



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	321200010286
School Name	Fannie Lou Hamer Middle School 286
School Address	1001 Jennings St. Bronx, New York 10460
District Name	NYC DOE CSD 12
School Leader	Lorraine Channon
Dates of Review	January 21-22, 2015
School Accountability Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Priority School
Type of Review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

12X286 School Information Sheet Key

School Configuration (2014-15)					
Grade Configuration	06,07,08	Total Enrollment	267	SIG Recipient	No
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2014-15)					
# Transitional Bilingual	N/A	# Dual Language	N/A	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	N/A
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2014-15)					
# Special Classes	12	# SETSS	N/A	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	12
Types and Number of Special Classes (2014-15)					
# Visual Arts	6	# Music	N/A	# Drama	N/A
# Foreign Language	N/A	# Dance	N/A	# CTE	N/A
School Composition (2013-14)					
% Title I Population	87.6%	% Attendance Rate			90.4%
% Free Lunch	76.5%	% Reduced Lunch			1.6%
% Limited English Proficient	15.1%	% Students with Disabilities			23.5%
Racial/Ethnic Origin (2013-14)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native	1.2%	% Black or African American			29.1%
% Hispanic or Latino	68.1%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander			1.2%
% White	0.4%	% Multi-Racial			N/A
Personnel (2014-15)					
Years Principal Assigned to School (2014-15)	9.15	# of Assistant Principals (2014-15)			1
# of Deans (2014-15)	N/A	# of Counselors/Social Workers (2014-15)			1
Personnel (2013-14)					
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate (2013-14)	N/A	% Teaching Out of Certification (2013-14)			4.8%
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience (2013-14)	0.3%	Average Teacher Absences (2013-14)			3.36
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	8.7%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4			10.3%
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	N/A	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)			20.8%
Student Performance for High Schools (2012-13)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	N/A	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4			N/A
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)					
% of 1st year students who earned 10+ credits	N/A	% of 2nd year students who earned 10+ credits			N/A
% of 3rd year students who earned 10+ credits	N/A	4 Year Graduation Rate			N/A
6 Year Graduation Rate	N/A				
Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2014-15)					
Reward		Recognition			
In Good Standing		Local Assistance Plan			
Focus District	X	Focus School Identified by a Focus District			
Priority School	X				
Accountability Status – Elementary and Middle Schools					
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (2012-13)					
American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	Black or African American			YES
Hispanic or Latino	YES	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander			N/A
White	N/A	Multi-Racial			N/A
Students with Disabilities	NO	Limited English Proficient			N/A
Economically Disadvantaged	NO				
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (2012-13)					
American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	Black or African American			YES
Hispanic or Latino	NO	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander			N/A
White	N/A	Multi-Racial			N/A
Students with Disabilities	YES	Limited English Proficient			YES
Economically Disadvantaged	NO				
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (2012-13)					
American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	Black or African American			N/A
Hispanic or Latino	NO	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander			N/A
White	N/A	Multi-Racial			N/A
Students with Disabilities	N/A	Limited English Proficient			N/A
Economically Disadvantaged	NO				
<p>Describe the school's top priorities (no more than 5) based on the school's comprehensive plans (SCEP, SIG, DIP, etc.):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum - Collectively develop CCLS-aligned instructional strategies to respond to individual learner's needs based on school-wide data resulting in increased test scores on ELA. Student SEL Development - Development of student decision-making body. Teacher Practices - Construct common teacher practices in school curricula with shared pacing calendars for each unit containing daily learning targets and "look for" self-assessments for students to be able to reflect, adjust and access their own progress. Leadership - Create accountable collaborations of Vertical Team staff to goal-set for student progress on the ELA exam using Standards-based trackers throughout the year. Family/Community Engagement - Improve Attendance Percentage by educating families on the impact of attendance on academic success by educating with families. 					

Information about the review

- The review was co-led by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from the New York State Education Department. The team also included a district representative, a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SEIS) representative and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The review team visited a total of 53 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, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- The school provided results of a student survey that 216 (89 %) completed.
- The school provided results of a staff survey that 20 (100 %) completed.
- The school provided results of a parent survey that 43 (18 %) 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.

Mark an "X" in the box below the appropriate designation for each Statement of Practice. Provide the letter rating in the OVERALL RATING row as the final overall tenet rating.					
#	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 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 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
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The school has received a rating of ***Developing*** for Tenet 2 – School Leader Practices and Decisions.

- The school’s mission of “Think Critically, Work Effectively, Act Compassionately”, recorded in the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) is posted in classrooms throughout the building. The school leader, staff and parent interviews demonstrate that the school community shares a basic understanding of the school's mission. However, during discussions with the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT or “review team”) staff and parents shared inconsistent responses about the school's vision and goals. Some responses were generic and included comments such as "do better, increase graduation rate, promote college, more parent engagement." The IIT found that the school’s goals included in the SCEP are ambitious and specific; however, a cross-section of stakeholders did not help create the goals.
- The school leader said she hired an F-status social worker in response to concerns about attendance and behavior. A review of documents showed a decrease in suspensions and an increase in overall student attendance. However, the school staff does not have a strategic plan in place to address chronic absenteeism among segments of students. The school leader has provided time for teachers to meet in vertical and horizontal subject and grade teams. Although a review of documents showed that teachers use the time to discuss data analysis, the school leader has not ensured that these efforts lead to improved instructional practices. The school leader has enabled students to take part in Advisory programs and extended learning day twice a week. However, procedures are not in place to evaluate the success of these programs or the impact the programs have on student achievement and well-being.
- The school leader conducts informal observations of teachers according to the Annual Professional performance Review (APPR), and provides feedback. A review of observation comments showed that not all feedback provided to teachers was specific and actionable. In addition, there is minimal between observations, which can be as long as two months later. When asked for a formal, written observation schedule that is shared with the assistant principal and staff, reviewers were told there is none. The school leader reported that the assistant principal does not have a definitive role in observing teachers.
- Although there are some data systems in place to evaluate student achievement and the quality of instruction, the school leader does not ensure that the information collected is analyzed rigorously enough to drive school improvements or to meet identified school goals. For example, although the school leader conducts classroom observations, the school leader does not consistently use information gathered from these observations to ensure teachers revise their instructional practices, which hinders student achievement.

Recommendation:

Create a formal teacher classroom observation schedule that includes:

- a minimum of 16 observations per month in order to complete the required observations no later than May 15, 2015;
- the assistant principal in observations of teacher practices;
- follow-up on a specific target for improvement such as questioning technique, meaningful student engagement and/or incorporating complex material, identified by the prior observation; and
- a timetable for oral/written actionable feedback.

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 established clear expectations for teachers to develop unit and lesson plans that align to the CCLS and has allocated time for staff to collaborate in the planning of the CCLS in all grades. However, the school leader has not monitored practice regularly enough to ensure that planning is translated into effective classroom instruction or that the needs of all students and subgroups are taken into account. During class visits, the IIT found that teachers inconsistently implemented a rigorous CCLS aligned curricula with less than half of teachers providing CCLS aligned instruction. In addition, reviewers noted that students who have passed the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) remain in classes with other English as second language students at lower levels and are not always challenged nor placed in a general education class. As a result, the curriculum does not always meet the varying needs of all students.
- Although most teachers’ plans include references to data-driven instruction (DDI), differentiation, and higher-order questioning, the delivery of these strategies in actual lessons varies widely across the school. During the teacher observation meeting, teachers reported planning collaboratively through grade-level and content area meetings but shared that they do not regularly use the time to review and adjust the curricula. While most teachers plan for the use of chunked material, close reads, academic vocabulary and inferential questioning, few teachers employed such strategies during class instruction. A review of lesson plans indicated that teachers plan lessons to address students’ varying skill levels for varied groups of students but, during classroom visits, reviewers found that most implemented lessons did not include varied entry points for all students.
- Teachers are beginning to collaborate and plan interdisciplinary lessons in some content areas but this is not a formal practice school-wide. Schedules indicate planning time for teachers to collaborate to enhance and deliver interdisciplinary curricula. Some teachers interviewed by the IIT reported that they collaborate with other content area teachers to plan lessons using the on-line shared pacing calendar; however, some teachers shared that they have not used this approach. The school leader organized a partnership with Marquis Studios to bring visual arts to the sixth grade social studies curriculum using Chinese Shadow Puppets as an entry point for understanding Chinese culture. However, classroom visits show that teachers do not uniformly incorporate the arts and technology

into the delivery of instruction across the school.

- Teachers have access to a range of city and state test and assessment data and teachers are at an early stage of analyzing and using these data sources to make curricular decisions. During discussions with the IIT, comments made by students reflect that teachers do not regularly provide on-going, test and assessment data-driven feedback to help students improve academically or to help them take more responsibility for their own learning. During class visits, the IIT saw few examples of teachers using data to inform instruction.

Recommendation:

The school leaders should modify the existing lesson plan template to strengthen the CCLS aligned literacy curricula and plan and implement strategic learning strategies by:

- identifying an inter-disciplinary connection in the Look Fors section focusing on the arts and technology;
- incorporating one or more higher-order questions in the *Lesson Flow* section 3; and
- adding a Teacher Reflection section at the end of the template to facilitate self-evaluation of the lesson, targeting groups of students including sub-groups or individual student outcomes.

Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions: Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn, so that all students and pertinent subgroups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking, and achievement.

Tenet Rating

D

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

- The school leader is beginning to engage teachers in conversations about data and has made expectations clear. However, the school leader is not ensuring that teachers consistently use data to provide planning and instruction that fully meets the needs and abilities of different groups of students. For example, in classrooms with English language learners (ELL), scaffolds and differentiated activities focused mostly on the beginner or low intermediate students and did not meet the needs of the more advanced students. The review team visited five self-contained or ICT classes and noted examples of differentiated instruction in only two. Teacher interviews confirm that teachers are at an early stage of setting goals for different groups of students.
- While some teachers provide CCLS aligned lessons that incorporate higher level thinking, this is not systemic in the school. The IIT found that, while some teachers differentiated readings and used strategies during instruction to enable students to achieve the learning targets, most teachers assigned the same tasks which did not meet students’ differing ability levels. The school leader rated the quality of instruction as effective on her self-assessment. However, during class visits the IIT noted that teachers’ instruction lacked rigor and differentiation, minimally incorporated the instructional shifts and higher- order questioning and provided limited opportunities for student engagement. The review team noted that teachers' lesson plans included differentiated lessons towards a common learning target; however, teachers inconsistently implemented their plans. In 14 out of 53 classrooms visited, the team noticed differentiation of instruction in practice; and in 20 out of 53 classrooms, the team saw examples of academic rigor.

- During discussions with the IIT, students shared that they feel they learn in a safe environment. Class visits showed that most teachers make behavioral expectations known and students generally respond well to these expectations. Observations also indicate that teachers do not consistently set learning tasks that align to the needs and abilities of different groups of students. The IIT found that teachers minimally provide opportunities for students to take part in discussions that promote the sharing of student values and opinions on a wide range of issues.
- Most teachers use test and assessment data to plan for different groupings of students but the review team found that in the majority of classes visited, instruction was whole-class, teacher-directed and students were not engaged in higher level activities that would meet their specific needs. Teacher interviews reflect that not all teachers consistently use summative and formative assessments in a rigorous manner to inform instructional decision-making or to adjust future instructional planning. Discussions with students and evaluation of their work show that teachers do not routinely provide feedback that is concise or linked to an evaluation rubric and this limits the opportunities for students to achieve at a higher level.

Recommendation:

The school should strengthen the school's data analysis procedures by:

- directing teacher leaders to ensure teachers consistently include specific strategies for meeting the needs of identified subgroups;
- sharing data at the weekly grade/vertical meeting that demonstrates individual or groups of students progress toward their individual goal;
- creating a data wall to communicate the performance and progress of students towards meeting the school's academic goals; and
- reviewing the instructional shifts for staff during the Monday professional development sessions.

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 leader has developed strategies and collaborations including a referral system that includes the community based organizations (CBO) Children's Aid Society (CAS) and Turnaround for Children. The CBOs work with the Student Support Team (SST), especially the social worker, to provide services that address students' social and emotional developmental health needs. However, the IIT learned that the SST does not regularly meet to collaborate with the CBOs to provide consistent and cohesive outreach and support to students. During discussions with the IIT, students reported that they have a designated adult in the school who they can turn to if they need to discuss social issues or academic concerns.
- Evidence from discussions with staff and the school leader demonstrate that the school staff is beginning to explore different programs to support the teaching of student social and emotional

developmental health. Professional development (PD) programs presented at grade-level and vertical team meetings indicate focus on topics such as cooperative learning strategies and classroom management. While evidence from attendance documents and staff interviews demonstrate that these programs have had some positive impact on behavior and attendance, additional follow-up is needed to ensure all staff develop and consistently use skills and resources that meet the academic and social and emotional developmental needs of all students. In addition, the school leader interviews show that the school leader does not monitor and evaluate the impact of PD offerings closely enough to ensure that strategies taught in PD are universally applied in the school.

- During discussions with the IIT, comments made by staff, students, and parents reflect that they have a general awareness of the school’s vision in relation to the social and emotional well-being of students. The IIT noted that staff, parents, and students were not able to articulate their specific role in helping the vision become a reality. The school leader has recently formed a student government. The review team met with some members of this student body as part of the larger student focus group. Some of the student leaders shared that they have opportunities to express opinions about how the school could improve; however, the students did not clearly describe the role they play in implementing the school’s vision.
- The school is at a developing stage of analyzing and utilizing data to meet the needs of all students. A review of documents as well as staff interviews confirm that the social worker is developing a plan that outlines a more rigorous approach to utilizing data to target and provide interventions to meet the needs of students. However, these plans are not yet embedded to ensure that the needs of students are consistently met. For example, although overall attendance for 2014-2015 has increased by five percent over the previous year, school staff has not analyzed or used attendance data to develop a plan to target chronic absenteeism. Presently, the school lacks a cohesive plan to unify data from sources such as attendance, suspensions, and referrals in connection with academic data to identify and meet specific student need.

Recommendation:

The school leaders should strengthen the delivery of support services by:

- creating and publicizing a protocol which identifies the ladder of communication among the members of the Student Support Team and the CBO's; and
- involving the student government in drafting and administering a student survey to identify the school’s strengths and weaknesses from a student perspective and to empower students with designated roles in helping the school improve.

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 provides opportunities for parents to stay informed about overall school priorities, expectations and policies, but has not yet completed a plan to provide students and families with tips

and tools that foster high student achievement. The school leader distributes “Family Handbooks,” which outline the school’s expectations for student achievement, in English and Spanish. Parents expressed that teachers are accessible by phone and respond quickly when contacted. Some parents interviewed by the IIT, who speak Spanish, reported that the Parent Coordinator, who also speaks Spanish, is available to assist them when they have concerns they want to discuss with the school. Parents are informed about upcoming PTA meetings and school conferences by standard mail in English and Spanish. However, parents told the IIT that the school has not canvassed their views on the effectiveness of the school’s current communication strategies or the strategies the school uses to build and sustain relationships between school and home.

- The school leader is currently working on a strategic plan to teach parents ways to support student learning and growth and for staff to be better skilled at building a robust home-school partnership. Parents stated that they sometimes have opportunities to discuss with individual teachers how they can support their child’s learning at home but this varies from teacher to teacher. School leaders report and staff confirm that the school’s PD calendar does not include training for staff on how to develop and/or strengthen their collaboration with families that could lead to higher student achievement. Although the school partners with Children’s Aid Society to provide after-school activities for students, the IIT found minimal evidence that the school staff collaborates with organizations to offer specific workshops to provide tips and strategies for parents to help with their child’s learning.
- Discussions with parents demonstrate that the school provides parents with some information about their child’s progress but sometimes parents have difficulties in accessing, translating, or understanding the available data. Parents interviewed by the IIT reported that they rely mostly on progress reports, report cards, and subject portfolios for information. Although some parents reported that they are aware of and have access to Teacher Ease, the teacher online system to monitor their child’s progress and assignments, some parents shared they were not aware of Teacher Ease or did not understand the information contained in it or how to use the system. Parents reported receiving progress reports monthly, in English, and if they have questions, they contact the school. However, the school does translate these progress reports as well as the student report cards into Spanish, which hinders the parents who do not speak or understand English well from partnering with the school to support their child’s learning.

Recommendation:

School leaders and the Parent Coordinator should improve school-home collaboration by:

- making Teacher Ease more accessible to all families and students, and equipping them with the knowledge and skills to interpret and understand the data housed in this and other school data bases; and
- providing a room, with access to computers for parents, at least one day per week to access information relevant to their needs and their child’s needs. Expanding the numbers of family-conference dates around the issuance of progress reports since the progress reports are not currently available in Spanish.