



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	130502020004
School Name	Dover Middle School
School Address	2368 Route 22, Dover Plains, NY 12522
District Name	Dover Union Free School District
School Leader	Patricia Rizzo
Dates of Review	January 21-22, 2015
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	6-8	Total Enrollment	313
		SIG Recipient	Yes
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2014-15)			
# Transitional Bilingual	0	# Dual Language	0
		# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	2
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2014-15)			
# Special Classes	17	# SETSS	3
		# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	6
Types and Number of Special Classes (2014-15)			
# Visual Arts	0	# Music	0
		# Drama	0
# Foreign Language	0	# Dance	0
		# CTE	0
School Composition (most recent data)			
% Title I Population	25%	% Attendance Rate	94%
% Free Lunch	41%	% Reduced Lunch	11.5%
% Limited English Proficient	1.5%	% Students with Disabilities	13.7%
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)			
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0	% Black or African American	6.7%
% Hispanic or Latino	17.5%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2%
% White	79%	% Multi-Racial	1.5%
Personnel (most recent data)			
Years Principal Assigned to School	5	# of Assistant Principals	0
# of Deans	0	# of Counselors/Social Workers	2
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0	% Teaching Out of Certification	.05%
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	14%	Average Teacher Absences	5
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	28%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	11%
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	90%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	85%
Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	96%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	82%
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)			
% of 1st year students who earned 10+ credits		% of 2nd year students who earned 10+ credits	
% of 3rd year students who earned 10+ credits		4 Year Graduation Rate	
6 Year Graduation Rate			
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	X
Hispanic or Latino	X	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	
White		Multi-Racial	
Students with Disabilities	X	Limited English Proficient	
Economically Disadvantaged	X		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (2012-13)			
American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American	X
Hispanic or Latino	X	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	
White		Multi-Racial	
Students with Disabilities	X	Limited English Proficient	
Economically Disadvantaged	X		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (2012-13)			
American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American	
Hispanic or Latino	X	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	
White	X	Multi-Racial	
Students with Disabilities	X	Limited English Proficient	
Economically Disadvantaged	X		
Describe the school's top priorities (no more than 5) based on the school's comprehensive plans (SCEP, SIG, DIP, etc.): SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased use of data. 2. Increase in differentiated instruction in all classrooms. 3. Implementation of the RTI model. 4. Increase percentage of students meeting proficiency in ELA and math. 			

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) representative.
- The review team visited a total of 40 classrooms during the two-day review.
- Reviewers conducted focus groups with students, staff and parents
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including teacher observations, lesson plans, school-wide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- The school provided results of a student survey that 267 students (85 %) completed.
- The school provided results of a staff survey that 34 staff (100 %) completed.
- Teachers are in the second year of working without a contract. Negotiations are currently at an impasse. As a result, teachers are completing all their work within the school day but most teachers are not performing additional work beyond the day, including attending meetings or events.

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"/>
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 2:				D	

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
3.2	The school leader ensures and supports the quality implementation of a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.	<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"/>
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 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 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:					I
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 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 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 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"/>
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
---	---------------------	----------

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

- Discussions with the school leader and documentation indicate that the school leader has established school goals focused on improving student achievement and instruction, which were developed in collaboration with the School Improvement Team (SIT). However, the review team found no evidence that the school leader worked with students or parents to develop goals or that they were specific, measurable, ambitious, results-oriented, and timely (SMART) goals to drive sustained school improvement. Documents examined by the review team show that work towards nearly all goals, have projected start and end dates of September 2014 and June 2015, respectively. The review team found no evidence of interim review dates or progress monitoring mechanisms to measure progress toward the goals. Although the school leader noted in her self-assessment that there are plans to monitor the goals, discussions with the school leader indicate that currently, goals are not tracked consistently. Parents interviewed by the review team stated they were not aware of the goals of the school.
- The school leader has made some programmatic and staffing decisions within the confines of her budget to address school improvement needs. Through her review of benchmark and State assessment data and observations from classroom visits, the school leader determined that some teachers were not taking individual student needs into account in their instructional practices. To remedy this situation, she secured a differentiation coach, who is currently supporting teachers with strategies and modeling in the classroom, but improvements to instruction are still ongoing. Test scores for students with disabilities are low. To support student needs, the school leader arranged training for a teacher to be trained in the Wilson Reading System. However, discussions with staff and the school leader indicate that the impact of these decisions are not being evaluated, which limits the ability of the school leader to develop informed school improvement strategies aimed at improving student achievement and teacher practices.
- The review team found that the school leader uses the Danielson rubric and conducts observations throughout the school year. In addition, the school leader meets with teachers to discuss Domains one and four, which include planning and preparation and professional responsibilities, and keeps a record of these conversations. Staff reported and an examination of documents indicates that informal classroom visits occur continually through the year, with the school leader providing feedback to teachers. Feedback from the formal visits is housed in the “My Learning Plan” software program. However, during interviews, teachers stated that the feedback that was provided to them, both formally and informally, is not specific enough to enable them to improve their instruction. Examination of feedback documentation and classroom observations by the review team indicated limited specific, actionable feedback by the school leader, which impedes improvement of instructional practices.
- Some systems, such as those that track teacher observations, monitor student achievement on benchmark examinations, and track attendance, are in place. However, discussions with the school leader indicate that these systems are not interconnected in a way that enables the school leader to

use the information to evaluate the connection and impact of the different data and to use the information to strategically target resources and improvement efforts to the areas of greatest need. The lack of interconnected evidence-based systems in critical areas hinders efforts by the school leader to make progress toward the school’s stated goals and to improve student achievement.

Recommendation:

- Develop and monitor interim benchmarks on a monthly basis to quantify progress towards building goals.
- Professional Learning Community (PLCs) leaders should have a standing agenda item for each meeting during which teachers share progress towards building goals. Action plans should be developed to ensure progress towards goals.

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 provided professional development (PD) for teachers to learn about Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-aligned curriculum. Teachers and the school leader reported that the school leader uses faculty meetings to provide on-going training, which is often provided by staff. The school leader ensures that the training includes examples of best practices related to the CCLS. However, these efforts are not part of a formalized plan to ensure that the curriculum is aligned across all areas of study. While the school leader encourages teachers to review and adjust the *Engage NY* modules for English language arts (ELA) and the *Go Math* program, staff report that the school leader does not rigorously monitor implementation of the curriculum in all classrooms.
- Teachers stated to the review team that there is no time in the schedule for collaboration between general education and special education teachers although data indicates that the needs of students with disabilities are not consistently addressed. Members of the science department shared that they analyze final examinations to determine any modifications that should be made in a grade level’s curriculum to better prepare the students for the next year’s intermediate science State assessment. However, less than one- half of the teachers report they have received training in data-driven inquiry (DDI) to help them modify and adjust the curricula they teach. Teachers shared that they adjust their short-term curricula based on evidence from exit tickets that indicate students’ comprehension of the work; however, this was not consistently evident in classroom observations carried out by the review team.
- There are no formal partnerships to address interdisciplinary curricula and no immediate plans to develop partnerships. Teachers state there are no opportunities within the schedule or school year to discuss this work. The review team found no reference in lesson plans or during classroom visits of interdisciplinary instruction, limiting opportunities for students to increase their academic success by exploring connections between the content and skills they are learning
- Teachers are in the beginning stages of using data from State tests and other assessments to

determine the level of student learning and to make curricula decisions and modifications. The review team found that the curriculum and assessments are not fully aligned to ensure student needs are addressed consistently. Some teachers are beginning to use the data to make short-term curricular decisions, including adjusting lesson plans for the next day or within the unit; however, these practices are inconsistent in classes. Discussions with teachers and students indicate that data is not used routinely to provide feedback to help students improve their work. Although the review team found that rubrics are used for various assignments, some students shared that they did not fully understand what the rubrics meant. Thirty-seven percent of teachers stated in their survey that the school does not expect them to provide opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and keep track of their progress.

Recommendation:

- The school leader should immediately provide regular opportunities, such as grade level or vertical teacher meetings, to review and align curriculum based on assessment data and monitor the impact on learning in classrooms; these meetings should include special education and special area teachers so that there is stronger collaboration in ensuring alignment between the curriculum and assessments.

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 school leader is beginning to engage teachers in conversations about data, and teachers themselves are beginning, particularly during weekly PLC meetings, to discuss how data can drive instruction. However, the review team found during classroom visitations that these discussions have not led to consistent instructional practices in which teachers use data to differentiate learning tasks to address the varying needs and abilities of students. Some teachers shared they are not confident or skilled in using data to set challenging and achievable goals for students. In addition, as special education teachers are not included in conversations and meetings about the use of data, opportunities are missed to discuss the academic progress and needs of students with disabilities.
- During classroom visits, the review team observed some examples of teachers posing higher-order questions and expected instructional shifts that were aligned to the CCLS; however, these practices were not consistent. In interviews, students stated that there was considerable variability in how well teachers matched work to their needs or how tasks engaged and stimulated them. During the on-site review, the majority of instruction observed by the review team was to the whole group. Even when students were organized in groups, they were usually working independently. There were examples of instructional strategies the differentiation coach had suggested, such as think-pair-share or “talk to your elbow partner,” but these activities were usually in general education classes and seldom seen in special education classes. While some teachers were using complex texts, they often accepted low-level factual responses to their questions without probing more deeply or asking questions that required text-based evidence to support conclusions.

- Teachers share their behavioral expectations with students at the start of each year and reinforce them throughout the year. The review team found that students were well- behaved in the classes they visited. However, some students shared that they did not always feel safe from an academic perspective. When the review team asked students what they did if they did not understand the material, participants indicated it depended on the subject or the teacher. Some students reported they kept quiet because they felt embarrassed and did not want to hold the class back by asking questions.
- Data is not yet used consistently to drive instruction or to ensure that tasks are accurately matched to the abilities of students. Some teachers use exit slips as formative assessments and use the information to alter their planning and review their intended teaching. However, observations and teacher planning show that this practice is not consistent enough to promote effective learning in all classes. Inconsistencies are also evident in the feedback provided to students. Although teachers use rubrics, students report that they do not always understand them or the scores they receive on completed work. Participants in the student focus group indicated that some feedback is helpful, but not all teachers provide feedback, and some feedback does not clearly outline the weaknesses they need to address in order to achieve at a higher level.

Recommendation:

Support differentiation and student engagement strategies in all classrooms and subject areas by having:

- teachers create a tool bank of differentiation and student engagement strategies;
- teachers implement at least one differentiation and one student engagement strategy to be used in every lesson;
- the school leader collect data on the use of effective strategies during formal and informal walkthroughs and observations;
- the school leader analyze and share data on effective strategies during faculty meetings; and
- the school leader monitor instructional strengths and challenges observed to inform PD decisions

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

I

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

- The school leader has not established a comprehensive, written system of referral and support to identify, address, and monitor students’ social and emotional developmental health. The school leader, staff, and students indicated that the school is small enough so that adults know all students. Staff indicated that they share information informally with each other. Once a week, grade level teachers, the school leader, and guidance staff meet in a PLC to discuss individual students. However,

discussions with staff and the school leader indicate that there is no comprehensive, formal system in place to collect and integrate data, such as attendance, behavioral referrals, or academic indicators, to establish a written intervention plan, monitor progress, or evaluate results. Fewer than half the staff surveyed indicated there was an effective system in place for developing and building students' social and emotional health. Although the review team observed that the students were generally well behaved, they found little evidence of adults working together in a systemic way to support students' social and emotional needs.

- The school began to use the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system last year. Some staff members were trained at that time, but staff state the program was not fully implemented and its effectiveness was limited. Observations and discussions with staff and the school leader indicate that this year, the focus has moved more towards the Response to Intervention (RTI) program, which focuses on academic intervention but also has a behavioral component. Although the review team did not observe behavior problems during the on-site visit, the majority of both staff and the students, in their respective surveys, felt behavioral issues interfered with instruction. The school does not have a comprehensive plan to equip staff with the skills needed to address the on-going social and emotional challenges of the students. Staff and the school leader stated that the PD offered teachers is predominantly focused on academics, with little emphasis on how social and emotional factors can influence student learning.
- Staff and parents reported examples of a community spirit and a nurturing culture that exists within the school. Participants in the focus groups cited special holiday initiatives for families in the area facing economic hardships and grade orientation nights and concerts. However, the review team found little evidence that there was a comprehensive system in place for monitoring and meeting the needs of all students. Staff reported that the PLC meetings were the venue where staff discussed individual student needs although the review team did not find such discussions during the PLC meeting members observed. There were no examples in the PLC meeting of how individual student needs were identified, interventions proposed and monitored, or needs met. The school has not strategically organized its work by formalizing processes and protocols or by formally identifying the roles that staff play in supporting a healthy learning environment, which limits student success.
- The school collects some data, such as attendance, discipline referrals, and academic performance. However, staff and the school leader reported there are no plans or protocols in place to correlate this information and use it to aid in the identification of root causes for individual student referrals. The lack of structures to support the use of data analysis to address students' needs, limits the ability of staff to address the academic, social and emotional well-being of all students.

Recommendation:

Support student social and emotional development health by having the RTI team develop a formalized referral system that:

- is written so that the protocols and processes are understood and implemented with fidelity by teachers, staff, students, and parents;
- includes a written referral form completed by teachers that includes academic, behavioral, and

attendance data, academic and behavior strategies attempted, and other pertinent information as needed, such as family and home information; and

- informs trends throughout the school to guide school improvement decisions.

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 leader communicates with parents during open house, parent-teacher conferences, and other events throughout the year; however, the review team found little evidence that these activities were specifically directed to help parents understand the school’s high expectations for all students. While the school has a website, there is no mechanism to indicate how many people sign in. School documentation and discussions with the school leader and staff indicate that parental involvement in school activities and events is low, and the school leader has not examined the reasons for this problem or the effectiveness of the school’s strategies for building home-school relationships.
- The school’s parent portal allows parents to access information on grades and assignments. During the parent focus group, the review team learned that access to the portal is at times limited by technological failings and that the quality and quantity of information available varies from teacher to teacher. There was little evidence that parental use of the portal is monitored or that strategies are in place for the school to evaluate the general effectiveness of its channels of communication with parents. Flyers are sent home informing families about school events; however, some parents indicated to the review team that they would prefer emails or text messages. There is an automated phone system, which alerts families to events at the school. While the school does not provide translation of these events by phone to families whose first language is not English, printed materials, which the review team examined, are usually offered in Spanish.
- The school has some relationships with service providers to support family and student needs. During health education classes, area service providers provide information about the availability of safe havens for those who experience domestic violence. There is also a dental clinic at the school. However, there is no comprehensive plan to provide training for parents and/or staff in strategies to build robust home-school partnerships to ensure student needs are addressed.
- Discussions with staff indicate that staff recognizes the need to share data with parents, but they rely on parents to access the parent portal to keep them informed about their child’s grades throughout each quarter. Some parents stated to the review team that not all families have access to the parent portal. In addition, even for those parents that are able to access the portal, they are not always able to find the information they are seeking. The school sends hard copies of progress reports home every five weeks, and a parent-teacher conference day is held after the second marking period, where teachers are available all day for discussions about each student. While many parents attend this function, the staff reported that events held during the day are problematic for many working parents or those without transportation. Parents shared they receive information about their child’s State assessment results, including explanations about the scores, but they are not confident they fully

understand what the scores mean in terms of performance. When questioned by the review team, parents stated there was no meeting or training to help them understand their individual child's score, nor did they know how the school was performing compared with other schools state-wide, which limits their ability to advocate on behalf of their children's needs.

Recommendation:

The school leader should strengthen partnerships with parents and families to ensure student academic growth and social and emotional health by:

- evaluating current strategies for communication with families, revising ineffective ones, and strengthening successful ones;
- working with the technology director to address failings in the technological aspects of the portal and to monitor successful use of portal by parents; and
- providing mini presentations on how parents can best support their child's learning.