



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	321100010021
School Name	P. S. 021 Philip H. Sheridan
School Address	715 East 225 th Street, Bronx, NY 10466
District Name	NYC CSD 11
School Leader	Joyce Coleman
Dates of Review	February 23 – 24, 2016
School Accountability Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus School
Type of Review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet for P.S 021 Phillip H. Sheridan

School Configuration (2015-16)					
Grade Configuration	0K,01,02,03,04,05	Total Enrollment	606	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	N/A	# SETSS	N/A	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	N/A
Types and Number of Special Classes (2014-15)					
# Visual Arts	N/A	# Music	N/A	# Drama	N/A
# Foreign Language	N/A	# Dance	N/A	# CTE	N/A
School Composition (2014-15)					
% Title I Population	86%	% Attendance Rate	92.63%		
% Free Lunch	78.2%	% Reduced Lunch	N/A		
% Limited English Proficient	6%	% Students with Disabilities	17.3%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin (2015-16)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	% Black or African American	71.3%		
% Hispanic or Latino	23.8%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2.1%		
% White	0.6%	% Multi-Racial	1%		
Personnel (2015-16)					
Years Principal Assigned to School	12.9	# of Assistant Principals	2		
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	N/A	% Teaching Out of Certification	9.6%		
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	4.4%	Average Teacher Absences	8.4		
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2014-15)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	14.4	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	17.5		
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	84%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	N/A		
Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2015-16)					
Reward	No	Recognition	N/A		
In Good Standing	No	Local Assistance Plan	No		
Focus District	Yes	Focus School Identified by a Focus District	Yes		
Priority School	No				

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Elementary/Middle School			
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (2014-15)			
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	NO	Limited English Proficient	N/A
Economically Disadvantaged	NO	ALL STUDENTS	NO
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (2014-15)			
American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	Black or African American	YES
Hispanic or Latino	N/A	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	YES	ALL STUDENTS	N/A
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (2013-14)			
American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	Black or African American	YES
Hispanic or Latino	N/A	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	YES	ALL STUDENTS	YES

SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:

1. By June 2016, 100 percent of classroom teachers will facilitate the quality implementation of rigorous and coherent writing curricula.
2. By June 2016, the school will implement a plan to identify and develop systems for students and provide them with appropriate emotional support.
3. By June 2016, teacher teams will analyze summative and formative assessments to develop goals and next steps for their target population of students.
4. By June 2016, the school will increase parent engagement by 5 percent.

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 (RBERN).
- The review team visited a total of 57 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 staff survey that 39 staff members (85 percent) completed.
- The school provided results of a parent survey that 192 parents (32 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	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
TENET 2 OVERALL STAGE :					1

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	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
TENET 3 OVERALL STAGE :					1

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	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
TENET 4 OVERALL STAGE :					1

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	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
TENET 5 OVERALL STAGE :					1

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	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
6.2	The school leader ensures that regular communication with students and families fosters their high expectations for student academic achievement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.3	The school engages in effective planning and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders so that student strength and needs are identified and used to augment learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
TENET 6 OVERALL STAGE :					1

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 Stage

1

The school is at **Stage One** for Tenet 2 – School Leader Practices and Decisions.

- School leaders stated that they developed the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) and mission statement without the participation of additional key stakeholders. Reviewers found that the SCEP goals are not specific, measurable, ambitious, results-oriented, and timely (SMART) and focus on teachers’ actions rather than student outcomes. For example, one goal is for all teachers to “facilitate the quality implementation” of writing curricula. In interviews, school leaders told the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that they have not communicated the school improvement goals and mission to all members of the school community. With the exception of the goal to improve writing instruction, interviewed students, parents, and teachers were unaware of the school’s other improvement goals and mission. Additionally, school leaders have not developed a strategy to assess school progress toward attainment of SCEP goals and have not promoted or used the mission statement to improve student achievement.
- Although school leaders have deployed resources to meet some student needs, they have not always directly related resource allocations to all challenges present in the school. For example, after analyzing student behavior and attendance data, school leaders instituted a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program and provided professional development (PD) to help teachers consistently implement the program. In addition, school leaders introduced the character education program, *Competent Kids, Caring Communities*, and re-configured the weekly schedule at each grade level to ensure schoolwide implementation of the program. However, while school leaders, teachers, and parents have expressed concerns about large class sizes, school leaders have not yet addressed the staffing issue through the re-assignment of personnel or other strategies.
- The IIT found that school leaders provide teachers with little targeted, actionable feedback following classroom observations and do not routinely conduct follow-up observations. School leaders have not normed their observation ratings to ensure inter-rater reliability and a sample of teacher observations showed that recommendations made by various observers did not always reflect a common understanding of the school’s instructional priorities. For example, although school leaders expect teachers to state learning objectives in their lessons, they did not address or enforce this expectation in many of the observation reports reviewed by the IIT. During interviews, school leaders admitted that they are not currently holding teachers sufficiently accountable for implementing the instructional priorities.
- School leaders have established data collection systems to track and monitor student behavior and attendance; however, school leaders have not systematically used the data to determine the effectiveness of school programs and practices intended to improve behavior and attendance. There is no system to track and monitor individual, grade-level, and schoolwide teacher implementation of the strategies introduced in PD. For example, although school leaders have scheduled a weekly instructional period for the *Competent Kids, Caring Communities* social and emotional development program, they have not yet developed a procedure to determine the impact of this program or ways of improving it.

Recommendation:

During the next meeting of the school leadership team, the school leaders should:

- identify a set of instructional best practices for writing instruction to serve as instructional priorities as teachers implement writing units within all subject areas;
- develop a means of communicating these priorities to teachers, students, and families as clear

expectations;

- develop a strategy to ensure that school leaders provide frequent monitoring and feedback to teachers regarding the quality of the implementation of these best practices; and
- design a strategy for the continuous collection of data to determine the degree of implementation of best practices by individual teachers and school-wide and identify the need for additional PD.

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 Stage

1

The school is at **Stage One** for Tenet 3 – Curriculum Development and Support.

- School leaders told the IIT that curriculum development to replace commercially produced English language arts (ELA) curricula and design writing units is at an early stage. School leaders recently provided planning time for a multi-grade-level team of teachers to expand the range of scaffolded ELA activities and materials to better suit the learning needs of all students and address shortfalls in writing expectations, but teachers on the team told the IIT that school leaders have not established clear criteria for their work. School leaders have set a goal to implement the writing component of the ELA curriculum by June 2016. The IIT found that the writing component currently consists of a pacing guide indicating the genre of writing, such as narrative and informative, to be addressed during each month of the school year, but lacks standards, objectives, resources, strategies, and assessments.
- School leaders told the IIT, and the IIT confirmed through a review of teacher lesson plans, that most teachers are not using data to plan lessons based on students’ strengths and needs. Additionally, few teachers are maintaining data binders as required by school leaders. Teachers have participated in PD on incorporating Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) expectations, individualizing instruction, selecting complex materials, and posing challenging questions. However, reviewers found little evidence of these components in teachers’ lesson plans. The IIT found that teacher lesson plans seldom identified questions requiring analysis, evaluation, synthesis, or problem solving. In addition, there was little differentiation planned for students with disabilities or English language learners (ELLs). School leaders said they encourage teachers to use a lesson plan template with standard components although school leaders cannot mandate template use in New York City schools. The IIT found that few teachers use the recommended template, and most lesson plans did not include instructional strategies that teachers had learned in PD.
- School leaders told the IIT there was no interdisciplinary curricula and interviewed teachers stated that any interdisciplinary activities that did occur were the result of individual teacher initiative. The school lacks art and music teachers and does not have a technology program. School leaders, teachers, and students said that there was almost no opportunity for students to explore connections across the curriculum to foster the application of learned skills and engage interest.
- Teachers are just beginning to use assessments as tools for planning. School leaders and teachers told the IIT that teachers have participated in targeted PD on using pre-tests to measure students’ prior knowledge; formative assessments to measure students’ understanding during lessons; and summative assessments to measure students’ skill acquisition. However, most teachers said they are unable to analyze the data to determine the instructional implications of these assessments without more explicit guidance and practice. Interviewed students told the IIT that most teachers did not provide rubrics in advance to inform them of the criteria for their writing assignments. Instead, teachers provided rubrics as feedback on completed work.

Recommendation:

- The school leader should immediately direct the school’s curriculum committee to review previously developed writing units to provide grade-level exemplars of unit design with student products to guide grade-level teams in the creation of additional writing units that are coherent, challenging, and reflect

best practices.

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 Stage

1

The school is at **Stage One** for Tenet 4 – Teacher Practices and Decisions.

- Although school leaders have prioritized instructional strategies, such as checks for understanding and delivering instruction that accounts for individual student needs, and provided training to support these expectations, they have been unsuccessful in leading teachers to apply the instructional strategies learned in PD. For example, school leaders provided teachers with training to use formative assessments to check for student understanding during lessons; yet most IIT observations did not show teachers conducting these types of checks. In an interview, one student said that his teacher polled students periodically to gauge their degree of understanding through a showing of one, two, or three fingers but said that this was not typical. School leaders said, and the IIT confirmed through observation, that most teachers do not use data to compose instructional groups, with the exception of Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System data used to form guided reading groups. Additionally, in observed classes, teachers seldom used scaffolding to help students progress to mastery, reviewed prior learning, checked for background knowledge, explicitly stated learning objectives, checked for understanding, or provided a variety of activities and materials to meet a range of learner needs.
- In observed classes, few teachers provided students with opportunities for discovery learning, piqued student curiosity by asking probing questions, or challenged students to extend learning beyond the scope of the lesson. In most observed classes, teacher questions were fact-based, rather than open-ended to foster higher-order thinking. In guided reading, teachers provided students with independent reading activities linked to books that could move students to higher reading levels; however, teachers did not routinely check student comprehension of more complex texts.
- Students said that they could respond in class without fear of consequences for wrong answers and were physically safe in school. However, students told the IIT that teachers did not offer a choice of learning activities and usually did not ask for student opinions. Parents told the IIT that their children seldom reported positively on school learning, except in cases when teachers made learning relevant to student interests. The IIT found that the activities observed in most classes provided students with little opportunity for intellectual growth or self-discovery. For example, the posted writing in one typical classroom consisted of a story about Rosa Parks that students had copied verbatim.
- While teachers use assessment data to compose guided reading groups, most are not yet able to use student performance data to plan and differentiate instruction in other disciplines. Teachers maintain student reading, writing, and math portfolios containing worksheets, assignments, and quizzes, as directed by school leaders. However, there were few student work products in the portfolios examined by the IIT. When asked, students could not state how the portfolios helped them to evaluate their own progress. Additionally, teachers were also unclear about the purpose of the portfolio system. Students receive graded rubrics as feedback on their completed writing assignments. However, when asked, some students did not know the meaning of certain words and phrases in these rubrics. Students told the IIT that they did not always know the next step to take to improve their work.

Recommendation:

- School leaders and instructional coaches should devise a schedule of daily walkthroughs of all classrooms to ensure that, beginning on March 1, every teacher is observed once weekly, so school leaders provide more frequent feedback to teachers regarding the implementation of identified best

practices for writing instruction and its impact on student ownership and achievement.

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 Stage

1

The school is at **Stage One** for Tenet 5 – Social and Emotional Developmental Health.

- School leaders have not established a formal process, such as a tiered intervention system, for identifying struggling students and addressing their social-emotional developmental health needs by providing them with appropriate services. School leaders do not disaggregate and analyze student data for use in adjusting programs to meet student needs and there is no system to determine the success of the current implementation of social-emotional programs in increasing student achievement. Additionally, reviewers found no evidence of a plan to engage guidance counselors, the save room director, administrators , social workers, and the parent coordinator in a collective effort to define schoolwide social-emotional developmental health needs and goals.
- School leaders instituted the *Competent Kids, Caring Communities* character education program, which consists of a formal curriculum and a weekly class period devoted to lessons addressing social-emotional development topics, such as belief in one’s self. In interviews with the review team, students said that they had learned valuable lessons through the program. School leaders also instituted the school’s PBIS program to prevent and address student misbehavior. Awarding tickets to recognize and reinforce appropriate behavior is a central component of the school’s version of the PBIS program. However, reviewers seldom observed teachers distributing these tickets in classrooms, hallways, or other common areas. One student said that he had not received a ticket recently and believed that the program was no longer in existence. School leaders provided initial staff PD on the *Competent Kids, Caring Communities* and PBIS programs, but reviewers learned that training for these programs is not continuous or differentiated for experienced and inexperienced teachers. Interviewed parents expressed concern that some teachers were not skilled in addressing students’ acting-out behaviors. Yet, teachers and staff told the IIT that the school has not provided PD on social-emotional development health topics other than PBIS and *Competent Kids, Caring Communities* programs.
- Student support personnel, including guidance counselors and social workers, do not have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and there are no formal structures designed to coordinate their work with students and families. Reviewers found that school leaders have not sufficiently researched available community-wide resources. For example, although there is a program of hobby activities with supervision that the Mosholu Montefiore Community Center operates after the school day, there is no after-school academic program. Additionally, school leaders have not yet attempted to engage community-based organizations to provide after-school tutoring and mental health services.
- The school has a system for continuously collecting student disciplinary and attendance data. School leaders use these data to analyze longitudinal trends and inform decision-making on disciplinary and attendance policies. There is, however, no comparable strategic system for collecting, collating, and analyzing data to determine other schoolwide social-emotional developmental health trends. For example, school leaders have not collected evidence to determine the effectiveness of the *Competent Kids, Caring Communities* program and identify any unmet needs.

Recommendation:

- At the next school support staff meeting, school leaders and support staff should design a plan to determine the demographics of the student body, including living conditions and culture, to guide the development of a comprehensive demographic profile. This information should be used to craft a best-fit response to the social-emotional developmental health needs of the students in this school,

leading to increased student engagement and achievement.

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 Stage

1

The school is at **Stage One** for Tenet 6 – Family and Community Engagement.

- School leaders have established some explicit expectations for student performance and communicated them to parents at meetings and in documents, but these efforts have not fully engaged parents as partners in the education of their children. The parent coordinator provides parents with a flyer entitled “Recipes for Success,” which contains practical activities to help children succeed, but the school publishes the flyer in English without translation into other languages used by families at the school. During interviews, school leaders and parents were unable to provide specific examples of how the school has informed parents of school leader expectations for student success or provided parents with useful tools and techniques to help their children succeed.
- Teachers communicate with parents about student needs primarily through telephone calls and parent-teacher conferences. Support staff and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) leaders told the IIT that school personnel needed to provide more outreach to parents to create improved mutual understanding. When asked by the IIT, student support staff cited only two examples of recent parent events, which were the September open house and a workshop on how to select an appropriate middle school. Although attendance by families was poor for both of these events, staff reported that the strategy of having children write a personal parental invitation resulted in increased family attendance at a recent *Competent Kids, Caring Communities* meeting. The school created a website in February 2014, but reviewers learned that information is not always current and is only in English. Additionally, parents said that the school does not provide the email addresses of their children’s teachers. Parents expressed the view that they had to specifically request information from school staff to be knowledgeable about school and student concerns.
- A review of the PD plan showed no formal trainings scheduled for teachers and staff on the process of building home-school partnerships. Interviews and an examination of school-submitted documents also showed no evidence of parent trainings offered by the school. The faculty handbook states that teacher contact with parents should be frequent, with teachers placing an emphasis on providing helpful information. However, the handbook does not contain specific strategies or detailed guidance to assist teachers in facilitating communication with parents. In addition, the school has limited relationships with external agencies that support families in need.
- The school shares information about student performance with parents in traditional ways, such as through progress reports and report cards that include reading levels. However, school leaders do not collect data about family needs and circumstances to identify barriers to learning or systematically share this information with teachers. The parent of a student with disabilities reported she does not receive regular reports showing progress toward the accomplishment of the goals in the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Recommendation:

- The school leader should immediately direct the parent coordinator and support staff to meet with family and community members to explore texting, video, and other modern media communication vehicles to augment the traditional array of written communications currently in use to increase student achievement through greater family engagement.