



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	460701040001
School Name	Dennis M. Kenney Middle School
School Address	846 Cayuga Street, Hannibal, NY
District Name	Hannibal Central School District
School Leader	Dee Froio
Dates of Review	March 11-13, 2014
School Accountability Status	Focus School
Type of Review	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet											
Grade Configuration	5-8	Total Enrollment	455	SIG Recipient	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Title 1 Population	65%	Attendance Rate	93%		
Free Lunch	48%	Reduced Lunch	10%				Limited English Proficient	1%	Students with Disabilities	16%	
Number of English Language Learner Classes											
#Transitional Bilingual			#Dual Language								
Number of Special Education Classes											
#Self-Contained		4	#Consultant Teaching		0	#Integrated Collaborative Teaching			14		
#Resource Room		4									
Number of Special Classes											
#Visual Arts	19	#Music	16	#Drama	0	#Foreign Language	5	#Dance	0	#CTE	0
Racial/Ethnic Origin											
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	Black or African American	1%	Hispanic or Latino	2%	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	96%	White	%	Multi-racial	0%
Personnel											
Years Principal Assigned to School		1	# of Assistant Principals		1	# of Deans		0	# of Counselors / Social Workers		1
Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate		0%	Teaching Out of Certification		0%	Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.		7%	Average Teacher Absences		6%
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		5-16% 6-23% 7-23% 8-34%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		5-21% 6-23% 7-16% 8-18%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4		Grade 8 61%	6 Year Graduation Rate		
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA											
		American Indian or Alaska Native						Black or African American			
		Hispanic or Latino						Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander			
		White						Multi-racial			
x		Students with Disabilities						Limited English Proficient			
		Economically Disadvantaged						All Students			
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Math											
		American Indian or Alaska Native						Black or African American			
		Hispanic or Latino						Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander			
		White						Multi-racial			
		Students with Disabilities						Limited English Proficient			
		Economically Disadvantaged						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			
		White						Multi-racial			
		Students with Disabilities						Limited English Proficient			
		Economically Disadvantaged						All Students			
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective											
		Limited English Proficiency									

SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE SCHOOL:

1. Increase the capacity of the building leaders to provide instructional leadership.
2. Adopt the state recommended rigorous, viable, and CCLS aligned curriculum in ELA and math in grades 5-12.
3. Improve the quality of instruction through alignment with CCLS and the shifts in ELA and math.
4. Create a safe and comfortable learning environment for all students.
5. Strengthen our community partnerships to support all aspects of student and family needs.

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

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

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
3.2	The school leader ensures and supports the quality implementation of a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.			X	
3.3	Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans used include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.			X	
3.4	The school leader and teachers have developed a comprehensive plan for teachers to partner within and across all grades and subjects to create interdisciplinary curricula targeting the arts, technology, and other			X	

	enrichment opportunities.				
3.5	Teachers implement a comprehensive system for using formative and summative assessments for strategic short and long-range curriculum planning that involves student reflection, tracking of, and ownership of learning.			X	
	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.			X	
4.3	Teachers provide coherent, and appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students.			X	
4.4	Teachers and students work together to implement a program/plan to create a learning environment that is responsive to students' varied experiences and tailored to the strengths and needs of all students.			X	
4.5	Teachers inform planning and foster student participation in their own learning process by using a variety of summative and formative data sources (e.g., screening, interim measures, and progress monitoring).			X	
	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.			X	
5.3	The school articulates and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is aligned to a curriculum or program that provides learning experiences and a safe and healthy school environment for families, teachers, and students.			X	
5.4	All school stakeholders work together to develop a common understanding of the importance of their contributions in creating a school community that is safe, conducive to learning, and fostering of a sense of ownership for providing social and emotional developmental			X	

	health 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.			X	
	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.			X	
6.3	The school engages in effective planning and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders so that student strength and needs are identified and used to augment learning.			X	
6.4	The school community partners with families and community agencies to promote and provide training across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.			X	
6.5	The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.			X	
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:			D	

School Review – Findings, Evidence, Impact and Recommendations:

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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Debriefing Statement: The school leader is establishing systems to support the practice of continuous and sustainable school improvement. In her first year at the school, the school leader has articulated clear priorities, but these are not aligned to a concrete mission and measurable goals. The school leader is assessing the school’s needs and beginning to make strategic decisions as well as monitoring the implementation of programs and strategies, but does not have systems in place to evaluate their impact. As a result, the school has not achieved high academic outcomes for all students.

Areas for Improvement:

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

Overall Finding: The school leader has articulated a clear vision for the school this year, but awaits completion of the district’s strategic planning process in order to establish a mission that will drive improvement. At this time the school does not have measurable goals and the school community is primarily focused on implementation of improvement strategies rather than being guided by agreed upon measurable outcomes.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The Hannibal School District is in the midst of a strategic planning process and has not yet established a concrete mission, vision and goals, though the schools are updated regularly on its progress. According to the district’s winter newsletter, “While the core team continues to develop a mission, vision and beliefs for the district’s future, three separate task forces are also meeting to solidify a five-year blueprint by focusing on student engagement, family/community engagement and academic achievement.” This process does include a range of school stakeholders, including the Kenney school leader. However, the school is waiting for the district to complete this task, which is scheduled to be presented to the school board in April 2014, before it adopts its own mission and goals with which to drive improvement.
- The SCEP specifically identifies “measureable school wide goals” as a need. However, there is only one SMART goal in the (SCEP): “The academic achievement target for the identified subgroup, students with disabilities, is to increase proficiency levels on NYS assessments by 10 percent.” Given the overall low performance of the school, the individual goals are generic and lack quantifiable targets. For example, the goals for Tenet 2 are “Implement shared decision making” and “All building leaders will provide comprehensive instructional leadership.” Moreover, while school leaders have set an administrative goal of raising proficiency on state tests by five percent, the school does not discuss quantifiable internal goals for academic achievement with which to focus

improvement strategies and measure progress and success. Students also noted the lack of goals, when they reported that goals are only used in sports and teachers do not connect teaching to goals in classes. This was corroborated by teachers, who noted the expectation to set and post learning targets, but said they “do not have to hit the bullseye,” and that “effort and improvement are what’s important, it’s not about a score.” The notable exception is special education, which is focused on students’ Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals. Finally, school staff speak enthusiastically about what the school is doing to address problems, but few spoke clearly about what they are trying to accomplish in terms of outcomes for students, such as high school and college preparation or career readiness.

- Despite lacking a concrete and embedded mission and goals to inform school improvement, the new school leader has articulated a clear vision and priorities and most stakeholders are aware of and support them. The school leader communicates her vision and priorities through correspondence and meetings with families and staff, including working with the Building Leadership Team (BLT) on developing the 2013-14 SCEP, breakfasts with faculty and bus drivers in the summer, and participation in grade team meetings. However, the school leader recognizes that more time is needed to ensure all stakeholders play a proactive role in making the goals a living reality. Discipline and school culture were identified as serious obstacles to success, and have been targeted with strategies including a character education program, positive behavior supports and revised discipline procedures. In the academic realm the school is focused on implementing state curriculum modules aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and associated instructional shifts but these are a work in progress in contributing to accelerated student achievement.

Impact Statement:

As a result of not having defined their desired outcomes in clear and measurable goals, the school community has not fully realized its vision.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Establish and communicate measurable goals and use them to focus improvement efforts, monitor progress, make adjustments and ultimately measure impact on student achievement.

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

Overall Finding:

Part way through her first year in the school, the school leader is continuing to assess the school’s needs and beginning to make strategic decisions to address them.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The new school leader has conducted a number of activities to identify and understand the school’s needs, including conversations with stakeholders and review of academic, discipline and attendance data, and is beginning to put in place strategies to address them. She is a visible presence in the

building and frequently attends staff meeting to observe and solicit input and works with the BLT to identify needs. The SCEP articulates a long list of needs that include: curriculum planning, measurable goals, procedures for data driven dialogue, targeted professional development (PD), targeted and differentiated instruction, systemic character education, increased family and community engagement, literacy development across the curriculum, and scheduled formal and informal teacher observations. The school leader has begun to address some of these needs, but has not made strategic decisions yet to address the wide-spread need for remediation, student access to a broad curriculum and effective implementation of professional learning communities (PLCs).

- The school leader has established priorities focused primarily on establishing an environment conducive to learning and implementing Common Core-aligned curriculum and instructional practices. As a result she has made some strategic decisions to improve school culture and develop teachers. For example, she has supported implementation of a character education program and reorganized events to recognize both achievement and growth while minimizing opportunities for disruptive behavior. With regards to the academic program, the school has fully adopted this year the use of the state curriculum modules in English language arts (ELA) and Math, and the school leader has targeted PD to support their use through the implementation of professional learning communities (PLCs) at grade team meetings as well as “shift” meetings to foster understanding of the instructional shifts necessary Common Core adoption. Nevertheless, these strategic decisions are in their beginning phases and have illuminated the need for further development and refinement.
- The school leader continues to assess specific programs, structures and strategies currently in place in the school and is still developing strategic plans for the coming school year. The school schedule presents a major challenge to raising student achievement because teachers are contractually obligated to teach five classes, each for 42-minute periods, each day. Students attend study halls, sometimes multiple times per day, and are not provided with the targeted instruction and support they need. While no strategic decisions have been made to address this problem, the school leader is supporting pilot programs in the grades five and six to provide more effective intervention and remediation for students and considering options for the coming year, which may be contingent on ongoing contract negotiations between the district and teachers. The school also lacks a family and consumer science teacher and the school leader has requested a position for next year to fulfill that curriculum requirement for students and to provide them with more instructional options besides supervised study halls. Stakeholders acknowledged that these decisions are only the first step and many of the changes this year are a “work in progress” with much left to do. For example, teachers are in the process of familiarizing themselves with the curriculum modules and the PLCs are just beginning to focus on data analysis and have not yet taken the next step of action planning.

Impact Statement:

Though strategic planning is underway, the current deployment of resources does not currently meet the needs of the school community.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Use resources to increase instructional time for students to provide them with opportunities for targeted support, remediation and enrichment.
- Ensure PLCs are effectively focused on building teachers capacity for using Common Core-aligned curriculum to meet the needs of all students.
- Ensure the school has sufficient staff to implement all aspects of the curriculum.

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

Overall Finding:

The school leader is using regular observations and evaluation of classroom data to identify needs and beginning to use results to identify and implement strategies to improve instructional practices. However, the school's evaluation process does not yet fully drive improvement in teacher practice.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school leader has established a schedule for formal and informal observations and is a regular presence in classrooms through walk-throughs, which are primarily focused on implementation of the Common Core modules and shifts. Teachers also noted that evaluations are happening more consistently this year and that the school leader attends some grade team and PLC meetings. Coaches also conduct walk-throughs and work in the classrooms and provide feedback to leadership about their observations of teacher practice. Based on these sources of information about teaching and planning, the school leader recognizes that the recent adoption of Common Core curriculum is a major challenge for teachers and is working with the district to continue to direct support to teachers. For example, consultants are working with PLC team leaders to develop their facilitation skills to make these meetings more productive. The school leader has also found limited evidence of differentiation in classroom instruction and is exploring ways to improve teacher practices and intervention programs to best meet the needs of students, including increased use of data-driven instruction and making better use of study hall time
- The APPR is not viewed by school leaders as producing a reliable assessment of teacher performance. The school is using the Oasis observation system, which was described as "evidence-based," and the NYSUT rubric, which is new to teachers. Some interviewed teachers said the rubric established clearer expectations but others felt it is "not clear where we stand." In addition, the rubric formula rates most teachers as effective, limiting its usefulness in driving faculty improvement. While the school leader feels that the post-observation conferences with faculty members have been productive, the district's current labor contract precludes school leaders from taking notes and providing formal feedback outside of APPR activities. With regards to accountability for student performance, though the school has followed the requirements for setting student learning objectives (SLOs), they also do not currently play a major role in improving instructional practices. The school is not sufficiently focused on measurable outcomes and teachers did not mention SLOs as an influence on their own development. The APPR is currently being renegotiated and in that context is not viewed by stakeholders as a useful process for staff

development or school improvement.

- Establishing a school culture conducive to learning is a major priority and school leaders are observing classrooms and evaluating discipline data to inform their strategies. Administrators noted that establishing consistency in classroom management and discipline is a work in progress with some evidence of diminished problem behavior reported based on referral records.

Impact Statement:

The school is in the process of developing an effective accountability system; as a result teachers are not yet fully accountable for continuous improvement in their instructional practices or student achievement.

Recommendation: In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Sustain observations and feedback as a priority and continue to develop a professional culture where teachers acknowledge areas for growth and seek and appreciate critical feedback and dialogue to improve practice.
- Use collaborative means to undertake meaningful goal-setting, progress monitoring and evaluation activities that focus more on professional growth than compliance.

2.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* 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).

Overall Finding:

While school leaders are using data to select strategies for school improvement, they are primarily focused on monitoring implementation and just beginning to develop evidence-based systems for assessing impact and improving their efforts.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school leader is new to the school and is “still getting to know” the staff, programs and partners. She acknowledged her immediate priorities have been course correction of school culture and adoption of Common Core curriculum. However, the school leader’s efforts have focused on monitoring implementation and not impact. The BLT and pupil support team (PST) meet regularly to review academic and behavior data, identify needs and monitor program implementation. The use of PLCs is designed to foster reflection and analysis of data, but to date has focused primarily on supporting and ensuring fidelity of implementation of the Common Core modules. Similarly, the bi-monthly CCLS Instructional Shift meetings are focused on discussion of instructional strategies aligned with the Common Core curriculum expectations. The school has set some measurable implementation goals but identified priorities mostly allude to unquantified goals, such as increase higher order questioning or decreases behavior referrals.
- The school is only just beginning to develop systems with which to analyze data and evaluate impact. For example, the school has administered Aimsweb benchmark assessments twice this year, but has not yet used the data for action planning or for evaluating strategies. Administration and

student support staff described this as a “foundation year” for response to intervention (RTI), with teachers not yet clear on their role in and responsibility for interventions. Data are being used to identify at-risk students and to progress monitor, with some anecdotal evidence of success such as students placing out of reading intervention programs, but the focus is “not really quantified growth.” The school leader has also collected some evidence to suggest its culture improvement strategies are effective, including reductions in behavior referrals and increased eligibility for recognition activities, but these have not yet been correlated with achievement on state tests or benchmark growth.

Impact Statement:

While there is some evidence of progress towards implementation goals, the school does not have systematic evidence of measurable progress towards clear achievement goals.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Establish measurable outcome goals and benchmarks as well as clearly understood systems for evaluating the impact of programs and strategies to determine efficacy and drive school improvement.

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

Debriefing Statement: The school has begun the process of adopting and developing curriculum and assessments aligned to CCLS, but is not using data and student needs to develop a coherent curriculum to maximize student learning. The school is not explicitly focused on college and career readiness. Curriculum planning and collaboration is focused primarily on the implementation of CCLS in ELA and math and is not being used to effectively integrate and vertically align the curriculum and promote rigor, engagement and differentiation. As a result, students do not all have access to a rigorous, engaging curriculum and are unable to achieve at high levels of academic achievement.

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.

Overall Finding:

The school leader is ensuring and supporting adoption of curriculum that is aligned to CCLS, and teachers are in the beginning stages of learning to use and adapt their curriculum to meet the needs of all students. The school is primarily focused on implementing its ELA and Math curricula, and does not have a coherent curriculum in other subjects.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school has adopted the state’s curriculum modules for ELA and math and is heavily focused on implementing them with fidelity but with limited attention at this point to other subjects. Ongoing PD has been provided to support teachers in their understanding and use of the modules. Common planning time is provided for grade level PLCs, which have been used to plan delivery of the modules, and monthly CCLS Shift meetings allow faculty across grades to focus on the instructional practices required to implement the curriculum. The school leader has emphasized literacy across the curriculum as a priority but there is still work to be done to ensure that this becomes embedded across the school.
- In their first year using the new curriculum modules, teachers and administrators acknowledged the difficulty in both learning the materials and using them effectively in classroom instruction. Interviewed teachers had mixed feelings about the modules. Some appreciated knowing what to teach in each grade and felt the modules “explain what the standards mean.” Moreover, their concerns about the ability of students to learn the modules have diminished as they have witnessed students rise to the challenge and start to grow. However, interviewed teachers indicated that they are “still muddling through” the modules and that the level of rigor is a presenting a challenge.
- Though the daily schedules for grades five and six have extended 84 minute ELA and Math blocks, grades seven and eight use the 42-minute periods for all classes, making it difficult to cover the material in the modules and crowding out other activities such as homework review. Teachers are still evaluating how to maintain momentum to cover all of the expected topics and at the same time ensure their lower-level students keep up. Students have picked up on their teachers’ anxiety, saying their teachers’ focus is on getting through lessons and completing modules rather than teaching and that some teachers appear to be learning the material themselves as they teach it. One student said students are afraid to ask them to slow down because “teachers are stressed about coverage of topics.” Another student said all of the students in her math class are struggling because the pace is too fast, but teachers feel they have to cover one topic per day.”
- While the modules have provided clear structure for ELA and math, the school does not have coherent curriculum in other subjects. Each grade has a different approach to science and social studies; for example, the grade six is using its science/social studies period to group students by reading lexile level to try to provide targeted intervention. The school has limited offerings in other subjects and electives. Without a science teacher, the school currently offers no classes in that subject this year, but to remedy this has requested a position for next year. The school is offering some advanced classes primarily for grade eight students, including Algebra and Living Environment, which is taught by a high school teacher. However, a student in grade six noted the absence of advanced options for students in lower grades and a parent noted that with the Common Core focus this year her son no longer gets supplemental work to challenge him.

Impact Statement:

The curriculum is not yet meeting the needs of all students and leading to their college and career readiness.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Enhance teacher capacity by providing training and guidance in effective curriculum planning practices as well as time and resources to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all students.
- Develop coherent curriculum maps that are horizontally and vertically aligned across all subjects and grades.
- Conduct regular review and revision of curriculum resources to ensure that they both align with standards and provide all students with appropriate rigor.

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.

Overall Finding:

Curriculum planning is limited primarily to adoption of the modules in ELA and Math and is not being used to effectively promote rigor, engagement and differentiation across the curriculum to meet student needs.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- In ELA and math, teachers are using the state modules as their curriculum. As such, the modules are clearly aligned to the CCLS and provide a structured scope and sequence for teachers to follow. However, teachers are primarily focused on implementing the state modules as written and there is little evidence of adapting the modules to craft units and lessons that meet the needs of all students. In addition, while teachers describe the ELA and math modules as well organized, they also noted the lack of curriculum maps for social studies and science this year.
- The school leader found little organized curriculum at the school and acknowledged that curriculum planning is an area for growth. This was evident in curriculum documents and classrooms. For instance, a number of teachers included in their lesson plans and/or posted learning objectives that were activities rather than clear learning outcomes and legitimate objectives were not always rigorous. School leaders and coaches are aware of this problem, having observed learning targets not being effectively integrated into instruction. With the exception of training in literacy across the curriculum, limited time and resources have been devoted to curriculum development in other subjects. School leaders recognize the need for more rigorous, coherent and structured curriculum and the district and school long-term PD plan is focused on building teachers' skills in curriculum planning with the goal of having "curriculum maps and pacing guides utilized in all courses."
- The school is just beginning to develop practices around the use of data and has not used these processes to modify its curriculum to meet student needs. The school has administered two benchmark assessments, once in the fall and again this winter, but at the time of the evaluation teachers had only reviewed the data and not yet used it for action planning purposes to inform curriculum and instruction. There was also limited evidence of differentiated materials to provide students with equal access to the curriculum. Teachers are focused on mastering the modules as written and, despite their concerns about accessibility for all students, have not taken ownership of

the curriculum besides making some adjustments to pacing.

Impact Statement:

The school has not created curriculum accessible to all students, which limits improvement in achievement.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Continue to adopt rigorous curriculum resources and develop teachers' skills in curriculum planning so that they consistently use data to adapt and modify their lessons to engage all students in rigorous instruction.
- Establish reflection routines and document unit and lesson successes and areas for improvement to inform future planning.

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

Overall Finding:

While the adoption of the modules in ELA and math has provided teachers with a valuable resource, the school is not effectively collaborating on developing a coordinated school-wide curriculum that engages all students.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school's primary interdisciplinary effort is the emphasis on literacy across the curriculum but recognizes that this is work in progress. The district and school have provided ongoing PD for all teachers, including specials teachers, to promote the Common Core instructional shifts. For example, one activity noted in the school's SCEP is to "Utilize district provided literacy consultant to work with 7-8 grade science/social studies/health/technology teachers focused on aligning curriculum with CCLS literacy across the content." There is a strong emphasis on evidence-based discussion and close reading of text, which was evident in Spanish and art classes. However, collaboration across disciplines is not a priority.
- Grade five is organized around self-contained classrooms, i.e., elementary model with a single teacher covering all core subjects. Grade six is divided into two teams that cover humanities and STEM subjects. Grades seven and eight are departmentalized. While the grades five and six configuration lends itself to interdisciplinary connections, interviews and meeting agenda and minutes indicate that grade team meetings and PLCs are dominated by implementation of the ELA and math modules, with little time for consideration and planning of other subjects. In addition, teachers noted that in some PLC meetings the focus has degenerated from instructional concerns to more administrative functions. For example, grade six has recently begun to use its social studies/science period instead of flexibly group of students for literacy intervention. Teachers also noted the need for department meetings to facilitate subject-specific conversations. At the present time the primary opportunity for integration of curriculum is the bi-monthly Shift meetings that bring teachers from all grades together to discuss the Common Core instructional shifts. One

teacher said that collaboration often takes a “backseat.” However, the school is just beginning to develop effective practices in instructional planning with additional training intended to promote productive collaboration in the future.

- Students are assigned to study halls and Educational Support Periods (ESP), sometimes multiple times a day, without focused instruction, limiting their opportunity to experience constructive enrichment and cross-curriculum connections. In particular, the computer lab is used as a study hall monitored by a teaching assistant rather than a resource for teachers to expand their curriculum to engage students.

Impact Statement:

Students have limited opportunities to engage in cross curricular activities that increase their ability to be academically successful.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Develop teachers’ knowledge of and skills in developing integrated CCLS-aligned curriculum and provide ongoing opportunities for structured collaboration so that students experience a rich, coherent curriculum.

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

Overall Finding:

Teachers are beginning to develop a system to analyze data to make curricular decisions and use results to instill in students ownership of learning.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school is using an assortment of diagnostic, formative and summative assessments to collect data regarding student learning. The adopted state modules include mid- and end-of-unit assessments, and teachers develop summative tests and assignments in other subjects. A number of formative assessment strategies were observed, including questioning, conferencing and exit tickets. In addition, some teachers are using “fist to five” strategies where students indicate with fingers their degree of agreement, readiness for tasks, or comfort with a learning target/concept. However, school leaders and reviewers noted that formative assessment has not been utilized as effectively as it could be. Aimsweb benchmark assessments in ELA and math are being administered three times per year; two benchmarks had already been administered as of the date of the evaluation visit. Some teachers raised concerns, however, about the alignment of these assessments to CCLS and the state’s curriculum, and are waiting to see how well they predict student performance on state tests.
- Despite access to a range of useful data, the school does not have a systematic approach to using data to inform curriculum planning and development. The school’s SCEP identifies “Formalized procedures for data driven dialogue” as a need. The district and school have provided ongoing PD

around data, and after the benchmark assessments were administered in the fall and winter the school leader and a consultant conducted data meetings with grade level teams to review the results. In addition, PLC documents indicate teachers have discussed assessment results and analyzed student work. However, though these activities have raised teacher awareness of their students' performance levels, when asked about measurable student improvement, teachers were unable to provide a clear answer. Moreover, at the time of the evaluation visit no subsequent action planning to inform instructional planning and remediation strategies was expected of teachers. This has been identified by school and district leadership as a next step and the school is planning additional PD and support to grade level PLCs to help teachers begin to use data for planning purposes. Consequently, student performance data are used primarily to identify low-performing students for interventions by specialists and not to inform curriculum planning or make curricular decisions.

- The school does not have a consistent approach to using feedback to encourage student self-evaluation and take ownership of their own learning. For example, the results of the Aimsweb benchmarks have not been shared with students, preventing an opportunity for them to reflect on their growth. Interviewed students described inconsistent feedback, including comments such as "they don't do that," "just grades and tests," and "five week progress reports." Some students noted useful conferencing with teachers regarding writing assignments, but other students said that though they sometimes get written feedback, such as little notes, teachers do not clearly explain how to improve or what to do differently.

Impact Statement:

Inconsistent use of data limits student ownership of learning and inhibits significant improvement in student achievement.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Develop teachers' capacity to use assessment data to evaluate curriculum and adapt it to meet the needs of students.
- Enhance the practice of using assessment and self-assessments to consistently provide students with meaningful feedback with which to evaluate their own growth, identify areas for improvement, and take ownership of their learning.

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

Debriefing Statement: The school is developing expectations and implementing strategies for improving school culture and student behavior to create an environment conducive to learning. However, teachers do not employ strategic planning practices and utilize effective instructional methods to meet the needs of all students. Planning does not reflect the systematic use of data to identify student needs and interests and

inform instructional decisions. The academic program and instruction provide limited opportunities for intervention. As a result, students are not experiencing consistently high levels of rigor, engagement and achievement.

Areas for Improvement:

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

Overall Finding:

The school is beginning to develop systems to ensure that instructional planning and practices are informed by data and reflect students' needs.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school does not ascribe to a common lesson plan format and the quality of reviewed lesson plans varied. The school has adopted the state's ELA and math modules, which provide resources to guide instruction, including detailed curriculum maps, unit and lesson plans, and assessments. These unit and lesson plans by design include rigorous learning objectives and activities and tasks aligned with CCLS and related instructional shifts. However, other lesson plans focused primarily on activities with no clear objectives or goals. While learning objectives were frequently posted in classes, they were sometimes a description of lesson activities rather than desired outcomes of learning and they were not consistently referenced as part of instruction. Some lesson plans included space for essential questions or differentiation, but these sections were blank. The pace of delivered instruction did not always match lesson plans; for example, in a number of classes teachers spent more time than planned on introductory activities, which left them without sufficient time to address concept development.
- The school demonstrated little evidence of instructional planning that is based on data and school leaders are at an early stage of ensuring that all teachers ensure that lesson planning and implementation is based on rigorous analysis of data. Most lesson plans did not identify specific student needs nor data modifications to meet those needs. While the school's SCEP sets as a goal "All instructional decisions are differentiated and driven by data" and some teachers reported that they use data for grouping students and selecting appropriate texts, there was little evidence of this in lesson plans or observed classroom instruction.
- School leaders identified PLCs and response to intervention (RTI) as levers for improving instructional planning practices, but acknowledged that these strategies are in their infancy stage at the school. Teachers are clearly using the PLCs to discuss implementation of the state modules, but indicated that these meetings are not always focused and productive. The school's PD plan includes future training for PLC facilitators and a focus on planning data-driven instruction. Similarly, administrators and support staff consider this a "foundation year" for RTI and indicated that general education teachers do not have a firm understanding of their role in providing Tier I support for their students. As a result, RTI is currently focused on identifying the most at-risk students and providing them with targeted interventions, primarily outside the general education classroom.
- Teacher leaders are beginning to work with teachers to establish short and long-term goals for

different groups of students but this is not yet translating into classroom practice to increase levels of student engagement and achievement.

Impact Statement:

As a result of limited instructional planning based on data that identifies needs, students do not have multiple access points to the curriculum and limited opportunities for targeted remediation and support.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Develop teachers' skills in using data to inform lesson planning to ensure instruction addresses the needs of all students.
- Establish the RTI process to include all teachers in addressing the needs of students, both within general education classrooms as well as in special education and intervention settings.
- Establish goal setting procedures for students to better engage them in the learning process.

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.

Overall Finding: Instructional rigor and engagement are inconsistent and do not lead to multiple points of access for all students.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Evidence from planning documentation and lesson observations indicated that teachers did not consistently challenge students to develop higher order thinking skills. In some classes, especially those where teachers relied on the state modules, observers found a deeper level of questioning and thinking. On the other hand, while teachers used higher order questions from the modules, they struggled to come up with rigorous follow-up questions. Teachers frequently asked basic recall or descriptive questions and missed opportunities to ask higher order questions to develop conceptual understanding. Some teachers did not provide adequate wait time and had a tendency to answer their own questions rather than let students grapple with them.
- The learning activities observed in many classrooms were not always rigorous. In classes using the modules, students were often asked to cite evidence from text and use it to explain their answers or explain the process they used to solve a problem. However, in other classes, students were observed copying information, filling in charts or solving problems procedurally without opportunities to synthesize, evaluate, or predict.
- Evidence of data-driven and differentiated instruction within general education classes was limited. In most observed classes students worked on the same tasks with the same resources. Many teachers used whole-class instruction; grouping was typically employed for cooperative learning purposes rather than targeted instruction. In addition, in a number of classes where multiple adults were present, the co-teaching technique was often lead and assist or lead and monitor, which did

not maximize learning opportunities for students.

Impact Statement:

Instructional practices do not produce uniformly high levels of student engagement and achievement.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Use a range of PD opportunities such as PLCs, video-taping, and/or peer observation, to develop clear understanding and consensus regarding the definition of rigor and engagement and provide ongoing observation and feedback to help teachers continuously develop their pedagogical skills.
- Increase the use of effective questioning techniques to develop higher order thinking skills.
- Ensure that students at all levels, including advanced students, have access to appropriately challenging materials and tasks.

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

Overall Finding:

The school is developing a program and expectations for school culture and student behavior but dignified enforcement is inconsistent.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- One of the school's major priorities is creating an environment that is conducive to learning. This theme was consistently reflected in the school's SCEP and self-evaluation and in interviews with the school leader, teachers, students and parents. In the past misbehavior was identified as a serious impediment to teaching and learning, and immediate steps were taken this year to remedy this problem. The school leader has designated her AP as the point person on discipline; the referral system has been revised and expectations raised for behaviors that should be addressed by teachers in their classroom. Parents also said that expectations were clearer this year and that teachers implemented behavior plans that were more effective. Although there is some evidence of a decline in referrals and teachers and staff noted an improved environment for learning this year, there is still a school-wide recognition that more needs to be done to ensure that good behavior is the norm across the school, including the provision of consistently engaging instruction.
- Despite these changes for the better, the school is not always intellectually and physically safe for students. Parents noted that bullying is a problem and that children do get picked on for being smart and were frustrated by group punishments for individual student's misbehavior. Parents also felt that consequences for similar infractions were not consistent, citing who was and was not allowed to go on field trips. As a result, one parent said her child will not ask questions or speak up in class and as a result gets poor marks for participation on his report card. Students reiterated some of these concerns, including fear of judgment or bullying if they spoke up in class, and said

some teachers do not notice mistreatment or do anything about it. In addition, the school has experienced some limited but serious incidents, including a “fight club” in the bathrooms that resulted in multiple suspensions.

- The effectiveness of classroom management and discipline practices varies across classrooms. In some classes students were uniformly on task and engaged in learning activities. In others, students were allowed to disengage without notice or consequences. The school leadership notes that referrals out of the classroom for behavior problems have decreased, but classroom management skills are still inconsistent. Furthermore, teachers were not always attentive to students’ needs. In one content area class a student said, “I am confused, I don’t understand” and the teacher responded “Yes you do, put your hand down.” Data indicate that study halls are a major source of behavior problems and student views on study hall were mixed. Some felt it was a useful opportunity to complete their homework and that they were able to go to other teachers for help. Others said students are not productive and fool around in study hall periods, which some students have twice a day.

Impact Statement:

The learning environment is not always intellectually and physically safe for students, which prevents optimal learning.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Instill a school-wide understanding of intellectual safety, continue to develop character education programs and practices, and train teachers to foster classroom atmospheres and use behavior management techniques that support student learning.

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

Overall Finding:

Teachers are in the process of beginning to use summative and formative assessments that inform instructional decision making.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- There is some use of data by teachers to inform instruction, such as grouping students and identifying at-risk students for interventions. However, interviewed staff acknowledged that the school is just beginning to establish a systematic approach to the use of data. The school’s SCEP has as a goal “Implement data-driven inquiry process to drive instruction” with related activities for this year including the establishment of “a building-wide RTI team” and training teachers to use “a data inquiry system to drive decisions.” The school leader and an outside data specialist modeled DDI process during PLC meetings that focus on data analysis and used to inform instructional strategies and interventions. With this training and support grade teams have reviewed benchmark assessment results, but they not have yet progressed to using the data for coordinated action

planning to inform curriculum and lesson development. In addition, the school does not currently have protocols in place to analyze data to address the needs of academically advanced students, especially in grades five and six where no advanced classes are offered.

- Similarly, the district is in the process of developing its RTI process. The school’s RTI team, which includes intervention teachers and student support staff, has begun to use academic data to identify the most at-risk students in the school. Teachers do not have a clear understanding of their role in providing Tier I interventions through effective classroom instruction, and the school is exploring ways to increase teacher involvement in the RTI process and make better use of study hall time to provide targeted support.
- The school does not systematically use feedback to foster student ownership of learning. Students reported that they receive some information about performance levels and grades, but not always in a way that helps them understand what they need to do to improve. Some teachers do use strategies to encourage student self-reflection. For example, one teacher said to her students “It is awesome that you are using the checklist so I don’t have to remind you.” However, many other students noted a lack of useful feedback from some teachers that would help them know why they received a particular score/grade and what they need to do to raise it.

Impact Statement:

The use of data driven instruction and the RTI process, particularly general education teachers, is limited, which hinders the improvement of student achievement.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Continue to develop teachers’ skills in using data to not only identify at-risk students but to inform instructional planning and practices for all students.
- Review assessments to ensure alignment to curriculum, standards and state tests.
- Focus more attention on using RTI to implement Tier I strategies in general instruction and ensure Tier II and III interventions are aligned with general instruction.
- Provide useful feedback for students as well as opportunities for them to use self-assessment and reflection strategies to take ownership of their learning and growth.

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
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Debriefing Statement: The school community has systems in place for identifying and providing supports for its most “at-risk” students, both academically and social-emotionally; however, not all stakeholders are effectively engaged in meeting the needs of students. The school community has begun to implement some new school-wide practices, such as a character education program, which is showing some positive impact;

however not all teachers are implementing it with fidelity. While most school constituents believe the school is a safer place than in the past, some students do not feel intellectually safe and some incidents of physical violence remain. Because some of the systems for identifying, promoting and supporting social and emotional development are in the early stage of implementation, and/or lack a fully developed monitoring process to determine effectiveness, the school environment, while better than in the recent past, is not optimally conducive to learning for all constituents.

Areas for Improvement:

5.2 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader establishes overarching systems and understandings of how to support and sustain student social and emotional developmental health and academic success.

Overall Finding:

The school leader is beginning to establish and enhance systems that identify social-emotional needs and involve all members of the school community in developing solutions and providing appropriate supports.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school is working to ensure that all students feel connected to an adult in the building. The school leader is working with staff to develop an effective system of referral and support but the school has yet to establish a fully developed system to ensure that the needs of all students are met. Currently a system is in place whereby the Pupil Support Team (PST), which is comprised of the school leader and student support staff, including the counselor and psychologists, identifies students at risk of failure based on review of referral, attendance, behavior, discipline and academic data and develops a plan to address the student's needs. The PST then coordinates internal and external interventions for these students. The PST also employs Check and Connect, a strategy that pairs an at-risk student with an adult in the building who has a rapport with that student and with whom the student must check in daily so the adult can closely monitor and support him or her to increase student success. However, while this system addresses the needs of the most at-risk students, it does not bring all stakeholders to the table to meet the needs of all students and this means that there is not equitable provision made for all students.
- Teachers are not usually invited to PST meetings and teachers felt excluded from its deliberations, though student support staff indicated that they try to communicate their plans for students to teachers to the extent allowed by confidentiality constraints. In addition, the PST has attempted to be more transparent this year by visiting every homeroom to explain its role and is moving to have students participate more often. PST members also attend grade team meetings to gather information about students and discern what teachers are doing to support students. Nevertheless, the PST has limited capacity and is therefore focused on the most at-risk students who often require targeted interventions outside the classroom or even the school.

Impact Statement:

The school is meeting the acute needs of some students, but has not fully addressed barriers to social and emotional and academic success for all students.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Develop a comprehensive approach to social emotional development by building staff understanding of the connection between social emotional development and academic success as well as their role in meeting those needs.
- Foster opportunities for teachers and staff to develop relationships with students and families and assist in the social emotional development of their students.

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

Overall Finding:

The school is developing its approach to addressing social emotional development, but the school climate is not always conducive to learning.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Improving the school environment has been a major priority at the school, as evidenced by the school's SCEP, self-assessment and staff meeting agendas and minutes but some issues still remain. The school leaders have revised the discipline system to make it more consistent and effective and students and teachers reported that administrators are more visible this year but behavioral incidents are still evident. The school has initiated a character education committee, which includes teachers and student support staff, and is actively developing and implementing strategies to improve the school culture and address social emotional needs. This committee identifies a monthly character trait and develops related school-wide activities, including morning announcements, word of the day and fundraising competitions for local causes. While these activities are producing some positive results, such as reduction of referrals, a lack of a coordinated overarching program to promote the teaching of student social and emotional developmental health prevents the needs of all students being consistently met. Each class nominates a student of the month, and recognition events are held throughout the year.
- There has been some PD for teachers and staff focused on social emotional development. For example, grade seven and eight teachers reported that the school counselor gave a presentation on the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) and provided them with materials. However, while there has been some minimal training and discussions around classroom management and setting behavioral expectations, the bulk of the school's staff development plan is devoted to curriculum and instruction. As noted, the school is planning to establish an IST as a forum for discussing students' social emotional needs, but at the time of the evaluation visit teachers were not systematically involved in this aspect of student development. The school leader recognizes the need for training and support to involve teachers in this new system.

Impact Statement:

With more consistent behavior expectations and positive approaches the school is improving the learning environment, but without buy-in and involvement from all stakeholders it has not established a school culture that is fully conducive to learning.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Continue to implement programs and activities informed by positive behavior strategies and embed these in an overarching program that teaches and better supports the social and emotional well-being of all students.
- Provide training and support for staff to equip them with the skills and behaviors to identify and meet the social and emotional developmental health of students.

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.

Overall Finding:

Stakeholder participation in social emotional development is inconsistent and helping teachers to enhance their capacity in this area has not been a professional development priority.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Students, parents, teachers and staff all recognize an improvement in school culture, though some students have felt the emphasis on rules and discipline outweighs the activities designed to promote positive behavior. However, the school culture is not yet fully conducive to learning. Students and parents reported bullying remains a problem that affects learning and there was some limited evidence of this within observed classrooms. For example, in an Academic Intervention Services (AIS) class when the teacher went over a problem and asked "are you with me?" a girl said of another girl in a mocking tone "she's not all there today," which appeared to shut down the latter girl's participation. During the review the school generally orderly and observed student interactions were respectful. Nevertheless, discussions with students and school leaders indicate that over time there have been some more serious behavioral incidents, which indicate that not all students recognize or accept the role that they need to play in making the school a safe place in which to learn or work.
- The character education committee has worked to involve teachers in planning and encourage them to further its objectives and the school leader has encouraged teacher participation. However, staff members report that teacher buy-in is inconsistent, that some teachers feel too busy and implementing Common Core with fidelity is a greater priority. Moreover, some teachers grasp the value of character education, while others expect parents to do it and see it as "not our job." The grade five and six teams have demonstrated more interest, while in grades seven and eight positive behavior strategies have been a "tough sell." The character education committee continues to

solicit teacher input and is doing what it can to minimize the burden on teachers by creating activities and materials for them.

Impact Statement:

While the school works closely with some key stakeholders to support student social and emotional development, limited teacher ownership in the current processes inhibits optimal coordination and effectiveness of strategies to address student needs.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Raise expectations for teacher responsibility for and involvement in activities that foster social emotional development, including character education programs and RTI/PST processes.
- Raise expectations and provide specific support and guidance for students to enable and empower them to play a more positive role in creating an environment that is conducive to safe and effective learning.
- Provide professional development that helps teachers and staff participate effectively in building the school culture and students' social emotional development.

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

Overall Finding:

The school is developing systems for monitoring and responding to student social emotional health so that their work with school stakeholders becomes more strategic.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school and district have invested heavily in PLCs to provide teachers with time and training to evaluate and use data. To date they have focused primarily on Common Core implementation and have not served as a forum for considering students' social emotional needs.
- The PST is the primary venue for addressing social emotional issues. However, while the RTI team is beginning to focus on using data to respond to students' academic needs, the school leader recognizes that the PST process and outcomes "seem mysterious" to teachers and an alternative system is needed to more effectively involve teachers in addressing social emotional issues. She along with district and school support staff are exploring the creation of an instructional support team, akin to the evolving RTI team but for behavioral problems, in which teachers would participate more actively in making referrals, evaluating data, crafting strategies and implementing supports for more students. The school's SCEP includes the following activities: "Building leaders will create an instructional support team (IST) consisting of various school personnel (Psychologist, counselor, teacher, building leader)" and "The IST will review students with persistent behavioral issues and explore intervention strategies and alternative education opportunities" but at the time of the evaluation visit the school was still deliberating about the best way to structure and

implement this system.

Impact Statement:

While the school leader and the support staff use data to address the academic and social emotional needs of some students, the lack of systems and structures that involve all stakeholders, particularly teachers, limits students' opportunities for academic and social success.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Expand the collection of data regarding social emotional development and health.
- Create and enhance systems for identifying needs, crafting solutions and progress monitoring to ensure students have adequate support and opportunities to learn.

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

Debriefing Statement: The school does communicate and share data with families, but has not established a strong culture of partnership where families, school staff and other community members share responsibility for students' academic, social and emotional growth. The school provides access to a notable array of internal resources and community partners that provide valuable services for some students and their families. However, parent involvement in the school is limited and teachers and staff are in the process of developing their skills in and strategies for effectively engaging parents in support of student achievement. As a result, home-school connections do not contribute to improving student performance at an accelerated or fast enough rate.

Areas for Improvement:

6.2 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader ensures that regular communication with students and families fosters their high expectations for student academic achievement

Overall Finding:

The school leader is beginning to develop relationships with students and families to foster their high expectations for student academic achievement.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school's new leader has undertaken a number of activities to communicate with students and parents and articulate her vision and expectations. However, she recognizes that communication is an issue and is devising a plan to address shortcomings. Despite her efforts, that have included the sending of introductory letters to families about academic expectations, a "road show" for staff about student achievement and opportunities for parents to learn more about CCLS, there is not yet a shared awareness and understanding of the extent of the school's commitment to raising student

achievement and the role that all stakeholders need to play to bring this commitment to life. This is reflected in the low level of parental involvement in the school and the school leader has just started to evaluate the strategies currently utilized to build strong relationships between home and school.

- School leaders have raised expectations for teacher contact with parents. Teachers are expected to reach out to parents for both academic and behavioral issues and maintain logs of their communication. Recognizing that teachers were very busy, “especially with the new curriculum,” interviewed parents were generally positive about the communication from their child’s teachers. They pointed to regular updates with schedules and calendars being sent home, and noted that a new teacher had held his own open house to meet with parents. However, contact between teachers and parents is variable between classes and engaging parents is proving more difficult for some teachers than others.
- The school leader and parents said that communication has improved this year. However, one constraint to communicating clear expectations to students and families is the district’s strategic planning process, which at the time of the evaluation visit was still underway. Consequently the school is waiting to finalize its mission and vision and set goals. As a result, the school does not have a concrete mission to share with families and the family handbook was described as a “work in progress” while the district and school revise policies. Despite increased communication, school staff and parents both stated that overall parent involvement in the school remains low. Interviewed parents attributed this to parents feeling disconnected from the school, thinking it was not their job to get involved, not knowing how to get involved, or not making it a priority.

Impact Statement:

The relationship between families and the school does not support meeting student needs and achieving academic success at a level necessary for students to become college and career ready.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Establish and strategically communicate a clear mission, vision, values and goals to parents.
- Continue to enhance communication strategies to reach all parents and make information accessible to them.

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

Overall Finding:

The school has multiple opportunities for reciprocal communication with families, but has not successfully engaged many families in productive dialogue to improve student learning.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school holds social and academic events and disseminates information to parents, but has

struggled to engage families in deeper conversations about the status and direction of the school. The school's SCEP identifies "Increased family and community engagement" as a need but the Home and School organization has only a handful of regular active members who, though very dedicated to the school, are frustrated by the low level of parent involvement. While parent representatives are involved in the district's strategic planning process and the school's BLT, interviewed parents were not aware of these initiatives or the school's SCEP or the school-based mental health provider. Parents also noted a dearth of volunteer opportunities at the school and some felt rebuffed when they tried to get involved, such as offering to chaperone field trips.

- The school is currently evaluating its procedures for communication with the parents and families for whom English is not their first language. In her short time at the school, the school leader, has not found this to be an issue but recognizes that a more analytical and detailed evaluation is needed to ensure equitable communication strategies for all families.

Impact Statement:

Families are provided with limited opportunities to support their children's academic achievement and social and emotional growth. As a result, parents are unable to form reciprocal relationships with staff to help their children identify their needs, assist them with their studies, promote their learning skills and ensure their academic success.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Develop more effective opportunities to engage parents in the life of the school and their child, such as volunteering, chaperoning, and parent organizations and meetings.
- Ensure that channels of communication are equitable for all families, including those whose first language may not be English.

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

Overall Finding:

The school leaders have established some effective community partnerships to promote and provide academic and social and emotional support; however training for staff and parents to help the students succeed is limited.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school community benefits from positive partnerships with community agencies and organizations. These include a social worker and social worker intern placed at the school by Oswego Hospital Children and Family Services. In addition, the PST has connections to a number of other community resources to which they can refer students and their families for assistance with health issues, including counseling and substance abuse as well as the mentors for at-risk students mentioned above. Nevertheless, discussions with support staff indicate that these partnerships

have limited capacity to address the needs of all students in the school.

- School leaders and support staff indicated that an area for growth for the school is improving strategies and techniques used by teachers and staff to effectively communicate with parents and engage them in their child's education. The school leader has been modeling strategies for her office staff and teachers to use in their contact with parents and expects teachers to reach out to parents; as a result she reported that parent participation in conferences has increased. On the other hand, some staff felt that after a few conversations with parents, the parents then avoided answering the phone.
- The school provides limiting training opportunities to parents to learn how to support their children. When asked, parents recollected only some training on how to use Progress Book in the past and noted the value of curriculum nights, which the school has used to inform parents about Common Core implementation. In addition, the PST works with some families to access services in community organizations and the onsite mental health program provides some opportunities for family therapy.

Impact Statement:

Students do not benefit from a robust and focused home-school connection that supports their achievement.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Continue and expand partnerships with organizations that help parents support students.
- Provide parents with more engaging opportunities to learn how to help their child learn and grow.
- Ensure that all staff is equipped with the skills to enable them to build effective relationships with parents.

6.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* 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.

Overall Finding:

The school is developing systems and strategies for sharing data and information that allows community stakeholders to effectively address the needs of students.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school leaders use varying strategies to communicate student progress. Previously report cards and progress reports were sent home by the students. This practice shifted to e-mailing the reports which increases the likelihood parents would receive the reports. In addition, school leaders and staff conduct parent-teacher conferences in order to improve communication between parents and teachers. There are plans to enhance teachers' skills in engaging parents in productive dialogue about their children's progress and achievement. The school leader indicated an increase in conference attendance, but also felt more could be done to make these and other home-school

connections more effective. The school leaders and staff reach out to parents of at-risk students but a review of correspondence indicated that the wording of language was not readily understood by parents. They were replete with jargon and poorly designed, and did not identify specific needs of the students and suggestions for parents to help their children improve.

- The school's online tool for sharing student data with parents, Progress Book, has not been reliable and as a result teachers are not expected to use it with fidelity. The district is evaluating this system and considering alternatives to ensure parents have access to timely information.

Impact Statement:

As a result of current school practices, stakeholders are not able to effectively address student needs and raise student achievement.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Ensure that the school has a reliable system for collecting and disseminating data and hold teachers accountable for updating it in a timely fashion and for helping parents understand what the data is telling them.