



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	44090104004
School Name	Highland Falls Intermediate School
School Address	52 Mountain Avenue, Highland Falls, NY 10928
District Name	Highland Falls – Fort Montgomery Central School District
School Leader	John Xanthis
Dates of Review	April 7-8, 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) - given			
Grade Configuration	3 – 8	Total Enrollment	321
			SIG Recipient
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2014-15)			
# Transitional Bilingual	0	# Dual Language	0
		# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	0
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2014-15)			
# Special Classes	1	# SETSS	0
		# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	9
Types and Number of Special Classes (2014-15)			
# Visual Arts	8	# Music	9
# Foreign Language	3	# Dance	0
		# CTE	0
School Composition (most recent data)			
% Title I Population	34%	% Attendance Rate	95%
% Free Lunch	41%	% Reduced Lunch	8%
% Limited English Proficient	6%	% Students with Disabilities	13%
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)			
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0	% Black or African American	20%
% Hispanic or Latino	26%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2%
% White	55%	% Multi-Racial	1%
Personnel (most recent data)			
Years Principal Assigned to School	.9	# of Assistant Principals	1
# 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		Average Teacher Absences	
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	21%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	23%
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	81%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	37%
Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	
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		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		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	
White		Multi-Racial	
Students with Disabilities	No	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	No	Multi-Racial	
Students with Disabilities	No	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. To build a school community committed to academic success of all students by providing informal and formal feedback to teachers about curriculum and lesson development.
2. To build a community committed to the social and emotional health of all students by developing a system of counseling programs a culturally responsive curriculum.
3. To build an intervention program that is responsive to both the academic and social/emotional needs of the students by developing a systematic RTI plan.
4. To build a school community that is responsive parents and the community by developing a program of school-wide events and ensuring clear, consistent communication.

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 OEE, and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The review team visited a total of 46 classrooms during the two-day review.
- Reviewers conducted focus groups with students, staff, and parents.
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including curriculum maps, lesson plans, school-wide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- The school provided results of a student survey that 281 students (82 percent) completed.
- The school did not provide results of a staff survey.
- The school provided results of a parent survey administered in 2014 that 26 elementary parents (16 percent) and 20 middle school parents (10 percent) completed.
- The school has been led by an interim principal for 2014-2015, and has had three school leaders in the three years since being designated a Focus School.

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"/>
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 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"/>
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 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.5	The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:				D	

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

Tenet Rating

D

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

- The interim school leader reported that he was hired to lead the school toward four identified priorities of establishing a culturally responsive school climate, building a comprehensive Response to Intervention (RtI) system, developing a structured program committed to the social and emotional health of all students and strengthening home-school relationships. The school leader and staff have taken purposeful actions that are showing evidence of progress toward achievement of these four priorities approved. The school leader reported that when the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP) was not approved by the start of the year, he collaborated with staff to pursue the climate, culture, and family relationship activities described in the documents for the Respect for all (RFA) and Response to Intervention (RtI) programs. During discussions with the Integrated Intervention team, although parents, teachers, staff, and students did not articulate the academic priorities developed last year for the SCEP, they eagerly described positive changes in the climate and culture at the school. A review of documents reflects that attendance data shows positive trends when compared month-by-month, discipline referrals have declined from 115 in 2013-2014 to 39 in the current year, and 15 percent more students are meeting honor roll standards.
- The school leader made strategic decisions to use funds to provide staff for intervention services, to manage the RFA program, and to offer stipends for the after-school program. The school leader's allocation of resources has contributed to improvement in student behavior, school climate, academic achievement, and community relationships as evidenced by reductions in disciplinary actions, increases in the number of students making honor roll, and improvements in attendance at parental events. The school leader's has hired additional part-time English language arts (ELA) and math teachers, to reduce class sizes and to allow grade-level teams to meet regularly. An instructional coach hired this year provides embedded training on data-informed instructional planning at grade-level team meetings. While State data shows that the school has made progress in State assessments since its designation as a Focus School, the school leader and staff are still building their skill in using school-level data to measure the impact of programs and services on all students, including those who are English language learners (ELL) or those with disabilities.
- The school leader, assistant principal, and teachers confirmed that evaluations comply with the district's annual professional performance review (APPR) plan and that informal class visits occur daily. In addition, the school leaders provide feedback to teachers on classroom climate as well as on instructional practices. Teachers affirmed that the feedback focuses on school-wide practices, such as posting of learning targets and use of the workshop model of instruction. However, teachers reported and the school confirmed that teachers are not required implement the recommendations provided in the feedback reports. The school leader confirmed that school leaders do not use school-wide classroom observation data to determine professional development (PD) needs and that neither the school nor the district has a coordinated PD plan.
- The school leaders have some structures in place to review school-wide practices. However, the school leader has not ensured that all staff members consistently use data to plan and implement supports that address the needs of all students, particularly students with disabilities. The RFA and RtI programs generate data on student behavior, student achievement, and school climate. According to the school

leader, staff adjusts and refines the program in response to emerging evidence, such as through analyzing gaps in reading skills and remedial strategies. The school leader relies on the instructional coach to engage teachers in refining and adjusting their instructional practice as part of the grade-level team meetings. The IIT saw some examples of the coach providing support to teachers in data-informed instructional planning. While structures for data use are in place, teachers and student support staff reported their lack of confidence in looking across data systems to develop plans to address the needs and ability levels of all students, particularly ELLs, students with disabilities, and higher-achieving students.

Recommendation:

- In collaboration with staff, parents, and students school leaders must define a vision of a high quality academic program and establish measurable short- and long-term goals to achieve that vision.

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.

- Teachers are in their second year of implementing the EngageNY modules as their ELA and math curricula. The school leader designates the grade-level team meetings led by the instructional coach as the system of support for teachers to refine their skills in implementing the curriculum, in addition to summer PD and support provided by contractors from the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). During discussions with the IIT, the school leader and assistant principal (AP) reported that they rely on the instructional coach working with grade-level teams to ensure that teachers lesson plans include materials and instructional methods that match the level of challenge detailed in the modules and that align with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). However, the school leaders do not have a structured system of monitoring in place to verify this alignment, relying solely on the instructional coach’s review of lesson plans. As a result, the quality of planning and instructional delivery varies across the school.
- English language arts, math, science, and social studies teachers as well as special education consulting co-teachers, regularly meet in their grade-level teams to plan lessons collaboratively and to adjust these plans based on data, such as formative classroom, benchmark, and state assessments, to address varying academic strengths and needs. The school leader and AP confirmed that there is not a common data-driven instruction protocol to guide teachers’ analysis and planning decisions to ensure teachers’ plans include appropriate levels of complexity and differentiation. A review of sample lesson plans as well as class visits showed that most teachers who modified the CCLS modules made adjustments that reduced the level of challenge in the lessons, particularly for students with disabilities and ELLs.
- Across 46 lessons, teachers’ questioning was all at a low-level of cognitive demand, such as asking students to recall information. The IIT found that few teachers implemented lessons that matched the level of challenge described in the instructional shifts in the CCLS. When interviewed by the IIT, students were asked to devise a pie chart to represents their perceptions about the level of challenge

in their lessons. Students’ responses varied greatly with some indicating a high-level of challenge and others indicating a low-level of challenge.

- While teachers reported meeting in grade-level teams to design common lessons, not all teachers participate in these meetings because the meetings occur during some teachers scheduled class time. During discussions with the IIT, students described examples of cross-content lessons and projects in science and social studies; art and social studies; math and science; and art and ELA. However, the school leader has not created opportunities for all teachers, including teachers of students with disabilities and ELLs, to participate regularly in collaborative planning.
- Classroom visits showed that some teachers are beginning to use daily formative assessments, such as turn and talk, thumbs up and down, fist to five and exit tickets, along with other data to guide their curricular decisions. Students interviewed by the IIT, reported that many of their teachers meet with students to set personal goals to encourage student ownership. During class visits, the IIT saw student goals posted in classrooms throughout the school. While some goals focused on academic achievement such as “get 90 percent average on my mental math practice,” some goals focused on personal development such as “do all my homework on time” and “be more organized.” Students reported that some of their teachers help them track progress toward their goals.

Recommendation:

- Starting with the next curriculum unit to be taught, teachers must enhance the level of challenge in lesson plans that are consistent with the expectations of CCLS by incorporating at least three higher-order questions in each lesson based on a standard measure such as Webb’s Depth of Knowledge levels discussed in PD sessions earlier in the year. Use the existing grade-level team meetings to build a library of higher-order questions linked to the EngageNY modules using items already included in the modules and adding others developed locally over time. Explicitly teach language structures such as sentence starters and vocabulary for answering higher-order questions for all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities.
- At least quarterly, school leaders and the instructional coach must engage grade-level teachers in analyzing common interim assessment data in a formative cycle to inform 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.

- The school leader and instructional coach reported that, during grade level team meetings the instructional coach provides support to teachers in using data to inform lesson plan content, curriculum pacing, instructional strategies, and student grouping. In addition, the instructional coach works with teachers to develop instructional action plans that teachers implement and later evaluate for effectiveness. During the grade-level meeting, teachers reviewed students test results. The IIT found that while teachers identified problems with the format of the text, such as whether a question includes “not” or “best” in the stem, as a potential cause for student errors, teachers minimally probed for the skill or concept embedded in the test items to determine if student responses were due

to lack of understanding. While the grade level teams identify whether the students are those with disabilities or ELLs, they did not develop action plans that included specially designed instruction for those groups.

- Classroom visits and a review of documents indicated that the greatest range of differentiation is evident among the intervention lesson plans for iBlock when teachers meet for intensive instruction with small groups of students generally addressing a common skill or concept weakness. Intervention lessons are remedial and include content and skills that are below grade level when compared with CCLS expectations. Lessons for students with disabilities and ELLs bridge multiple grade levels and include learning targets aimed at basic skills. The school leader and assistant leader confirm that they do not regularly review lesson plans to ensure that lessons incorporate strategies consistent with the instructional shifts cited in the CCLS or include appropriate modifications for students with disabilities or ELLs. As a result, while students are receiving needed remedial instruction, their core or Tier 1 instruction does not always provide the level of challenge or enrichment needed to help them reach grade level expectations.
- Classes are orderly and relationships between teachers and students are respectful. During class visits, the IIT observed that most students were compliant, but students' level of engagement varied across classrooms. Students confirm they are comfortable asking for help and do not fear teasing from their classmates. Some teachers use centers with different points of access, such as audio stations, computer stations, and partner or group discussion. However, most lessons observed by the review team consisted of teacher presentation and worksheets. While some teachers modified the content of the worksheet for students with varying abilities, paper and pencil was the predominant method by which students demonstrated their work. The review team noted that in most classes visited, students completed their tasks quickly with minimal effort. During discussions with the IIT, some students shared that they do not find their class work challenging and that they are sometimes bored during class instruction.
- Class visits showed that few core or Tier 1 lessons are differentiated in ways appropriate to the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs, and there are few enrichment options for capable students. The school leader and teachers reported that they rely on the expertise of the academic intervention service (AIS) teachers who co-teach in classrooms, and the multi-grade special education and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers to meet the specific learning needs of ELLs and students with disabilities. Lesson plans for the multi-grade student groups in resource classrooms show that learning targets are not always appropriate to each student's grade level.
- Evidence gathered from student interviews and student work samples show that some teachers provide feedback to students. The IIT found that the feedback on work samples included minimal guidance to help students reflect upon and assess their own progress. For example, teacher feedback on samples of student work consisted of checks indicating right or wrong and comments on quantity, such as, "include at least five sentences."

Recommendation:

- To improve the quality of instruction, the school leaders along with the instructional coach should:
 - use grade-level meetings to improve the awareness of all teachers , including those responsible for ELLs and students with disabilities, of how to use data on individual students to group them and

match activities to meet student needs;

- monitor and check that learning tasks and plans are aligned with CCLS and modified as needed for ELLs and students with disabilities;
- engage teachers, at least quarterly, in a process to collect a selection of lesson tasks and analyze them against Webb’s Depth of Knowledge levels to understand current levels of instruction; and
- provide a monthly instructional focus for the school leaders’ walk-throughs, using summaries of data to inform a school-wide PD plan and to make ongoing adjustments to align instruction with CCLS expectations.

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 school staff has begun to implement purposeful and coordinated activities to address the social and emotional developmental needs of students. The school leader and staff reported that they designed and implemented the RFA program and took other actions, to address three of the school’s key priorities of students’ social and emotional health, academic and behavioral improvement, and home-school relationships. A review of documents show that the weekly meetings of the RFA, RtI, and leadership teams include a review of data to inform decisions, to adjust advisory lessons, and to plan monthly awards assemblies and other community events. In addition, the three teams have established systems and procedures to review data to monitor the impact of intervention strategies and revise the strategies as needed.
- The students, families, and staff all reported that the school’s efforts to improve the school climate and strengthen family-school relationships were beginning to make a difference. During discussions with the IIT, students expressed pride in being “caught” demonstrating admirable traits, a key element of the RFA program, and parents expressed appreciation for being greeted by the school leader at drop-off and dismissal, when they attend assemblies and events, and volunteer or visit the school. Data from the “I got caught” tickets show that all teachers are participating regularly in implementing the program’s strategies. The school staff hosts programs such as Students with Admirable Traits (SWAT) to recognize students who have demonstrated the school’s character traits. Staff reported presenting 541 awards at the SWAT assemblies. While the schools’ programs are showing signs of positive impact on key areas, the programs do not include explicit plans to strengthen the capacity of parents and teachers to sustain and extend existing gains.
- The school leaders, staff, and families are just beginning to collaborate to identify their contributions to building a school community that is safe and conducive to learning. The school provided introductory information about RFA to parents and teachers at the beginning of the year, and teachers have received guidance on their role in enacting the program. Letters to families from the school leader reiterate attendance targets and invite parents to support the school’s aims. By participating in RFA activities and responding to the school leader’s call for better attendance, parents have acknowledged their role in achieving the school’s key priorities.

- Data on the intervention plans developed by the RtI team include academic and behavior indicators and staff shared that they review data weekly to inform decisions about plan revision or continuation. However, with the exception of the RtI data, school leaders confirm that the school’s data systems do not link academic and behavior data to ensure all teachers can use these data to select appropriate instructional modifications for students of all ability levels. The IIT reviewed data provided by the RtI and RTA teams. The IIT noted that the data were disaggregated by gender, grade, ethnicity, and economic disadvantage. However, data were not broken down for students with disabilities, ELLs, and higher achieving students to determine if these subgroups are benefiting from RFA in the same way as their peers. The IIT did not find evidence of an implemented action plan to address this shortcoming.

Recommendation:

- The school leaders should make effective use of the abundant data gathered by the RFA team, the RtI team, and the leadership team, in conjunction with attendance, discipline, and academic data, to identify a specific challenge emerging from the data and develop an action plan that details the responsibilities of all members of staff, as well as the roles of parents and families in resolving the challenge.

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, staff, and families have focused on achieving the key priorities of building a safe and healthy school environment and strengthening home-school relationships as a necessary foundation to improved performance. While the school shows progress toward the identified priorities, the school leader has not focused the attention of teachers, staff, and families on the goal of high academic achievement for all and school-level academic data is not shared regularly with parents. The identified school priorities do not include specific actions to address the gaps between the performance of students with disabilities and ELLs and that of their peers.
- The school leader reported that as part of the community-building objective, the school staff has focused on enhancing communications with families by translating information into relevant languages and providing translators at events and meetings. During discussions with the IIT, parents shared that they communicate with the school via phone, email, or notes to and from the teacher, such as those in the Friday Folder. Discussions with parents and staff, as well as a review of documents, indicated that most communication from the school centers on events, such as invitations to monthly SWAT celebrations.
- The school leader reported that the student support staff including counselors, psychologist, and special educators held information workshops for parents of students transitioning from grades two to three and grades eight to nine, as well as for families of students moving from the elementary-style classrooms in grade five to the partially departmentalized classrooms in grade six. A review of documents showed that over 300 families participated in the fall Family Fun Night and attended workshop sessions on a variety of academic and non-academic topics. Support staff and parent interviews indicate that the activities and strategies employed by the school leader and staff bring

families to the school and create a strong home-school connection. The school leader and the RFA coordinator reported that they consider the growing attendance of families at workshops, events, and assemblies as evidence of the positive impact of school activities on the home-school relationship. While the school leader and student support staff confirm that they have not developed an explicit plan to sustain the community-building activities, the commitment to the school and support of its aims expressed by the parents in the focus group indicates the emergence of a growing home-school partnership.

- School staff reported using a variety of data, such as report cards, classroom assessments, and referrals to monitor and assess the impact of its RFA and RtI programs on student academic, social, and emotional well-being. However, the school leader acknowledged that the staff has not yet taken the next step to share school-wide academic data in ways that would enable families to be effective advocates for their child's academic success. For example, teachers engage students in their own goal setting; however, teachers do not regularly share student goals with families. As a result, parents are not able to be full partners with the school.

Recommendation:

- School leaders and staff should build on the enthusiasm and goodwill of the families and community to strengthen home-school partnerships to support student academic success. Strengthen the ability of parents/families to support their child's academic success by sharing students' goals and providing weekly communication to parents on strategies to help students achieve academic success. Strategies should be translated for families of ELLs, include modified approaches for students with disabilities, as well as enrichment activities for academically capable students. Parent discussions facilitated by the RFA team can complement the monthly coffees already in place, held at a time convenient to working parents, to help parents deal with the challenges of adolescence.