



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	411800010010
School Name	Lyndon H. Strough Middle School
School Address	801 Laurel St., Rome, NY 13440
District Name	Rome City School District
School Leader	Tracy O'Rourke
Dates of Review	November 13-15, 2013
School Accountability Status	Focus School
Type of Review	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet											
Grade Configuration	7-8	Total Enrollment	730	SIG Recipient	<input type="checkbox"/>	Title 1 Population	100%	Attendance Rate	93.4%		
Free Lunch	43.5%	Reduced Lunch	10.8%	Student Sustainability	%	Limited English Proficient	1.9%	Students with Disabilities	16.7%		
Number of English Language Learner Classes											
#Transitional Bilingual		#Dual Language		#Self-Contained English as a Second Language							
Number of Special Education Classes											
#Special Classes	28	#Consultant Teaching	0	#Integrated Collaborative Teaching							10
# Resource Room	18										
Number Special Classes											
#Visual Arts	NP	#Music	NP	#Drama	NP	#Foreign Language	NP	#Dance	NP	#CTE	NP
Racial/Ethnic Origin											
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.4%	Black or African American	8.1%	Hispanic or Latino	5.9%	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1.2%	White	84%	Multi-racial	0.4%
Personnel											
Years Principal Assigned to School	5	# of Assistant Principals	2	# of Deans	0	# of Counselors / Social Workers		3			
Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0%	Teaching Out of Certification	0%	Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.		2.7%	Average Teacher Absences	11.2%			
Credit Accumulation (High School Only) and Performance Rates											
% of 1 st yr. students who earned 10+ credits	N/A	% of 2 nd yr. students who earned 10+ credits	N/A	% of 3 rd yr. students who earned 10+ credits	N/A	4 Year Graduation Rate		N/A			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	23.5%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	19.4%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	69.7%	6 Year Graduation Rate		N/A			

NP = Not Provided

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
X	White		Multi-racial
	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
X	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
X	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
	Economically Disadvantaged		All Students
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science			
	American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American
	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
X	White		Multi-racial
X	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
	Economically Disadvantaged		All Students
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective			
	Limited English Proficiency		

SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE SCHOOL:

1. Develop a vision/mission statement that is aligned with the RCSD goals.
2. An organizational structure will be refined and administrators assigned to specific departments to meet monthly to support instruction. Administrators will schedule and conduct classroom and walkthroughs to monitor initiatives and instructions.
3. Core and ENCORES will continue to refine their standards and lessons to align to the CCLS and Literacy Standards. Professional development will be provided to support student engagement and higher-level questioning/high-level responses to increase rigor.
4. Establish a child-study procedure that will be used to support at risk students or those students who are not performing at a proficient level.
5. Create and implement a process that defines assessment, data, and the reports for guiding instruction. The school staff regularly communicates and solicits family feedback concerning student achievement, needs, issues, and concerns using multiple, interactive communication paths in all pertinent languages so that student achievement is increased. Every student will receive at least one positive note home during the school year. Those students who have more significant behavioral issues will be targeted for increased positive notes home to assist in reinforcing and increasing positive behaviors.

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 tenet, and mark in the 'OVERALL RATING' row the final designation for the overall tenet.

#	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			X	

	planning that involves student reflection, tracking of, and ownership of learning.				
	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:			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.				Xx
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 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 leaders have recently developed a long-term vision and mission statement, which they shared with the staff and students. This statement reflects goals outlined in the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP). Key teams are instrumental in the school’s efforts to achieve these goals. Despite the focus on what the school calls “TEAM”, there is no real sense of teamwork toward the goals set. As a result, efforts are fragmented and lack united purpose. Strategies are not always systematic and effectively applied school-wide. The school generates data related to student attendance, behavior, discipline issues, achievement, and social and emotional needs. However, the inconsistent use of this data limits the school’s ability to increase student academic and social outcomes. Goals and targets set focus on the school’s efforts to address the needs of students and their families; however, the school is still working toward these goals.

Strengths:

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

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).

- The school leader is working to ensure that the school community shares the SMART goals aligned to the SCEP. The school leader, one assistant principal (AP), and the School Based Instruction Team (SBIT) recently developed the school’s vision, mission, and goals statements, which were communicated to staff and students, and are displayed around the school. During interviews, staff confirmed that the vision and mission were developed recently, and they supported the leadership through the process. During interviews with the student government representatives, students shared that they learned of the goal statements through a recent assembly, and that while they were not involved in formulating the school’s vision statement, they would welcome the opportunity to contribute actively to this vision. However, parents informed the review team that they are not aware of the vision statement, and believe that many other parents also are not aware. According to the school leader, the goals within the vision statement align to the SCEP, and the majority of staff supports these goals. Additionally, she stated that the SCEP includes the priorities for school improvement, established in collaboration with staff. One of these priorities focuses on the way the school uses data. Staff shared that while they have access to both summative and formative data sources, there are differing opinions among teachers about the usefulness of the information. Discussions with students demonstrate that teachers do not consistently set individual goals for students, and primarily employ whole-class instruction. The review team confirmed these

statements during classroom visits, as most teachers used whole-class instruction, and did not modify the instruction based on available data, which lessens the level of rigor and challenge offered to students. The school leader shared that she introduced Academic Intervention Services (AIS) strategies to help students who need additional support. She stated the school meets the requirements for the district's directives for AIS, but some teachers have negative views about the impact these services have on specific lessons, and the breadth of the curriculum offered to students. The three school leaders use classroom visits to observe instructional practice, and reported that they use a monitoring form to gather evidence. However, the review team found that leaders do not communicate the observation process and the system for monitoring instruction consistently school-wide. Additionally, although the school established teams, such as the Loop and the Grand Round, to focus on school improvement efforts, these groups do not share a common purpose and vision, and they operate in isolation. As a result, despite the team approach, efforts are fragmented and lack consensus, which hinders student academic outcomes.

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.

- The school leader does not consistently make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources. The school established an Extended Learning Time (ELT) program offered to students in the form of a range of clubs. Some teachers employed during this time run activities with outside partners, such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). The school leader shared that there are opportunities during ELT for staff to provide additional academic and social emotional support to students. During interviews, some parents expressed varying opinions regarding the benefits of the ELT for all students, particularly those with special needs. Parents stated that they have experienced problems with their children coming home late from ELT. One parent mentioned that there is sometimes a lack of adequate supervision in this program. The school leader is positive about the role she and the district share in the recruitment, selection, and appointment of new staff at different levels within the school staffing structure. She shared that the present system gives her a voice in the process, and in the final assignments for the school. In classroom visits, the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) noted class size ranging from ten to 25 students, and that the classrooms have a number of resources. For example, there are class sets of laptops and iPads that teachers use to support student learning. The IIT observed students, in a special needs class, using computers to reproduce newspaper articles reflecting the events of Veterans Day. The school leader stated that many teachers have requested interactive whiteboards; however, she delayed purchase of these items due to pending plans for school refurbishment. While evidence from documents, and discussions with school leaders, demonstrated the school offers professional development (PD) opportunities to staff, teachers did not consistently confirm this information, and attendance records show low participation by staff at PD. The inconsistent strategic use of resources limits the meeting of the needs of the school community, which hinders student success.

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.

- The school leader is developing a system aligned to the district's APPR to conduct teacher observations and provide feedback. The school leader reported that there is an APPR system in place to allow school leaders to set individual performance goals for teachers linked to student achievement outcomes.

However, the review team found that the process lacks action- planning, and is inconsistent. While one of the APs shared that they devised a document to assist evidence gathering from observations and feedback to staff, evidence from a document review, and discussions with teachers, demonstrated that the three school leaders inconsistently implement this process. The school leader stated that the original observation plan was for leaders to spend two full days each observing instruction, but this has not happened, so the impact on improving learning has been minimal. The school leaders shared that the observation process has clarified the need for PD to improve the quality and consistent use of higher-order questioning to challenge and engage students, which has yet to be scheduled. Despite the fact that the three school leaders are involved in the observation process, leaders have not consistently used the information from completed observations to target PD to improve instruction. Consequently, until this plan is in place the impact of the observation process, and the way it drives school improvement, is limited. An inconsistent observation process does not ensure that administrators and staff are held accountable for continuous improvement, which hinders student achievement.

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).

- School leaders are beginning to use systems to examine individual and school-wide practices outlined in the SCEP. Evidence from classroom visits, a document review, and discussions with staff demonstrated that while school leaders are beginning to develop evidence-based systems, teachers do not consistently support these changes, which limits the effectiveness of using these systems to make changes in school-wide practices. The school leader reported that teachers use a school-wide planning approach, which is research-based, to ensure quality in planning and preparation for instruction. However, the review team found that there are no evidence-based systems in place to monitor the modification and adaptation of lessons based on data to meet the diverse needs of students. As a result, progress toward goals related to improved student achievement and instruction is limited. While the school leader is developing evidence-based systems to examine school-wide practices, lack of consistency and support limits measureable progress toward school-wide goals and hinders student success.

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: School leaders, in conjunction with the SBIT Team, have developed a plan to align curriculum, instruction, and assessments with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for all subject areas. The SCEP identifies PD and opportunities for teacher collaboration throughout 2013-14 to accomplish curriculum alignment. Plans to include detailed action plans, ongoing monitoring by school leaders and a plan for staff accountability are not yet in place. The lack of specificity and oversight limits the achievement of the SCEP goals and the delivery of rigorous curricula, which hinders student college- and career- readiness.

Strengths:

All ratings for this Tenet are either *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 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.

- The SCEP outlines the goals and activities for 2013-14 to support the implementation of the CCLS curricula. Interviews with staff, and a document review, demonstrate that during the summer, teachers from the English language arts (ELA), math, social studies, and science departments participated in curriculum writing to match their curricula with the CCLS standards, and the ELA shifts. Staff said that the separate departments plan to continue this focus throughout the school year. For example, ELA teachers are developing common writing pieces as Odell units become available; science teachers are working on aligning the curriculum with the “Next Generation Standards,” and social studies teachers are redesigning test questions for more rigor in assessment. The plans that are in place for departments align to the SCEP goal, which states that, “ENCORE and CORE teachers will meet quarterly to better align instruction with the Common Core.” The plan is clear in setting the goals to implement a quality curricula guided by research and the CCLS. It provides opportunities, in writing, for distributive leadership to encourage department coordinators to maintain the momentum of this plan. An action plan to ensure that dates and deadlines are set to keep the curricular changes on target is not in place. A system for monitoring the quality of the curricula and the way it meets the needs of the students is also lacking. As a result, the impact within classrooms is limited. Teachers are not consistently applying, through discussion and collaboration, a modified curriculum that uses the CCLS shifts to match the academic development of students, which hinders student college- and career-readiness.

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.

- Teachers design plans and assessments that connect to CCLS; however, systematic analysis of student data to monitor and adjust curriculum and drive instruction is not done consistently across all subject areas. A document review and classroom visits showed the review team that many teachers utilize a common lesson plan template, as well as unit plans, that reference the CCLS. Teachers shared that they use unit tests, daily exit tickets, and questions from the New York State Essential Questions Guide to provide assessment information about student understanding. However, teachers do not analyze this data to inform planning. Some teachers state that they complete and submit data sheets for benchmark assessment, but do not know what happens to these documents after they are submitted. The lack of systems and structures that ensure the use of data to inform instruction and modify the curricula negatively affects the academic growth of students in meeting the demands of the CCLS across grade and subject areas.

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.

- Teachers do not formally partner across grades and subjects to create interdisciplinary curricula that targets the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities. Interviews with the school leader and staff demonstrated that there is little opportunity, and no plan, to provide time for teachers to collaborate within and across subject areas. However, the review team found that the Loop B Team works collaboratively to create interdisciplinary curricula and enrichment opportunities. Staff shared that this team creates three interdisciplinary units each year connecting a range of subjects to meet student needs. However, this practice is limited and only available to a small number of students. A document review, discussions with staff, and classroom visits provided evidence that the school does not offer formal enrichment opportunities to students school-wide. Consequently, the lack of collaborative practice across grades and subjects fails to make the best use of opportunities to link the arts and technology into core skills development. Additionally, the review team found that the music, technology, and physical education teachers spend much of their time teaching core subjects, due to AIS requirement. The lack of a formal plan for teachers to collaborate across subjects and grades limits student opportunities to engage in thoughtful cross-curricula activities and hinders their academic success.

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.

- Teachers do not consistently implement a system of using assessments for curriculum planning that involves student ownership of learning. The school leader, APs, and teachers all shared that the school does not have a data-driven culture; however, the school leader and staff have developed a plan to begin working on an initiative to address this situation. In addition, the school leader is aware, through the self-assessment process, that the teachers need training in using data. The SBIT team has identified a goal in the current SCEP to, “create a plan that defines assessment, data, and the reports necessary for guiding instruction.” In addition, teachers reported that they administer many assessments, but do not know how to use the data they obtain to inform and drive their instruction. Additionally, although testing and assessment data is available, the teachers have not begun using this information to modify curricula. Evaluation of student folders and work demonstrated that teachers give numeric grades to students after weekly quizzes, but guidance on what students need to do to improve does not consistently take place. Most students stated that teachers do not provide them with individual goals or with opportunities to self-assess in order to make decisions about their learning. Consequently, student ownership of their learning is limited. The lack of alignment between the curriculum and assessments limits student achievement.

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: Instructional practices do not consistently align to the CCLS shifts and lack high levels of complexity, and higher-order thinking questions. The school has not systemized the use of data to inform instruction. There is a lack of both teacher feedback and individual data-based goals for students to help accelerate their

learning. Most teachers do not modify instruction, or consistently use assessments, to address the varying needs of the diverse range of students. As a result, student response to learning varies from passive participation to active engagement. In addition, there were limited opportunities for students to have a voice in, or to access, their learning.

Strengths:

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

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.

- The school leaders are beginning to work with teachers to ensure that instructional practices, organized around unit and lesson plans, address student needs. While the school leader shared that teachers use a uniform lesson plan format, the review team found that teacher planning is not informed by data to meet student needs. For example, in the ELA and AIS classrooms visited by the review team, there was no evidence that unit plans or lessons referenced data. The school facilitates team and common planning times, but because of the contractual obligations, additional group planning within the teacher's schedule is difficult. Therefore, the school leader shared that she arranged for thirty minutes of group planning every two weeks. Discussions with school leaders and staff confirm that the SCEP plan used report card and attendance data only. Additionally, teachers stated that they do not have individual or group goals for students beyond raising state test scores. The school leader and the APs shared that they are aware of the areas that need improvement, as was noted from the SCEP review. School leaders and the SBIT team identify higher-level questioning, data-driven dialogue, and differentiated teaching as key areas in instructional practice where staff needs training, which the review team confirmed through classroom visits. Additionally, during one meeting, staff stated that the SBIT team is receiving training on data-driven dialogue. During classroom visits, the majority of lessons seen by the IIT were in whole-class format. An exception was the Loop team, where the teacher team includes colleagues from special education, English as a Second Language (ESL) and AIS. In this classroom, teachers group students so the support staff can address questions within the classroom, or core subject, as the instruction happens. Although, most classrooms visited displayed calm, controlled interaction between adults and students, students generally exhibited passive behavior. For example, during instruction many students did not respond to questions the teacher asked, and often were not actively engaged in the lesson. Whole-class teaching does not engage the interest or challenge the varying abilities of students. This lack of differentiated instruction limits student engagement and subsequently reduces the impact on student achievement.

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.

- Teachers do not consistently provide coherent instruction aligned to the CCLS that leads to multiple points of access for all students. While the majority of lesson plans reviewed, referenced the CCLS, instructional

practice did not consistently align with the CCLS shifts, or ensure multiple points of access for all students. For example, in almost all classrooms visited for ELA and ELA/AIS use “shared pairs” to encourage students to engage with the learning. However, once students share with a partner, there is little opportunity for them to debrief with the entire class, or with the teacher, to check understanding. Teachers also did not challenge students, or ask them to respond to higher-order questions to further engage and extend learning. In grade eight classrooms visited, teachers are beginning to use the Odell modules. Reviewers noted that students in these classes struggled to complete tasks because of the complexity of the material and the lack of modification to match student academic development. In grade seven classrooms, students explored a grade four level storybook, and teachers did not offer the students appropriate levels of complexity demanded by the CCLS. In many classrooms visited by the IIT, the teachers asked closed questions that did not challenge students to think at a high level. Students often responded with a single word, or teachers filled in the answer for them, further reducing the challenge. In many classes, teachers called upon the same individuals for answers, and as a result, failed to maximize student participation in the learning. Limited instructional practices do not include multiple points of access, which reduces student opportunities for academic success.

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.

- Teachers do not consistently create a learning environment that is responsive to the needs of all students. In the majority of classrooms visited, teachers did not modify instruction to meet the learning needs of students. Despite the lack of differentiation, most student behavior is calm in classrooms, and during transitions, with or without adult supervision. The majority of students displayed self-control and maturity. However, during the meetings with teachers, staff focused on the negative behaviors of students, which were not apparent in the classrooms visited. Yet the review team found that teacher strategies for meeting the differing needs of students were at a developing stage. The SCEP indicates the school plans to explore the use of Positive Behavioral Intervention Services (PBIS), which, while a priority for the past two years, the school does not yet implement school-wide. Reviewers found that during lessons, occasionally a few students disturbed learning; however, the majority of students cooperated with their teachers. The vast majority of students interviewed said that they feel safe in school. Evidence shows that the learning environment overall is safe, but is not intellectually challenging, as reflected by the fact that there is no school-wide practice that includes modification of instruction to meet the needs of all students. Discussions with students confirmed that they would like work that is more challenging and would like individual goals set to keep them motivated. Despite the safe learning environment, a lack of intellectual challenge for students hinders academic, social, and emotional progress.

4.5 **The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* 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).

- The use of data, to inform both instruction and student goals, is not evident across all grades and subjects. Classroom observations and team meetings demonstrate that teachers collect data through a variety of means, but are not clear how to use this data to modify their instruction. Teachers administer a number of assessments throughout the year, including progress monitoring using AIMSWEB Math. The majority of teachers shared they are unclear how to incorporate the data findings for individuals and groups of

students into their lessons, or how to shape individual student goals using the information. There is feedback given to students in the form of praise in relation to their behavior, or if they provide the right answer to a question; however this is minimal. Teachers do not ask students probing or reflective questions, as seen during classroom visits and from talking to students. In addition, students are provided with few opportunities to participate in, and take responsibility for, their own learning. Ineffective use of data, results in limited instructional planning and delivery, and leads to some students finishing early and waiting for others who never finish at all. Lack of data-based instruction that is timely and purposeful limits student achievement.

Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health: The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: The school places a great emphasis on student social and emotional developmental health, as reflected in the newly adopted school vision, mission, and goals statement. The school provides students and staff with a safe environment. The vast majority of students present are calm, respectful learners; however, a small number of students require intensive support to maintain appropriate behaviors. As a result of the extensive focus of all staff and leaders on disruptive student behavior, less time is available to prioritize student academic achievement goals, outlined in the SCEP. This limits the success of school improvement efforts.

Strengths:

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

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.

- The school leader and the APs have developed a range of strategies and supports, such as the SST and the Grand Round, which allows each student to be known by an adult and to address student social and emotional developmental health. However, the focus of these strategies is behavior monitoring and response, not academic success. The IIT observed a common planning time meeting in which staff discussed the actions of individual students that are not complying with expectations. According to teachers, they sometimes use the common planning times to hold parent conferences for individuals or small groups of students. The guidance counselor prepares the agenda for the team meetings that focus on attendance, behavior, and response, forming an action plan of support for the individual students. The meetings and discussions generate behavioral data, but pro-active interventions are not yet a focus. Discussions with school leaders and staff demonstrate a high level of care and concern, but senior leaders do not work pro-actively to monitor the academic growth of the majority of students. The review team found that the school has not reviewed the behavior policy and set high levels of expectations. Additionally, the school has not celebrated good behavior or investigated ways of observing best practice

in other schools. Further, discussions with school leaders and staff confirm that the school has not analyzed data to look for patterns and to establish systems that meet the social and emotional needs of all students. The school's time and effort in addressing the needs and behavior of a minority of students, distracts from the social and emotional developmental health of the majority of students, which hinders student success.

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.

- The school is developing a vision for social and emotional developmental health to provide a safe and healthy school environment. While the school does not have a formal curriculum, the school leader and SBIT recently developed a vision for student social and emotional developmental health, which they reported is a priority. Teachers shared that school leaders have not fully communicated this vision to them, and that not all staff embrace the vision. Parents shared that there was a bullying problem in the school last year and that the school responded to parent concerns and resolved the problem, which students confirmed. The school has a diverse community of learners, where positive relationships are encouraged and maintained. Additionally, there is a safe and secure environment, supported through an organized and positive security team. The lack of a formal curriculum or program for social and emotional developmental health, results in the school not systematically managing and monitoring its efforts, which hinders student success.

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.

- Stakeholders do not consistently work together to develop a common understanding of the importance of their contributions in creating a safe learning environment. The majority of stakeholders in the school prioritize their responsibilities to support the social and emotional health of the students. While the school addresses students with challenging behavior effectively, the review team found that the school focuses its time and resources on this small number of students, rather than on the social and emotional development of the overall student population. The Student Support Team (SST) reported that the behavior specialist provided training on bullying, as a few students in the building were causing disruptions. Further, guidance counselors were part of this initiative and taught lessons on anti-bullying. The SST shared that the social worker sustains this work, and holds individual counseling and weekly open-ended groups for students that meet during lunchtime to facilitate conflict resolution. Further, the social worker refers students to community agencies and is responsible for issues relating to family court and child protective services. There is a system for students who repeatedly misbehave where they can go to a room supervised by a specialist teacher for ten minutes and choose to talk to the specialist before returning to class or to an in-school suspension room. However, the lack of strategic plan to ensure that all constituents develop a common understanding for their roles in developing a safe learning environment, limits student success.

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.

- While the school leader shared that staff collect data from a range of sources, there is no formal system for analyzing this information. The Student Support Staff (SSS) confirmed that they collect, record, and process data about student behavior and are working on a plan to better identify student needs based on this information. The Initial Response Team (IRT) meets regularly and joins the Grand Round team to share information; however, the review team found that while these structures and teams are in place, they mostly focus on a minority of students. The school is developing structures to support the use of data to respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs, but the school needs to focus on the wider population in order to improve student success.

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: While the school provides parents with some opportunities for contact with the school, these systems are not always effective. Better opportunities for regular and effective communication regarding student achievement and social and emotional well-being are needed to help parents become informed partners in support of their children. The school leaders, parent coordinator, social worker, and guidance counselor are all involved in supporting students and the most vulnerable families. Additionally, a parent teacher group works on developing the home-school connection; however, the number of people involved is limited. The school does share data through traditional methods, such as report cards; however, there are few effective systems to ensure that all parents have access to information to help them support their children’s success, which limits the potential of parent partnership.

Strengths:

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

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.

- The school leader shared that staff provides parents a number of avenues to access information and receive communication from the school, such as the Parent Portal. However, the review team found that the portal is not user friendly, and that teachers do not consistently maintain the information, which is often out of date. Additionally, the school leader shared that the school sends home a newsletter on regular dates; however, there were no examples of the newsletter available for the review team. Further, while staff said the school sends home flyers, parents shared that they do not receive these on a regular basis, and that some parents do not receive the flyers at all. Parents did confirm that they receive robocalls about events. One parent, of a child with disabilities that has difficulty handling money, shared

that she was not informed that that the school uses "My Lunch Money", which allows parents to pay in advance for meals and monitor their child's balance. The school's parent survey findings show that 41 per cent of parents "disagree" or "strongly disagree" that "the school provides them with useful information about how they can help their child do well in school." Parents reported that they were not involved in the creation of the school vision statement. In addition, they stated that the school has not done enough to address parent concerns expressed in the survey about communication. Parents stated that they would like to know more about the way students are taught, as only 38 per cent agreed that the school tailors instruction to meet student needs. The evidence from the review indicates that while certain communication channels are in place, they are not effective at keeping parents and students informed about key issues or sharing high expectations in an effort to improve academic, social, and emotional outcomes.

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.

- The school does not consistently engage in reciprocal communication with families and community stakeholders to meet student needs. Parents informed the review team that information provided to families through the Parent Portal, as well as other communication channels, is not consistently up to date. Additionally, the review team found that the strategies the school uses to communicate with parents are limited and in need of review. The findings from a parent survey indicate that 42 per cent of parents do not feel that the school informs them about how their child is doing academically, and that only 48 per cent feel that the feedback teachers provide on homework helps their child. Discussions with students confirm that teachers share limited information with them, and that they would like individual goals and a greater level of challenge in their work to prepare them for college and career. Although the school has systems for communicating with families, the lack of monitoring and revising these systems to empower families to support their children's academic achievement, limits student success.

6.4 The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* 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.

- The school leader shared that the school uses student data to engage with community agencies and partners, such as the probation service. Additionally, partnerships with the local neighborhood center provide students with access to the Project Aim Program, while Kid Oneida provides wrap around services and an action plan for those who need support and intervention. One parent questioned shared that she is reluctant to contact teachers personally for advice and support because, "the teacher always seem so busy and I feel I am being a bother." However, the parent survey shows that 83 per cent of parents feel that teachers are available to discuss their children's learning needs. However, parents shared that they feel like the school's communication does not help them become partners in the support of their children, as the school does not offer parents training to build their skills and understanding of practices that teachers use to help students learn. In addition, there is no formal plan in place to teach staff how to create and sustain family engagement. Consequently, the school community has not developed an effective strategy to partner with families and community agencies to promote student success.

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.

- Although the school provides parents with report cards and information on the school website and the Parent Portal about student achievement, the school does not consistently update this information. Further parents reported that they are not always aware of services that provide additional support for their children, and that newsletters do not always reach home. Parents expressed an interest in a system of communication that promotes dialogue with the school, to improve their level of understanding about teaching and learning. Although the school provides families with some information, they do not consistently empower families to take action to support their children's learning, which hinders student success.

Recommendations:

Tenet 2: School Leader Practices and Decisions

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 2 the school should:

- 2.2: Work towards establishing planning teams with defined roles and responsibilities. Involve staff, parents and students in reviewing and promoting the school's long-term vision to gain consensus and support. Facilitate opportunities for school leaders to network with other school leaders to share practices and successful change strategies.
- 2.3: Re-examine the use of resources to determine how additional staff can participate in an extended day program, and attend the scheduled PD to build consistency in implementation of practices.
- 2.4: Ensure that the APPR system is consistently implemented in a timely manner and includes analysis, which will focus staff study and discussion on teaching practices that include higher-order questioning and challenging work to engage students.
- 2.5: Use the data specialist to assist staff in analyzing student data that will enable teachers to adapt instruction in response to identified student needs, and include differentiation in their lesson planning and implementation.

Tenet 3: Curriculum Development and Support

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 3 the school should:

- 3.2 Establish a school-wide plan for school leaders to monitor the quality of the curricula changes recommended by subject area departments, and establish dates and deadlines for the curricular changes to be implemented.
- 3.3: Encourage school leaders to have reciprocal communication with staff to understand the staff views and concerns regarding student assessment, data analysis, and implementation of the CCLS.
- 3.4: Ensure school leaders and staff members collaborate, explore scheduling opportunities, and implement an approach to improving student learning that embraces interdisciplinary curricula that leads to higher levels of student engagement and participation in their own learning.
- 3.5: Determine which formative and summative assessments are appropriate. Share strategies that will help teachers analyze data and adjust their instructional practice. Ensure that students are provided with a rubric to assist them in analyzing assessment results, self-assessing, and planning their own next steps.

Tenet 4: Teacher Practices and Decisions

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 4 the school should:

- 4.2: Target PD to ensure that all staff has a common understanding of what is meant by differentiation, and can use it to modify and adapt classroom instruction to meet identified student academic needs and increase student engagement.

- 4.3: Provide students with material appropriate to their grade level that will challenge them to establish individual goals and experience the satisfaction of studying complex material in multiple ways.
- 4.4: Introduce a range of strategies to challenge, engage, and to enable students to reflect on and make decisions about their own learning, and give them a voice and ownership in developing their academic skills, so that they are better prepared for college. Focus on student engagement in classroom visits and share observation results with staff individually and collectively.
- 4.5: Assist teachers in developing lesson plans that use assessment data to structure small and large group instruction and provide feedback to students, which will increase student engagement.

Tenet 5: Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 5 the school should:

- 5.2: Leverage available resources to benefit the majority of students focused on learning, as well as on those few students who disrupt the learning process. Identify additional opportunities to acknowledge and praise students who comply with teacher expectations and contribute positively to the school environment.
- 5.3: Formalize a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is part of the school's culture. Share this vision with all stakeholders and provide the support needed to result in ownership of the vision.
- 5.4: Establish additional community partnerships to provide more opportunities for collaboration in the support of students to drive academic, as well as social and emotional development. Review the role of existing groups supporting and maintaining student behavior, and synthesize these to make the best use of time and staff to support the academic and social development needs of all students.
- 5.5: Formalize the use of behavioral data and ensure the plan to implement PBIS is developed into an action plan with dates, key actions, and personnel involved. Review the systems that are in place to support social-emotional health to synthesize them to make best use of time and staff to support student need.

Tenet 6: Family and Community Engagement

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 6 the school should:

- 6.2: Expect all teachers to enter grades, and other pertinent information, in a timely manner on the Parent Portal. Establish parent workshops to discuss and share information about what is taught, and why, as well as how students receive guidance that supports their academic and social-emotional needs. Provide additional opportunities for families to be involved in the academic activities of the school, such as structuring team meetings to include parents, and planning visits to businesses or schools to explore career and college goals.
- 6.3: Develop strategies and procedures to communicate with parents that are user friendly, consistently used by all staff, and monitored by the Parent Coordinator, or a liaison identified by the school leader, for effectiveness.

- 6.4: Provide opportunities, at meetings or workshops, for parents to receive training to help them understand the practices used by teachers to help students learn, in order to empower parents to support their children's academic, social, and emotional development.
- 6.5: Update the communication between home and school to provide information that is timely and specific to grades and subjects. Provide assessment data in a user-friendly format that will enable parents to support the academic and social success of their children in partnership with the school.