are limited.

- The school leader stated that there is no formal plan to address interdisciplinary curricula although the schedule has recently been adapted so that teachers of visual arts and music can collaborate with general education teachers. During classroom visits, the review team found little evidence of teachers implementing interdisciplinary links between subjects. A document review and discussions with staff show there are no plans or procedures in place to coordinate the development of interdisciplinary curricula. Consequently, students have few opportunities to engage in thoughtful cross-curricular activities that increase their ability to be academically successful.
- A document review indicates that teachers use some formative and summative assessments to assess the performance of students. Reviewers noted in a grade four planning meeting they observed that staff are beginning to analyze the data they collect to target identified areas that need re-teaching. However, classroom visits show that student data is not regularly used to adjust planning to meet the demands of CCLS in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, and student achievement needs are not consistently addressed in all grades and subject areas, including those from all subgroups. Examination of student work indicates that feedback to students is not consistently based on assessment data, and teachers do not often provide students with comments that specify what steps they need to take to improve their performance, which limits student ownership of their learning.

**Recommendation:**

School leaders should monitor and evaluate the quality of curricula planning twice monthly to check that all ELA and math lesson and unit plans :

- reflect CCLS;
- include planned instructional shifts and higher-order questions; and
- contain activities that allow students to think more deeply about their answers and then have time to discuss their thoughts with their peers.

**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.

- School leaders do not ensure that all teachers’ instructional plans and practices are informed by data. A review of documents, discussions with teachers, and observations of a grade four subject meeting, which focused on analyzing students’ previous assessments, indicate that teacher leaders and the instructional coach are beginning to work with teachers to develop their understanding of the use of data to inform instruction. However, reviewers found during classroom visitations that teachers’ planning showed little evidence of how teachers use data to drive instruction, to ensure that students are fully engaged and that all student needs are addressed. Learning objectives are not consistently

reinforced throughout the lesson, and teachers do not check that students understand what they are doing. The school leader shared that there is no whole-school system for all students to have goals that focus on improving achievement. While parents reported that their children were given goals that focused on improving test scores, students indicated that they were not sure if they were or were not provided with such goals. The review team found minimal reference to any goals during classroom visits. As a result, instructional practices do not promote high levels of student engagement and inquiry, which limits increased student achievement.

- Although teachers use materials that are reflective of CCLS, the review team observed that CCLS instructional shifts and higher-order questioning were not common in many classrooms. Some teachers posed questions that required one or two word answers, instruction was frequently teacher-centered, and did not often provide students with multiple points of access. In some cases, teachers delivered the same instruction, using the same materials, to the whole class.
- A review of planning documents and classroom visits show that teachers do not consistently adapt their instruction to students' varied experiences and needs. Although teachers have adopted a behavior matrix, which focuses on students being respectful, responsible, and ready to learn, not all teachers enforce these expectations. Some students and teachers stated during discussions that there have been some instances of bullying, and unacceptable behavior, which disrupt learning. While students with disabilities often receive specially designed instruction, which focuses on behavioral issues, instruction is not always designed to address students' specific academic learning needs. Some teachers focus on grouping students by ability during interventions for ELA and mathematics, but teachers do not consistently use grouping strategies to meet the diverse needs of all students.
- A document review, visits to classrooms, and discussions with staff show that few teachers consistently use student performance data to inform and adjust their instructional strategies and groupings or to engage students in purposeful self-evaluation. The feedback that students receive about their work during lessons and on written assignments does not give clear guidance on what they need to do to improve and does not support student ownership of their learning. Visits to classrooms show there is minimal evidence of teachers using on-going assessments to check student understanding as lessons progress, and students sometimes become disengaged, which limits high academic achievement.

**Recommendation:**

School leaders, teacher leaders, and the instructional coach should immediately focus on improving teachers' instructional practices and the intellectual safety of students by ensuring teachers:

- use student performance data in ELA and math to plan activities that are linked to the skills levels each group is working towards;
- check that students understand the learning objectives at the beginning of the lesson, and through on-going checks for understanding, evaluate all students' learning and what needs to be re-taught; and
- consistently refer to and positively embed the behavior matrix to stop unacceptable student behavior interrupting student learning.

<p><b>Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health:</b> The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.</p>	<p><b>Tenet Rating</b></p>	<p><b>I</b></p>
<p>The school has received a rating of <i>Ineffective</i> for Tenet 5 – Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school leader has not prioritized the development and implementation of a system that ensures all students are well known by an adult in the school. During interviews with students, participants reported that many students are not sure whom they would go to if they had a problem or a concern. In the survey of staff conducted in February 2015, less than one-half of the staff agreed that the system for developing and building student social and emotional health was effective. Although staff members use a referral system, the review team found that the school leader does not conduct in-depth analysis to identify patterns and trends for staff to focus on when supporting student social and emotional developmental health needs.</li> <li>• The school leader indicated the school does not have a curriculum that supports the teaching of student social and emotional developmental health, and no PD is provided to build adult capacity in this area. In a recent survey and during interviews, some students reported that the school was not a bullying free environment. The review team also noted that at times teachers spoke to students in a harsh tone that was not conducive to learning. As a result, not all students learn in a safe and healthy school community that addresses student social and emotional developmental health needs.</li> <li>• While the school has some protocols and processes to support student social and emotional developmental health, such as the behavior matrix teachers use to instill student expectations, behavior is not always well managed in classrooms, and discipline referrals and suspensions are high. Parents, teachers, and support staff interviewed by the review team stated that inappropriate behavior is an issue and sometimes interferes with learning. Documentation indicates that there is no clear vision for students, staff, and parents to understand how to contribute to student social and emotional development. In addition, school leaders have not prioritized the development of a system to monitor and respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs.</li> <li>• The school has not developed a plan to enable teachers to understand how to use data to address student needs. Although data is collected, there is no evidence of staff analyzing this data and then taking action to meet students’ social and emotional needs. The school leader, teachers, and support staff do not ask questions to identify what is necessary for further intervention. For example, although some students, teachers, and parents indicate that bullying and inappropriate behavior interferes with learning, the review team found no evidence of a clear plan to address either of these issues. Students do not always have opportunities to become academically and socially successful because structures to support the use of data to respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs are not well established.</li> </ul>		

**Recommendation:**

To build classroom community, school leaders and staff, should :

- connect every student to an adult, who they can turn to for support, to address their social-emotional and academic concerns on a daily basis; and
- along with the involvement of school leaders, establish a ten minute morning welcome and a final farewell session, which involves creating a student-centered environment that focuses on student preferences, interests, and opportunities for classroom celebrations.

**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.

- The school leaders stated that they have developed some communication vehicles to inform parents of their child’s academic achievement. However, there is little evidence of the school alerting families to the school’s high expectations for student success and enabling families to help students reach those expectations. Comments from the recent teacher survey and discussions with teachers indicated that not all teachers feel they help families to set high expectations for their children. Staff reported that only a limited number of parents attend school events that focus on the achievement of their children, such as parent conferences. Parents who met with the review team stated that teachers remind parents twice each month about the school’s expectations. A document review and discussions with teachers, however, indicate that most communications with families focus on students’ academic progress or negative behavior and not on the school’s high expectations for the academic success of all students. This minimizes parental engagement and the development of college and career readiness.
- The school has some reciprocal communication links that increase families’ awareness of student needs and to support student achievement. For example, Wednesday Folders contain information pertinent to student learning and achievement, such as curriculum content and how to access the parent portal. However, during discussions, some parents reported they were not able to access the parent portal because they do not have computer access. Interviews with the school leader and a review of documents show that the school is beginning to explore issues concerning the effectiveness of its strategies for communicating with parents through avenues such as the monthly meeting of the school-based management team in which parent representatives are involved.
- The school leader acknowledged that the school is not providing training for staff on creating and sustaining home-school partnerships. Teacher comments in the recent teacher survey and parents interviewed by the IIT indicated a lack of training for families across all areas-- academic and social and emotional, to support student success. As a result, not all students benefit from a robust and focused home-school connection.
- Discussions with teachers and the school leader indicate that the school recognizes the need to share data with families. The school shares some data with parents, such as report cards, progress reports,

and information concerning behavioral issues. The school leader reported that some families advocate for services that address the needs of their children, for example, support for behavioral problems. However, the school leader acknowledged that not all parents are involved in addressing their child's academic or social needs because families are not generally empowered to take action to support student learning and success. The review team did not find evidence that the school provides training to enable all families to better understand data systems and ways to support their child's needs.

**Recommendation:**

School leaders, support staff, teachers, and students must work together to improve the number of families who are regularly involved in their child's education by:

- engaging students in a school-wide project by surveying parents to gather their views and then allowing students to analyze the data collected, write up their results, and display by grade level through the building; and
- school leaders using the information to respond to the needs of the families.