



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

**DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)**



<b>BEDS Code</b>	01-01-00-01-0045
<b>School Name</b>	Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School
<b>School Address</b>	100 Elbel Court, Albany, New York
<b>District Name</b>	Albany County School District (ACSD)
<b>School Leader</b>	Kimberly Wilkins
<b>Dates of Review</b>	November 18 – 19 and 21, 2013
<b>School Accountability Status</b>	Focus School
<b>Type of Review</b>	State Education Department (SED) Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

<b>School Information Sheet</b>											
Grade Configuration	6-8	Total Enrollment	682	Title 1 Population	75%	Attendance Rate	94%	Students with Disabilities	17%		
Free Lunch	NP	Reduced Lunch	NP	Student Sustainability	NP	Limited English Proficient	NP	Students with Disabilities	NP		
<b>Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes</b>											
#Transitional Bilingual		#Dual Language		#Self-Contained English as a Second Language							
<b>Types and Number of Special Education Classes</b>											
#Special Classes	3	#Consultant Teaching	4	#Integrated Collaborative Teaching							
# Resource Room	2										
<b>Types and Number Special Classes</b>											
#Visual Arts	22	#Music	24	#Drama	0	# Foreign Language	17	# Dance	0	CTE	0
<b>Racial/Ethnic Origin</b>											
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	Black or African American	64%	Hispanic or Latino	10%	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	6%	White	18%	Multi-racial	1%
<b>Personnel</b>											
Years Principal Assigned to School	9	# of Assistant Principals	1	# of Deans	0	# of Counselors / Social Workers	2/2				
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0%	% Teaching Out of Certification	2%	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.	0%	Average Teacher Absences	NP				
<b>Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)</b>											
School in Good Standing		Priority School		Focus District		Focus School Identified by a Focus District	X	SIG Recipient			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	<b>16%</b>	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	<b>12%</b>	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4		4 Year Graduation Rate (HS Only)					
<b>Credit Accumulation (High School Only)</b>											
% of 1 <sup>st</sup> yr. students who earned 10+ credits		% of 2 <sup>nd</sup> yr. students who earned 10+ credits		% of 3 <sup>rd</sup> yr. students who earned 10+ credits		6 Year Graduation Rate					

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

**Describe the school's top priorities (no more than 5) based on the school's comprehensive education plan (SCEP):  
SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE SCHOOL:**

1. All students will have access to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in English language arts (ELA), including students with disabilities, English Language learners (ELL) and all student sub-groups.
2. All students will have access to the CCLS in mathematics including students with disabilities, English language learners and students in all sub-groups.
3. Teachers will use instructional strategies that engage students to be responsive to the CCLS shifts, using North Western Education Association (NWEA) and other assessments.
4. Teachers will create rigorous lessons that promote higher-order thinking and critical analysis and become proficient in the Tri-State Rubric for lesson development in ELA and mathematics.
5. ELA and mathematics teachers will work with special area teachers reviewing student assessment data, developing collaborative lessons and reviewing student work.

**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).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.4	The school leader has a fully functional system in place aligned to the district's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) to conduct targeted and frequent observation and track progress of teacher practices based on student data and feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.5	Leaders effectively use evidence-based systems and structures to examine and improve critical individual and school-wide practices as defined in the SCEP (student achievement, curriculum and teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 2:</b>					<b>I</b>

**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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3	Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans used include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3.4	The school leader and teachers have developed a comprehensive plan for teachers to partner within and across all grades and subjects to create interdisciplinary curricula targeting the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.5	Teachers implement a comprehensive system for using formative and summative assessments for strategic short- and long-range curriculum planning that involves student reflection, tracking of, and ownership of learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 3:</b>					<b>I</b>

**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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.3	Teachers provide coherent, and appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.4	Teachers and students work together to implement a program/plan to create a learning environment that is responsive to students' varied experiences and tailored to the strengths and needs of all students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.5	Teachers inform planning and foster student participation in their own learning process by using a variety of summative and formative data sources (e.g., screening, interim measures, and progress monitoring).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 4:</b>					<b>I</b>

**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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.3	The school articulates and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is aligned to a curriculum or program that provides learning experiences and a safe and healthy school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	environment for families, teachers, and students.				
5.4	All school stakeholders work together to develop a common understanding of the importance of their contributions in creating a school community that is safe, conducive to learning, and fostering of a sense of ownership for providing social and emotional developmental health supports tied to the school's vision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.5	The school leader and student support staff work together with teachers to establish structures to support the use of data to respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:</b>				<b>I</b>
<b>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.</b>					
<b>#</b>	Statement of Practice	<b>H</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>I</b>
6.2	The school leader ensures that regular communication with students and families fosters their high expectations for student academic achievement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.3	The school engages in effective planning and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders so that student strengths and needs are identified and used to augment learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.4	The school community partners with families and community agencies to promote and provide training across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.5	The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:</b>				<b>I</b>

**School Review Narrative:**

<b>Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions:</b> 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.	<b>Tenet Rating</b>	<b>I</b>
<p><b><u>Debriefing Statement:</u></b></p> <p>The school leader has not established systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement including vision, mission, and goals that focus the efforts of members of the school community directly on student academic success.</p> <p><b><u>Strengths:</u></b></p> <p>All ratings for this Tenet are either <b>Developing</b> or <b>Ineffective</b> and, therefore, comments are listed under <b>Areas of Improvement</b></p> <p><b><u>Areas for Improvement:</u></b></p> <p>2.2 <b><u>The school has received a rating of <i>Ineffective</i> for this Statement of Practice:</u></b> 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).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school staff has not developed and promoted a vision that addresses the gap between what students know and what they need to learn. While the school leader and staff are committed to the well-being of students, the information included in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP) is not explicit enough to drive the establishment of a school-wide culture of continuous school improvement. The review team found that the goals in the SCEP were not specific, measurable, and timely. Instead, the SCEP contained broad goal statements, such as “The Building Leadership Team and school administration will prioritize the opportunities for focused professional development on the Common Core Learning Standards in order to achieve high standards of instruction across all disciplines, especially for students with disabilities.” The SCEP does not provide the clarity and impetus necessary to drive improvements in raising the standards of students’ academic achievement. A review of documents by the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT or “the review team”) and interviews with the school leaders and staff show that the school staff does collect and use some data to inform planning. However, during discussions with the IIT some staff members shared that except for the prior year’s NYS ELA and math scores they have limited access to data to inform planning. Although the school identifies student access to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) as a priority, the school has not identified specific plans for the implementation of CCLS and does not consistently monitor and evaluate instruction. The lack of a clear vision with SMART goals hampers the school’s ability to provide quality instruction, promote high levels of engagement in</li></ul>		

learning, and produce continuous and sustainable school improvement. This contributes to low student achievement.

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

- The school leader organizes resources to support the school's routine operations, but her spending and fiscal decisions are not specifically targeted to meet the school's identified goals for raising achievement and addressing the varying academic needs of students. When interviewed by the IIT, the school leader said she articulates the staffing needs to the district and works in partnership with district staff to hire qualified personnel. In addition, the school leader informed the review team that current staffing levels are adequate. The school leader reported that she allocates resources to meet the basic requirements of the normal school day and to ensure the adequate supervision of students. In addition, the school staff has developed an expanded learning time program that is allocated in line with the requirements for middle schools in the district. The school leader informed the IIT that the expanded learning program is geared toward improving academic outcomes for some, but not all groups of students. Observations by the IIT and discussions with staff indicate that classrooms have sufficient fiction and non-fiction books and materials and special rooms have sufficient equipment. However, some teachers explained to reviewers that they feel there is a shortage of some basic resources. In addition, resources are not used to address the immediate needs of students. Through discussions with school leaders, the IIT learned that current resources do not meet the varying needs of students, particularly students with disabilities. For example, during classroom observations, the review team found that the curriculum for students with disabilities lacks coherence and the plans for curriculum shifts do not include Academic Intervention Services (AIS) or Response to Intervention (RtI). Although the school leader makes some strategic decisions regarding the use of available resources, not all students' needs are adequately addressed, which can hinder academic progress.

2.4 **The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* 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 review team found minimal evidence of a fully functional system to frequently observe and provide feedback to teachers. While the school provided the IIT with a schedule of classroom walkthroughs and observations, during discussions with the IIT, many teachers reported that they had not received a formal or informal observation as of the date of the IIT visit. While the school provided copies of teacher goal settings meetings to reviewers, teachers did not reference these meetings in interviews as having any influence on their instructional practice. Reviewers also found significant room for improvement in the instruction they observed during the review. Teachers

interviewed shared that they receive minimal feedback and guidance on how to improve teacher practices. The review team did not see an overarching plan or any tracking mechanisms indicating status and progress. The observation process does not provide frequent review, reflection, and modification of teaching approaches based on clearly written feedback, to support improvements in instructional practice. The lack of a fully functional system to conduct observations and provide feedback to teachers hinders school leaders from determining the actions necessary to bring about improvement in teacher practice, which also hinders the academic progress of students.

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

- While the school did provide evidence that data has been collected, based on evidence gathered from a review of documents and staff interviews, the review team found that the school has few evidence-based systems to address school-wide improvements. While the school has multiple programs in place, there was minimal understanding regarding the effectiveness of the different programs. In addition, the school lacked the comprehensive systems needed to monitor its initiatives and efforts and revise these efforts when progress is not being made. There is limited information about the progress students are making beyond the results of periodic summative assessments. Assessment information exists, but it is not gathered and used consistently school-wide. The SCEP does not include clear and tangible steps regarding curriculum and teaching practices that are differentiated to match the range of students’ needs on a school-wide, grade-level, group, and individual bases. A review of documents demonstrates that the school inconsistently tracks students’ progress and school performance. Additionally, during classroom visits the review team found minimal evidence of teachers using data to re-group students or adjust lessons. Current practices limit the school staff’s ability to monitor and evaluate student progress, and to adjust and revise school-wide practices in critical areas to increase students’ learning and achievement.

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

**Tenet Rating**

**I**

**Debriefing Statement:**

The school leader and staff have just begun to embrace the district plan for professional development (PD) and curriculum revision to support the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Since the current implementation of rigorous and coherent curricula aligned to CCLS is at the beginning stages, it lacks the necessary monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation to meet the needs of all students.

**Strengths:**

All ratings for this Tenet are either **Developing** or **Ineffective** and, therefore, comments are listed under **Areas of 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 school leader is in the beginning stages of providing support to staff to implement a coherent curriculum that reflects the CCLS. However, the school lacks a systematic approach to implement the curricula. The responsibility for ensuring and supporting the quality implementation of the CCLS is shared by the school leader, assistant principal (AP), coaches, and district staff. However, the review of lessons and unit plans by the IIT, as well as teacher interviews reflect that the school's planning is sporadic and does not align to the curriculum. Teachers reported to the review team that they had not gone through a systematic process of reviewing the CCLS, and had not analyzed or internalized it. This limits the pedagogical support required to make the CCLS instructional shifts. While the school is using the CCLS Modules, there was minimal evidence that the modules had been adapted to meet the learning needs of the students, and reviewers found minimal evidence of the instructional shifts guiding lessons to enhance understanding, rigor, and critical thinking. When interviewed by the IIT, the school leader acknowledged that the curriculum is not where it should be and that there is little ownership of curriculum development by teachers. In addition, she indicated to the IIT that she recognizes the modules and calendars that teachers currently use are not adequate substitutes for developed curricula. Teachers interviewed by the IIT confirmed that they have received some information about CCLS curriculum modules and that staff has some access to training. During the review, the IIT observed PD delivered to teachers and leaders of math. Though the focus of the PD was teaching practice rather than curriculum implementation, the discussion was relevant to planning for CCLS developments pertaining to math. The review team noted that the curriculum for students with disabilities lacks coherence and the plans for curriculum shifts do not include AIS or RtI. In addition, although documents reviewed by the IIT indicate that there are goals listed for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), teachers have not established individual learning goals aligned to benchmarked assessments with students and are not engaging students to monitor their own learning and progress. The staff lacks a coordinated approach to plan and deliver curricula that consistently reflects the CCLS, which hampers the school's ability to provide robust curricula to support improvements in student achievement.

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

- The school's current planning and pedagogical arrangements do not include data-driven unit and lesson plans that indicate the next steps that individual and groups of students should take. The school does not have a process in place for regular monitoring and review of unit and lesson plans to assure CCLS alignment and quality. Although teachers are using written plans, reviewers found few examples outside of interventions in IEPs of teachers using multiple sources of data. During class visits, reviewers found only one explicit reference to data-driven information, in relation to a lesson focused on addressing special education needs. While data is collected across the school, detailed tracking of the progress of individual and groups of students is limited. In discussions with the review team, the school leader acknowledged that staff has not collected, analyzed or shared data in a manner that is useful to teaching teams. Teachers do not use data about student progress to monitor curricula and make adjustments in instruction to meet the needs of all students, which limits opportunities for students across grades and subjects to access learning at their own level of difficulty and then meet the demands of the CCLS.

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.

- School leaders and teachers across grades and within subject teams have common planning times to discuss curricula. However, the school lacks a comprehensive plan for teachers to create interdisciplinary curricula. During interviews with the IIT, staff reported that some teachers meet to create connections and integrate themes and concepts that increase the application of skills and talents in different content areas. During the Student Focus Group Meeting, one student explained his understanding of how music and band are linked within the curriculum. This student also expressed how much he and others enjoyed lessons of this manner. However, the amount and quality of work samples reviewed by the IIT did not reflect consistent interdisciplinary planning or curricula targeting the arts. Staff members reported that they value opportunities for collaboration; however, staff also reported that leaders do not allocate sufficient time for collaboration to develop interdisciplinary curricula and partnerships. The lack of consistent staff collaborations to plan interdisciplinary curriculum that target the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities, limits students' access to a robust curriculum and increased opportunities for academic success.

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

- The review team found that the school staff lacks a comprehensive system for using formative and summative assessments for strategic short- and long-range curriculum planning. Reviewers found that teachers do not consistently use formative assessments to monitor progress and to raise student achievement. Although teachers assess students' work, most of the assessment data sources are summative tests. Teachers told the review team that the school does not have a policy to guide how they should conduct formative assessments or how they should grade students' work and provide feedback. Documents reviewed by the IIT indicate that in some instances the results of formative assessments are recorded; however, generally assessments are not recorded and tracked so that they can be used subsequently to inform next steps in planning. Students' notebooks reviewed by the IIT indicate inconsistent use of feedback by teachers. During the review team's formal examination of student work samples, the IIT noted that only one of the six students received formative assessment feedback. Additionally, in the 40 classroom visits conducted by the IIT, the review team saw few examples of teachers providing verbal formative assessment feedback. The absence of a comprehensive plan to use assessment data to consistently inform instruction limits opportunities for teachers to adjust plans to meet identified student needs and hinders academic progress.

**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**

**I**

**Debriefing Statement:**

Teachers do not present strategic instructional practices involving unit and lesson plans that result in high levels of engagement, thinking, and achievement. Instruction and learning are not supported by data that informs and guides lessons to the needs of diverse groups of students. Current instructional practices limit opportunities for all students to experience high level of engagement, thinking, and achievement.

**Strengths:**

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

**Areas for Improvement:**

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

- School leaders do not ensure that teachers engage in consistent conversations about producing and sharing plans, so that their instruction is aligned with data about students. During classroom visits reviewers found that while a few teachers used a variety of methods to present their lessons; most teachers used low-level questionings and presented lessons that lacked rigor. The review team also noted that in most classes, students did not engage in complex thinking or problem solving and instead relied on the teacher for step-by-step instructions. The IIT found that most lessons were teacher led and provided few opportunities for students to work independently with minimal support from the teacher. Students are not encouraged to practice basic writing skills as routine behavior. During classroom observations and the review of students' written work, reviewers found few examples of where students wrote a first draft and then developed further, through creative discussion or editing, a second or final draft. In addition, the review team did not see evidence in lesson plans or student work of short-or long-term goal targets for students. During discussions with the IIT about student work folders, students were not able to articulate their respective targets or goals. Current instructional practices do not promote high levels of engagement, thinking, and inquiry in students, which impedes academic progress.

4.3 **The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* 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' lesson plans do not provide multiple points of access for all students. During interviews, staff specifically indicated to the review team they had minimal understanding of CCLS. In addition, during classroom observations the review team found that most teachers' lessons did not stimulate students to use higher-order skills or show evidence of the CCLS instructional shifts. During class visits, the review team found evidence of CCLS-based instruction with multiple points of access in only two out of 40 lessons. The majority of lessons observed by the IIT lacked complex learning materials and activities that challenge students at a range of levels appropriate to their needs and stages of development. In one ELA lesson, the teacher gave a writing assignment that most students completed very quickly, but the students' drafts contained many errors. The teacher then asked students to complete the last paragraph of the writing assignment for homework; however, students were allowed to work on the assignment in class. The review team observed that half of the class finished the assignment before the end of the class period. In a math lesson, the teacher's introduction of the lesson on features of proportions was understood very quickly by almost half the class, but all students were kept waiting for several minutes for the other students before moving forward in the lesson. In these examples, teachers did not provide lessons that differentiated to address the varying skill level of students. In the 40 classroom visits, the IIT saw limited peer-to-peer dialogues, extended writing, or instruction that stimulated students towards deeper conceptual understanding. Class instruction is often presented at the knowledge-recall level and class activities frequently involved worksheet completion. Teacher practices provided minimal

opportunities for students to consistently experience challenging lessons that address individual student strengths and needs, which can hinder academic achievement.

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

- The school staff does not consistently promote a learning environment that is responsive to students' different experiences and varied needs. During discussions with the IIT, school staff and students were not able to articulate how any plan was occurring throughout the school or translated into the classrooms beyond the discipline code. During class visits, the IIT found that teachers focus primarily on discipline and control rather than on positive classroom management and high-level learning. The review team noted that hall monitors, social workers, and guidance counselors effectively controlled students' behavior in the hallways and other areas of the school. However, in five classrooms visited by the IIT, students' distracting and inappropriate behaviors impeded the progress of the lesson. Teachers have taken steps, in varying degrees, to keep their classrooms well organized and to display learning aids to support students. However, not all teachers consistently use displays. Teachers through the grades do not display or make explicit overlapping linkages to demonstrate key points in progression from year to year, nor do they emphasize the standards expected of students based on both prior learning and the CCLS. During classroom visits, the review team did not see evidence that teachers use strategies and organizational plans designed to meet the needs of differing groups of students. In addition, the review team found that many lessons were conducted at a slow pace, and while students were compliant, they were not engaged. School constituents indicate the school is generally safe. However, the current learning environment does not encourage students to become engaged as active learners, which limits opportunities for students to grow and develop.

4.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** Teachers inform planning and foster students' participation in their own learning process by using a variety of summative and formative data sources (e.g., screening, interim measures, and progress monitoring).

- Teachers use summative assessments to guide their instructional planning. However, the school does not have a policy or process for managing information gained during lessons and creating a coherent assessment system that can be used to ensure continuity and progression. The range of summative and formative data sources is narrow, particularly for formative assessments. The review team found that grading of student work, with specific feedback, is limited. Although teachers' verbal feedback to students is positive, it does not point students to specific next steps in their learning or to the skill practices most needed for them to improve. The IIT's discussions with students indicate that students have few opportunities to assess their own progress. Students indicated that they receive teachers' comments and grades on assignments, but they did not

describe how they used this information to engage in and further their own learning. Formative assessment techniques are not used frequently, particularly in writing and math. In an ELA lesson observed by the IIT, the teacher missed an opportunity to engage students in reflective assessment while they worked individually and in groups, on drafting and editing. In math, formative assessment techniques are not evident in exploration and inquiry. Limited opportunities for students to engage in their own academic process as critical self-learners, diminishes opportunities for them to increase their academic 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**

**I**

**Debriefing Statement:**

The school community acknowledges the importance of social and emotional developmental health; however, the lack of effective systems to promote social and emotional health limits students in their ability to overcome social and emotional barriers and achieve academic success.

**Strengths:**

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

**Areas for Improvement:**

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

- The school lacks an overarching system to support staff in understanding the social and emotional developmental health needs of students. While the school has multiple programs that support students’ social and emotional developmental health, the school lacks a comprehensive vision for social and emotional developmental health that allows the school to strategically organize its efforts to support all students. During interviews with the IIT, staff indicated that students know which staff they should seek when problems arise. However, staff members shared inconsistent responses as to how they identify and respond to students’ social and emotional needs. During the review, IIT members observed hall monitors supervising the corridors between classes and at breakfast sessions. The review team noticed that many of the hall monitors and some other adults actively engaged students in conversations. However, not all staff members set this example and observations during the review indicate relationships between students and staff members are

inconsistent. The school has an electronic system for logging referrals. According to the school leader, just over 50 referrals have been recorded since September 2013 for minor incidents and another 12 for more serious behaviors such as fighting. Support staff members reported to the IIT that they use different referral procedures, because the current system does not track who refers the students. During discussions with the IIT, staff indicated that hall monitors, social workers, and guidance counselors provide support and interventions promptly, when incidents occur. However, these staff actions are reactive rather than proactive. Current systems to support the social and developmental health of students are reactive and fragmented. One consequence of an incomplete, overarching system to support the social and emotional developmental needs of students is that students are receiving inconsistent services to support and sustain these needs, which can impede academic achievement.

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

- School leaders have not established a well-understood and consistent school-wide process for behavioral and academic interventions. During interviews, the IIT found that the support staff knows the students well and that the school provides activities and programs to support social and emotional developmental health but this has not led to the establishment of structures that provide supports for students in a systematic way. The IIT reviewed documents including the handbooks for students and parents, which indicate that the school emphasizes the “do not’s” rather than the “dos.” Initial disciplinary intervention is not consistently applied across all classes, which limits effectiveness. During discussions with the review team, some students voiced concerns about the school procedures. Almost all students in the group raised their hands to say they had witnessed bullying. In addition, one student shared comments about suffering from racial stereotyping. The IIT did not find evidence of a plan to share best practices or use PD to build capacity among staff. Current practices do not promote a positive and healthy school culture, which hinders academic success.

5.4 **The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* 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 know and understand their roles in working together to develop a common understanding that promotes a culture of lifelong learning linked to social and emotional developmental health. The IIT’s discussions with students and staff reflect that there is no clear understanding of the assigned role each should play in ensuring that the school’s vision of providing a safe environment is achieved. While the school distributed a Parent Guide to families outlining

parent roles and school procedures, the parents interviewed by the IIT were unable to communicate their role in promoting the school’s vision and improving the learning environment. The four parents who attended the meeting with the IIT indicated that the school does not facilitate opportunities for parental participation in this process. The parents noted that daytime meetings are difficult for working parents, especially when many live a distance from the school. One parent told reviewers that she believes it is incumbent on the school to attempt to overcome the existing barriers to parent involvement so that parents can share ownership of students’ education. Not all stakeholders know and understand their role in promoting a shared vision for social and emotional developmental health, which hinders the ability of all constituents to work together to meet students’ needs.

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

- Reviewers learned through discussions with school leaders, staff and students that the school’s student support staff work well together and that they respond quickly to the needs of students. However, the IIT did not find evidence of a comprehensive written plan to use data to track students’ progress socially, emotionally or academically. While a Crisis Team Committee meets to review data on student social and emotional development, a review of documents by the IIT and discussions with staff indicate that gaps exist in the communication of data between teachers, student support staff, including hall monitors, and school leaders. During discussions with the review team, staff reported that the school does not have a proactive comprehensive plan and acknowledged they use reactive approaches to respond to students’ concerns. The lack of a comprehensive plan to collect, share and use data across the school, limits opportunities for staff to work together to address concerns and make adjustments to support the academic and social and emotional growth of students and this can impede academic achievement.

**Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement:** The school creates a culture of partnership where families, community members, and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being.

**Tenet Rating**

**I**

**Debriefing Statement:**

The school has not created a culture of partnerships where families, community members, and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for students’ academic progress and their social and emotional well-being.

**Strengths:**

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

**Areas for Improvement:**

6.2 **The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* 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 does not consistently communicate to parents and other stakeholders the school's high expectations for students' academic achievement that align with the CCLS. The parents and some staff who spoke to the review team voiced concerns about the lack of opportunity for collaborative learning and partnership development across the school community. The school initiates conversations with parents and their children, but parents reported that staff are not flexible in their availability to promote such meetings effectively. According to parents, current conversations between families and school staff do not promote an understanding of the high expectations being demanded by the CCLS. . The relationship between the school and families is not contributing positively to the goal of students reaching proficiency levels necessary for the challenges of high school.

6.3 **The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* for this Statement of Practice:** The school engages in effective planning and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders so that student strengths and needs are identified and used to augment learning.

- The school has not ensured that all families can communicate reciprocally with the school. Evidence gathered from staff interviews indicates that the school does not consider the language barriers of all families represented at the school. Necessary school documents are not widely translated and sent to all families who need them. Parents with computers can go on PowerSchool to become more involved. However, staff and parents reported that few parents have access to a computer and therefore minimally use the parent portal. Parents interviewed by the IIT shared that translation services are offered in only one language. While the school distributes communication through multiple avenues, such as the school newsletter, mailings, and the school website, the IIT found the communication to be one way and not reciprocal. Though parents do meet with teachers at conferences, the parents interviewed and the documents reviewed indicated there are minimal opportunities for parents to provide their input to the school. The school does not ensure that all parents can access information equally, which limits opportunities for parents to support their children's academic achievement and social and emotional developmental growth.

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 is not successful in building effective partnerships with parents and community agencies to support student success. . Although the school staff shared that a recent evening orientation meeting for grade eight parents was well attended, generally parental involvement is very low. The school leader reported to the IIT, that only one parent has been on the school’s Building Leadership Team over the past three years. The four parents interviewed by the IIT suggested that there have been few attempts to accommodate parents . Though three informational meetings are held in the evening each year and the school has partnerships with several organizations during interviews none of the staff or parents were able to articulate the partnerships within the school. The parents who were interviewed acknowledged that the responsibility to inspire and lead the learning community into being successful is a shared one between school and the wider community of stakeholders. It was expressed strongly by one parent and supported by others that workshops to share with parents the “what and how” of their children’s learning would appeal to the parents of children in the school and those entering the school. Through discussions with staff and review of PD documents, the IIT learned that staff has not had specific professional training on developing effective partnership with families and the community. The lack of the full understanding of the school’s partnerships, along with the lack of PD to build staff capacity, limits the development of home-school relationships, which negatively impacts students’ academic and social 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.

An analysis of school documentation and meetings with teachers and school leaders show that the school staff does not promote an “information-rich” culture. The IIT reviewed correspondence sent to parents, which indicates that the school provides parents with limited information regarding students’ academic, social, and emotional growth. In addition, the school staff does not share information about various aspects and measures that contribute to the growth and achievement of students. Although some teachers and support staff indicate that data is necessary for the school to make the improvements that are required, most staff lack access to the data necessary to meet individual needs of students and to support progress. During discussions with the IIT, the school leader shared that the school is developing an improved mechanism to share data including the expanded school website and programs such as PowerSchool. These plans are intended to provide a better platform for sharing information with parents. However, in their present format, these plans fall short of promoting an effective dialogue on student data. The current systems do not adequately inform families about their children’s learning needs, which hinders the ability of the families to advocate for their children from an informed position.

## **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: Establish systems, through the engagement of the entire school community, to create a shared vision statement and school goals focused on high expectations for students' learning and success based on performance data. Develop a plan, within the scope of the SCEP, for the implementation of improved instructional and learning practices, and for monitoring progress towards the achievement of these goals on a quarterly basis.
- 2.3: Deploy resources systematically to meet the varying needs of students and create a positive school culture focused on high expectations for academic success and positive behaviors for learning across the school community.
- 2.4: Write a schedule and establish a process to provide timely and written feedback through frequent instructional walkthroughs and formal observations aligned to the APPR. Ensure that the systems are rigorously applied and monitor for the impact on improving student achievement.
- 2.5: Revisit the SCEP and develop an evidence-based system to adjust and monitor school-wide practices around improving instruction, supporting students' social and emotional development health, and raising students' achievement. Assess the impact on student achievement and preparing students for college.

### **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: In collaboration with district initiatives, fully support and engage in the implementation of CCLS curricula. Hold all staff accountable. Delineate the foundational skills (speaking, reading, writing, and math) necessary to implement the instructional shifts required by CCLS, so that students are prepared for high school and subsequently become college and career ready.
- 3.3: Develop unit and lesson plans based on multiple sources of data, and monitor and adjust curricula to meet the needs of all students. Monitor and review unit and lesson plans to ensure the CCLS are implemented consistently across the school.

- 3.4: Extend the time allocated for team collaboration and develop a note taking system to share information among teams. Provide a school-wide direction and identify outcomes for interdisciplinary curricula and partnerships that target the arts, technology, and enrichment opportunities and lead to improvements in student achievement and engagement.
- 3.5: Establish individual student learning targets based on data and other evidence of students' prior learning. Ensure formative assessment is a regular part of class lessons. Include student self-assessment and peer-assessments. Incorporate discussion of assessments and the results in team meetings. Provide specific feedback to students to support their ownership of progress toward their individual learning targets.

#### **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: Ensure school and teacher leaders support teachers in aligning their planning to data about student achievement. Provide grade-level expectations for planning. Monitor lesson plans to ensure that plans include adaptations for different learning needs and styles, and provide instructional interventions for students as indicated by data analysis.
- 4.3 Incorporate the CCLS instructional shifts into lesson plans and daily teaching to stimulate student thinking through the use of higher-order skills and complex learning materials and activities.
- 4.4 Develop explicit classroom management expectations that are shared across the entire school community. Develop teacher strategies that meet the needs of diverse groups of students.
- 4.5 Expand the use of data to inform student groupings and instructional strategies so that adaptive and flexible teaching challenges learners and clarifies the next steps students should take.

#### **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: Build on the positive relationships that many of the school personnel have with the students by developing a systematic, school-wide system that will promote and sustain students' social and emotional growth and academic success.
- 5.3: Incorporate research-based practices to facilitate the teaching of student social and emotional developmental health. Work with the district to provide a school-wide tiered approach to promote positive and healthy school culture.
- 5.4: Write and implement clear protocols and processes that identify the roles of all stakeholders, to ensure support of the school's vision regarding the social and emotional developmental health of students.
- 5.5: Devise a clear process to ensure that data is shared and informs a coherent plan to address students' social and emotional developmental health needs. Ensure that the plan is accessible and used by both the teaching team and student support staff to develop a fully coordinated approach to improve students' outcomes.

#### **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: Communicate with parents and other stakeholders using a variety of means, to share the high expectations for students' academic achievements in-line with school goals.
- 6.3: Provide opportunities for parents to share in the education of their children by offering multiple avenues of communication. Engage parents in an authentic dialogue regarding how to support student progress, achievement, and needs. Translate all documents and provide translation services for families, as needed.
- 6.4: Create a plan with calendar of training, for both staff and parents, to build partnerships toward an inclusive and focused home-school connection. Survey parents in a variety of ways to ensure plan meets their needs.
- 6.5: Develop and implement a robust, accessible data system that provides families with information regarding their children's learning needs and successes, and enables them to advocate for and support their children.