



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

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



<b>BEDS Code</b>	331600010534
<b>School Name</b>	The Academy of Instructional Technology
<b>School Address</b>	787 Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11221
<b>District Name</b>	New York City Public Schools, District 16
<b>School Leader</b>	Ativia Sandusky
<b>Dates of Review</b>	January 29 – 31, 2014
<b>School Accountability Status</b>	Focus School
<b>Type of Review</b>	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

### School Information Sheet

School Configuration (2013-14)			
Grade Configuration	06,07,08	Total Enrollment	151
		SIG Recipient	N/A
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2013-14)			
# Transitional Bilingual	N/A	# Dual Language	N/A
		# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	N/A
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2013-14)			
# Special Classes	2	# SETSS	N/A
		# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	1
Types and Number of Special Classes (2013-14)			
# Visual Arts	N/A	# Music	N/A
		# Drama	N/A
# Foreign Language	N/A	# Dance	N/A
		# CTE	N/A
School Composition (2012-13)			
% Title I Population	80.4%	% Attendance Rate	88.5%
% Free Lunch	91.0%	% Reduced Lunch	2.3%
% Limited English Proficient	5.1%	% Students with Disabilities	20.9%
Racial/Ethnic Origin (2012-13)			
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0.6%	% Black or African American	77.4%
% Hispanic or Latino	22.0%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	N/A
% White	N/A	% Multi-Racial	N/A
Personnel (2012-13)			
Years Principal Assigned to School	0.34	# of Assistant Principals	1
# of Deans	1	# of Counselors/Social Workers	1
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	N/A	% Teaching Out of Certification	10.3%
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	N/A	Average Teacher Absences	9.1
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2012-13)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	3.6%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	3.0%
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	N/A	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	63.1%
Student Performance for High Schools (2011-12)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	N/A	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	N/A
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2012-13)			
% of 1st year students who earned 10+ credits	N/A	% of 2nd year students who earned 10+ credits	N/A
% of 3rd year students who earned 10+ credits	N/A	4 Year Graduation Rate	N/A
6 Year Graduation Rate	N/A		
Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2012-13)			
Reward		Recognition	
In Good Standing		Local Assistance Plan	
Focus District	X	Focus School Identified by a Focus District	X
Priority School			

### Accountability Status – Elementary and Middle Schools

Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (2011-12)			
American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	Black or African American	No
Hispanic or Latino	No	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	N/A
White	N/A	Multi-Racial	N/A
Students with Disabilities	No	Limited English Proficient	N/A
Economically Disadvantaged	No		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (2011-12)			
American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	Black or African American	No
Hispanic or Latino	No	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	N/A
White	N/A	Multi-Racial	N/A
Students with Disabilities	N/A	Limited English Proficient	N/A
Economically Disadvantaged	No		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (2011-12)			
American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	Black or African American	No
Hispanic or Latino	N/A	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	N/A
White	N/A	Multi-Racial	N/A
Students with Disabilities	N/A	Limited English Proficient	N/A
Economically Disadvantaged	Yes		

**SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE SCHOOL:**

1. By June 2014, the principal will conduct a minimum of six informal or one formal/four informal classroom observations and provide teachers with formative feedback and professional development to support improved practice in competencies across the Danielson framework.
2. By June 2014, teacher teams will design and implement curriculum units in math, ELA, social studies and science that include rigorous assessment tasks engaging students and in alignment with CCLS as evidenced by

tasks, assessment analysis, classroom observations, and teacher-team evaluations. Curriculum units will contain multiple entry points and various assessment methods ensuring access for ALL learners, with a specific focus for the bottom third, English language learners (ELL) and students with disabilities.

3. By June 2014, all students, including the ELL and students with disabilities will demonstrate progress toward achieving State standards as measured by a five percent increase in students scoring at Levels 3 & 4 on the NYS ELA assessment.
4. By June 2014, the whole school attendance rate will improve by at least 3 percent as measured in the school's Annual Attendance Report.
5. In the 2013-2014 NYCDOE School Survey Report, parental response rate will increase 10 percent.

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
2.2	The school leader ensures that the school community shares the Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) goals/mission, and long-term vision inclusive of core values that address the priorities outlined in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP).		X		
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.		X		
2.4	The school leader has a fully functional system in place aligned to the district's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) to conduct targeted and frequent observation and track progress of teacher practices based on student data and feedback.		X		
2.5	Leaders effectively use evidence-based systems and structures to examine and improve critical individual and school-wide practices as defined in the SCEP (student achievement, curriculum and teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health).			X	
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 2:</b>			<b>E</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.			X	
3.3	Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans used include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.			X	
3.4	The school leader and teachers have developed a comprehensive plan for teachers to partner within and across all grades and subjects to create interdisciplinary curricula targeting the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities.			X	
3.5	Teachers implement a comprehensive system for using formative and summative assessments for strategic short and long-range curriculum planning that involves student reflection, tracking of, and ownership of learning.			X	

	<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 3:</b>			<b>D</b>	
<b>Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions:</b> 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.					
<b>#</b>	Statement of Practice	<b>H</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>I</b>
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	
	<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 4:</b>			<b>D</b>	
<b>Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health:</b> 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.					
<b>#</b>	Statement of Practice	<b>H</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>I</b>
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	
	<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:</b>			<b>D</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.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
6.2	The school leader ensures that regular communication with students and families fosters their high expectations for student academic achievement.			X	
6.3	The school engages in effective planning and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders so that student strength and needs are identified and used to augment learning.			X	
6.4	The school community partners with families and community agencies to promote and provide training across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.			X	
6.5	The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.			X	
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:</b>				<b>D</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>E</b>
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**Debriefing Statement:** The school leader has developed a vision and school mission that gives the school an identity as a professional learning community. Most teachers, students, and parents have adopted and articulated this vision. The school leader has strategically deployed available resources to improve instruction and maximize opportunities for enrichment. The school culture has been transformed to emphasize high expectations in an academically and emotionally safe environment. Nevertheless, some subgroups of students are not sufficiently challenged.

**Strengths:**

2.2 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader ensures that the school community shares the Specific, Measurable, Achievable, 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 has communicated the school vision, long-term mission, and goals, which are shared with members of the school community. This was evidenced through consistent statements during the student, teacher, and parent focus group meetings, who articulated their knowledge and understanding of vision, mission, and goals. The school mission is prominently posted in the hallways and classrooms. The school leader has created a data-driven instructional culture through individual goal-setting meetings with all teachers. Goals are established based on student achievement data. During common planning periods, coaches, inquiry teams, and subject teams analyze student data in order to identify any weaknesses in student performance and to plan instruction accordingly. The school leader has purchased and introduced assessment data programs, for example, *Degrees of Reading Power* (DRP) and the *Light Sail* literacy program and both are used to adjust instruction and address specific skills. Through observations of lessons, walk-throughs, and conferences, the school leader closely monitors and evaluates the work of the teams and individual teachers to ensure progress toward instructional goals are met. Students reported in their focus groups that they meet individually with teachers to establish and discuss their instructional goals and plans to achieve them. The school culture has been transformed, establishing the foundation for a professional learning community with a shared vision and core values.

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

- Through data analysis, the school leader makes strategic resource decisions to improve student achievement. The school leader is the sole school leader who has established a leadership team and has made personnel changes to improve the instructional program. The leadership team includes the school leader and those in the newly created positions for literacy and mathematics coaches, and a science lead teacher. The school leader undertook the financial decision to keep class size

below 20 students to maximize individual attention to student needs. The school allocates funds to receive intensive services from its network Partnership Services Organization (PSO) and Center of Educational Excellence that have provided school benefits such as professional development (PD), instructional consultants, a data specialist, and an administrative consultant. Through the school-based option (SBO) process, the school has effectively integrated academic intervention services (AIS) into the regular school day on Mondays and Tuesdays. The school leader successfully used funds to establish after school mathematics and literacy assistance, a Saturday Academy for test preparation and after-school clubs that have helped boost student achievement and engagement. The school leader secured additional funding to purchase additional SMARTboards for classrooms, that aid both instruction and student achievement. In her one and one-half year tenure at the school, the school leader has made strategic resource decisions that are more effectively addressing the needs of the school community.

2.4 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* 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 established a system of teacher self-assessment, an observation cycle, and administrative evaluation and support in implementing the *Danielson Framework* and the new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). To achieve this, the school leader met with all teachers in September 2013 to analyze their self-assessments and to formulate PD goals collaboratively that align with the *Danielson Framework* domains. The school leader maintains a chart indicating dates of formal and informal observations, post-observation conferences, and areas of teacher strengths and deficiencies. Both the school leader and teachers reported that the leadership provides meaningful and actionable recommendations for improving instructional practice. These recommendations form part of the focus for future observations. *Advance*, the NYC APPR initiative, provides the school leader with additional data to monitor teacher progress and to ensure that structures for improving instruction are embedded in practice. Through *Skedula*, the school leader and staff monitor the relative effectiveness of teacher practices based on student progress data and additional observations or guidance and counseling are provided for teachers that may be struggling. The school leader also ensures that there is close alignment between information gained from the observation process and targeted PD activities for individual and groups of teachers. PD is seen by teachers and school leaders alike as a vehicle for improving instruction and student learning and enables teachers to feel responsible for their own development and accountable to improve student achievement.

**Areas for Improvement:**

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).

- Although the school leader, coaches, and outside consultants provide PD on the use of

interconnected evidence-based systems to aid student achievement, the impact is not evident in terms of consistent school-wide practices and notable improved student achievement. Systems are not consistently in place that allows the school leader to assess accurately how well the school is performing and to take appropriate actions to address weaknesses and to disseminate good practice. Based on the school leader interview and statements at the teacher and students' focus groups, teachers' annual goals and mid-year review insufficiently address the instructional and social-emotional needs of English language learners (ELL) and students with disabilities. The staff collaborates in weekly content inquiry team and cabinet meetings (school leader and coaches), and monthly grade meetings to seek to improve individual and school-wide practices as defined by the school comprehensive educational plan (SCEP). However, a review of the school program and team class visits revealed that staff practices are inconsistent, negatively affecting academic goals and student achievement, especially the instructional and social-emotional needs of the ELL and students with disabilities students.

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

**Tenet Rating**

**D**

**Debriefing Statement:** The school is seeking to align its curriculum with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) but instruction is not consistently rigorous for all students and subgroups. Some teachers use detailed information on student progress to plan the curriculum and instruction for all students but this practice is not widespread. While PD has been provided by coaches and outside consultants on how to align unit and lesson plans with CCLS and the use of data to plan instruction to improve student outcomes, the practice is inconsistent. Efforts have been made to establish better links between subjects but these links are tenuous and are not sufficiently modified to address the needs of all students.

**Strengths:**

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

**Areas for Improvement:**

3.2 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader ensures and supports the quality implementation of a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.

- The school has begun to align the curriculum with the CCLS and a formal plan is being developed to establish consistency across the school. However, work still needs to be done to ensure that the planned curriculum meets the needs of all groups of students. The school purchased and implemented the *Expeditionary Learning* and *Math in Focus: Singapore Math* curricula that support the CCLS. Teachers submit unit and lesson plans aligned with the CCLS that are evaluated and generated reflection and recommendations for modification. Based on findings from the teacher

focus group meetings, teachers formulate targeted goals that address the academic needs of all subgroups except for the ELL and students with disabilities. The school leader has established a schedule of support that includes observations and post-observation conferences. Individual and group PD is provided by coaches and outside consultants. Opportunities are also provided for staff collaboration to support the implementation of CCLS. However, evidence from observations indicates that these efforts and support strategies are not resulting in a consistent implementation of CCLS. Unit and lesson planning is not translating into instruction that fully reflects the demands of CCLS or in helping students to be college and career ready. This is particularly the case in terms of the curriculum provided for the ELL and IEP students that does not adequately reflect their diverse needs. The situation is compounded by a lack of thorough evaluation by school leaders as to the effectiveness of implementation of CCLS.

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 are beginning to collaborate, to develop lesson and unit plans and instruction based on student progress data and using DDI protocols. However, this practice is at an early stage, and it is not exerting enough influence to provide a curriculum and instruction that fully meets the needs of students. The mathematics and literacy coaches are starting to provide English language arts (ELA) and mathematics teachers with an analysis of student responses on the State assessments. The inquiry and subject teams are beginning to analyze student work, student, State, and local assessment data to plan instruction and establish next steps based on student needs. However, this is not uniformly reflected in teaching and learning in classrooms where there is an absence of DDI, and where teachers do not routinely use a variety of learning materials, matched to the needs of students, that are both challenging and engaging. However, although unit and lesson plans address higher order thinking skills (HOTS), the review team classroom visits revealed that teachers inconsistently integrated the standards or HOTS into classroom practice. Although teachers use the *Understanding by Design* to write unit and lesson plans aligned to the CCLS and The *Light Sail* program is starting to be implemented to support intervention for small group guided reading activities the needs of the ELL students are inconsistently met by the ELL staff and classroom teachers. Although, the school leader suggested the staff use a lesson plan format aligned with the *Danielson Framework* and the CCLS, a review of plans submitted indicated that the format is not being used by most teachers resulting in inconsistent practice. As a result, targeted instruction is implemented inconsistently and does not reflect the CCLS sufficiently, limiting student achievement.

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.

- The content and inquiry teams meet weekly to collaborate but there is limited interdisciplinary instruction and little integration with the arts. The grade-six inquiry team is in the initial stages of planning interdisciplinary instruction. The school partners with *Partnership for the Arts* to bring a

resident artist to work weekly with students and partners with the *Center for Arts Education* to bring an after-school drum line club to the school. However, collaboration between these providers and teachers is minimal. Although the school has a Mac computer lab, there is little collaboration between the technology teacher and other subject teachers. Teachers have received PD from *Expeditionary Learning* consultants in how to write unit and, lesson plans and how to integrate writing activities in social studies lessons. In practice, these efforts are not being reflected in the classroom, as observations indicate that there are too few interdisciplinary learning activities that engage the students' interest, and challenge their thinking. While the school is developing, a more formal approach to effective integrated learning there is currently an absence of integrating arts and technology into curricula across all grade levels and core subjects that adversely affects student opportunities for 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.

- Teacher teams are beginning to have conversations on how to use data along with formative and summative assessments to make curriculum and instructional decisions. Further, the school provides teachers with analysis of State ELA and mathematics examination data. However, this information is not used effectively in most classrooms. Unit and lesson plans revealed some use of data in the planning process but it was not used to best effect in the classroom to match closely activities and tasks to the learning needs and abilities of different groups of students. This inhibits academic growth. Numerous teachers used entrance and exit slips as a means to assess student knowledge prior and subsequent to a lesson but few used the information to amend curricular planning. Although some teachers talk with individual students to set goals and monitor progress, students at their focus groups stated that most students did not take sufficient ownership for their own learning. A great deal of student work displayed in classrooms exhibited some form of feedback and next steps based on posted rubrics. However, much of the work had many errors that had not been identified or corrected. Student work shared at the small focus group revealed inconsistent feedback from teachers and students stated that they received little data based feedback to enable them to make gains in test and assessments. Consequently, the curriculum, instruction, and assessment are insufficiently aligned causing student achievement to slow.

**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:** Although teachers meet in a variety of teams to review student work, analyze data, plan instruction, and develop strategies to improve student achievement, not all students in subgroups receive appropriate and adapted instruction. Teachers are just beginning to provide instruction that increases student engagement and promotes higher order thinking skills.

### **Strengths:**

All ratings for this Tenet are **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 leader demonstrates the importance of the use of data to make curriculum decisions and develop unit and lesson plans for many, but not all groups of students. The school leader has identified level two students on the cusp of level three and targeted them for assistance with some success. By the computer application, *Skedula*, teachers are beginning to use data to plan instruction and create assessments that strategically address student needs. However, the ELL and students with disabilities students do not receive the same level of targeted instruction. Led by the coaches, *Looking at student work* protocols have been implemented by inquiry teams and content teams to assess student work and plan more accordingly but the information gained on the different levels students are working at is not being used well to plan instructional strategies and interventions in the classroom that lead to improvements in student academic growth. The school leaders recognize that more PD is needed for teachers on how to analyze student work and data in order to tailor instruction more closely to the needs of students. Although the school leader has emphasized the importance of goal setting, teachers and coaches have not developed or established consistent individual short or long-term goals for all groups of students. The identified weaknesses mean that teachers insufficiently use data or goal setting to base instruction around their students' strengths and deficiencies that limits student engagement and academic 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.

- A review of teacher unit and lesson plans revealed some developing alignment to CCLS. *Expeditionary Learning* and *Math in Focus* plans were noticeably aligned to CCLS that included instruction strategies matched more closely to student needs. Although teachers received training in writing, *Understanding by Design* plans aligned with the CCLS, the review team observed little classroom evidence of this practice. Class visits revealed few activities that required complex and critical thinking by students. Instead, the level of questioning was often low level and required little sophisticated or extended answers from students. Too often teachers expected and received one or two word answers to questions and were not ready to ask students for extended answers that would provide a deeper awareness of student knowledge and understanding. Observations indicated that in few classrooms teachers were using learning materials that contained high levels of text and content complexity and so opportunities were missed to extend student thinking and learning. Grouping was evident in some classrooms but instruction did not cater for different

groups of students and there was little instruction that provided multiple points of access for different groups of students, particularly the ELL and students with disabilities. Consequently, this low-level instruction insufficiently engages student learning or interest and negatively influences achievement.

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.

- The school has developed a learning environment where most students expressed the freedom and ability to ask questions and make errors. Expectations for students are consistently communicated and shared by staff. The school has adopted the motto, SOAR, which stands for Studious, Organized, Articulate, and Responsible. The school leader publicly reinforces this regularly and SOAR posters are displayed in every classroom and the hallways. Students enthusiastically articulated the SOAR motto at the student focus group meetings. The review team class visits revealed some classrooms that adapt instruction to student needs based on jointly developed academic goals. Some teachers plan and provide instruction adapted to the varying needs of diverse groups of students, but the needs of the ELL and students with disabilities are not always catered for. Teachers however, have begun to discuss strategies at their inquiry and content area meetings to begin to address the diverse needs of sub-groups of students. All students expressed knowledge that misbehavior had serious consequences. Comments at the student focus group meeting revealed that they believe that a vast improvement in the school tone and safety has taken place in just one year. However, the school has just begun to change its culture so that students take greater responsibility for their actions and expect to be held accountable. Although, the school increasingly provides an intellectually and physically safe environment for all students it is not yet fully embedded.

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

- A review of teacher unit and lesson plans revealed some use of flexible grouping and varying instructional strategies to meet the needs of students. However, the same level of adaptations were not seen in class visits and there was often a clear disconnect between what was planned and the instructional strategies delivered. The inquiry teams have begun to analyze data but the information is yet to be used consistently to inform instructional plans and strategies. Teachers received training in the use of *Skedula* to analyze data and create CCLS aligned examinations. However, few teachers fully utilize this tool to inform data driven instructional practices. A few teachers regularly talk with students to establish academic goals, monitor progress toward them, and make necessary adjustments. However, this good practice is the exception rather than the norm. The quality and frequency of feedback to students is too variable to have a consistent impact on improving student achievement. Although there are some good examples of developmental and constructive feedback, it is not commonplace. Feedback is generally not used to provide clear guidance on what students need to do to improve or achieve at a higher level. Students are not given numerous opportunities to reflect upon or assess their own progress and this results in

students taking little or no accountability for their own learning and 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**

**D**

**Debriefing Statement:** The school has grown into a safe and orderly learning environment. Although the school community promotes student social-emotional well-being, the school leader is working with staff to develop a system that consistently addresses the social-emotional needs of all students. Inconsistent professional development for adults provides insufficient training and opportunities, which limits their ability and skills to help students develop relationships that foster learning.

**Strengths:**

5.4 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** All school stakeholders work together to develop a common understanding of the importance of their contributions in creating a school community that is safe, conducive to learning, and fostering of a sense of ownership for providing social and emotional developmental health supports tied to the school's vision.

- Students, teachers, and most parents share the school leader's vision for creating and maintaining a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning. The school leader, leadership team (SLT) and network staff analyzed data and responses on the *2012 – 2013 Learning Environment Survey* to identify any deficiencies and plan strategic responses. The discipline code is applied to all student sub-groups and discussions with students indicate that they have a growing and more embedded understanding that they have a pivotal role to play in ensuring that the school provides a safe learning environment. Statements by the school leader and by teachers in focus groups revealed that they understand their roles, feel supported, and take responsibility for creating a safe learning community. Discussions with parents indicated that they too recognize the role they have to play in supporting the school vision for a learning culture based on respect and acceptance of others. Protocols for student discipline are known by staff. A comprehensive system to monitor and respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs is developing but work still needs to be done. However, efforts to date to have a shared school vision and goal have played an important role in the school's moves to create a safe learning community.

**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.

- While students in focus groups cited numerous adults they were comfortable approaching for assistance, there is no formalized system in place. Individual students do not connect with at least one assigned adult. The guidance counselor provides a weekly *push-in advisory program* to students covering relevant adolescent development topics. However, there is no set curriculum for

this program. The school leader cited student assemblies on social-emotional development topics that were not mentioned by either teachers or students. There were differences between what services students cited as being available and what services the support team cited. Although there is a disciplinary referral protocol, students were not aware of the discipline code. Referral of students with social-emotional needs is informal with little monitoring. The student support team is extremely knowledgeable but no system of referral and follow-up has yet been established and embedded in the work of the school. The school is developing a more overarching approach to meeting the social and emotional needs of students, but is at an early stage, and does not have the best impact on improving student social and academic 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 has adopted the motto *SOAR*, which helps raise students' awareness of social and emotional developmental health. However, no curriculum has been adopted or implemented to support the teaching of social-emotional health. Suspensions in the school have fallen significantly as part of an overall improvement in safety and tone. Lunchtime detention has been instituted to provide another available consequence for student misbehavior. The review team noted inconsistent rules of conduct posted in different classrooms and these were enforced to varying degrees. Student misbehavior not tolerated in one classroom was acceptable in another. The guidance counselor provides a weekly advisory period for every class; however, no set curriculum exists for this class. Two teachers received *PBIS* training in January 2014, but how this program will be implemented across the school community has not been made clear by the school leader. Overall, there has been limited PD for staff in equipping them with the necessary skills, knowledge and expertise to best meet the social and emotional needs of different groups of students, although they did receive mandated training in preventing and identifying child abuse. Parent workshops on social-emotional development were offered, but were poorly attended. Because of these combined shortcomings, students' social-emotional development is not fully addressed.

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.

- The school is beginning to use data to address student social-emotional needs but the impact is not yet sufficient to ensure that these needs are fully met in a consistent and cohesive manner. The attendance teacher analyzes attendance data to follow-up absent students, and makes home visits. The school leader, guidance counselor, dean and parent coordinator use attendance and OORS (Online Occurrence Reporting System) data to address needs of individual students but this information is not always used effectively to devise and share strategies that are aimed primarily at making sustained improvements. School leaders have not ensured that teachers have benefited from PD to enable them to interpret data related to student social needs or to devise appropriate strategies to tackle issues highlighted in the data. In addition, data driven systems have not yet been developed to track the progress and improvement of students with social-emotional needs.

As a result, opportunities to help students make more rapid academic and emotional progress are limited.

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

**Tenet Rating**

**D**

**Debriefing Statement:** Although the school has created a welcoming culture of shared responsibility for student learning, parent engagement remains low. The school has held various events and established means of communication with students' families but the potential of these communications to strengthen links between home and school are not yet fully realized. The limited partnerships with community-based organizations reduce the availability of resources that could provide additional support to students and their families.

**Strengths:**

All ratings for this Tenet are **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 is beginning to use a plan to communicate its expectations to students and families but it is not yet successful in translating its intentions so that families are fully aware of the stated school commitment to raising academic achievement. The school has introduced some initiatives to make clear its stance on academic expectations. For example, the school is planning a trip to SUNY Binghamton for ten students to give them a better understanding of college life and aspirations. Students in the large focus group spoke of this trip as a reward and talked about the school focus to prepare them for college and "future readiness." A number of ELA classrooms had reading baskets on group tables named after colleges and the school is holding a first-ever career day in March 2014. However, parents and students stated that not all teachers discuss individually with students to reinforce high expectations for academic achievement. Although, *Pupil Path*, the online parent portal is operational and includes academic and behavioral notations from teachers, discussions with parents indicate that few parents use it and as such, the school is missing opportunities to convey its academic aspirations. This and further discussions with parents indicate that the school does not regularly review the success of its efforts in communicating with parents. As a result, a close relationship between school and most families is not yet fully realized, which diminishes the support given to foster high expectations and student academic success needed for college and career readiness.

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 is beginning to develop a strategic plan to address two-way communication with families and community stakeholders. The *Pupil Path* parent portal is linked to *Skedula*. The school posts test data, school announcements and other important information on *Pupil Path* and most teachers post homework, comments and important information on the parent portal. However, only ten percent of parents make regular use of *Pupil Path*. Important documents, relating to school events and academic issues that have been sent home were written in English only, despite the fact that a small number of the students attend the school. Teachers regularly communicate with parents via telephone but teachers and parents reported that it is often difficult to make contact because of conflicting work schedules. The school leader, parent coordinator and parents all indicated that there was poor parent attendance at all school events and a document review revealed that only one parent event, high school workshops, were offered in the morning and evening and although morning attendance at this event was good, no other morning events have been planned. Three parents are members of the SLT and contribute to some school decisions but no formal mechanism exists for these parents to share SLT agendas and discussions with other parents. The school leader has identified the necessity to assess its strategies for communicating with parents and to take on board any concerns but this has not yet been formalized and consequently the school's current inconsistent connection to parents negatively impacts on their children's academic achievement.

6.4 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school community partners with families and community agencies to promote and provide training across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.

- The school is developing a plan to teach parents how to be engaged in their children's education and support their learning and social-emotional growth but this has yet to impact in practice. The school leader has connected with *Learning Leaders* in order to bring parent volunteers into the school. However, parent volunteers have not yet provided any service to the school. The parent coordinator and some teachers have reached out to individual parents, to involve them more in their child's education but no training has consistently taken place for parents over time. The school has limited partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs) that can support families. The student support team cited numerous social service organizations in the community that can provide valuable training and resources; however, parents are not consistently referred to these organizations for services. The staff has not received PD in the area of creating partnerships with their students' families but a formalized plan to develop such procedures is being developed. The limited home-school-community connections prevent students from receiving all available support to enhance their academic and emotional growth.

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.

- The school has posted student standardized test data and attendance data on *Skedula*, which is

accessible on the parent portal, *Pupil Path*. Further, teachers have posted class test data, homework assignments and anecdotal accounts on *Skedula* that are accessible to parents. The school required that parents sign for report cards at the end of the first marking period by distributing the reports at November parent-teacher conferences. However, discussions with parents indicate that they feel that the school does not provide them with enough information about how well their child is performing academically. In addition, parents stated they do not readily access the data that is made available and that at times they have difficulty understanding exactly what messages the data is conveying. Discussions with the school leader and teachers outlined that the school does not do enough in providing support and guidance for parents in interpreting academic data. These discussions further outlined that the school is only at an early stage of working with partners to share and to respond to data pertaining to family needs. The minimal connections that have been made between the school and CBOs and the few families demonstrated that have been referred to social agencies to receive services they may need. Consequently, families have not been fully empowered so they can more effectively support their children's academic achievement.

## **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:

- 2.5: Develop a school-wide evidence-based system that effectively monitors school wide and individual practices so that school leaders gain a clear picture as to how well the school is performing. The information gained should be used to tackle weaknesses in a rigorous manner and to disseminate good practice.

### **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: Create and implement a more rigorous curriculum and instructional program for all students, especially the ELL and IEP students. Provide intensive PD on planning for rigorous instruction aligned to the CCLS for all student sub-groups and school leaders should ensure that it has a positive impact on student achievement.
- 3.3: Consistently align classroom instruction with unit and lesson plans that reflect the CCLS and focus on the development of critical thinking skills in students.
- 3.4: Ensure that individual teachers and teacher teams address integration of the arts and technology into unit and lesson plans. Inquiry and grade teams should collaboratively develop interdisciplinary lessons and units.
- 3.5: Develop and implement a comprehensive system that enables staff to use data to drive curriculum and instruction, focusing on instruction that provides multiple points of entry to match students' differing abilities and needs. School leaders should ensure that all teachers used feedback as a strategic tool for improving student learning and achievement.

### **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 all teachers use data to plan instruction more closely matched to the learning needs of all groups of students. Ensure that all teachers work with students individually to establish goals and an action plan to achieve them, followed by monitoring student progress and making strategic adjustments as needed.
- 4.3: Ensure that teachers receive further training in aligning instruction with the CCLS. Provide extensive professional development to ensure staff provides specific instruction for student sub-groups with an emphasis on the ELL and IEP students.
- 4.4: Ensure that all teachers uniformly communicate and enforce high student academic and behavioral expectations. Develop strategies that acknowledge and address the diverse needs of all students, including the ELL and IEP students.

- 4.5: Ensure all teachers meet with students individually to set and monitor progress toward learning goals and to help students take greater ownership for their own learning. Ensure teachers' use data effectively to adapt instruction to meet students' varying needs to increase student engagement and achievement.

### **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: Develop a school-wide initiative to address student social-emotional needs, and implement a systemic approach to serving students' developmental needs where each student is known by an adult member of staff. The student support team should meet on a regular basis and institute a monitored referral system for students requiring social-emotional services.
- 5.3: Plan a curriculum that addresses student social-emotional development needs actively and ensure that there are consistent rules of conduct that are established and enforced by all staff. Ensure that staff receives PD that equips them fully with the skills to meet students' social-emotional needs.
- 5.5: Ensure that teachers and support staff are equipped with the skills to analyze and use data to devise strategies, interventions, and referral processes that meet the needs of students.

### **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: Ensure that the school evaluates and modifies its methods of establishing relationships and communicating with parents so that all parents are fully aware of school academic expectations for their children and enable parents to play a more active role in helping these expectations to be realized.
- 6.3: Ensure that all parents are given multiple opportunities to participate in school life and that documents sent home must be translated into appropriate languages. School leaders should evaluate its communication channels with parents on a regular basis, make adjustments when needed and in doing so better engage parents in their children's education.
- 6.4: Provide staff with professional development on strengthening the home-school connection and connections with CBOs that will positively affect all students and their families. Further support and training should also be provided for parents to enable them to support their child's academic development.
- 6.5: Provide more support and guidance for parents to access and understand academic data relating to their child's progress so that they can work with the school in seeking to improve academic and social growth. In addition, the school should make best use of data to identify family needs and target strategies and support mechanisms to address them.