



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)

Modified School Review



BEDS Code	140600010045
School Name	The International School
School Address	141 Hoyt Street Buffalo, NY
District Name	Buffalo City School District
School Leader	Nadia A. Nashir
Dates of Review	October 8 & 9, 2013
School Accountability Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Priority School <input type="checkbox"/> Focus School
Type of Review	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) Modified School Review

School Information Sheet											
Grade Configuration	PK-6	Total Enrollment	791	SIG Recipient	<input type="checkbox"/>	Title 1 Population	93%	Attendance Rate	93.8%		
Free Lunch	91.6%	Reduced Lunch	1.4 %	Student Sustainability	91%	Limited English Proficient	55.2%	Students with Disabilities	9.8%		
Number of English Language Learner Classes											
#Transitional Bilingual		#Dual Language		#Self-Contained English as a Second Language	14						
Number of Special Education Classes											
#Special Classes	4	#Consultant Teaching		#Integrated Collaborative Teaching	4						
# Resource Room											
Number Special Classes											
#Visual Arts		#Music		#Drama		#Foreign Language		#Dance		#CTE	
Racial/Ethnic Origin											
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.3%	Black or African American	31.5%	Hispanic or Latino	7.8%	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	41.6%	White	15.7%	Multi-racial	3.2%
Personnel											
Years Principal Assigned to School	4	# of Assistant Principals	3	# of Deans	0	# of Counselors / Social Workers	3				
Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0%	Teaching Out of Certification	0%	Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.	12%	Average Teacher Absences	9%				
Credit Accumulation (High School Only) and Performance Rates											
% of 1 st yr. students who earned 10+ credits		% of 2 nd yr. students who earned 10+ credits		% of 3 rd yr. students who earned 10+ credits		4 Year Graduation Rate					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	9%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	16%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	72%	6 Year Graduation Rate					
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA											
	American Indian or Alaska Native				X	Black or African American					
	Hispanic or Latino				X	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander					
	White					Multi-racial					
X	Students with Disabilities				X	Limited English Proficient					
X	Economically Disadvantaged					All Students					
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Math											
	American Indian or Alaska Native				X	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					All Students					
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science											
	American Indian or Alaska Native					Black or African American					
	Hispanic or Latino					Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander					
X	White					Multi-racial					
X	Students with Disabilities					Limited English Proficient					
	Economically Disadvantaged					All Students					
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective											
X	Limited English Proficiency										

SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE SCHOOL:

The International School's top five priorities are: to build the capacity of our teachers to meet the individual needs of their students (particularly ELLs), to continue to develop knowledge of and effective practices aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), to continue to implement RtI-B (Response to Intervention-Behavior), to increase parent involvement, and to identify and build assets within the community.

1. Our first priority is to build our teacher's capacity to meet the needs of all students, particularly ELLs. We have a professional development plan that includes SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol), effective use of data, and co-teaching models in an integrated setting of both special education and ELL students. We have job embedded professional development for individual teachers using the coaching model (Literacy and Math) .
2. Our second priority is to continue to support the implementation of the CCLS. Teachers attend two weekly common planning times in which they review district supplements and current teaching materials to ensure alignment to the CCLS. Additionally, teachers are shown resources found on engageny.org to use in their classrooms. Professional learning opportunities are provided after school to "unpack" the standards as a grade level.
3. Our next priority is to continue to implement the RtI-B school wide initiative started last year. We successfully implemented Tier 1 interventions and this year we are focusing on Tier 2 and 3. We have a team that meets periodically to look at student data and to plan events and assemblies to support our R.A.R.E Program (Respect, Always Safe, Responsibility, and Excellence for Everyone).
4. Another priority for our school is to increase parent involvement. We have a multilingual parent facilitator who helps reach out to parents to become more involved. We provide translators in our top five languages at every parent event. We have our most important documents translated into our top five languages and we make ConnectEd calls to parents in multiple languages. It is our goal to help develop parents' leadership skills to be an active voice in the decision making process. A representative from the District Parent Coordinating Council (DPCC) will be providing training to parents around this topic in the late spring.
5. Finally, we realize that in order for our students to be college and career ready we must find resources outside of our school to help our students achieve this goal. We have partnerships and grants with many colleges and universities in the area which provide support to our students and professional development to our teachers. We work closely with the many resettlement and post settlement agencies to help with a smooth transition into the school setting for our newcomers and to bridge the gap between home and school for all students. We have created a group called COMPASS (Community Partnerships for Action, Support and School Success) which consists of our community partners and school personnel. This group meets monthly to share resources and collaborate on projects.

Mark an "X" in the box below the appropriate designation for each tenet, and mark in the 'OVERALL RATING' row the final designation for the overall tenet.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.5	Leaders effectively use evidence-based systems and structures to examine and improve critical individual and school-wide practices as defined in the SCEP (student achievement, curriculum and teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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"/>
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"/>
5.4	All school stakeholders work together to develop a common understanding of the importance of their contributions in creating a school community that is safe, conducive to learning, and fostering of a sense of ownership for providing social and emotional developmental health supports tied to the school's vision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.5	The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

School Review Narrative:

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.

Areas for Improvement:

2.3 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.

- The district recently empowered school leaders to begin making some strategic decisions regarding the organization of programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources. The designation of the school as an international school has provided the school with fiscal capital advantages. Fiscal resources, an active volunteer program, and community partnerships have resulted in an abundance of adult assistance in classrooms. In some classes observed by the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT or “the review team”), as many as three or more adults assisted the teacher in working with students. The 2013-14 school year is the first time that the school leader has had any input into the budget process for the school. This year, the district provided the school leaders with an allocated budget amount and allowed the leaders to prioritize funding for instructional programming and human resource needs. Teachers interviewed by the IIT reported that the school leader clearly articulates funding needs to district personnel throughout the school year. Additionally, the school leader actively seeks grant funds for initiatives such as a “newcomers” class, instructional coaches, and parent facilitators. A number of staff described to the IIT a specific example of collaboration and creative problem-solving regarding the availability of parent facilitators. The school had funding for one parent facilitator, who represented a particular ethnicity of the multiethnic community. In recognition of the immense community diversity, that facilitator proposed to the school leader that the district divide the parent facilitator’s position equally among three other people representing other language-based cultures of the school community. The school now has four parent facilitators, each of whom represents a different segment of the diverse school community. In the 2012-13 school year, the district empowered school leaders to develop and provide targeted professional development (PD) opportunities for school personnel. The school leader reported to the IIT that she plans to design PD and training opportunities based on targeted instructional practice needs and student achievement data. The school leader has accessed resources available to support the needs of the school and improve student achievement.

2.5 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** 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).

- School leaders have developed evidence-based systems and structures to improve critical

practices. The IIT's review of documents, interviews, and classroom visitations indicates that the school leaders collaborate among themselves and with staff to build a structure of support for students and their families, including the expansion of services for those lacking English language proficiency, CCLS alignment of curricula, and the improvement of instructional practices through collaboration and training. Parent facilitators, English language classes after school, the translation of written documents, and the availability of translators as well as interpretation headsets and receivers during school functions are means by which the staff facilitates parent engagement. Documents reviewed and interviews conducted by the IIT indicate that the school leader regularly communicates and reviews school goals with staff. School leaders organize student and teacher data and create data binders for instructors. The regularly updated binders contain quarterly assessment data, including attendance, disciplinary and classroom progress reports; Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) reports; and other academic assessment results. School leaders implement a system for monitoring and revising teacher practice on a regular six-week schedule, based on the student and class data contained in the binders. According to the DTSDE Self-Assessment document, staff in every classroom implements the Data Driven Instruction (DDI) process to monitor individual and subgroup achievement and inform instructional strategies that are used to differentiate instruction to meet student needs. School leaders and coaches also participate in training, including visitation to schools with demographic similarities and instructional and/or programmatic success in increasing student achievement. There is scheduled time for common planning and grade-level teacher meetings. School staff, students, and parents stated to the IIT that the school is a safe place, both physically and instructionally, with parent facilitators instrumental in identifying cultural differences and providing training to ameliorate potential conflicts. There is an abundant adult presence at the school entrance during times of transition. As a result of the evidence-based systems and structures in place to allow the school leader to monitor individual and school-wide practices, the school leader is able to ensure that activities in the school will improve student achievement.

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.

Areas for Improvement:

3.2 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** 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.

- Frequent meetings between school leaders and individual teachers provide new opportunities for the development of a systematic plan by leaders to monitor and adapt curricula based on identified student needs. Based on a review of documents and interviews, the IIT found that the plan of the school leaders includes the adoption of a new reading series that supports the CCLS and

the mathematics modules produced by NYSED. Additionally, the design of local and targeted PD specific to CCLS-aligned curricula and provided by instructional coaches supports teacher implementation of rigorous and coherent instruction. The school provides common planning time for staff. Staff report that planning time facilitates curricula implementation across grade levels in content areas, and representatives from publishing companies provide helpful training. In addition, classrooms that the review team visited were equipped with technology that supports instruction. While the plan for implementation of the CCLS has allowed for time to devote to improving what is taught and how it is taught, the IIT found that the instructional shifts required as part of the CCLS were not evident in the classrooms the team visited. For example, higher-order questions were asked in only three of the 18 classrooms the IIT visited. While the school leaders' plan for quality implementation of CCLS-aligned curricula contains components for increasing teacher knowledge, the disconnect between the PD provided by the coaches and the classroom practices observed by the IIT indicates that there still is a significant need to devote more attention to the development of teacher skills and practices to support CCLS-aligned shifts. As long as this disconnect is in place, students will not receive access to the curriculum they need to be college and career ready.

3.3 The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice: 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.

- District leaders develop pacing guides by themes, and school leaders organize and schedule consistent grade-level meeting times so that teachers collaborate on the development of unit and lesson plans based on student data. Based on a review of documents, interviews, and classroom visitations, the IIT determined that some teachers use lesson plans that support the CCLS. The school leader has developed a plan for reviewing the collected lesson plans. School staff report that grade-level meetings yield unit and lesson plan discussions and that teachers providing targeted instruction meet with grade-level teams to share information about student achievement needs. When asked by the IIT about complex materials used during instruction, interviewees stated that teachers use NYS mathematics modules, a new reading program selected by school leaders, a writing program, and the internet to access additional materials. During classroom visitations, however, the IIT saw that only half of the classrooms visited displayed student work, and none of the displays included a rubric. Some displays of student work included the posting of CCLS and a description of the assignment. In two of eighteen classrooms visited by the IIT, teachers collected data during the lesson, and there was no indication that data informed any of the lessons. There was no evidence of the use of a variety of complex materials that include a progression of sequenced and scaffolded skills. Without protocols to monitor and adjust lesson plans and the consistent use of data to drive instruction, staff is hindered in developing unit and lessons plans that address student achievement needs.

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.

Areas for Improvement:

4.3 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** Teachers provide coherent and appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students.

- The school has taken steps so that instruction will be aligned with the CCLS; however, most of the classrooms visited by the IIT did not show significant evidence of the CCLS instructional shifts. Based on a review of documents, interviews, and classroom visitations, the IIT found that many instructors are conscientious about providing multiple points of access to curricula for students. Although curricula are provided by the district, teachers work within district timeframes to plan, pace, and provide inclusive practices, such as picture support, modeling for students, use of technology during lessons, and embedding elements of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) in daily instruction. However, the review team found through classroom visitations that not all instruction supports the CCLS, and student engagement varies widely from class to class. Fifty-five percent of the student population are English language learners, and the district designated the building as an international school. Because the school serves as an entry point for young children from other countries, the school initiated a “newcomers” class, which provides introductory information and English language acquisition skills to students within their first two weeks in school. School staff report that after the “ice is broken” for new students, the students engage more freely, both socially and academically. Classroom visitations and interviews that the IIT conducted indicate that instructors maintain teacher-directed lessons, with limited use of enrichment activities, and demonstrate uncertainty about student assessment, progress monitoring, and the provision of meaningful academic feedback to students. In addition, there was little to no instructional closure demonstrated by teachers in the lessons the reviewers saw. Consequently, current instructional practices continue the gap between what students know and need to learn and hinder student 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.

Areas for Improvement:

5.4 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** 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.

- A core group of school stakeholders, representing some of the diverse cultural and ethnic

communities at the school works together in creating a safe school climate that is conducive to learning. Based on a review of documents and interviews, the IIT found that there is an active School Based Management Team (SBMT) composed of representatives from each stakeholder group. The SBMT members regularly attend meetings, and the team sets annual goals, such as reviewing and revising the grading policy. Additionally, there are a number of other family member; student; and teacher committees and organizations, including a student council for young students. The various stakeholder groups contribute to the school's vision for student social and emotional developmental health by explaining the purpose and necessity of the vision. Parent facilitators represent four different ethnic groups and act as translators, interpreters of cultural differences, and "bridges" between the school and family members. Parent and community members interviewed by the IIT report that they appreciate their partnerships with school personnel and that they feel safe in the school. Procedures are in place and practiced so that children and adults are prepared to keep each other safe in dangerous situations. Displays in hallways, classrooms, and public spaces clearly define behavioral expectations for students, family members, and school personnel. Based on documents reviewed and interviews, the IIT determined that the regular review of school-based programs and related data leads to updates and revisions, including the introduction of new levels of support. Community partnerships provide numerous supports for students and their families, and school personnel assist in making connections with resources when necessary. Some stakeholder interviewees minimized the importance of their own contributions in creating a supportive school culture, and there is no process designed specifically to facilitate discussion among stakeholder groups about their roles in providing appropriate student supports for all groups of students. Nevertheless, a core group of stakeholders demonstrates a "clear sense of ownership" for supporting the social and emotional developmental health of students. This core group engages and collaborates with school personnel in providing student supports tied to the school's vision and creating a school community conducive to learning. However, not all school constituents contribute toward ensuring the school's vision, so progress toward meeting student needs is limited.

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.

Areas for Improvement:

6.5 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** 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.

- School leaders, the School-Based Management Team (SBMT), and the district initiate a number of opportunities for school constituents to share, dialogue, and communicate about student learning data. Based on a review of documents and interviews, the IIT concluded that data collection begins when a child enrolls in the school. Having a "student profile sheet" completed is a first step in the

use of data for providing appropriate educational services to children and empowering families to understand that there are support services available to their children. Since more than half of the student population has limited proficiency in English, collecting a complete history of each child's educational background is a necessity. School staff interviewed by the IIT report that it is very important for teachers to become aware of students' educational and refugee status and history. Some entering students may have never experienced formal education before, and others may have experienced numerous interruptions of their education. Based on the student profile information and education records, if they exist, students receive a class assignment and family members receive targeted strategies and/or referral information geared toward addressing family needs. Any plans developed for sharing family data with partners, such as the refugee resettlement agencies, exist at the district level. Interviewees explained to the IIT that the introduction of families to the concept of school data collection begins in simple terms, such as the Attendance, Behavior, and Course Work Results (ABCs). School staff arranges to share student data with families through means such as breakfast with the school leader, parent and teacher conferences, the ABC progress report, attendance meetings, and individual follow-ups. School staff interviewed by the IIT report that parent meetings have changed from a focus on fun to academics. The multi-cultural festival event has become popular among families, with approximately five hundred families attending to visit classrooms and share their children's accomplishments. School staff and parents interviewed by the IIT voiced appreciation for the availability of interpreters and translators at events so that family members understand report cards, progress reports, and conversations. The school has empowered families to take action to support student learning by providing families with multiple opportunities to understand how their children are doing at school, leading to higher student achievement which will ultimately enhance student achievement.