



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	412300010005
School Name	Christopher Columbus Elementary School
School Address	934 Armory Drive, Utica, New York 13501
District Name	Utica City School District
School Leader	Elizabeth Gerling
Dates of Review	February 24-25, 2015
School Accountability Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus School
Type of Review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet (2014-15 data)

Grade Configuration	K-6	Total Enrollment	631	SIG Recipient	Y
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2014-15)					
# Transitional Bilingual	0	# Dual Language	0	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	17
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2014-15)					
# Special Classes	2	# SETSS	3	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	4
Types and Number of Special Classes (2014-15)					
# Visual Arts	1	# Music	1	# Drama	1
# Foreign Language	N/A	# Dance	N/A	# CTE	N/A
School Composition (most recent data)					
% Title I Population	35		% Attendance Rate	94	
% Free Lunch	82		% Reduced Lunch	6	
% Limited English Proficient	22		% Students with Disabilities	12	
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native	1		% Black or African American	24	
% Hispanic or Latino	17		% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	23	
% White	31		% Multi-Racial	4	
Personnel (most recent data)					
Years Principal Assigned to School	1.5		# of Assistant Principals	0	
# of Deans	0		# of Counselors/Social Workers	1	
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0		% Teaching Out of Certification	0	
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	0		Average Teacher Absences	3	
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	15%		Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	27%	
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	93%		Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	N/A	
Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4			Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)					
% of 1st year students who earned 10+ credits			% of 2nd year students who earned 10+ credits		
% of 3rd year students who earned 10+ credits			4 Year Graduation Rate		
6 Year Graduation Rate					
Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2013-14)					
Reward			Recognition		
In Good Standing			Local Assistance Plan		
Focus District	X		Focus School Identified by a Focus District	X	
Priority School					
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (2012-13)					
American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A		Black or African American	No	
Hispanic or Latino	Yes		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	No	
White	No		Multi-Racial	N/A	
Students with Disabilities	No		Limited English Proficient	Yes	
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	Yes		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	No	
White	No		Multi-Racial	N/A	
Students with Disabilities	Yes		Limited English Proficient	Yes	
Economically Disadvantaged	Yes				
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	N/A		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	N/A	
White	Yes		Multi-Racial	N/A	
Students with Disabilities	N/A		Limited English Proficient	N/A	
Economically Disadvantaged	Yes				
SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase student achievement by five percent focusing closely on students with disabilities and English language learners. 2. Provide effective feedback to students. 3. Utilize higher order thinking strategies throughout lessons. 4. Increase parental involvement within the school. 					

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 Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SEIS) representative, and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBE-RN).
- The review team visited a total of 34 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 did not provide results of a student survey.
- The school did not provide results of a staff survey.
- The school did not provide results of a parent survey.
- Special circumstances: On the first day of the visit, the opening of school was delayed for two hours due to extraordinarily frigid temperatures. Modifications to the visitation schedule were made on site to adjust for that circumstance. In addition, although the school district representative reported that surveys of parent, student, and staff perceptions of school performance were administered, the survey company had not yet released the results.

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
2.2	The school leader ensures that the school community shares the Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) goals/mission, and long-term vision inclusive of core values that address the priorities outlined in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.4	The school leader has a fully functional system in place aligned to the district's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) to conduct targeted and frequent observation and track progress of teacher practices based on student data and feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.5	Leaders effectively use evidence-based systems and structures to examine and improve critical individual and school-wide practices as defined in the SCEP (student achievement, curriculum and teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 2:				D	

Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support: The school has rigorous and coherent curricula and assessments that are appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for all students and are modified for identified subgroups in order to maximize teacher instructional practices and student-learning outcomes.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
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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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	supports tied to the school's vision.				
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 leader has worked with teachers, parents, support staff, and students to develop and promote a mission statement that directs the school to bring about sustained school improvement by making students “college and career ready.” However, reviewers found that although the mission statement is posted throughout the building in the predominate languages of students and read aloud each day during the morning announcements, it has had limited impact in driving or bringing about sustained school improvement. In addition, the school leader has not developed Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) goals to focus sufficient attention on particular aspects of academic growth or social and emotional health.
- The school leader has begun to reallocate resources to bring about school improvement and increased opportunities for student success. The school leader provided workbooks to teachers to help them adapt EngageNY materials to address student needs and instituted a number of programs designed to address students’ social and emotional health needs and promote good citizenship behaviors. These include a character education program, Peaceful People, an in-house “Bucket Filling” program to promote kindness to others, a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program to reward good behavior in school, and the Safe Schools, Healthy Students anti-bullying program. However, reviewers learned that these programs were not chosen as the result of a strategic assessment of the character-building needs of this school’s unique school population.
- The school leader conducts frequent lesson observations and uses classroom data to provide targeted feedback to teachers and make strategic decisions about professional development (PD), teacher placement, and instructional coaching. A review of observational narratives and walkthrough checklists supported the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) assessment that the school leader is providing constructive feedback to teachers. Written feedback reviewed by the IIT is frank and linked to events directly observed in the classroom. However, lesson observation protocols and feedback are not linked to a prioritized rubric of expectations, such as the Danielson Framework, that identifies expected teacher performance behaviors. Therefore, teacher evaluations and the feedback they produce do not reference or reinforce many instructional innovations currently being implemented, such as the consistent use of a lesson-planning template used to plan lessons aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the use of student progress data to modify instructional strategies in reading and mathematics.
- The school leader is establishing systems to track and monitor individual and school-wide practices to inform decisions about how to move the school forward. Reviewers learned that the school is beginning to collect significant amounts of data on student performance. i-Ready, a computerized learning support program, provides quarterly assessments of student progress in mathematics and reading. Benchmark tests and traditional school-based assessments developed by grade-level teacher teams are also being used to generate student performance data. However, reviewers noted that little analysis of the longitudinal growth data of individual students, pertinent subgroups, including English

language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, and of grade-level performance is undertaken.

Recommendation:

To build and sustain capacity, the school leader should:

- set clear expectations for the adaptation and modification of the curriculum;
- monitor the instructional implementation of the adapted and modified curriculum to increase the levels of consistency, student engagement, and rigor using data-driven instruction (DDI), formative assessment, and differentiation;
- establish systems for gathering and analyzing impact data, including anecdotal, direct observation, frequency and performance information; and
- develop a process for assessing and prioritizing existing social and emotional developmental health programs and the delivery of the range of social and emotional developmental health services and interventions.

The school leader should also collect and analyze available data on parent engagement and respond to that data through a parent-community-school collaborative committee to explore alternative means of increasing family involvement consistent with an understanding of the needs of impoverished and diverse communities.

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 developed a lesson-planning template designed to ensure that teacher planning includes content and instructional strategies that support implementation of the CCLS. During the summer of 2014, the school leader, in conjunction with the school district, also provided teachers with opportunities to modify and adapt EngageNY modules as a follow up to training about differentiation and planning for different sub-groups the previous year. The lesson plan template directs teachers to account for key elements of the CCLS. However, a review of teacher lesson plans showed they are completed with a range of fidelity; a comparison of plans provided from this and last year showed some plans complete with explanations of expectations and procedures, while others provided only short phrases merely repeating the previous year’s plans.
- Teachers are starting to develop lesson plans that employ complex materials and higher order questioning to meet different student abilities during lessons. The school leader collects and reviews these plans, as well as weekly reflections completed by teachers on the week’s worth of lessons. However, teachers reported that opportunities to co-plan with integrated co-teaching (ICT) and ELL specialists to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs is limited. In addition, since this is only the second year that teachers have used EngageNY modules, they are only just starting to revise and adapt these materials. The recent addition of i-Ready software has provided data

on the individual skill levels of students in reading and mathematics; nevertheless, interviewed teachers reported that they need more experience and guidance in translating data into a well-defined data-driven planning process.

- Although individual teachers occasionally work with other teachers to connect the curriculum across subjects through vertical planning sessions that include the arts and music teachers, planning documents and classroom visits showed that teachers have not created nor deployed interdisciplinary curricula. Beyond expectations for the use of mathematics and writing in non-core subject areas, a review of school curriculum documents revealed that a formal program connecting curricula across subject areas has not been a significant outcome of vertical planning meetings. Further, classroom observations substantiated a limited infusion of art, music, or technology aimed at promoting student engagement.
- Most teachers have begun to use a range of assessments to guide and inform curriculum planning. In addition, teachers have developed a set of goal-setting practices and feedback loops designed to encourage student ownership of their own learning and improve achievement. For example, the recent addition of i-Ready reading and mathematics data has provided teachers with on-going, timely, student performance data that is shared with students and parents. As a result, students and parents reported that they are aware of individual reading and math proficiency levels and students reported developing personal goals for improvement each quarter. However, teachers reported that to make the best use of the data being provided to them through the recently established common forms of assessment, i-Ready ability testing, and state-wide test data, they would benefit from more time on the task, guidance provided by the school leader and district data coach, and experiential expertise.

Recommendation:

The school leader should use the collaborative planning process to adapt and modify the curriculum currently in use for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics to fully engage the use of data to respond to:

- the individual and small group needs of students classified as ELLs and students with disabilities;
- the range of reading and mathematics abilities of all students, as identified through the i-Ready testing program, the common forms of assessment, and benchmarks in use; and
- the prior learning of individuals and small groups of students determined through formative assessment.

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 has established a well-defined set of expectations and a template for lesson planning; the school leader has also deployed teacher leaders to support teachers’ instructional planning and practices. She reviews teacher plans and required teacher reflections on instructional outcomes weekly. She has also established expectations for the use of “flex time.” The school leader

expects that the classroom teacher and a team of teacher aides provide targeted small-group instruction for one-half hour per day for students who remain in the classroom while ELLs and students with disabilities are pulled out by ELL and special education teachers. However, the set of expectations for adaptive DDI reflective of student needs and learning styles has not yet been fully integrated and routinized within regular classrooms. For example, while a significant student population is composed of Karen people who are recent refugees from Burma, reviewers found little evidence of instruction planned to address their specific needs within the general classroom setting.

- While most teachers demonstrated an awareness of the school's expectations for DDI, the incorporation of student needs, the use of complex materials, and higher order questioning, the IIT rarely observed these elements in practice during classroom visits. Students who spoke with the IIT reported that an improper pacing of lessons and a predominance of deskwork prevents their engagement in higher order activities. They reported that most students are made to move through lessons at the same pace as less able students, and have few opportunities to creatively problem solve, evaluate, and synthesize, to analyze textual material in depth, and apply their learning to real-world situations. Higher performing students reported that those types of activities are only provided in library enrichment classes.
- Reviewers found that students were attentive and responsive when the teacher occasionally provided different points of access to learning and opportunities for students to engage in their own areas of interest. However, in classes visited by the IIT, lessons were often teacher-centered with the teacher explaining the learning and students generally listening and responding to questions that demanded one-word or short-phrase answers. Students were collectively asked to respond to learning with all students doing the same thing at the same time, which included students with disabilities and ELLs. The needs of students with disabilities and ELLs were most often met by being pulled out of the classroom for interventions. As a result, reviewers found that students were not engaged in leading or assessing their own learning.
- Teachers have only just started to use data and assessments to inform and adjust their instructional strategies and groupings. For example, classroom observations confirmed that students are sometimes grouped using factors such as ability or success in prior learning, or purposefully placed in mixed-ability groupings. Yet, reviewers found that student work was generally not differentiated to match the abilities of each group. The recent introduction of i-Ready mathematics and reading ability testing has provided teachers with on-going individual measurements of the reading and math proficiencies of students. Reviewers learned that students also know their reading levels; however, students are unclear about the implications of the data and their next steps for improvement. In classroom observations, the IIT observed teachers consistently using a range of formative assessment strategies, such as red/green cards and thumbs up/thumbs down, but few teachers subsequently responded to students by giving further explanation or re-teaching.

Recommendation:

Teachers should increase higher order thinking and instructional differentiation to meet the individual needs of all students and pertinent subgroups based on the available data by:

- creating small instructional groups to target student needs, especially ELLs and students with disabilities supported by specialist teachers;
- reducing the frequency of teacher-centered instruction where students respond to questioning with one-word or a short phrase;
- increasing opportunities for students to engage in applications of their learning to real world situations; and
- providing choices for students to creatively engage in more hands-on, open-ended activities.

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 taken a leading role in bringing new programs to the school, such as Peaceful People, Safe Schools, Healthy Students, Please Stand Up, and PBIS, and modifies the schedule each month to accommodate monthly assemblies promoting the themes and values of these programs. However, reviewers found that the school leader and support staff had not collated available information about the collective social and emotional health needs of students to select the most relevant programs. For example, when students, parents, and teachers were interviewed they did not cite bullying as a significant school-wide issue; and despite having a significant population of refugees from Southeast Asia who experience issues of acculturation, there is no program to address this group or determine other specialized needs within the school community.
- Character-education curricula in use this year include the Peaceful People program, which offers a series of lessons designed to address feelings and issues such as anger, frustration, and bullying. A locally developed pledge is recited each morning to encourage students to “stand up” for others. There are student generated posters throughout the building promoting kindness to others and a “bucket filling” program designed to inspire students to give good comments to others to “fill their bucket,” rather than taking from the bucket of others. A PAWS Points reward system for good behavior is in place as a feature of the PBIS program. In addition, the school and district have recently provided PD to a portion of the staff through a book study on how to effectively teach children of poverty. However, projects such as these have not been established long enough to determine their ultimate impact on improving student achievement.
- The school leader is organizing the school’s work with teachers, student support staff that include a half-time social worker, parents, and community-based organizations and staff, such as a Safe School’s coordinator and Kids Oneida, to ensure that students’ social and emotional developmental needs are consistently met in a healthy learning environment. Reviewers found that the school has a range of resources for responding to students who display social and emotional problems that impede their own learning or the learning of others. Data substantiated that the programs mentioned above have collectively reduced the disciplinary issues occurring within the school dramatically; however, the school leader confirmed there no similar, coordinated effort to address the social and emotional needs of the children of poverty and recent immigration.

- The school has developed and is implementing a plan to collect data to identify the social and emotional developmental health needs of all students; however, the school has not developed a strategic plan detailing how to analyze and use that data to set priorities for future interventions. School staff created a parent survey to gather information about the social and emotional needs of students; although returned surveys provided teachers with some insights, the school leader stated that the limited number of respondents was disappointing. Reviewers learned that the school does not collect or collate data on student social and emotional health needs from experiential reports completed by teaching staff. Therefore, reviewers found that not all available data is used strategically to prescribe additional programs or strategies to address collective student needs.

Recommendation:

The school leader should work with the student support staff and teachers during the current schedule of team meetings to assemble the available data on the social and emotional needs of students through:

- reviewing student profiles provided by parents to identify social-emotional issues;
- collecting and analyzing assessments from teachers and support staff; and
- collectively prioritizing the introduction or continuation of programs intended to address student social and emotional developmental health targeted needs.

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 has established positive communications and relationships with students and families aimed at ensuring an awareness of high expectations for student success and equipping parents to help students reach those expectations. Parents and students reported that expectations for academic performance were higher this year than in past years. Parents who spoke to the IIT reported that the school leader has established rapport and earned their confidence in her ability to improve academic success in the building. Parents also said that teachers are approachable and active partners in sharing information; for example, most teachers provide parents with weekly agendas describing what is going to be taught, so that parents can assist their children in learning concrete information, new vocabulary and spellings. Parents also said they are aware of the reading and mathematics ability levels of their children, as provided in backpacked reports and teacher-parent conferences, but reported that they needed more guidance on understanding the information so that they can help their children improve their reading and math skills. The school has provided a series of mathematics and ELA evening meetings for parents to help them better understand how reading and mathematics are taught, but registers show that attendance has been low.
- The school is aware of the need to provide multiple and equitable opportunities for reciprocal communication to increase staff and family understanding of student needs and further support student achievement. For example, the student profile survey allows parents to provide school staff

with insightful information about the social and emotional status of their child. However, this survey was sent to parents in English only, and so might not have been accessible for many parents whose native language is not English. Parents reported that school notices are routinely translated into their native language and that translators are provided during both parent-teacher conferences and school meetings to support dialogue. The school supports a website for parents; however, reviewers found that some individual teacher web pages are out of date and do not include current information.

- The school has sponsored a series of initiatives aimed at providing training to parents and staff on creating and sustaining home-school partnerships. For example, although not well attended, the school is providing a series of ELA and math nights to educate parents in the dynamics of these instructional programs and help them to help their children succeed. The district has begun to provide many teachers with training to heighten their awareness of the challenges faced by children who live in poverty. Reviewers found that these efforts have not yet yielded measurable improvements in student performance because they have been so recently introduced.
- Data is beginning to be shared in a way intended to allow families and teachers to understand both student and family needs and advocate for services that address those needs. For example, the parent survey is a clear attempt to gather information from families about the needs of their children. However, these efforts have been limited because few parents have responded to the surveys. In addition, parents reported that while they are able to assist their children in preparing for spelling tests and ensure that homework is completed, they are not aware of ancillary activities they might employ to develop mathematics and ELA skills and abilities.

Recommendation:

To explore alternative means of engaging parents as learning partners with their children and teachers, the school leader should work with staff and parent committees to gather and review parent involvement data by:

- continuing and expanding curriculum nights using a variety of communication strategies and media;
- creating a parent-community-school collaborative committee that includes a variety of parents and community members who identify with the diversity of students to provide guidance on family and community relations; and
- guiding teachers in how to apply what they have learned from recent training about the needs of families living in poverty to build greater understanding and stronger partnerships between teachers and parents.