



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	151102040002
School Name	Lake Placid Elementary School
School Address	318 Old Military Road, Lake Placid, New York
District Name	Lake Placid Central School District
School Leader	Mr. Brian Latella
Dates of Review	April 8-9, 2014
School Accountability Status	Focus School
Type of Review	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet											
Grade Configuration	K-5		Total Enrollment	291		Title 1 Population	38%		Attendance Rate	94.3%	
Free Lunch	28 %	Reduced Lunch	9 %	Student Sustainability	96%		Limited English Proficient	0		Students with Disabilities	0
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes											
#Transitional Bilingual	0		#Dual Language	0		#Self-Contained English as a Second Language			0		
Types and Number of Special Education Classes											
#Special Classes	8		#Consultant Teachers	8		#Integrated Collaborative Teaching			0		
# Resource Room	2										
Types and Number Special Classes											
#Visual Arts		#Music		#Drama		# Foreign Language		# Dance		CTE	#
Racial/Ethnic Origin											
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	Black or African American	0	Hispanic or Latino	0	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1%	White	96 %	Multi-racial	3%
Personnel											
Years Principal Assigned to School	1		# of Assistant Principals	0		# of Deans	0		# of Counselors / Social Workers	1	
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0		% Teaching Out of Certification	0		% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.	1		Average Teacher Absences	5.7/day	
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
School in Good Standing		Priority School		Focus District	X	Focus School Identified by a Focus District	X	SIG Recipient	X		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	28.9 %	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	31.6 %	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	98.4 %	4 Year Graduation Rate (HS Only)					
Credit Accumulation (High School Only)											
% 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		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										
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics											
	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										
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										
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective											
	Limited English Proficiency										

Describe the school's top priorities (no more than 5) based on the school's comprehensive plans (SCEP, SIG, DIP, etc.):

- 1) Create a collaborative peer/peer environment
- 2) Align instructional practices to CCLS
- 3) Strengthen support/continuum for students with disabilities.

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.

Mark an "X" in the box below the appropriate designation for each Statement of Practice. Provide the letter rating in the OVERALL RATING row as the final overall tenet rating.

#	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 enrichment opportunities.			X	
3.5	Teachers implement a comprehensive system for using formative and summative assessments for strategic short and long-range curriculum planning that involves student reflection, tracking of, and ownership of learning.			X	
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 health supports tied to the school's vision.		X		
5.5	The school leader and student support staff work together with teachers to establish structures to support the use of data to respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs.		X		
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:			E		

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
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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:			E		

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.	Tenet Rating	D
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Debriefing Statement: The school’s goals, as written in the SCEP (School Comprehensive Educational Plan), were developed by the school leadership with no input from other school stakeholders. Additionally, the majority of school stakeholders are unaware of the SCEP or its importance. While the school leader uses resources available to promote student achievement, and provides useful feedback to teachers to improve their practice, he lacks monitoring systems to ensure program and teacher effectiveness. As a result, the school leader’s understanding of the school’s progress is incomplete, impacting his ability to promote positively and consistently best practices in all areas.

Strengths:

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.

Overall Finding:

The school leader makes decisions which contribute to the school’s ability to provide social, emotional and academic supports to its students.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school leader has created a new block schedule for the 2013-2014 school year which allows all teachers to have the same schedules in the building. In past years, the schedules were staggered, creating uneven times where teachers were teaching or had their preparation periods. As a result of this change, the school’s Response to Intervention (RTI) blocks were modified, allowing for more staff to provide intervention services with a smaller staff to student ratio. This permits the school to allow for more differentiated instruction, based on individual student need.
- The school leader ensured that teacher assistants were trained in Leveled Literacy Intervention kits and skilled to work with Tier two students during RTI time. By allowing these staff members to teach during this block, it ensured that more students were receiving instruction based on their individual needs.
- As a result of the school’s restructuring of its block scheduling and RTI program, the school’s special education and reading teachers are working with Tier three students (those most in need of additional instructional support) to boost their progress and achievement. By having teachers who are specifically trained in providing specialized interventions to provide these services, it ensures that the school’s human capital is allocated where it best fits the need.
- The school leader supported the use of the School Improvement Grant (SIG) to purchase the Lucy Caulkins’ Writing and the Envision Math programs, as well as corresponding professional development (PD) in which to support it. He did this in order to provide a program which is in alignment with the

CCLS in the school's two core areas. The Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) noted, during classroom visitations, that the staff is implementing these two programs with fidelity.

Impact Statement:

The school leader's use of available resources allows the school to provide support to students who are in most need of additional academic services.

Areas for Improvement:

2.2 **The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* 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 Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP) was developed with a limited number of stakeholders and includes goals which are not Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART), nor are they aware to many in the school community.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The SCEP was developed by the school leader, school psychologist and reading specialist with no feedback gained by others in the school community. During interviews with various stakeholder groups, the IIT found that none could speak to the content of the SCEP and did not demonstrate an understanding of how their activities worked in conjunction with its goals or prescribed activities. The school staff and stakeholder groups were unable to articulate specific aspects of the SCEP or specific goals and time frames in it or how it specifically drives the school's improvement efforts.
- The school's goals are unspecific and have vague timelines and benchmarks making it difficult to ascertain progress towards or completion of its many goals. An example is, "Create a collaborative peer-to-peer environment: Through weekly grade level team meetings, as well as monthly faculty and English Language Arts (ELA)/mathematics team meetings, create collaboration both through and across grade levels". These activities are not SMART goals, with no reference to the measurable impact it will have on student achievement.
- While parents interviewed by the IIT spoke about what they see in the school and what they believe the school values to be, they could not articulate the school's actual stated mission or vision. Parents interviewed stated the vision as, "...to create a student-centered atmosphere" and "...where the community feels engaged." One parent said, "Everyone knows the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) slogan, 'Be safe, be respectful, be responsible.'" Another parent expressed that the school shows its values through its actions.

Impact Statement:

The lack of stakeholder input in the development and implementation of the SCEP minimizes both its value and shared understanding of what guides the school's decision-making process.

Recommendation:

- Create a team of school stakeholders that will develop the SCEP for 2014-2015. Ensure that the SCEP includes a shared vision for the school's expectations, aspirations and mission; decide how to share and discuss the SCEP with all stakeholder groups to inform them of its contents, how it impacts the school's decision-making process and their roles and responsibilities in its implementation; use SMART goals to measure the progress towards reaching the prescribed goals and adjust actions if progress slows.

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:

While the district's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) is followed and complies with the State, there is a lack of strategic tracking of follow-up to ensure that the feedback promotes a positive change in instructional practice.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Teachers reported they have access to the district-wide electronic My Learning Plan/OASYS software which the district subscribes to. They reported that it includes their teacher evaluation scores from the previous year, all PD attended, pre-conference notes, post conference reflection questions, and additional evidence from the principal. They also use the site to sign up for PD. It was not clear if teachers' learning plans in this system are monitored to ensure teachers receive PD in areas identified by school leaders for needed improvement.
- Though the evidence of improved teacher effectiveness based on data is limited, teachers interviewed stated that the school leader provides feedback through the Annual Professional Performance Report (APPR) process as well as through informal walk-throughs. All teachers interviewed by the IIT agreed that the feedback provided by the school leader is useful and timely. While teachers indicated that the school leader also follows up with them to see if they are heeding previous suggestions, the school leader acknowledged that his follow up is informal, primarily based on his recollection, and is not systematically tracked.
- The school leader provides time for each grade level to meet to discuss pedagogy, though there is no set of specific expectations for outcomes to these meetings. The school leader indicated, however, that there is the expectation that teachers discuss the implementation of the writing and mathematics programs. While the school leader reported that he attends these meetings every other week, he indicated that he does not always receive minutes or notes from the meetings, so there is no proof that the use of this meeting time is always being maximized.

Impact Statement:

Though the school leader provides feedback and follow-up to staff, the lack of a system to track improvement in teacher practices, and the lack of protocols to ensure constructive teacher collaboration, limits the school leader's ability to hold his staff accountable in all areas.

Recommendation:

- The school leader should develop a system for tracking whether the feedback provided following formal and informal observations is being implemented when he follows up with teachers; the school leader should provide a template to be followed for every grade-level team meeting to ensure that specific areas of the school's programs are being discussed, and documented, at each team meeting.

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 S CEP (student achievement, curriculum and teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health).

Overall Finding:

The school leader is beginning to use data to evaluate the various systems, programs or protocols that are operating throughout the school, but data systems are not fully functional in all areas.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The grade level teams meet regularly, though there is no standardized template which they use to guide their meetings and no set of expectations on what they should be accomplishing through these meetings. While the school leader reported he is unable to attend all grade level team meetings, he is able to attend meetings every other week. He also indicated that notes are usually, but not always provided to him so he is not informed as fully as he could be.
- The school leader was unable to say whether the two recently adopted programs, Lucy Caulkins's Units of Study and Envision, for ELA and mathematics respectively, have had a desired impact on student learning and achievement. The school leader stated that based on his classroom visits and conversations with teachers, both programs are being used with fidelity. He also reported that he has observed increased student engagement as a result of their adoption.
- The school leader reported that the school uses three main assessments, Aims Web, Fountas and Pinnell, and Star. He indicated that while teachers are not yet consistently modifying instruction, he has noted that grade one and grade four teams are using data to drive their instruction more consistently than some other grade level teams.
- The school leader reported that they use a screening tool for students in grades kindergarten through grade three to identify students who would benefit from the Primary Project, a play therapy program for shy or withdrawn students to help them adjust to the school environment. Student support services staff reported that they are certified in the program and give workshops, as they are a model school. They also indicated their data shows that the program is effective. The school leader reported that all teachers have been trained in PBIS. He added that they have seen a 50% decrease in office discipline referrals (ODRs) this year as compared to the previous school year at the same time.

Impact Statement:

While the school leader is developing an understanding of evaluative systems to monitor school and program

effectiveness, the lack of systems in some areas limits his ability to determine if those programs are benefitting the school's stakeholders in the way in which they were intended.

Recommendation:

- The school leader should set up a data dashboard in which all critical school-wide data is posted and updated regularly so he is able to both speak to and make decisions based on this data.

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: Data-driven Instruction (DDI) is not apparent in most classrooms, and staff are still developing curriculum alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Interdisciplinary curriculum planning, while happening sporadically, is not part of an overall plan or process, and is not always inclusive of the enrichment area teachers. The school leader has provided staff with programs and PD related to the CCLS, though the use of assessments and processes to modify curriculum and instruction based on data is not being done systematically, which limits the supports and extensions for all groups of learners to promote student achievement.

Strengths:

All ratings for this Tenet are **Developing** or **Ineffective** and therefore, comments are listed under **Areas for Improvement**.

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 CCLS that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.

Overall Finding:

While the school does not have a CCLS aligned curriculum in all subject areas, it is implementing with fidelity two programs for writing and mathematics that support the CCLS; this is promoting a more rigorous and coherent curricula in those areas, with other content areas still lacking in development.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school leader conceded that, "This building has not unpacked the CCLS in a systematic way." He also stated that differentiated instruction is not happening on regular basis. The school leader reported that staff is using prescribed programs for writing and mathematics that support the CCLS. However, he also indicated that the staff uses a basal reader for literacy and textbooks drive instruction for other subjects. In addition, he stated that there are different practices in different grade levels.
- Several members of the vertical team group reported in interviews with the IIT, that they attended a 30 hour PD the previous summer where they learned about the CCLS and where to apply them to their own practice. They indicated that they have been working on curriculum mapping. They

added that they aligned some of the writing program and a couple of science and social studies units, and that alignment of the mathematics program was completed.

- Though the school stakeholders acknowledged that the adopted writing and mathematics programs are not a curriculum, they believe that they support the CCLS, and their use has strengthened the school's academic program as a result. The IIT noted that a majority of lessons reviewed were CCLS aligned.

Impact Statement:

The lack of a CCLS aligned curriculum across all subjects limits the school's ability to adapt its content and practice based on its own students' needs.

Recommendation:

- The school should begin unpacking the CCLS to expand their curriculum work beyond mathematics and writing; school leaders should monitor the impact on student learning and achievement.

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:

Teachers do not use student performance data consistently or systematically to modify the curriculum or instructional practices.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- There is inconsistent use of DDI except for the RTI identification process. Staff reported in interviews that teams of teachers meet with the reading coordinator to discuss academic data for the RTI referral process. While some grade level teams are beginning to use data to inform curricular or instructional decisions in core classes, this is not standard practice for all teams. The school leader stated that there is the expectation that teachers should be using the Star data, but he does not believe that it is always being used in all classes. He also reported that there is no follow up to ensure that data is being used in classrooms to drive instruction
- The lesson plans reviewed had limited and vague examples of modifications such as, "The teacher confers with students who need extra support," and, "Students will be placed with a partner who will maximize learning for both."
- Other lesson plans reviewed were not reflective of regular use of formative and summative assessments. Plans often stated that formative assessments will be used, but they were not explicit about why or how the information from the assessment will be used. In the grade-level team meeting observed by the review team, teachers did not discuss data driven instruction or assessments. Conversely, in the vertical teacher interview, a teacher described how she uses the Fountas and Pinnell assessment to provide guided reading material to her students through her leveled library. A further evaluation of lesson and unit planning indicated some use of higher-order questioning, rubrics and complex learning materials, but this practice was not consistent.

Impact Statement:

The lack of a systematic approach to DDI that is fully aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards limits the school's ability to modify curriculum or instruction so that all students are able to meet the demands of the CCLS.

Recommendation:

- Provide training to teachers on how to use student formative and summative performance data to determine appropriate resources and strategies necessary to engage all learners at their level; ensure that planning includes references and planned implementation of the use of rubrics, higher order questioning and complex learning materials.

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:

The school does not have a plan or a systematic means to provide interdisciplinary units or enrichment activities, though there are pockets of thematic units taking place.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school leader stated that there is no formal plan to connect the curriculum across all subject areas and currently, there is no plan for interdisciplinary curriculum. In interviews, the school leader and some enrichment area teachers reported that enrichment area teachers try to connect to the homeroom teachers but are oftentimes unable to because of their schedules. The school leader stated that the school has PD days and other times set aside for enrichment area teachers and regular education teachers to meet, but they are not often or on a regular basis. This lack of regular communication between the homeroom and enrichment area teachers hinders the school's ability to connect interdisciplinary units on a consistent basis.
- Teachers reported that they have begun to develop units in social studies and science that incorporate the expectations of the newly adopted writing program. The review team observed multiple examples of lessons that connected interdisciplinary units. There were two science lessons encompassing literacy and writing; an ELA lesson using a non-fiction book on planting and sowing seeds and an ELA lesson focusing on the Underground Railroad. However, these lessons reflected the initiative of teachers rather than a formalized approach to integrated learning.
- There are thematic units taking place across classrooms, such as a Spanish/Latin theme in physical education, art, music and some homerooms when the Spanish culture is celebrated in multiple ways. In addition, there is a thematic unit on Egypt, about which various types of student work was showcased throughout the school.

Impact Statement:

The lack of school-wide implementation of interdisciplinary curricula limits opportunities for all students to

engage in thoughtful activities to promote their academic success.

Recommendation:

- Provide training for all teachers in the implementation of interdisciplinary lesson planning; create a regularly scheduled time for core and non-core teachers to plan interdisciplinary units and themes and monitor its effectiveness.

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:

Formative and summative assessments are used though their impact on curriculum and instruction is inconsistent.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- There is inconsistent use of summative and formative assessments to inform long range planning. The school leader reported that they use several interim assessments, including Star, Aimsweb, and Fountas and Pinnel. He reported that the reading specialist for the district meets with teachers at the beginning of the year to analyze data to create RTI groups and consults with teachers throughout the year. Teachers also use data to create flexible guided reading groups and leveled reading materials in ELA classes. Teachers indicated that they use data from the Fountas and Pinnel assessments, given three time a year, to determine if students move up or down in these groups.
- The use of formative assessments is used primarily as a means to determine if students understand content or instructions. The lesson plans reviewed by the IIT indicated the use of multiple assessments, though plans were not clear on how the results would impact curriculum or instruction. In contrast, mathematics teachers reported in interviews that they use both teacher generated formative assessments and formative assessments that are part of the Envisions Math program, as well as Star data that drives their curriculum for the following day. They reported use of a formative math sheet that was “like an exit ticket.”
- Discussions with students and lesson observations indicated that teachers do not consistently use the results of tests and assessments to provide feedback to students. In interviews with students, about half of the students reported that their teachers provide comments as well as grades on their work so they know how they could improve. In addition, some students said their teacher pulls them aside to talk to them about their report cards. Of those interviewed, only one student reported use of a rubric for writing assignments. Students are not always clear on what they need to work on to improve their achievement level.

Impact Statement:

The inconsistent use of formative and summative assessment data to inform teacher planning, as well as, the limited sharing of student progress data with students, impedes teachers’ ability to meet effectively students’ needs, and students’ ability to take full ownership of their learning.

Recommendation:

- Train the staff in the use of assessments to monitor student progress, and in the many different ways to modify curriculum and instruction as a result of the assessment data; ensure that teachers use data to make clear to students what they need to do to improve.

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 has taken steps to align their educational program to the CCLS through the adoption of two core programs, both of which promote student engagement and ownership of learning. The learning environment is inclusive and nurturing, promoting both a maximization of learning time as well as participation from all groups of learners. However, there is an absence of formative assessment protocol to promote re-teaching or the modification of curriculum and instruction based on student need, as well as the promotion of providing students with specific feedback to advance their skills and knowledge base on a systematic basis. This lack of a systemic approach to customized instruction results in not all groups of students being challenged on a regular basis.

Strengths:

4.4 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* 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:

A safe learning environment is apparent in all classrooms.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- In the large student focus group, all eight students stated that they feel safe at the school, and all stated that they are not afraid to ask questions or participate in class. All reviewers stated that the classrooms were intellectually safe and observed students confident to answer or ask questions, as the level of student engagement was extremely high in all classrooms visited. Additionally, reviewers stated that they did not observe any instance where negative classroom conduct impacted instruction or took away from instructional time. The review team also noted that the physical environment of each classroom is inviting, colorful, organized and clean. Many of the students interviewed stated that they feel like the school is, "a second home." This positive classroom culture creates an environment where students are free to be inquisitive. Students respond by readily sharing ideas, values and perspectives knowing adults and classmates alike will respect them.

Impact Statement:

The school promotes a classroom environment whereby students feel safe- both physically and intellectually.

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:

There is no systematic means in which teachers promote student learning goals to address the needs of all learners.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Some teachers interviewed by the IIT spoke about using data, such as Fountas and Pinnell, to determine reading levels and appropriate literacy materials. Mathematics teachers also indicated that they use formative assessment exit tickets to modify their instructional planning for the following day. However, it was not common practice for teachers to use formative assessments to create differentiated long- and short-term goals for students. As a result, not all teachers' plans are modified to address student goals and needs.
- In only 23 percent of the classes visited by the IIT were students observed as having learning goals based on grade-level benchmarks. During the interview with teachers, only two teachers, one enrichment area teacher and one core teacher were able to speak to the creation of student learning objectives to plan their instruction. One teacher spoke of "lowering the bar" when creating lesson plans for lower level learners, rather than adapting the curriculum or instructional strategies to meet the needs of all learners.

Impact Statement:

The lack of learning objectives and corresponding plans for all learners negatively impacts the ability of the school to meet the needs of all students.

Recommendation:

- Provide staff with PD related to creating specific learning objectives which will meet the needs of the school's diverse learners; ensure that students are set challenging and achievable long and short term goals.

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:

The majority of lessons viewed by the review team were CCLS aligned, though not always differentiated in order to meet the needs of all learners.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- In 58 percent of lessons viewed by the review team, the objective was aligned to the CCLS and the majority of lessons viewed contained multiple elements that support the CCLS. Scaffolding was noted in 59 percent of the lessons; the citation of textual evidence was observed in 90 percent of

lessons related to ELA, and academic vocabulary was covered in the first part of lessons in 13 out of 15 classes.

- However, higher-level questions were noted in less than half of the classes which the review team visited (44 percent). Though the use of formative assessments was observed in approximately three quarters of the classrooms visited, it was typically done in a manner which was lower level, garnering information about which students knew certain pieces of information, and not used to drive instructional or curricular modifications.
- Student engagement was consistently observed, with the review team noting that in all classrooms visited (27); students were engaged and motivated to do well. Although the adopted writing and mathematics programs support the CCLS, there is a dependence on teaching it as prescribed, without modifications, regardless of their student ability levels. As a result, differentiation does not happen on a regular basis, which limits the school's ability to teach each child at their own level.

Impact Statement:

The school's use of two academic programs has helped align many of its practices to the CCLS, though there is a lack of adaptability to challenge all types of learners at the appropriate access point.

Recommendation:

- Ensure that the curriculum and instruction is always adapted to the needs of all students and that questioning is both challenging and accessible to promote thinking and 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:

The school does not have a systematic means to ensure that summative and formative assessments are used to drive the creation or modification of lessons to meet the needs of all learners.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- In lesson plans reviewed, there was no rationale provided as to why certain students were grouped together. The use of modifications based on formative or summative assessments was also absent. During the classes visited by the review team, 74 percent contained elements of cooperative learning, though it was not evident that these groupings were the result of formal or informal assessment data.
- The review team observed that the use of formative assessments in the vast majority of classrooms consisted of checking student work (74 percent) or checking for understanding (86 percent) by whole group questioning or using techniques such having students give a thumbs up or down to indicate understanding. However, rarely did the review team note that this feedback was used by the teacher to have the students become deeply engaged in their own work or to re-teach the materials in a different manner to reach all learners at their levels. Most of the time, the teachers used these assessments as a checklist to note the students' understanding of various parts of the

lesson. While the school does use multiple and regular assessments in which to identify students who may be in need of additional supports through their Response to Intervention (RTI) program, and in some ELA classes to adjust guided reading groups, formative assessments are not consistently used as a means to change classroom practice to meet the needs of all learners.

- In the small student focus group, students shared some of their class work with the review team. Reviewers noted that the student work contained very few examples of specific written feedback that could be used to help a child understand what they needed to do to improve. Most students spoke of the teacher providing feedback orally. Additionally, reviewers noted that of the student work that was posted in 20 different areas throughout the school’s corridors, in only one of these areas did the student work include specific teacher comments tied to standards such as a rubric. Much of the teacher feedback on the remainder of the work posted included comments such as “good job” and the use of stars to denote good work.

Impact Statement:

The lack of adaptive lesson plans based on summative and formative assessments hinders the school’s ability to bridge the gap between what many students know and are able to do and what they need to know and be able to do to meet the CCLS requirements.

Recommendation:

- Provide PD on the application of formative and summative assessments to drive instructional and curricular planning and to meet the needs of all learners through a varied range of methods and supports; ensure that teachers provide quality feedback to students to help them improve their learning.

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

E

Debriefing Statement: The school is a safe place, with classrooms and common areas orderly and calm. There is a common understanding by the school’s stakeholders and embedded in the school’s culture in how to reinforce positive behavioral norms. School and community programs are understood by staff and families, and are set up for students who may need additional social, emotional and academic supports. Students’ emotional well-being is a priority for the school community, which enables students to learn in a positive school-wide setting.

Strengths:

5.2 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* or 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:

There are overarching systems and a common understanding of social and emotional support for students

among the school's stakeholders.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The student support team meets with staff regularly to discuss the social and emotional identification system, referral process and RTI processes. There are written protocols for these processes, as provided through both the document review by the review team and documentation provided by the SST members. Teachers interviewed supported this assertion by articulating clearly the aforementioned processes.
- The document review by the IIT found evidence of written roles and responsibilities for all adult school stakeholders in terms of providing a social, emotional and academic referral and support system. All students interviewed stated that they have an adult to go to in the school if they needed help and are confident that any concerns are handled appropriately.
- The school leader installed a "Red, Yellow, Green" coding system which allows students to know where they stand in terms of their behavior and to provide strategies on how they can regain control if they are misbehaving. Both staff and students were able to speak to this process, and it was also observed working positively in classroom visits by some members of the review team.
- The school uses a school-wide information system (SWIS) in which all student information is held. This system includes student discipline data, so that there is a centralized method of tracking school-wide and individual student behavior. As a result, school staff can identify students who exhibit frequent misbehavior for possible referral for support services and their parents can be notified.
- A 're-teach' system is in place if a child breaks the rules, whereby the student must recite and write what the rules are as per the PBIS posters in the school and what they will do differently in the future. A mantra stated by many groups of stakeholders is, "Be respectful, be responsible and be safe."

Impact Statement:

School community members know and support the school's systems related to students' social, emotional and academic well-being, allowing students to receive the necessary supports to promote their success.

5.3 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* 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 promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health which is uniformly shared, providing a safe and healthy place for students and families.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school has PBIS, in which expectations are made clear to all members of the school community and both rewards and consequences are consistently provided based on student behavior. Posters relating to this system were evident in each classroom, and both students and staff were able to speak to what the posters meant and how the expectations espoused in the poster were to be implemented. As a result, the school community had a "common language" in which to base their

behavioral expectations.

- Since the adoption of PBIS, office disciplinary referrals have gone down by 50 percent. Between September 2012 and March 2013, there were 362 referrals. During the same period in the 2013 to 2014 school year, there were 177. This decrease in negative student conduct allows students to learn and grow in a safe and healthy environment which maximizes their learning time.
- All of the parents interviewed stated that they believe that this school is safe for both their child and themselves. They cited the presence of administrators and teachers consistently visible in the school and on the grounds, and the positive climate they both see and hear about from their children as the basis for this belief.
- Effective procedures are in place to ensure that staff benefit from PD that helps them meet the social and emotional needs of students.

Impact Statement:

The school has created a culture and climate in which all stakeholders feel safe and secure. As a result, learning time and student well-being is maximized.

5.4 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* 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:

Staff and students have a common understanding of behavior expectations and take responsibility for ensuring good behavior supports students' social and emotional developmental health and learning aligned to the school's vision.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- In all 27 classrooms visited, the review team noted no incidents of negative student behavior which detracted from instruction. Additionally, members of the review team noted that each class visited was intellectually safe and noted no instances of students reluctant to ask a question in class or provide an answer to the teacher. Of the ten students interviewed in the large student focus group, eight stated that they feel safe to answer questions or raise questions if they are unsure of the answer. This allows students to gain understanding and be more engaged in the learning process.
- All ten students interviewed stated that they feel safe in their school and in their classroom. They all agreed that if there was a negative issue with a student, they had confidence that their teacher would handle it. This trust allows the teachers and students to maximize instructional time in class.
- All of the teachers interviewed noted that they feel very safe in the school, and that their students feel safe as well. Furthermore, they articulated their role in creating a safe and secure environment for the students. They also were knowledgeable and appreciative of the school referral process for students who may have social and emotional needs, and reported that the student support services

team provided training for them to address student needs on a regular and on-going basis.

- Student support services staff reported in interviews that students have been trained in a “self-referral” system in which they can seek help prior to an issue becoming a major problem. The student support services team tracks these referrals, and makes time to meet with the students who refer themselves. As a result, students are encouraged to be proactive in seeking help, knowing that they will not be punished or judged because they have taken a positive course of action.

Impact Statement:

As a result of the knowledge of all school stakeholders regarding the systems and supports available to students and staff, the school is a safe place where students have their academic, social and emotional needs met.

5.5 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* 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 uses data to establish systems which support students’ social and emotional developmental health needs.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Interviews with various stakeholders and a review of documents indicated that the school has a referral system which incorporates the use of data and other pieces of evidence to make decisions related to student social and emotional health. Some of the data used is available through the SWIS, as related to discipline, absentees, grades and diagnostic testing. Members of the school’s instructional support team review the data with the grade level teams and decide a course of intervention with the identified student. Throughout the intervention process, both the teacher and instructional support team member kept data on various aspects of the child’s experience at school. This allows the school to follow a systematic yet individualized approach to meet the needs of its students, through a specific behavioral intervention plan. Further interventions may result through a committee on special education (CSE) referral, which may lead to an individualized education plan, and greater supports for the child’s social and emotional needs.
- Interviews with the student support services staff and document review indicated that the school contracts with an organization to provide the “Primary Project”, which facilitates and trains staff in play therapy for students in grades kindergarten through three. Prior to beginning, a student must be identified as in need of tier two or three support using a behavioral rating scale as a screening instrument. The play therapy provides an opportunity for these students (25 in all) to receive this additional social and emotional support with certified counselors. As a result, disciplinary referrals are down for students in this program.
- In interviews with the IIT, school leaders and staff reported that the school uses an academic recovery program in which classroom data is used to determine if some students are “falling between the cracks” and not receiving appropriate RTI support as a result of their standardized test data. As a result, classroom observation data may lead to students receiving additional supports

necessary to help them succeed emotionally, socially and academically.

Impact Statement:

The school systematically uses data to ensure that all students receive appropriate social and emotional supports necessary to make a positive contribution to the school environment and to help them succeed emotionally, socially and academically.

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

E

Debriefing Statement: The school provides a welcoming environment, with multiple means for reciprocal communication with families. The school has also created community partnerships, of which most of their stakeholders are aware and from which many benefit. Student data, while shared with families, is not entirely understood by all as a means to advocate for the needs of their child. Additionally, while the home school connection is strong, the lack of shared high academic expectations is limiting families' ability to support their child in being college and career ready.

Strengths:

6.3 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* 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 established positive partnerships with parents through regular and effective reciprocal communication about students' learning and wellbeing. Parents feel very well informed and able to support their children's academic and personal growth.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- All groups of adult stakeholders articulated that the percentage of parents attending parent conferences is over 95 percent. All parents in the parent interviews stated that they attend these conferences and receive relevant information on their child's progress from the teacher. A staff member gave a detailed account of the extra effort made by one teacher to contact a parent that could not be contacted by phone or other means. That teacher went to a store in which a parent worked, and asked that parent to attend the parent conferences. Knowing that this parent did not typically attend these conferences, the teacher met with the student support team to ensure the conference would not "overwhelm" the parent.
- Every day, every child has a folder go from school to home and back, which contains homework assignments, progress updates, a reminder of upcoming events, and behavioral information. In the parent meeting, all seven parents stated that they receive this packet of information daily, and that they find it extremely helpful in keeping up with their child's progress. Parents also can send notes back to teachers through this communication, making it reciprocal. Parents stated that communications are translated into home languages. All parents interviewed agreed that if they

contact the school, they will receive a call back that same day. They believe that this shows that the school values them as partners in their child's education.

- The school leader has begun a weekly "Family Fridays" meeting with groups of parents, in which an open forum is provided to answer any questions that families may have about the school or their child. This serves a dual purpose as the school leader is new to the district this year, and this allows him to get to know the families on a more familiar basis.
- The mother of a special needs child detailed that when her child first began in this specialized program, she requested meetings with the student support team every five weeks, and also requested regular communication and updated data. She stated that this was provided and lasted until she was comfortable with less frequent meetings. She also reported that because of the staff's communication and cooperation, she felt "like a partner" in her child's support program. The school monitors and is open to improving its efforts to strengthen relationships with parents and families.

Impact Statement:

The school staff's availability and its mechanisms to provide reciprocal communication with families allow parents to be active participants and partners in their child's learning experience.

6.4 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* 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 proactively and strategically partners with community agencies to provide social and emotional supports and related training to its stakeholders. This is in addition to training for instructional and curricular planning.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- All parents interviewed agreed that they received an orientation package when the school year began. This orientation package included a list of community organizations and the supports they provide to students and families. Additionally, all parents reported that if they were unclear as to which organization to contact in a crisis, they would know whom to ask at the school. A document review and interview with the student support team confirmed that the list of community-based organizations, their services and their contact information is provided to parents. Parents stated that they received guidance on the CCLS, literacy and mathematics and their child's academic progress. These initiatives to keep parents informed are further enhanced by the open-door policy of the school where parents feel comfortable in approaching the school about tips and strategies they can use to support their child's learning. They stated that staff is always ready and willing to provide such help.
- Some members of the school community received training in suicide prevention through a local mental health agency. There were recently several suicide threats and attempts among some students in the district and some recent graduates who committed suicide. As a result, the school and district believed that it was their responsibility to address this crisis with trained professionals and make the community aware of the situation. They also trained staff in identifying students who may have suicidal ideation or the potential for suicidal tendencies.

- The school has ongoing plans in place to ensure that staff is trained in strategies to build and sustain quality and productive relationships with parents and families.

Impact Statement:

As a result of reciprocal communication and support from community-based partners, parents feel well informed about their child's social, emotional and academic needs and confident to support learning at home.

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.

Overall Finding:

The school shares a considerable amount of information with parents about their child's learning. The academic intervention system and instructional support team provide additional supports to students in need.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Three of the eight parents in the parent interview have children with special needs, and each lauded the school for how they share their child's data through the IST and CSE processes. Each of the parents stated that their child's teachers and support team took the time they needed to understand how their child was doing in school and how the data translated into additional support. They all stated that they felt like partners in the process, as they understood what the data meant and how it was used.
- The school holds a Title One parent night each year in which all parents are invited. The staff makes it a point to speak with all parents of children who will be receiving RTI at tiers two and three interventions (those needing the most assistance). The school's reading specialist also sits in on all conferences to review this data with the parents and answer any questions which they may have.
- The school provides daily communication with folders transferred between the classroom teachers and families each day. In these folders, the teachers note data in the form of completed homework assignments, attendance, and test and quiz scores. The parents interviewed stated that this is a very helpful means to ensure that they know how their child is doing in school.
- The school district also provides an online 'parent portal' in which parents may see real-time grades, attendance and assignments due. According to the school leader, the school shares some assessment data with parents that enable them to gain an understanding of how well their child is doing. The school has already recognized the need to provide further guidance to parents on interpreting the data so that their understanding of academic progress is further strengthened.

Impact Statement:

Parents are kept informed of their child's progress so that they can advocate for their success.

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 does not have an organized system of high expectations which drives the school's actions and communication to its stakeholders.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- In meetings with all groups of stakeholders, none stated that the mission of the school is to prepare the students for college or careers. They did mention teaching good citizenship, providing a safe, secure place to learn and to advocate for becoming good people. Additionally, none mentioned that the goal of the school is to challenge each child to their highest level of academic ability. The result is an inferred but not explicit declaration of high expectations for the school's students by its adult stakeholders.
- In the Parent Interview, parents stated that if their child is in need of additional resources, such as special education or remediation, they received a multitude of data and resources to help their child succeed. The school provided one parent of a struggling learner with leveled books and strategies on how to help their child at home. For parents of students who were doing well (above grade level), they noted an absence of both enrichment activities tied into academics as well as a lack of direction and specificity on what they can do at home to help their child become more successful. One of these parents said that when they asked a teacher about how they can help their child at home, they were told, "Do more mathematics."

Impact Statement:

The lack of a systematic means to communicate the school's high academic expectations for all students limits its ability to support all students at school and at home to become college and career ready.

Recommendation:

- Establish a belief that all students can be highly successful academically, and include all of the school's stakeholders in this conversation; develop a definition for what "high expectations" means and a corresponding plan on how the school and its stakeholders can support all students to achieve this end.