



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

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



<b>BEDS Code</b>	641301060001
<b>School Name</b>	Hudson Falls High School
<b>School Address</b>	80 East LaBarge Street, Hudson Falls, NY
<b>District Name</b>	Hudson Falls Central School District
<b>School Leader</b>	James Bennefield
<b>Dates of Review</b>	April 15-16, 2015
<b>School Accountability Status</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus School
<b>Type of Review</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

## School Information Sheet

School Configuration (2014-15 data)			
Grade Configuration	9-12	Total Enrollment	625
		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	0
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2014-15)			
# Special Classes	1	# SETSS	N/A
		# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	15
Types and Number of Special Classes (2014-15)			
# Visual Arts	12	# Music	4
		# Drama	0
# Foreign Language	15	# Dance	0
		# CTE	0
School Composition (most recent data)			
% Title I Population	18	% Attendance Rate	92.03
% Free Lunch	38	% Reduced Lunch	6
% Limited English Proficient	0.3	% Students with Disabilities	13.9
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)			
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0.1	% Black or African American	0.6
% Hispanic or Latino	1.3	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1.3
% White	95.6	% Multi-Racial	0.3
Personnel (most recent data)			
Years Principal Assigned to School	4	# of Assistant Principals	1.4
# of Deans	0	# of Counselors/Social Workers	4.5
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0	% Teaching Out of Certification	0
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	4.4	Average Teacher Absences	10
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)		Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	
Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	79	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	81
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)			
% of 1st year students who earned 10+ credits	0	% of 2nd year students who earned 10+ credits	93.6
% of 3rd year students who earned 10+ credits	91.2	4 Year Graduation Rate	80.9
6 Year Graduation Rate			
Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2013-14)			
Reward		Recognition	
In Good Standing		Local Assistance Plan	
Focus District	yes	Focus School Identified by a Focus District	yes
Priority School			

### Accountability Status – High Schools

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

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

1. Increase academic achievement for all students in all academic areas
2. Increase the graduation rate to meet and/or exceed the NYS graduation rate
3. Implement the Common Core State Standards
4. Implement Data Drive Instruction

## 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 Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SEIS) representative. The review team visited a total of 45 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 470 (75 percent) completed.
- The school provided results of a staff survey that 37 (84 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 2:</b>			<b>E</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 4:</b>			<b>E</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:</b>			<b>E</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.

#	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:</b>			<b>E</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>E</b>
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The school has received a rating of *Effective* for Tenet 2 – School Leader Practices and Decisions.

- The school leader is part of the District’s Shared Decision Making Team (SDMT) and represented the high school as the District goals were developed. In interviews with the SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT or review team), the leader explained that he shared those goals with his Building Team (BT) and, in September, announced that the emphasis for this school year would be on data-driven instruction (DDI), student-centered learning, and differentiated instruction. With these goals and emphases in mind, the high school staff created their own mission: “Engage, Excite, Excel.” This mission and the district goals are posted in every classroom, on the school’s website, and on its letterhead. The school leader reported working with each department to ensure that they create their own goals, which are specific, measurable, ambitious, results-oriented, and timely (SMART). At the BT and department meetings, staff discusses progress, using formative assessment and benchmark data. Hudson Falls has reached its goal to increase graduation rates compared with the previous year. The school leader reported that the school rate in 2014 was 80 percent, reflecting an increase of eight percentage points. The percentage-rate increase for economically disadvantaged students was the highest of any subgroup, moving from 58 to 72 percent.
- Using the evaluation results from the special education program, the school leader reported to the IIT that he worked with district staff to redefine the program. Based on the report findings, the district and school staff agreed to increase opportunities for special education students and increase the graduation rate of this subgroup. Based on data, the school leader eliminated self-contained classes and created 15 co-taught classes. He scheduled common planning time as well as sustained professional development (PD) for co-teachers. Walk-through data from the Special Education Instructional Support Specialist (SEIS) shows that instructional practices have improved. For example, in four of five classes visited, special education students were working on content aligned with that of their grade-level peers and supporting the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). The school leader explained that students have the opportunity for additional learning time after school via the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Center Program as well as in the summer and during school vacations.
- The school leaders schedule and conduct observations according to the District guidelines. Teachers described the process of formal and informal observations aligned with the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) as having pre- and post-observation conferences, written feedback, and goal setting. They shared with the review team that the school leader visits their classrooms frequently. However, the observations do not target specific instructional strategies and teachers told the review team that they do not consistently receive feedback on informal visits.
- All departments use an evidence-based system to monitor student progress. In addition to the computer application, School Tools, all teachers use standardized spreadsheets to record benchmark and unit assessment data, student attendance, and other achievement information specific to their content areas. By continuously reviewing student progress, teachers and students work together to improve student achievement. During the document review, the review team observed on many BT

meeting agendas and minutes that reports on these data and progress on school-wide activities, such as curriculum development, are standing agenda items.

**Recommendation:**

By May 1, 2015, the school leader should use a systematic approach to document informal classroom visits that are targeted in such areas as:

- literacy in the content areas;
- higher order thinking and use of complex materials; and
- student engagement.

Timely, actionable feedback on classroom practices should be provided to staff and should be used to guide follow-up visits to monitor progress in instructional strategies.

**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 is in the process of ensuring that curricula support the CCLS. Teachers shared with the review team that they have attended workshops on implementing the CCLS and, especially, the instructional shifts. While the math and English language arts (ELA) teachers work with consultants in their content areas monthly, teachers in other core content areas are also expected to incorporate reading and writing into their units and lessons. During classroom visits, the review team saw evidence of reading and writing instruction in other content areas, such as guidelines for preparing a final report in science. However, the review team did not see this practice in every classroom visited. Teachers reported attending PD on “Understanding by Design” (UbD) and using the UbD principles, for example, identifying desired results and creating essential questions, when designing curricula. They have had preliminary training on the curriculum software program “Rubicon Atlas,” with intensive PD planned for this summer.
- Teachers design their curricula to support the CCLS and identify complex materials in their units. However, although the review team saw examples of differentiated instruction in classrooms, lesson plans showed little evidence of support or enrichment strategies. The school leader and teachers explained that the reading and writing deficits of students, especially those entering grade nine, leave them at a disadvantage in courses and on assessments, such as the Regents Examination in Global History, that require grade-level literacy skills. Findings from the SESIS walk-through showed that students with disabilities and lower achieving students do not routinely receive explicit instruction in reading, writing, and/or math strategies. The lesson-plan template does not address scaffolding strategies necessary for those students who would benefit from alternative ways to access the content.

- Teachers reported having limited opportunities to discuss interdisciplinary curricula, with the exception of superintendent conference days. Common planning time is by department, with little chance to discuss curriculum units with colleagues in art, music, and technology. Any sharing of plans or units is done informally. This finding was supported by a review of documents.
- Teachers reported using a wide range of assessments to guide their short- and long-term curriculum development. They analyze assessment results in department meetings and adjust their curriculum accordingly. Teachers use a quick question or problem to begin lessons and exit tickets to assess understanding at the end of class. Students take pre- and post-assessments for each unit and benchmark assessments at least three times each year. Assessments include articles to critique in English, thematic essays that mimic Regents exams in history, and preparing weather maps in science. Students told the review team that teachers share their progress with them and identify trouble spots, such as low grades or incomplete work. This practice allows students to make up work or get additional help before the end of the marking period, thus preventing course failures. Teachers help students set SMART goals for themselves and monitor progress towards them. In this way, students take responsibility for their learning and practice organizational skills necessary for success as they move on to college and careers. Students also told the review team that they often work together with their peers to develop rubrics for assignments so they know exactly what is expected of them for each task.

**Recommendation:**

The school leader, in the summer of 2015, along with district staff, department heads and teachers, should develop a data-driven protocol to inform CCLS-aligned curriculum. This protocol should include:

- baseline data check focused on literacy for incoming grade nine students;
- determination of root causes of literacy skill deficits;
- sequencing and scaffolding components on unit and lesson plans to address literacy support;
- monitor effectiveness of curricular adaptations; and
- process for reviewing data and determining skill deficits for subsequent grades.

**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**

**E**

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

- School leaders reported insisting that teachers use data to guide instruction. Teachers explained that each teacher maintains a spreadsheet that identifies pre- and post-assessment scores, projections on the number of students who will score 40 to 55 percent better on their post-assessment, and whether sufficient students will close the achievement gap by the required amount to meet the district goal of

80 percent. This tool shows scores on benchmark assessments and identifies students who are on the “watch list.” Having this information, by student, allows teachers to differentiate their instruction to support struggling students. The review team saw evidence of differentiation in many of the classrooms visited. However, there were also examples of whole class, teacher-centered lessons, where all students received the same information without checks for understanding.

- Teachers continue to have PD on implementing CCLS, including the instructional shifts, and evidence from classroom visits confirmed that teachers were addressing the shifts. The school leader and teachers explained how coaches work with teachers monthly, providing strategies for asking probing questions and for demanding that students think deeply about the content. The review team saw students working in groups, often reading different articles on the same topic, and then coming together to discuss their ideas. In one class, the teacher provided a framework to guide student reflection and to foster deep group discussion. Reflection questions focused on comparing and understanding the perspectives of those who read the same article and of those who read different articles. To provide practice for students taking the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English this June and to monitor progress, teachers administered the January Regents exam to all grade eleven students. Eighty-five percent achieved scores between 55 and 100. Teachers were enthusiastic about the January results because they showed that students were performing nearly as well as the previous cohort, when only halfway through the course.
- Beginning this school year, teachers reported that groups of teachers developed both academic and behavioral expectations for students, during staff meetings. In subsequent meetings, the entire staff reviewed, revised, and ultimately agreed upon the expectations. When the review team spoke with students about behavioral and academic expectations, they were clear on what was acceptable both in class and in the broader school community. Students agreed in their focus group that they feel safe and supported at school. Students said they were encouraged to “think out of the box” and did not feel intimidated if their ideas were different from the majority.
- School leaders and teaching staff reported that teachers collect and use data from a variety of sources to inform instruction. They use pre- and post-tests to measure student growth and record this information in spreadsheets. Teachers also note other information in order to look for patterns and to identify root causes of lower student achievement, such as tardiness, absence, or difficulty in completing lab reports on time. Teachers bring these findings to the child study team to better support students. They also present data to students in a way that is easy to understand. For example, some teachers are creating individual pie charts based on test item analyses to show students graphically what percentage of each topic they have mastered and where they need to improve their understanding.

**Recommendation:**

- The school leader should include in his monthly meetings with department heads an agenda item that provides him with information about how all teachers have used strategies to align and adapt their instruction to address the needs and learning styles of all groups of students.

<b>Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health:</b> The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.	<b>Tenet Rating</b>	<b>E</b>
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The school has received a rating of *Effective* for Tenet 5 – Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health.

- School leaders and staff are committed to supporting social and emotional developmental health. This support was evident during conversations with the school leader and confirmed by the groups that exist to address social-emotional issues. The child study team (CST), for example, explained that it meets weekly to discuss referred students who are at risk academically or behaviorally. The team has an established referral process and, after developing interventions based on individual needs, monitors success. The CST is in close contact with teachers, who monitor academics. School leaders and the CST track discipline referrals by number and offense. Data comparing referrals in the school years 2011-12 and 2014-15 show that referrals have gone down significantly in almost all areas; for example, 81 percent fewer students left school without permission in 2014-15. Since absenteeism is a chronic problem across the District, the Attendance Review Board (ARB) meets regularly to follow up on high school students who have five or more unexcused absences. Data are tracked and support staff follows up with phone calls and home visits as necessary. The community, through the Hudson Falls Board of Trustees, joined with the District to declare September “Attendance Awareness Month.”
- The school leader reported that the School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) plays an important role in forming partnerships with local and national agencies to provide programs for students and PD for teachers to address social and emotional development health needs. For example, grade nine students attend a Signs of Suicide (SOS) assembly and the “Trusted Adults Gatekeeper Program” provides training for teachers and parents to address suicide prevention. The SHAC also plans family health days and ensures timely referrals to community mental health facilities, such as Home Base Crisis Intervention and the Capital District Psychiatric Center’s North Clinic.
- Members of all focus groups (student support, parents, teachers, and students) identified the grant-funded 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Center program as instrumental in providing academic and behavioral support for students. The program provides the Freshman Seminar as well as one hour of academic support and an additional hour of extracurricular activity after school each day. Surveys completed as part of the program’s evaluation by the College of St. Rose documented that the program served 218 students last school year, including 37 students with disabilities. Seventy-six students were part of the morning check-in program. The majority of the students surveyed said that the check-in program was valuable to them since it helped them start the day on a positive note. In addition, the program arranged for 27 grades eleven and twelve students to tutor 30 grades nine and ten students.
- The SHAC collects, compiles, and analyzes data collected from partner agencies. The data include information about participation, activities, and referrals. Much of the information is accessible in School Tools. However, information of a sensitive nature, including medical information, is kept confidential. The SHAC also administers several surveys annually, such as the Brief Screening for Adolescent Depression and the Council for Prevention of Substance Use, and uses that information to plan programs and training to support student social and emotional health. The SHAC, the school, and the student support team also rely on that information to support grant applications for additional services for the students.

<p><b>Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement:</b> The school creates a culture of partnership where families, community members, and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being.</p>	<p><b>Tenet Rating</b></p>	<p><b>E</b></p>
<p>The school has received a rating of <i>Effective</i> for Tenet 6 – Family and Community Engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School leaders, teachers, and student support team members reported to the review team that they take every opportunity to communicate with parents and community members about the importance of high expectations for all students. For example, the school holds a parent night for parents of incoming grade nine students to orient them to the high school and make their children’s transition as smooth as possible. The parents in the focus group, several of whom were parents of grade nine students, said that they felt welcomed from the beginning. They understood that the school community was eager to form a partnership with parents and families to benefit their children. One father said that he remembered being told that parents only had to ask and the school staff would be there for them and their child. All parents in the group agreed that that was the case.</li> <li>• School leaders, teachers, and parents shared with the review team the methods used by the school to communicate with parents. At freshman orientation, at open houses, and in letters home, staff provides parents with information on how to use the parent portal to access their children’s grades and assignments. Parents receive progress reports halfway through each marking period and report cards every ten weeks. When students enter grade ten, they and their parents meet with counselors to discuss college and career planning and develop a course schedule. Periodically, as the students move through the grades, counselors hold additional sessions for parents and students to provide information about visiting colleges, completing college applications, and applying for financial aid. The committee on special education (CSE) also communicates with parents to explain the process for referral to CSE and parents’ rights. Although there is only a small Spanish-speaking population in the school, all packets of information are translated into Spanish to make communication easier.</li> <li>• Teachers and support staff shared with the review team that they would like to see more parent involvement in supporting academics. They say that concerts and athletic events are well attended by the community, but functions where staff presents information on the CCLS or assessments, for example, are not. Although the school leaders and staff continue to explore and offer a variety of ways to engage all parents, the current strategies to inform parents about the school’s academic program are largely unsuccessful.</li> <li>• The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Center has implemented a family resource center whose goal is to provide individual assistance and needs assessments so that families become aware of the resources the school and the community have to offer. The Center hosts “fun nights” where families share a meal and have fun and offers workshops on a variety of topics, including nutrition and making ends meet. Based on increasing attendance, the strategies used to bring parents in to these events seem successful. The project coordinator shared with the review team that she has attended several PD sessions as part of the grant to learn about successful methods to engage parents and families with the program.</li> </ul>		

**Recommendation:**

By fall 2015, the project coordinator of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Center should collaborate with the school leader to design one or more workshop session(s) for 2015-2016 for teachers, staff, and parents to increase family engagement/involvement. Workshops should focus on aiding parents in supporting their child's academic success as well as social and emotional health.