



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

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



<b>BEDS Code</b>	131500010010
<b>School Name</b>	Poughkeepsie High School
<b>School Address</b>	70 Forbus Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603
<b>District Name</b>	Poughkeepsie City School District
<b>School Leader</b>	Mrs. Phee Simpson
<b>Dates of Review</b>	September 30 - October 1, 2014
<b>School Accountability Status</b>	Priority School
<b>Type of Review</b>	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

## School Information Sheet

School Configuration (2014-15 data)			
Grade Configuration	9-12	Total Enrollment	1,197
		SIG Recipient	Yes
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2014-15)			
# Transitional Bilingual		# Dual Language	
		# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	3
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2014-15)			
# Special Classes	12	# SETSS	
		# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	42
Types and Number of Special Classes (2014-15)			
# Visual Arts	20	# Music	10
# Foreign Language	20	# Dance	
		# CTE	10
School Composition (most recent data)			
% Title I Population	73%	% Attendance Rate	88%
% Free Lunch	68%	% Reduced Lunch	12%
% Limited English Proficient	4%	% Students with Disabilities	10%
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)			
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	% Black or African American	64%
% Hispanic or Latino	20%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1%
% White	15%	% Multi-Racial	0%
Personnel (most recent data)			
Years Principal Assigned to School	1	# of Assistant Principals	4
# of Deans	0	# of Counselors/Social Workers	4/1
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0%	% Teaching Out of Certification	0%
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	3%	Average Teacher Absences	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	67%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	67%
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)			
% of 1st year students who earned 10+ credits	0	% of 2nd year students who earned 10+ credits	21%
% of 3rd year students who earned 10+ credits	74%	4 Year Graduation Rate	59%
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	
Priority School	X		

### 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		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		Multi-Racial	
Students with Disabilities		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			
Describe the school's top priorities (no more than 5) based on the school's comprehensive plans (SCEP, SIG, DIP, etc.):			
<p><b>SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve student academic, behavioral, and attendance performance, as part of the district and school mission.</li> <li>2. Implement the Scholastic Literacy Initiative model.</li> </ol>			

**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 (NYSED). The team also included a district representative, a district-selected OEE, 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 44 classrooms during the two-day review.
- Reviewers conducted focus groups with students, staff, and parents.
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including lesson plans, curriculum maps, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- The school provided results of a student survey that 180 students (15 percent) completed.
- The school provided results of a staff survey that 74 staff members (60 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).				X
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.			X	
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.				X
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).				X
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 2:</b>					<b>I</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.				X
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.				X

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.				X
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.				X
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 3:</b>					<b>I</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.				X
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.			X	
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.				X
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).				X
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 4:</b>					<b>I</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.				X
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.				X
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.				X
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.				X
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:</b>					<b>I</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.				X
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.				X
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.				X
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.				X
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:</b>					<b>I</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>I</b>
---	---------------------	----------

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

- At the time of the review, the school leader had just begun her second year at the high school; the district leader also began her position at the same time. Rather than attempt to make immediate changes, reviewers learned that the school leader chose to wait until the second semester of the 2013-14 school year to begin to implement new programs, including those introduced by the district leader. One such program was a new literacy initiative, Mission: Literacy. Since the second semester of last year, teachers have been required to embed literacy practices into all content areas using a consistent rubric; coaches and consultants from Scholastic Achievement Partners have been assisting teachers with this initiative. However, in discussions with teachers, the review team learned that teachers had virtually no input in choosing the literacy program and felt that the initial stages of implementation were rushed and sporadic. Many agreed that the decision to adopt the program was a top-down directive that teachers were forced to adopt. Even with supportive coaching, teachers stated they are unclear about how to accomplish the work throughout the variety of content areas they teach and reviewers found little evidence that progress for each student is monitored. Students shared with the review team that, although it was the beginning of October, they have had only one assignment in English classes based on the Mission: Literacy model. The review team saw this as an example of how initiatives are put in place, but not consistently followed up on or monitored for success; reviewers also noted that procedures are not in place for stakeholders to work together to devise challenging goals for the school to aspire to. Review team discussions with stakeholders showed a lack of awareness of goals intended to drive an agenda of sustained school improvement. A lack of focus on stakeholders working in unison and the introduction of initiatives without strategic planning and structures for successful implementation severely hampers opportunities for student success.
- The school leader has made some steps forward in seeking to make resource decisions that meet the needs of the school community, but decisions are not always strategic or explained to stakeholders so that potential impact is heightened. To create a greater sense of collaboration, the school leader has ensured that teachers have common planning time built into their schedules in the form of professional learning communities (PLCs) grouped by content area. The expectation is that teachers will, for example, analyze assessment data, or share and refine literacy strategies in keeping with Mission: Literacy. In the absence of agendas or minutes documenting these meetings, it was unclear to reviewers how activities taking place during PLC meeting times support and monitor improvements in learning in the classroom. In efforts to move the school forward at a faster rate, the school leader formed a Transformational Team, consisting of assistant principals, department chairs, coaches, the building’s union representative, guidance staff, and the school psychologist, that meets monthly to discuss school progress and propose changes to be considered. For example, the Transformational Team recommended abandoning the ten-period day in favor of an eight-period day. This change was made after analyzing student attendance during afternoon classes, enrollment, and teacher duties. The Transformational Team determined that academics would be minimally affected and a large

financial payoff would result from a return to eight periods. Although the team included representatives from academic departments throughout the school, there was little evidence that plans to change the schedule were communicated to teachers. Students, especially those eager to create a schedule that allowed for enrollment in many courses each semester, reported being unhappy with the change. Although it is too early in the year to ascertain the benefits of returning to eight periods, structures have not been put in place to assess the impact of the schedule changes or the effectiveness of the recently formed Transformational Team.

- Teachers are formally observed at least once per year with two informal walkthroughs required. Although observation reports are recorded in the online observation and appraisal data management system, OASYS, for teachers to access, the system does not allow school leaders to re-examine their findings in preparation for the next report. Thus, the ability to follow up on suggestions to determine improvement is lost, and as a result, teachers are not held accountable for bringing improvements to their practice. Beginning in the previous school year, the district instituted Focused Instructional Learning Walks. This program provides for groups of up to ten leaders and coaches to visit a classroom for a short time to observe instruction and gauge learning. Teachers can request informal feedback on what the learning walk team observed. The review team learned that observations and trends seen across the teaching staff help determine areas that will be addressed during professional development (PD) presented during faculty meetings, such as higher order questioning skills. However, teachers stated that feedback from this type of observation is not specific in highlighting needed improvements and that having a large group of observers in classrooms disrupts instruction. Teachers stated that they were expected to participate in Focused Instructional Learning Walks comprised of teachers, but were not provided with a reason for their participation in the walks or training on what to look for. The picture that emerges is that while systems are in place to observe and monitor instruction, the same systems lack structure, coherence, and effectiveness, and as confirmed by lesson observations carried out by reviewers, are not leading to improvements in student learning and achievement.
- Apart from monitoring student scores on Regents exams, the school leader has limited measures in place to determine how effective school programs and instruction are. Structures for improving teacher practice are ineffective, and the lack of a data driven culture throughout the school means that information is scant to evaluate the performance of different groups of students across grades and content areas. According to the teacher survey, nearly seventy-five percent of teachers disagreed that school leadership is supportive, encouraging, or provides them with meaningful feedback about their work performance. The lack of a strategic and unified purpose shared by school leadership and stakeholders results in a lack of clarity about school goals, priorities for school improvement, and most importantly, strategies to address school weaknesses, particularly in relation to student outcomes and the quality of instruction. Without a vision and clarity of purpose, measurable progress and improvement is both hard to achieve and quantify.

**Recommendation:**

- Improve the channels of communication between the district, school leaders, and teachers so that the school's vision and goals are shared and understood by all stakeholders. Ensure that school goals have a strong focus on improving instruction and increasing achievement for all students and that progress toward these goals is rigorously monitored so that school leaders and staff are held accountable for the

role they play in improving school performance across all grades and content areas.

**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**

**I**

The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* for Tenet 3 – Curriculum Development and Support.

- English language arts (ELA) and mathematics teachers are in the process of adapting modules from the Engage NY website to meet student needs. However, reviewers found little evidence that other content areas are revising curricula, with the exception of early stage incorporation of instructional shifts in some planning, as per the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). As the school continues to implement Mission: Literacy, there is an assumption that more reading and writing in content areas is occurring. However, there is no monitoring system used by school leaders to ensure that this expectation translates into practice. The impact of this is that school leaders cannot adequately track student improvement or support teachers as they implement this initiative. Teachers submit lesson and unit plans to the school leader, but reviewers found that they are generic and do not address the needs and capabilities of all students. The lesson plans evaluated by the review team did not contain modifications for students with disabilities or English language learners (ELLs.) The school leader directive to have objectives and standards written on the board during each class was replaced with an expectation for teachers to provide an agenda consisting of a lesson objective, an essential question, academic vocabulary, an opening, a work period, a closing, and a homework assignment. In practice, this is not happening, as the review team received only one example of an agenda completed for the week.
- Although most teacher survey respondents stated that students were exposed to a rigorous, CCLS-aligned curriculum, 73 percent disagreed with the idea that students were learning what they needed to know to be successful in the next grade level or after graduation. Sixty-five percent of respondents disagreed that the variety of activities and courses at the school kept students engaged in learning. The absence of a curriculum that is vertically aligned throughout the high school grades and that identifies engaging instruction, results in students who are neither college, nor career ready. There was little evidence of data collection to ascertain student achievement or ensure curricula aligned to student needs and abilities. Reviewers found that for courses culminating in a Regents exam, most assessments and data collection were focused on passing those tests; exit tickets and benchmark exams were recycled Regents exam questions from previous years. On the survey, 92 percent of teachers said they regularly use data to identify student strengths and weaknesses, but in focus group conversations, teachers stated that they are unable to fully access test data to modify or make decisions about curricula because the data management systems are not user friendly and the desired information is sometimes unavailable. This was confirmed by review findings. A variety of data were not consistently shared with students, which resulted in students relying on only the grades they received on benchmark exams to understand their academic progress. Students confirmed that teachers gave them little support and guidance about areas to focus their efforts on to achieve at higher academic levels. Student portfolios were being developed in several classes, but many students stated that the goals contained within their portfolios were determined by the teacher, which restricts

opportunities for them to take greater ownership and responsibility for their own learning.

- The school leader provides teachers with common planning time in their PLCs, three times a week. However, the PLCs are subject-specific and scheduling does not always allow special education teachers to attend the meetings of the different content areas in which they co-teach. As a result, special education teachers reported feeling at a disadvantage in some of the co-taught classes. Apart from additional reading and writing in content areas, reviewers found little evidence of interdisciplinary opportunities for students. Teachers agreed that, for example, art might be incorporated into a social studies lesson, but there were no concrete examples of systematic and consistent embedding of the arts into the curricula of various content areas. Reviewers also learned that technology is not consistently incorporated into lessons or curricula. Consequently, without well-developed curricula providing multiple access points to learning, the ability of all students to be academically successful is diminished.

**Recommendation:**

- Devise a long-term curriculum plan that incorporates Mission: Literacy goals and strategies and clearly outlines the roles that school leaders, teachers, department chairs, coaches, and outside literacy consultants play. Rigorously monitor implementation of the plan for the impact it has on improving curriculum planning, classroom instruction, and engaging students in their own learning; address weaknesses so that demonstrable improvements in student achievement are attained.

**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**

**I**

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

- Lessons observed during the review varied significantly in terms of quality and contribution to student learning and achievement; as a result, a considerable number of students do not make the progress of which they are capable. Reviewers found that the collection and use of data to inform instruction was minimal. Most lessons were “one size fits all” with few modifications to account for differences in student needs, abilities, or experiences. There was little evidence that teachers were adjusting instruction based on formative or summative assessment results. The majority of the classes visited were teacher-directed with few student groupings suggesting that instruction was differentiated based on student needs. Students shared that they use many worksheets, with one senior remarking that his homework assignment was to complete the odd-numbered questions on a worksheet. Teachers reported that they are unable to get the data they need because the district’s data management system has changed so many times in recent years that they have difficulty interpreting the data. A new student information system, Infinite Campus, has recently been put into place. Teachers have been trained on the system, but stated that they do not feel comfortable with it yet. Most teachers are so focused on having their students pass Regents exams that many classroom assessments are composed of old Regents questions. A significant amount of data collected is student scores on compiled questions from past Regents exams. The review team was told that students are encouraged

to create goals that guide their learning; however, when students shared their portfolios and goals with the review team, more often than not the goals were, for example, to get 90 percent on the practice Regents. They did not include goals such as learning the content or skills addressed in the standard.

- Reviewers found limited opportunities for students to be engaged in their lessons. Although students reported that they spend substantial time answering questions during lessons, during classroom visits the review team seldom heard teachers using higher-level questioning techniques or probing for more in-depth answers among students. Students were seldom challenged by the level of questioning, the text and content complexity, or by the tasks set for them. Questioning did little more than check rudimentary student understanding, and a paucity of supplementary questions meant that the students were not expected to think beyond the literal. Just occasionally this trend was broken, as in one science class where questioning was incisive, but relentless, and tasks were challenging for students of all abilities; the result was an engaged, motivated, and achieving classroom. Reviewers found such practice was the exception, rather than the norm.
- In many classrooms, the views and perspectives of students are not canvassed, nor is their diversity recognized or celebrated. Discussions with students confirmed this and they stated that they do not feel the school provides a safe environment to ask and answer questions for fear of ridicule from some of their peers. The student handbook and code of conduct is purposely vague in terms of the level of punishment for various offences, as the school leader wishes to allow for considering the context of each situation. This “vagueness” is unsettling to the students because they say they do not understand how some classmates are suspended for their actions and others remain in school. Classroom visits by the review team revealed some classrooms where students were well behaved and other classrooms in which, in one instance, a student was allowed to enter a class, hit a classmate, and walk out again without consequence. Reviewers learned that little is done to encourage students to become more active participants in the learning process. Discussions are seldom held in the classroom where students can talk about their views, opinions, and perspectives. Little or no guidance is given to students, either orally or in writing, as to what they need to do to improve their work. Comments that are made are often overly praiseworthy, such as “well done,” or are too generic to help students take the precise steps needed to help them on their learning journey. These weaknesses combined with weaknesses in the quality of instruction do little to create an environment that is conducive to learning and promotes improved student achievement.

**Recommendation:**

- Establish a comprehensive, ongoing system of data collection, analysis, and use that informs instruction in a manner that leads to advances in student learning beyond simply preparing for tests.
- Ensure that school leaders work in collaboration with teachers, students, and support staff to create a learning environment where students and staff feel safe and students are guided through constructive and actionable feedback to take ownership and responsibility for their own learning and make better academic progress.

**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.

<b>Tenet Rating</b>	<b>I</b>
---------------------	----------

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

- The school community agrees that the school should be a place that is socially and emotionally healthy for all students. However, there is no common vision among school leaders and staff that describes what this means or how it is to be achieved. The school’s dean has assumed the position of Director of Climate and Culture, a role established in the 2013-14 school year. Discussions with teachers revealed that they have not been provided with information as to what this role encompasses and no evidence was provided to the review team about how the role is tasked with developing, or helping to develop, a positive culture in the school beyond merely maintaining discipline. This is indicative of a lack of cohesion in the school that thwarts staff ability to work collaboratively to meet the social and academic needs of all students. The school has an Instructional Support Team that consists of the guidance counselors, social worker, school psychologist, and the parents and teachers of specific students whose situations are scheduled for discussion at team meetings, but reviewers found the current system ineffective because it is reactive, rather than proactive. Support staff address student problems when they arise because of the lack of a school-instituted program or process designed to support students’ social and emotional development health and prevent problems before they occur.
- Evidence from discussions with stakeholders revealed there are no structured systems in place for student referrals or for the collection and sharing of student data that allow all concerned parties to take part in student improvement plans devised by the support team. There is a Response to Intervention (RTI) process, but no one in the school has been trained in it; reviewers learned that teachers are unclear as to what intervention strategies they might attempt when seeking to support students. School leaders and teachers concurred that there has been little PD to support teachers in intervention strategies or strategies to identify and meet the social and emotional needs of all students. As a consequence, students’ social and emotional development health is reduced to a series of methods to correct unacceptable behaviors, rather than addressing the root causes of the student’s infractions, exploring the role the school environment may be playing, and considering the whole gambit of social and emotional issues that provide increased obstacles to students’ chances for academic success.
- Teachers and leaders confirmed that over time the school has launched many initiatives in an attempt to create a safe learning environment and an environment where staff consistently evaluate students’ social and emotional needs. Recent school efforts include “Rachel’s Challenge,” a program that promotes an emotionally healthy lifestyle by encouraging students to choose positive influences, dream big, and practice random acts of kindness; and the more recent Restorative Justice program, which takes into account the needs of the victim, the offender, and the affected community when an offense has been committed. Both programs have proved equally ineffective because they do not have the full backing of the school community; in addition, the school does not monitor program progress, nor consistently collect data to determine success. Therefore, the school community cannot sustain the programs and has learned that programs come and go without any prolonged impact on student achievement or social and emotional developmental health.
- Nearly 50 percent of both teachers and students agreed in their respective surveys that students do not respect teachers. They also agreed that students often get into fights and hurt each other. In their focus group, students shared that they do not know who to go to for help or support. Students

reported there are some teachers they trust, but were not sure whether they could go to guidance counselors or the school leader if they needed to talk with someone. When asked if a student council might address some of these issues, students said no. Reviewers learned that there is a student government; however, it is an after-school club focused on fund raising for community projects, such as the Toys for Tots program, or a “jeans drive” to collect clothing for poor children. Students stated that only about seven or eight students joined this group. Reviewers found limited opportunities for student voice to be heard in decision-making around the school. This results in limited student engagement and missed opportunities to develop student leadership qualities in a healthy environment. Because there are no systems in place that support a safe learning environment, student opportunities to have their social and emotional developmental health needs met are limited.

**Recommendation:**

- Ensure that senior leaders of the school work with student support services, students, teachers, parents, and community organizations to create, implement, and monitor a vision that establishes a safe learning environment where data is used to identify and meet the needs of all students, individual students are known and supported by a designated adult, students have a genuine voice, and social success is promoted as a vehicle for enhancing academic achievement for all.

**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**

**I**

The school has received a rating of *ineffective* for Tenet 6 – Family and Community Engagement.

- The school leadership oversees limited communication between the school and parents and families, which results in few partnerships being created to support student growth. The school leader and members of various focus groups, including teachers, parents, and student support staff, mentioned ways the school shares information with families and the community. These included the district and school website, monthly newsletters, and an automated calling system. Reviewers found that the most current newsletter was from January 2014 and the invitation to join the Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA) had not been updated since early September 2013. The automated calling system alerts families to events occurring at the school; however, these messages, as well as the district calendar, are provided only in English, and not in Spanish, Chinese, or Arabic, the other predominant languages present in the school. Reviewers found that these shortcomings contribute significantly to parents and community members not feeling connected to the school. Reviewers also found that the communication that does exist is primarily about events or simple information sharing. Evidence from correspondence to parents showed that it is not used as a vehicle for outlining the school’s commitment to high academic expectations for all students. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that based on focus group conversations and classroom observations, the review team concluded that teachers themselves do not hold high expectations for students; thus, it is difficult to share these with parents. This results in many students not being challenged to meet high standards, either by the school or at home.
- Although the school offers some opportunities for parents to become involved in school activities,

there is little evidence that the school is creative in encouraging a high turnout rate at these events. Parents are invited to Open House at the beginning of the year. Some information about school events is distributed at that time, as is a description of the school's literacy initiative. However, not all parents attend Open House and therefore, not all parents receive this information. Reviewers learned that events, that in the past were successful, are abandoned when the person responsible for spearheading the project leaves. For example, teachers stated that a potluck dinner featuring the sharing of native dishes for the families of ELLs is no longer occurring. School staff acknowledged, and parents confirmed, that many parents have had disappointing experiences with their own schooling; however, even with this understanding, reviewers learned that no training is offered to parents or staff on how to create and sustain meaningful home-school partnerships or understand the importance of holding high expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and ELLs. Without continued attention and determination to involve parents in the school and their children's education, students' ability to achieve at high levels of success is limited.

- The sharing of student progress data with parents has been ineffective for most parents. Reviewers found the only examples of continued communication with families about student progress are the reports sent home five weeks into each marking period, with report cards arriving five weeks after that. One parent stated that although progress reports show grades for the first five weeks of the marking period, they do not arrive in the home mailbox until approximately two weeks after they are issued. The parent pointed out that helping students salvage bad grades or complete missing work in only three weeks is very difficult. In addition, teachers are not required to include specific information about individual students on progress reports, but rather choose from a list of general comments; parents stated that they have difficulty knowing how to help their children based on these comments. A parent survey was administered last school year, but parents did not know the results. Other methods of sharing data, such as through the data management system, are not always easily accessed by parents and not all parents have home computers. The district has used several different data management systems in recent years. Currently schools are using "Infinite Campus," but the parent portal has not yet been activated. Without a consistent plan that all teachers use to share timely student information with parents, the benefit of academic and behavioral support to students is limited.

**Recommendation:**

- Ensure that school leaders establish reciprocal channels of communication between school and home; these channels of communication should be in English, Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese, so that all families are aware of events and opportunities at the school.
- Teachers should work closely with parents to build meaningful and sustained relationships that lead to a strong partnership focused on the academic and social well-being of all students; staff should demonstrate a commitment to providing academic progress information in a timely and accessible way, so that parents can better support their children's learning.