



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

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



<b>BEDS Code</b>	270100010019
<b>School Name</b>	Marie Curie Institute for Engineering and Communication
<b>School Address</b>	9 Brice Street, Amsterdam, NY 12010
<b>District Name</b>	Greater Amsterdam School District
<b>School Leader</b>	John Penman
<b>Dates of Review</b>	November 18-19, 2014
<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 for [Marie Curie Institute of Engineering & Communication]**

School Configuration (2014-15 data)					
Grade Configuration	PreK-5	Total Enrollment	451	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	1	# SETSS	0	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	3
Types and Number of Special Classes (2014-15)					
# Visual Arts	1	# Music	1	# Drama	0
# Foreign Language	0	# Dance	0	# CTE	0
School Composition (most recent data)					
% Title I Population	73%	% Attendance Rate		92%	
% Free Lunch	67%	% Reduced Lunch		6%	
% Limited English Proficient	7%	% Students with Disabilities		8%	
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	% Black or African American		3%	
% Hispanic or Latino	52%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		1%	
% White	43%	% Multi-Racial		1%	
Personnel (most recent data)					
Years Principal Assigned to School	3	# of Assistant Principals		0	
# of Deans	0	# of Counselors/Social Workers		2	
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0%	% Teaching Out of Certification		0%	
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	3%	Average Teacher Absences		2.2%	
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	24%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		43%	
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	89%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)			
Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	NA	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		NA	
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)					
% of 1st year students who earned 10+ credits	NA	% of 2nd year students who earned 10+ credits		NA	
% of 3rd year students who earned 10+ credits	NA	4 Year Graduation Rate		NA	
6 Year Graduation Rate					
Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2013-14)					
Reward		Recognition			
In Good Standing		Local Assistance Plan			
Focus District		Focus School Identified by a Focus District		X	
Priority School					

**Accountability Status – Elementary and Middle Schools**

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

**SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:**

1. 85% of students will be at or above grade level as measured by Fountas & Pinnell scores.
2. Student performance in math will improve as shown by benchmark testing by 10%.
3. There will be a decrease in the number of students absent more than 15 days a year.

**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 district-selected Outside Educational Expert, a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SEIS) representative and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The review team visited a total of 28 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 78 students (18 percent) completed.
- The school provided results of a staff survey that 32 staff members (78 percent) completed.
- The school provided results of a parent survey that eight parents (one percent) completed.

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
2.2	The school leader ensures that the school community shares the Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) goals/mission, and long-term vision inclusive of core values that address the priorities outlined in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 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"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:</b>				<b>D</b>	
<b>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.</b>					
<b>#</b>	Statement of Practice	<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 and a small group of representatives of the school community have worked together to revise the mission and develop goals that set expectations for improvements in reading, mathematics, and attendance. Although the mission statement is posted in various places in the building in both Spanish and English, the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT or “review team”) found minimal evidence of how the school staff uses the mission to drive school improvement. Teachers, parents, and students interviewed were aware that there were goals and mission statement, but were not able to articulate them. The IIT found that the goals do not fully align to the mission statement. For example, the mission statement states that “students will be real-world problem solvers who can effectively communicate;” however, the goals do not address instructional aims to promote critical thinking, applications of learning to solve problems nor oral and written communication.
- The school leader has begun to use resources strategically to bring about school improvement and increased opportunities for student success. The school leader shared that he has reviewed the performance shortfalls of students, the curriculum, and instructional practices through classroom observations and some data analysis and has started to direct financial and human resources to address areas of need including providing professional development (PD) to teachers on CCLS literacy expectations and supporting that PD with the acquisition of leveled classroom libraries to replace the basal series; establishing times for vertical- and grade-level planning; acquiring a data coach to assist teachers in gathering and interpreting student performance data; creating a lesson planning template; acquiring school website software that incorporates the availability of computerized Spanish language translations of messages written in English on that website; and introducing a character education program school-wide. However, the IIT found that a system for monitoring and supporting these innovations and adapting these efforts to generate school improvement is not yet in place.
- The school leader conducts observations using the district-approved Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) protocols and reviews classroom data using the Danielson Framework model for formal and walkthrough classroom observations. This formal process is augmented with short classroom visitations that provide opportunities for informal feedback to teachers. However, teachers report that there is no formal process for providing further targeted observations, additional coaching, or additional PD to tackle and monitor improvement in the instructional areas highlighted through these processes.
- The school leader reports that he informally monitors school-wide practices through direct observations and by being highly visible in classrooms and common areas in the school and is starting to measure growth through data analysis. The school leader is beginning to work with a newly hired data coach to begin assembling and analyzing data about school performance; however, this analysis is only in the very early stages and does not reflect a comprehensive plan to produce longitudinal studies.

**Recommendation:**

The school leader should:

- work with the data coach and a larger focus group composed of parents, students, teachers, and support staff to develop school-wide SMART goals that align to the mission statement.
- work with the curriculum cabinet, comprised of teachers and specialists, the data coach and student support staff to determine and implement actions in the SCEP that brings teacher planning and practice, parental training, and student performance together and to monitor every month the progress towards achieving goals, adjusting planned actions as necessary; and.
- extend APPR activities to provide teachers with targeted support for the faithful implementation of the professional development training they have received.

**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 recently established a range of professional development, building-wide systems, and structures to ensure that Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) are being implemented and that the school’s curriculum takes into account student needs and contributes to college and career readiness. The school leader has provided a template for the development of CCLS-aligned lesson plans, and during class visits, the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT or “review team observed many teachers using this template. He has established a curriculum cabinet, composed of teachers, specialists, and the school leader that meets monthly to plan and monitor CCLS school-wide implementation. However, during discussions with the IIT, the school leader and members of the curriculum cabinet acknowledged that there are significant next steps, including monitoring, adapting, and supporting curricula modifications that are necessary to ensure rigorous and coherent curricula and assessments aligned to the CCLS.
- A review of lesson plans and classroom observations show that some teachers have begun to plan and deliver lessons that include data-driven instruction (DDI), that align to the CCLS, and that incorporate student needs, complex materials, and higher-order questioning. A review of lesson plans and curriculum maps, as well as classroom observations show that teachers generally follow the established set of planning expectations for classroom instruction. During discussions with the IIT, teachers shared that they selected a new mathematics text after reviewing, piloting, and evaluating two text series for grades kindergarten to grade five. Although some teachers have begun to use DDI and the incorporation of CCLS the new approach has not yet demonstrated significant impact on student performance
- Teachers are not systematically working together to connect the curriculum across subjects in a way that increases students’ engagement and promotes better opportunities for student success. While

classroom observations and teacher comments reflected that individual teachers attempt to increase students' exposure to cross-curricular connections, the IIT did not find evidence of a formal plan or a defined set of expectations to consistently engage students in an interdisciplinary learning. Teachers reported that the magnet school concept of this school focuses on engineering and communications; however, in recent years they have placed less emphasis on providing opportunities for students to develop projects and activities that are interdisciplinary in nature. The review team noted that most students interviewed could not recollect significant projects that required them to link learning in one subject to learning in another subject.

- Teachers are beginning to define and use assessments such as STAR reading, STAR math, and STAR early literacy, "Go Math" unit assessment, Educational Software for Guiding Instruction, and Fountas and Pinnell testing for benchmark assessments to guide and inform their curriculum planning. However, during discussions with the IIT teachers reported that the school staff has only recently initiated a calendar of quarterly testing for the assessments. Although teachers report that they are beginning to provide students with feedback they need to ensure ownership of learning and improve achievement, teachers acknowledged that they do not have a common approach for formative assessment strategies.

**Recommendation:**

The data coach and school leader should:

- work with teachers during the professional learning communities (PLC) meeting times to revise curriculum maps and agree with teachers what should be included in unit and lesson plans to ensure full implementation of the CCLS for each grade level in the school;
- hold all teachers accountable for full implementation of the curriculum maps, unit and lesson plans while assessing to what degree their students are mastering the grade-level standards;
- monitor through lesson plan reviews, APPR formal classroom observations and informal walkthroughs the quality and fidelity of instructional planning and teacher performance implementing curricula aligned to the CCLS and the instructional shifts; and
- share the results of targeted school-wide learning walks and other periodic monitoring activities to plan for and coordinate adjustments to instruction.

**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 and teacher leaders have initiated programs and strategies designed to ensure that teachers' instructional plans and practices are informed by data, reflect students' needs and lead to increased achievement as well as the meeting of student goals. The data coach has begun to meet with teachers through the newly established professional learning communities (PLCs) meeting times to assist

teachers in creating student groupings in response to student performance on literacy test data. In addition, the school leader and the data coach have begun to review school-wide and classroom/student specific data to assess the impact of instruction on student achievement. The nascent nature of these activities precludes the presence of measurable impact on student achievement in state tests.

- The IIT noted that many teachers are beginning to provide CCLS-aligned lessons that contain high levels of text and content complexity; however, during class visits, the review team found that teachers inconsistently incorporate higher-order questions into lessons, and teachers minimally employ teaching strategies linked to the CCLS instructional shifts. Reviewers found that lessons primarily included teacher-centered learning activities. Although students and teachers reported some opportunity in mathematics to explore alternative solutions to posed problems and that students have choices in the nature of the reading activities, students reported and teachers confirmed that there are limited opportunities for students to consistently engage in hands-on learning activities. While students are physically safe in this school, the learning environment provides limited opportunities for acknowledging student voice and perspectives and providing opportunities for student engagement. Students reported and classroom visits confirmed that students primarily experience questioning that requires one-word or short answers and provide limited opportunities for in depth discussions.
- Teachers have begun to use data and assessments to inform and adjust their instructional strategies and groupings as well as to provide timely feedback necessary to students. For example, the IIT observed grade three English language arts (ELA) teachers working with the building’s data specialist to review recent performance data. The teachers then developed a plan to assign students to learning groups based on that data. The teachers worked cooperatively to divide the students into three learning groupings for re-teaching or expanded learning. However, evidence from walkthrough and class visits confirmed that teachers are not effectively employing formative assessment activities to inform and adjust their instruction.

**Recommendation:**

The school leader and data coach should work with teachers to:

- set expectations for teacher performance in the areas of using higher-order questioning, open-ended student-centered learning, and formative assessment;
- set grade-level meeting agendas that prompt collaborative planning and reflection in these areas;
- target and monitor teacher performance in effectively providing higher-order questioning, open-ended, student-centered learning, and formative assessment;
- use peer coaching/fishbowling during faculty meetings to foster conversations concerning effective teaching strategies for promoting the targeted expectations; and
- monitor the status and effectiveness of school-wide implementation through learning walks, reviews of observation/walkthrough reports, the curriculum cabinet meetings, and teacher focus groups.

**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

**Tenet Rating**

**D**

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

- The school leader is establishing systems that identify social and emotional developmental health needs to ensure that appropriate social and emotional developmental health supports are provided to students. For example, the school leader has created a committee called “FACES” comprised of the school leader, the school’s social worker, and the school’s data coach. The committee purpose is to address the instructional and social and emotional developmental health needs of students identified through a review of performance and behavioral data.
- The school is beginning to use curricula, programs, and materials to address students’ social and emotional developmental health needs. The school staff has put in place elements of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program. A character education program with monthly character traits linked to specific grade-appropriate texts was implemented this year; however, the school leader and the school’s social worker noted that the implementation has not been fully monitored for compliance and uniform application. The character education program was not instituted through a strategic analysis of the needs of the school community. The review team found that the range of character traits addressed do not fully align to the core values of the school of “everyone is capable of learning; education is a shared responsibility; everyone is responsible for his/her own actions.” In addition, during discussions with the IIT, teachers could not report specific training in the strategies and approaches that effectively address the social and emotional developmental health needs of all students provided by either the school or the district.
- The school does not strategically organize its work with parents, teachers, and community-based organizations to ensure that students’ social and emotional developmental health needs are consistently met. Parents interviewed by the IIT did not know the district’s parent liaison or her role. Although parents and the teachers interviewed described the school leader as an effective problem solver when student issues arise, the IIT found that they did not articulate a system, policy, or set of practices in place to respond to students’ needs. There is one social worker in the school, and that person does not speak Spanish, the second largest language spoken by students in the school, which makes it difficult for the social worker to communicate with all families and to address the range of needs of all students. Some parents reported that their children do not have enough opportunities to develop their citizenship skills through volunteering or student choice in responding to the classroom academic learning goals.
- While the school receives social and emotional developmental health data on students such as the district’s Benchmark of Quality (BOQ) report and the Self-Assessment Survey (SAS), the school has not fully developed and implemented a strategic plan to collect, analyze, and use data to identify and meet the social and emotional developmental health needs of all students. During discussions with the IIT, both parents and teachers shared that the school inconsistently provides in-house resources to address student issues.

**Recommendation:**

The school leader should use the information available on the latest Benchmark of Quality (BOQ) report and the Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) to:

- collaboratively analyze that information with parents during school events and focus group meetings, and with teachers, student support staff and teacher leaders in faculty and grade-level meetings to determine the social and emotional developmental health needs of students;
- assess the capabilities of currently available community-based, district-based, and in-house resources to address those needs;
- create a system for using a structured approach to respond to the identified needs; and
- provide training for all staff groups in delivering PBIS and the character education program to ensure consistent implementation throughout the school.

**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.

- While the school leader builds positive relationships between the school and the families, communications have not fully focused on creating partnerships for academic success. School support staff, teachers, and parents report that parents attend and support school-sponsored social events such as “movie night” and the parent barbecue; however, the school staff has inconsistently used those events to create greater awareness of high expectations for students’ success or to equip parents with the tools they need to assist students in improving academic skills. There is no defined strategy or plan to systematically develop skills among parents to help students reach the high expectations being established within the school. The school sponsors a Math Night for parents of grade four students to explain the expectations for grade five math; however, the IIT did not find evidence of a program similar to Math Night for any other grades nor plans to explain the expectations of the literacy program being put into place.
- The school staff is beginning to provide multiple opportunities for communication to increase staff and families’ understandings about student needs and further support student achievement. In the fall and spring, there are parent/teacher meetings. Teachers say that they are expected to contact parents who do not attend these meetings. The review team noted that the daily and weekly progress sheets that are sent home with students are written only in English. Although the school has acquired website software that facilitates the translation of messages written in English into Spanish, other communications seen by the IIT including students’ report cards were only in English though forty percent of the students are Latino. During discussions with the IIT, parents shared that the information on the website pages is not current nor do a majority of teachers update the information on the webpage.
- Through discussions with staff, the IIT learned that the school social worker utilizes the services of the area’s Coordinated Children Services Initiatives (CCSI) to work with selected individual parents on how to develop goals for their own children’s achievement and for their social and emotional developmental health. Although the school staff has established links with community organizations

such as Centro Civico, Catholic Charities, YMCA, and the public library, there is no school-wide plan for training parents and staff on home-school partnerships. For example, the YMCA provides before school supervision of children whose parents have brought them to school early. However, there is no coordinated effort to link the expertise of the community partner agencies to engage parents and teachers in a common effort to promote improved academic achievement.

- While the school does share student data with families, the school community does not consistently share data in a way that allows teachers and support staff to understand both student and family needs and advocate for services that address those needs. The review team found no evidence of a defined system for eliciting from parents information concerning their family needs. Additionally, school staff lacks a clear process to ensure all parents understand the student assessment data sent home such as Go Math, the STAR testing, or the Fountas and Pinnell.

**Recommendation:**

In order to focus reciprocal conversations with parents on improving student performance, the school leader should:

- create a parent/teacher focus group to review the efficacy of current attempts to communicate high expectations for student performance;
- define with parents a range of opportunities for providing parents with specific strategies for supporting student performance;
- set expectations for school-home communications for teachers and support staff to create consistent messages concerning the strategies families can provide for improved academic achievement;
- develop a way to present student performance information that is provided in languages and in ways that are understood by parents; and
- monitor the effectiveness of the communications through quarterly meetings of a parent/teacher focus group adjusting the process as appropriate.