



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	140600010108
School Name	Riverside Institute of Technology
School Address	51 Ontario Street, Buffalo 14213
District Name	Buffalo Public Schools
School Leader	Denise Clarke
Dates of Review	December 2 – 3, 2014
School Accountability Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Priority 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	816	SIG Recipient	No
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2014-15)					
# Transitional Bilingual	N/A	# Dual Language	N/A	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	0
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2014-15)					
# Special Classes	8	# SETSS	N/A	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	28
Types and Number of Special Classes (2014-15)					
# Visual Arts	5	# Music	0	# Drama	0
# Foreign Language	5	# Dance	0	# CTE	38
School Composition (most recent data)					
% Title I Population	74%	% Attendance Rate	74%		
% Free Lunch	73%	% Reduced Lunch	1%		
% Limited English Proficient	33%	% Students with Disabilities	16%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native	2%	% Black or African American	38%		
% Hispanic or Latino	29%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	17%		
% White	13%	% Multi-Racial	1%		
Personnel (most recent data)					
Years Principal Assigned to School	4	# of Assistant Principals	3		
# of Deans	1	# of Counselors/Social Workers	2		
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0%	% Teaching Out of Certification	5%		
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	0%	Average Teacher Absences	13%		
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	13%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	6%		
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)					
% of 1st year students who earned 10+ credits	0.5%	% of 2nd year students who earned 10+ credits	49%		
% of 3rd year students who earned 10+ credits	89%	4 Year Graduation Rate	16%		
6 Year Graduation Rate	34%				
Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2013-14)					
Reward		Recognition			
In Good Standing		Local Assistance Plan			
Focus District		Focus School Identified by a Focus District			
Priority School	x				

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. Improve levels of student engagement.
2. Improve the level of rigor in instruction.
3. Develop students' problem solving skills.
4. Develop students' ability to draw on evidence to argue a point in writing.
5. Improve students' reading abilities.

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, a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SEIS) representative, and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBE-RN).
- The review team visited a total of 63 classrooms during the two-day review.
- Reviewers conducted focus groups with students and staff. One parent was able to attend the parent meeting.
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including curriculum maps, lesson plans, school-wide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- No survey data was available at the time of the review.

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 2:					I

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 3:					I

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 4:					I

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

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	I
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The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* for Tenet 2 – School Leader Practices and Decisions.

- The school leader has not developed a clear vision statement for school improvement that is known or understood by teachers, staff, or parents. Although the school’s mission statement was included in documents provided to the review team, staff was not able to articulate a specific vision for the school. During interviews, teachers indicated that they thought the mission involves the introduction of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). While there are district targets for improving graduation rates and reducing absences, the review team found that the school leader has not developed school-wide specific, measurable, ambitious, results-oriented, and timely (SMART) goals. The school leader indicated that the students have not been made aware of the values inherent in the “Safe & Civil Schools” program and noted that attendance levels and the behavior of some students are poor.
- The school leader reported redirecting resources in response to changes in the school’s population and to staff shortages. She adjusted the schedule to accommodate a late influx of freshmen and to provide more time to develop the low mathematics and literacy skills of some students, as described in the school self-evaluation. However, the school leader noted that teachers have not planned effectively for the larger classes, and the schedule adjustment has not had a positive impact in improving student achievement. To meet the needs of the increasing population of English language learners (ELLs), a co-teaching model has been modified for teachers of ELLs in a few subject areas. But the school leader reported that the impact of this initiative is inconsistent because many teachers choose not to use their preparation periods for shared planning. She stated that an external review, which was made available to the review team, indicates that the school’s partnership with the Northwest Community Center has improved student achievement for some students who attend the after-school credit recovery session.
- An examination of the school leaders’ classroom observations and feedback to teachers by the review team indicates that although evaluations often identify weaknesses in teacher practices, feedback to teachers does not provide specific, actionable steps for instructional improvement. The school leader reported that some teachers are reluctant to engage with instructional coaches, so they miss opportunities to develop their expertise. The review team found limited evidence that indicates the school leader provides professional development (PD) opportunities focused on teacher weaknesses. Records show that teacher attendance at voluntary PD sessions is low.
- The school leader has not implemented evidenced-based systems for monitoring critical school-wide practices. The school leader and assistant school leaders reported that they collate information about student achievement, school attendance, and behavioral issues during an informal de-briefing session at the end of each day. However, when asked for examples, such as the impact of the school’s partnership with Medaille College, which has resulted in the hiring of staff to support student preparation for college and careers, school leaders were not able to provide specific, quantitative data regarding its impact on student achievement. The lack of a specific mission for school improvement, SMART goals, and systems for holding teachers accountable and determining the root cause of

problems impedes the ability of the school leader to improve student achievement.

Recommendation:

- Senior leaders must create an effective school improvement mission by:
 - sharing with all staff, Attachment B targets for student achievement and attendance; and
 - meeting with the committees responsible for meeting these targets on a weekly basis in order to monitor progress towards achieving them, to check that revisions are made, to ensure progress is sustained, and to hold them accountable for meeting these targets by the end of the year.

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

I

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

- The review team found that school leaders have not implemented a plan that assists teachers in understanding how to modify the CCLS to address the academic needs of subgroups. While the school leader indicated that she has provided guidance about flexible planning, the team found that teachers interpret this guidance as providing students with a succession of tasks rather than adjusting the curriculum to meet student needs.
- The school’s career academies of finance, entrepreneurship, and health science do not consistently meet students’ academic needs. The school leader reported that some students pursue the finance course even if their numeracy and reading levels are low. She noted this often prevents them from accessing the course materials. The review team found no evidence that the school leader provided effective support to enable teachers to adapt the curriculum to support the needs of these students. Staff reported that the graphic communication course has been effective for students with disabilities because it promotes social development and employability skills. However, during interviews, students reported that not enough is done to help the high proportion of students who join the school throughout the year, to catch up with the work they have missed.
- Examination of lesson plans and classroom observations indicate that most teachers provide activities that are not intellectually challenging, such as filling in words missing from text passages rather than asking students to generate the prose themselves. Often there is no development from one activity to the next, and learning is not structured for increasing autonomy. Most students interviewed described their work as too easy, reporting they rarely felt prepared for the Regents examinations. Classroom visits by the review team indicated that the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) methodology used to guide instruction for ELLs is used inconsistently and that few teachers incorporate modeling or cultural experiences to meet these students’ needs.
- The school leader reported that teachers have recently chosen not to use preparation time for shared planning, so there are no discussions about promoting interdisciplinary curricula. Staff indicated that few departments meet to develop content in their own areas, but noted that those that do have a

positive impact on student achievement. For example, the school leader shared that the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) data shows an increase in the proficiency levels of ELLs over the last four years. However, the lack of coordinated planning between teachers of ELLs or special education teachers with their general education colleagues hinders the modification of the curriculum to address the needs of these students in integrated classes.

- Discussions with school leaders and teachers indicate that they do not use data to inform curriculum planning and that few teachers are aware of the improvement indicated in the NYSESLAT data, and they have not raised their expectations about student work in keeping with the data or the expectations of the CCLS. The review team’s examination of student work showed that feedback to ELLs did not focus on actionable steps for improvement. While the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) data provides some useful information when freshmen are tested, teacher interviews indicated that the limited analysis of assessments at subsequent grade levels impedes progress in reading. School leaders and teachers are not using the CCLS to maximize instructional practice or student learning outcomes, which hinders improvement in the graduation rate.

Recommendation:

- School leaders must make sure that teachers take greater responsibility for increasing the rigor in the implementation of the CCLS by:
 - taking every opportunity to plan together during their preparation times and to agree how to scaffold the curriculum so that it helps students reach the level of expectation required of Regents assessments; and
 - collaborating with special education and English as a second language teachers so that curriculum modifications meet these students’ needs.

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

I

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

- Instructional practices and classroom routines are inconsistent. During interviews with teachers, the review team found that senior leaders allow teachers leeway in interpreting guidance about instruction and class routines. The “Instructional Rocks” strategy introduced by the school leader to regulate instruction is not having a positive impact. Classroom visitations by the review team showed that few teachers incorporated within lessons the fundamental features or “Rocks” of effective teaching. For example, features of this strategy concerning academic communication recommend that students talk for at least 50 percent of the time; however, the review team found that most lessons are teacher dominated with very limited student participation. At times, when special education teachers identified learning, language, and content objectives, the review team found that these practices provided a more useful learning framework for students with disabilities.
- Classroom visitations indicate that most lessons do not include the expected instructional shifts. The

review team found that the questions teachers posed were not challenging, focusing primarily on basic knowledge or recall with little opportunity for students to talk through emerging ideas. Teachers often answer their own questions or rush ELLs, who are not given sufficient time to learn, by forming a response independently. The review team found that in many classes, students are not encouraged to try new techniques because teachers do not model best practices or check that students understand what they need to do to be successful. Although some teachers introduce complex text aligned to CCLS, reviewers found that instructional practices did not enable students to access these ideas and lessons often proceeded too slowly to promote mental agility in mathematics.

- During classroom observations, the review team found that many teachers did not consistently address student inattention or disruptive behavior. During interviews, students reported that they sometimes choose not to give answers when they are concerned that an error might expose them to ridicule. The review team found that occasionally some teachers expressed impatience when students struggled to answer questions, although teachers of students with disabilities provided a supportive learning environment by encouraging students to plan their own solutions to intellectual problems.
- Teachers do not analyze data to inform and adjust their instructional practices. Assessments devised by teachers do not align to the CCLS and do not provide the level of accuracy needed to monitor students’ academic growth effectively. An examination of lesson plans showed that without the analysis of assessment data teachers do not plan the variety of access points necessary to sustain individual students’ academic growth during lessons. Classroom observations by the review team indicated that teachers rarely adjust activities in relation to students’ responses. Planning documents show that teachers rely on the school’s reteach policy to address gaps in learning, and there is considerable delay time before student misconceptions are addressed. During interviews, students commented that they were often surprised to find they were falling behind when it was too late to redress the situation. The school identified a high proportion of senior students currently failing up to five courses. The lack of purposeful feedback based on data hinders the school’s ability to create learning opportunities for students based on their strengths and areas of need, which impedes student progress.

Recommendations:

- Teachers should develop instructional practices, which motivate students to take ownership of their learning by:
 - providing timely feedback so students know how well they are doing and can make decisions about how to improve; and
 - giving all students, especially ELLs, time to respond to questions so that they can learn by making contributions in class.

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 introduction of the “Safe & Civil Schools” program to promote student social and emotional developmental health has not been effective because staff do not implement it consistently. Students indicated that they commit to the code of conduct, but the school leader reported that some teachers fail to uphold these expectations, allowing students, for example, to use cell phones in class. Nevertheless, the review team found well-organized routines for supervising the corridors and stairwells at transition times. Records show that these areas of school have become more orderly.
- During interviews, students reported that they are confident there is a member of staff to whom they can turn if they have a problem. However, teachers, support staff, and students noted that the needs of the few most vulnerable students fully occupy the support staff, who report they have little capacity to identify students with emerging or latent needs. Most students shared that they feel safe in school although school leaders reported that there have been some bullying incidents.
- The school uses some protocols to address student needs. A mentoring program has been established, and identified students “check in and out” with key members of the staff to promote improved attendance. This program is intended to work in conjunction with a “start on time” policy at the beginning of the day. However, this policy has not been consistently effective. Students report teachers sanction lateness inconsistently, and students do not always understand the reasons for some punishments. The student support team has asked teachers to standardize student referrals for a consistent approach to recording and collating background information, which might indicate individual student social and emotional developmental health needs. However, the student support team reported that not all teachers follow the suggested procedure.
- School leaders, teachers, support staff, and students are involved in creating a healthy learning environment. Students reported that student ambassadors are committed to raising attendance by promoting positive attitudes at the school. School leaders report that the events the school organizes, in addition to individual student conferences with the dean, have contributed to the slight improvement in low attendance figures noted by the review team. The after-school program includes a range of activities, such as the music club and weightlifting, which has had a positive impact on student behavior. An independent review of the program, which was provided to the review team, indicates that the proportion of students attending the after-school program who are suspended is low.
- The school generates a considerable amount of data. Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students with disabilities are monitored to ensure students are on track to fulfill program aims. There are records of the number of “hall sweeps,” the proportion of students held in internal suspension, as well as attendance data. However, none of this data is strategically analyzed, and this minimizes the ability of school leaders to determine the most prevalent needs of the school community and address the social and emotional health needs of all students.

Recommendations:

- School leaders must raise the priority of preventative measures to create an environment that promotes students’ academic success and welfare by:

- issuing standardized routines and expectations for student behaviour in each classroom and holding all teachers accountable for implementing these measures; and
- making sure that all teachers use school systems for documenting concerns about individual student social and emotional developmental health needs so that these can more easily be identified and addressed.

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

I

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

- The school leader has not ensured effective communication channels between home and school to articulate high expectations for student achievement. She reported that too often parents have endorsed their children’s requests to drop out of school. In addition, she indicated the school has not been able to persuade the majority of parents to work with them to reduce absences, and many parents do not understand how to support their child’s improved achievement.
- The school provides information about school activities to parents through the parent portal, school website, and newsletters. However, the school leader and staff noted that this has not resulted in increased parent engagement. For example, monitoring by school leaders shows that only 20 percent of parents access the parent portal. The school leader reported that the school is unable to reach some families because they do not have accurate contact details for them. The school is in contact with the families of vulnerable students and those with more extreme behavior issues. However, the review team found that these communications are often delayed until the student reaches a crisis point. The school does not communicate with parents to reduce the likelihood of minor disturbances, which can escalate into concerns that are more serious. For example, there are no systems for communicating the frequency with which students are referred to the internal suspension room. The attendance teacher routinely contacts parents about student absences, but there is no strategic analysis to determine how to improve attendance effectively.
- The school lacks a formal system to communicate with parents whose first language is not English. Staff indicated that the school does not provide translated versions of school documents to parents of ELLs. In addition, the review team found a lack of clarity in some documents issued by the school. For example, there were letters informing parents of an external suspension that did not clearly indicate the reason for the decision, which limits parents’ ability to work with the school to prevent a reoccurrence.
- The school leader indicated that the staff has made some efforts to engage parents in understanding how to support their child’s learning. For example, in 2013, parents were invited to attend a workshop about changes to the CCLS, but attendance registers show that parental attendance at this and other events was very low. More events are planned, but there has been no training for parents so far this year.
- The school leader indicated that the staff members confer with parents about their child’s academic performance when parents come to school about students’ behavior issues. She also reported that

these meetings provide families with essential information they may not have accessed elsewhere. Students shared that they found it hard to interpret grade cards for their parents, particularly when the five-week interim assessment did not reflect their likely overall performance by the end of the marking period. The lack of a robust home-school connection hinders the ability of parents to support their child's academic achievement and social and emotional developmental growth.

Recommendation:

- Senior leaders should improve home school partnerships with parents by:
 - translating materials for families who speak English as an additional language; and
 - using attendance teacher home visits to gather and collate information about the causes for students' absence so that the needs of families can more easily be identified to improve attendance.