



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

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



<b>BEDS Code</b>	310100010332
<b>School Name</b>	University Neighborhood Middle School - 01M332
<b>School Address</b>	220 Henry St, New York, NY 10002
<b>District Name</b>	New York City Community School District 1
<b>School Leader</b>	Laura Castro Peynado
<b>Dates of Review</b>	March 25 - 26, 2014
<b>School Accountability Status</b>	Priority School
<b>Type of Review</b>	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

### School Information Sheet for 01M332

School Configuration (2013-14)					
Grade Configuration	06,07,08	Total Enrollment	100	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	7	# SETSS	N/A	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	13
Types and Number of Special Classes (2013-14)					
# Visual Arts	N/A	# Music	N/A	# Drama	N/A
# Foreign Language	3	# Dance	3	# CTE	N/A
School Composition (2012-13)					
% Title I Population	85.2%	% Attendance Rate	90.2%		
% Free Lunch	90.6%	% Reduced Lunch	2.6%		
% Limited English Proficient	18.8%	% Students with Disabilities	28.2%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin (2012-13)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	% Black or African American	21.4%		
% Hispanic or Latino	73.5%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3.4%		
% White	N/A	% Multi-Racial	1.7%		
Personnel (2012-13)					
Years Principal Assigned to School	4.19	# of Assistant Principals	1		
# of Deans	N/A	# of Counselors/Social Workers	1		
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	N/A	% Teaching Out of Certification	2.4%		
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	35.7%	Average Teacher Absences	2.6		
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2012-13)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	7.5%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	7.9%		
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	N/A	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	22.6%		
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			
Priority School	X				

### 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	N/A
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 Mathematics (2011-12)			
American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	Black or African American	N/A
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	N/A
Hispanic or Latino	Yes	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:

- To improve student performance in mathematics by adopting CMP3 – a DOE recommended CCLS-aligned math curriculum that emphasizes the CCLS practice standards. As a result, by June 2014, the overall percentage of students achieving proficiency in mathematics will increase by at least 30% as measured by the NYS Math

exam.

2. By June 2014, the overall percentage of students, including ELLs and Special Education students, meeting and exceeding standards will increase by at least 15% as evidenced in the NY State Exam.
3. To improve “student-to-student discussion and questioning” across all content areas. By June 2014, at least 70% of student-to-student discussion that takes place during enrichment will be facilitated by students themselves as evidenced by narrative information and video artifacts.
4. By June 2014, to improve students’ social and emotional development at UNMS as evidenced by our NYC Learning Environment Survey, especially in the areas of Safety and Respect outlined above and as evidenced by a 5% decrease in the total number of student suspensions compared to the previous academic year.
5. By June 2014, to improve communication between school and families and parent engagement to support student learning at home. The percentage of parents responding in disagreement to the areas stated above under the “Communications” and “Engagement” sections will decrease by at least 2%.

**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>E</b>		
<b>Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement:</b> 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 – Findings, Evidence, Impact and Recommendations:**

<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 articulates a shared vision focused on “students as independent learners and productive members of the community” and that reflects and values the input of all stakeholders. The school leader integrates 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology to provide actionable feedback with structures that measure accountability. This approach enables leaders to better monitor the effectiveness of staff pedagogical practice and promote student progress. While a culture to inform teacher practice based on data is not yet fully developed, teachers have begun to refine their skills and improve student outcomes.

**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, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) goals/mission, and long-term vision inclusive of core values that address the priorities outlined in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP).

**Overall Finding:**

The School Leadership Team (SLT) collaboratively created the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP). The SCEP goals are based on data review, reflect the identified needs of the school and outline the necessary steps to continually improve student achievement. Evidence from the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) review indicates that the SCEP priorities were Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) in nature.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The school leader and school stakeholders articulate a shared vision that is reinforced by the school motto that “Together WE Make the Difference.” All speak to the values of “consistency, achievement, respect, empathy and shared responsibility” (CARES). During interviews, stakeholders indicated that preliminary goal-setting begins in May and is responsive to recommendations made by the NYSED and NYCDOE Quality Review Process. The SCEP is finalized upon receipt of NYSED English language arts (ELA) and math data, with pedagogical foci and professional development (PD) plans reviewed, modified and implemented accordingly. The school also aligns goals to its long-term vision, which is uniformly seen, heard and known: “to create independent learners and productive citizens.”
- School academic goals are timely and ambitious, and include increasing the overall percentage of students achieving proficiency in mathematics by at least 30 percent and in English language arts (ELA) by 15 percent. Both goals and mission are shared and reinforced during weekly faculty meetings, called professional learning time. Reflections on progress were evident on the school’s

Blogger and Google Docs. In order to help achieve the ambitious math and ELA goals this past year, teachers unanimously voted to amend their contract to embed the 37.5 extended day mandated minutes of targeted instruction into the regular school day. The goal was to ensure 100 per cent student participation in academic intervention services (AIS). In addition, the school adopted CMP3, a math curriculum that supports the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Stakeholders are committed to the implementation of this school-wide math program in order to reach the school's academic goals in math. The enrichment teachers embrace the philosophy that all teachers across all content areas are teachers of reading. Quarterly data provided to the team indicates school-wide progress towards proficiency in both math and writing.

- The school leader uses Google Docs to provide transparent collaboration between teachers, school leaders, parents, and students. She indicated that she posts a weekly professional development (PD) agenda aligned to SCEP goals, which is shared via email and is used as a reference and documentation of the school's work. Access to these on-line documents was provided to the IIT team. A parent newsletter, which includes important dates and academic information, is mailed at least once a month. Parents are provided information on a consistent basis via the auto-phone system, School Messenger, and other social media, such as Twitter. These are used to highlight student learning and to celebrate individual student achievements.

**Impact Statement:**

All stakeholders play a proactive role in ensuring that the school's mission and goals are at the core of driving school improvement.

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

**Overall Finding:**

The school leader maximizes the school's fiscal resources, hires experienced teachers, designs the school program to provide mandated AIS and creates opportunities for increased student academic success. She identifies targeted efforts and fiscal resources to meet the needs of the school community on an on-going basis.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The school leader hires experienced, highly-qualified personnel. There is a low turnover rate. Most of the staff have been at the school for the majority of their teaching careers, three to ten years. They speak about the school, students and parents in positive terms. Teachers and support staff indicate that the leadership is supportive and concerned about their professional growth and values their input. The school leader made the strategic decision to train school leaders and half of the staff in the Facilitative Leadership model in order to identify teacher leaders, to build capacity and to turn-key PD to stakeholders.
- Leadership has made strategic decisions to improve the instructional climate and school safety. The school is no longer designated as persistently dangerous and only two students were suspended this

year for serious infractions. Other matters have been addressed in the Restorative Justice, a peer mediation program that allows students to enforce behavioral expectations through mediation in lieu of suspension, if the parties agree. To further ensure school safety and supervise supplemental services, the school leader hired a full-time Assistant Principal (AP). This AP monitors behavioral referrals, Individual Education Programs (IEPs), and supervises the Student Support Team (SST). A part-time Dean, who is also the physical education teacher, assists with discipline. A teacher of students with disabilities, with strengths in math and science, is a part-time IEP coordinator. The bilingual, English as a second language (ESL) teacher, serves as a part-time coordinator of services for English language learners. All of this is now in place in order to complete the distributive leadership model.

- Because of the declining enrollment, the school receives a significant number of students throughout the year which necessitated major structural and programmatic changes. These new students are mostly either English language learners and/or students with IEPs. Ninety percent of the 107 students enrolled are designated as Title I or as requiring additional IEP supports. The school leader modified student schedules to include a daily 37 minute AIS/enrichment period at the end of the school day. This has resulted in 100 percent of students receiving mandated services while ensuring delivery of AIS academic support that promotes individual and school-wide achievement.
- The school leader created a daily professional learning time (PLT) period to allow teachers to meet by department and discuss student performance, lesson plans or adjustments to the curricula. Teachers are aware of the school leadership's expectations for PLT. An evaluation of the humanities curricula, which had evolved from past practice, indicates that the PLT has allowed the team to design units that are more coherent and CCLS-aligned.
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant funds are allocated for the after-school Leadership Academy. It includes small group tutoring and high interest, student-centered activities including drama, film editing, dance and athletics. Activities selected and implemented in the after school program proactively support the SCEP goal to improve student-to-student discussion and questioning across all content areas.

**Impact Statement:**

The school leader makes strategic decisions to make the best use of available resources to meet the immediate 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.

**Overall Finding:**

The school leader schedules formal and informal observations as part of the negotiated APPR. The school leader integrates 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology to provide timely actionable feedback and assess accountability structures that monitor the effectiveness of staff pedagogical practice and promote student progress.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The school leadership has an effective system for observations that is aligned to the district’s APPR and is based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching. All staff selected one formal and three informal observations. The school leader has completed all formal observations for the year that included goal-setting and pre and post-conferences. Teachers report that the school leader and AP have completed the three unannounced informal visits to fulfill the annual APPR requirements. Many indicate receiving over five informal observations that include feedback on instructional practice and on the quality of student work. The Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) reviewed examples of such feedback.
- The school leader collects observation data on digital media as artifacts and uses that data for evaluation purposes as well as for PD efforts to hold teachers accountable for continuous improvement. The school leader aligns PD to school-wide goals assigning mentor texts to support pedagogical implementation for Socratic circles, to further develop strategies for close reading and implements notice and notes to address item analysis findings. The school leader provides various opportunities for staff to receive continuous PD through weekly meetings, blog, e-mail, and PLT. Staff focuses on designated and specific studies on Danielson and CCLS using books such as Zwiers’ Academic Conversations, Reeves’ Where Great Teaching Begins, Jensen’s Teaching with Poverty in Mind. The school leader reports that the emphasis on frequent observation, meaningful feedback and purposeful self-reflection after PD has resulted in the professional growth of 90 percent of staff in questioning techniques, using discussion protocols and creating real-life performance tasks. However, evidence of this was not always supported by classroom observations carried out by reviewers.

**Impact Statement:**

The comprehensive, timely, actionable feedback provided by school leaders and frequent class observations help monitor the effectiveness of staff pedagogical practice, promote student progress and hold teachers and school leaders accountable for continuous improvement.

**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).

**Overall Finding:**

The school leadership has developed an online system based on feedback loops of evidence-based data to inform next steps for school-wide improvement. However, there is limited evidence of a school-wide integrated system to monitor student progress. Rather, there are intervention programs, strategies, protocols and PD activities that are somewhat connected but inconsistently ensure the full accomplishment of the school’s goals.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The school leader encourages the staff to use evidence-based systems to improve critical individual and school-wide practices and to revise units and performance tasks. However, the team noted during classroom visitations that instruction did not consistently reflect the rigor and high expectations outlined in these units and lessons. The school leader also promotes the setting of goals and benchmarks for teachers to collect and review skill level performance data. However, teachers do not yet make best use of this data in order to make effective adjustments to their teaching and accelerate student growth.
- The school has a peer inter-visitiation policy for teachers. Teachers are assigned to pair with a colleague and observe each other, concentrating on questioning and discussion. However, other instructional delivery elements such as pacing, procedural delivery of the lesson or classroom management that may have a negative impact on student learning, are not addressed. While the school leader put the peer inter-visitiation structure in place and identified the peer pairs, the effect of the strategy on improving instruction was not evident to reviewers. This lack of evidence given the IIT may be a result of the confidentiality of the communications and the limited feedback provided to leadership.
- While the school leader has provided PD on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), teachers have not yet embedded the principles of UDL into their instructional delivery. There was limited evidence of multiple means of representation of content, few strategies to provide “multiple means of action and expression”, and little variety in providing multiple means of engagement to learning. Relevant purposeful connections to culture and background knowledge were inconsistently addressed in lesson plans and instructional delivery.
- While the school leader has identified data sources to monitor progress towards meeting the SCEP goals, not all staff members were able to articulate the systems and practices they are using to reach their goals. They did not identify the data sources they track to monitor student growth and close achievement gaps.

**Impact Statement:**

Despite relationships with all stakeholders that are based on mutual respect and support, school leaders are not systematically monitoring school-wide practices to ensure measureable sustained progress and achievement of all SCEP goals.

**Recommendation:**

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

- The school leader should revisit SCEP goals, PD plans and peer visitation objectives with the SLT to measure specific progress towards meeting each school improvement goal. Based on the outcomes of data analysis, action plans with next steps and benchmarks should be created and include critical areas of concern identified for specific subgroups.

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

**Tenet Rating**

**D**

**Debriefing Statement:** The school has designed and implemented Common Core Learning Standards–aligned curricula, including units of study and lesson plans that reflect alignment to the CCLS instructional shifts. However, there is inconsistent planning for academic vocabulary integration, specific developmental learning strategies, and scaffolded questions leading to higher order thinking. The needs of English language learners, students with disabilities and high achievers are inconsistently addressed. As a result, rigorous, relevant learning opportunities with multiple points of access to learning that meet CCLS expectations for college and career readiness are not maximized for positive student outcomes.

**Strengths:**

3.4 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader and teachers have developed a comprehensive plan for teachers to partner within and across all grades and subjects to create interdisciplinary curricula targeting the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities.

**Overall Finding:**

The school leader and teachers use both PLT and enrichment activities to develop integrated interdisciplinary learning opportunities that imbed the visual arts, technology and other enrichment areas to broaden student engagement, learning and reflection.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The school leader and teachers share that they have been trained in Constructivism as a perspective to design interdisciplinary experiential learning units/performance tasks to enable students to construct knowledge through real life experience. Teachers collaborate between content areas to create interdisciplinary projects that support school-wide goals. For example, in grade six, the performance task was to create sculptures that reflected the content of the Greek myth each student wrote about in humanities class. In grade seven, the self-portrait unit culminated in a bio-poem, which students shared with reviewers and that reinforced use of the ELA rubric. The principles of design were used to integrate new knowledge with existing knowledge. Each of the projects has an interdisciplinary connection that increases students’ ability to become academically successful. A teacher certified in art, science and dance, integrates scientific concepts as they relate to light and color. The reviewers observed the inclusion of mathematical concepts, in the original work of students, using perspective and measurement. Math and science teams meet once per week to discuss and create activities and tasks that incorporate key concepts and standards from both content areas and these efforts include collaboration with art.
- The teachers in grade six integrated technology across disciplines into a project by publishing a student-generated anthology of original Greek-inspired myths which they titled “Tragik Flaws and

All.” The essays and illustrations for this year’s publication were prominently posted, were shared in student portfolios, and reflected self-directed, creative, innovative learners. Some students never had previous access to an art class or to technology until they arrived at the school. As part of the APPR process, the school leader collected artifacts of the constructivist approach that included digital recordings of student-led discussions on Masks created for social studies, and community service efforts videotaped by students as part of their finance unit in the after school program. These real-life experiences increase student learning and reflection and allow peers to provide purposeful feedback that contributes to college and career readiness.

- The team reviewed the student work of English language learners (ELL), students with disabilities and high achievers, where teachers provide feedback on their writing efforts. These student work samples demonstrated that the students were able to use digital media. ELLs are supported in their academic vocabulary usage, and make oral presentations of their artwork by explaining or translating rubric language, or using technology and instant translators for native language support. The team observed that SMART boards were used in all classes, often providing visuals to support language acquisition for ELLs.

**Impact Statement:**

The work of the teachers during weekly PLT opportunities, which include systematic support for all teachers to create thoughtful interdisciplinary curricula for students in all sub-groups, increases students’ ability to become academically successful.

**Areas for Improvement:**

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

**Overall Finding:** The school leader provides many opportunities for faculty collaboration to design and revise curricula, including units of study, in all core subjects. However, lesson plan design was inconsistent in the creation of clearly developed units with specific modifications for students in targeted subgroups.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- To support the implementation of CCLS, the school leadership purchased CMP3 for math and provides ongoing opportunities for faculty collaboration to revise the existing humanities curricula. Since September 2013, all teachers have participated in weekly PLT, to study and to implement best practice. The team reviewed lesson plans and rubrics which generally reflected alignment to the expected instructional shifts of the CCLS. However, the use of these materials was inconsistent regarding planning for academic vocabulary integration, specific developmental learning strategies, and scaffolded questions leading to higher order thinking, in order to more fully address the needs of English language learners, students with disabilities and high achievers.

- The school leader provides time for the teachers of students with disabilities and ELLS to work with other content teachers, school leaders, and network specialists to refine at least one unit and ensure alignment to the CCLS. Despite the school's efforts to provide time, support and training to implement rigorous and coherent curricula, units and lessons are inconsistently designed to include specific modifications for all students including those in identified subgroups. For example, in the large group student interview, one third of the students indicated that they did not find school work challenging. The school is beginning to address this need in their design of a daily AIS/enrichment period. This period is divided into three levels providing small group support for the lowest one-third, test-taking interventions for weak readers and writers, and enrichment to deepen content knowledge for the upper one-third. However, there is no written plan to ensure that CCLS is implemented with fidelity; and monitoring of unit adaptations to meet the needs of all students is inconsistent.
- During the summer of 2013, all eleven teachers attended PD provided by the network to examine the CCLS and to implement Citywide Instructional Expectations using UDL. While teachers can articulate the principles of UDL, unit and lesson design does not consistently address how learners differ in the way that they perceive and comprehend information, differ regarding the ways they engage in the learning process and differ in the ways they are motivated to learn. While multiple discussion protocols are beginning to help students express what they know, there is limited school-wide consistency in planning and organizing opportunities for active learning and engagement.

**Impact Statement:**

Despite school leader support for implementation of CCLS aligned curricula, a lack of focus on curricular modifications to meet the needs of the students in the school's diverse subgroups results in the academic needs of students not being met uniformly.

**Recommendation:**

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

- Increase student achievement by aligning UDL best practices and questioning strategies and creating formative and summative assessments that address the CCLS expectations for middle school. Examine lesson and unit plans and assessments being used in all classes to assure rigorous and coherent CCLS-aligned instruction that promotes college and career readiness.

3.3 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans used include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.

**Overall Finding:**

Teacher collaboration to create curriculum units and lesson plans aligned to the CCLS was evident, particularly among the humanities teachers. However, there was inconsistent use of DDI and limited use of complex materials to ensure student progress for sequential and scaffolded skill development that addresses student

achievement needs.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The school leader provides time twice weekly for teachers to address vertical and horizontal alignment of curricula and revisions. The team observed a grade meeting that focused on student work, but did not demonstrate timely or comprehensive analysis of student performance tasks. The grade level teacher meeting, which utilized a “Looking at Student Work” protocol, did not meet the objective for the protocol which was “to identify/modify a sequence of lessons and use of materials for the argumentative essay.” As a result, strategies to engage students in a high cognitive level of learning throughout the argumentation unit were not developed during the grade level meeting. Also, questioning scaffolds to lead to higher order thinking were not the norm in the lesson plans reviewed. Vocabulary development and language objectives were not observed in all classrooms.
- Most classrooms visited had lesson plans aligned to the standards; however, the implementation of these lessons in order to engage students in activities to stimulate higher order thinking skills or to use scaffolded complex materials was inconsistent. Rubrics are used as a method of collecting data, but they are used inconsistently and the team review of portfolios and classroom visits provided limited evidence that the data was used to adjust instruction for either individuals or sub-groups of students. Observations by the team indicated that when ELLs and students with disabilities attended math and science classes the work was not differentiated. Where student level of proficiency influenced their ability to participate and understand, the curriculum planning did not address individual student needs and those students were disengaged.

**Impact Statement:**

Modifications to the curriculum to address the different needs and abilities of students are inconsistent and lack the rigor demanded to fully develop the skills needed to improve student achievement. One consequence is that students do not fully develop the skills essential to improve student achievement.

**Recommendation:**

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

- Ensure that teachers use both quantitative and qualitative data to incorporate technology and create multiple points of access into classroom lessons. Identify school-wide protocols to arrive at a normed understanding of instructional excellence, as teachers refine curricula and instructional practice to ensure CCLS alignment and access for a diverse range of learners.

3.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** Teachers implement a comprehensive system for using formative and summative assessments for strategic short and long-range curriculum planning that involves student reflection, tracking of, and ownership of learning.

**Overall Finding:**

While teachers use a variety of protocols for discussing student work, there is inconsistent use of assessment

data to revise curricula or modify plans to meet the needs of students in subgroups. Similarly, feedback to students is inconsistent, and lacks the specificity necessary for actionable next steps that will challenge students to take ownership of their learning.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- School leaders and teachers did not articulate a systemic approach toward using data to plan instruction, adjust plans and make adjustments to the curriculum. Staff spoke about data sources such as baseline tests and benchmarks and indicated that data was used to group students in classes. For example, students are grouped for English as a second language (ESL) or humanities instruction based on proficiency levels. However, there was limited evidence of thorough analysis of assessment which could lead to the adaptation of the curriculum and instruction for individual ELLs, Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) or long-term ELLs.
- Few data sources were identified for goal creation for specific groups of students. Teachers were asked what data they use to measure progress for academic improvement. They indicated that students can now read for longer sustained periods of time and that they use context clues to figure out word meaning. However, while teachers look at outcomes on performance tasks and make minor revisions to the curriculum on an ongoing basis, curricular modifications do not consistently meet the needs of all learners.
- While teachers and students are able to communicate easily via technology and silent sustained reading conference time, feedback related to data analysis to inform instruction is limited. Although teachers knew that ELLs were beginner, intermediate, or advanced, there was little indication of analysis of specific data to identify individual areas of need leading to targeted interventions to improve instruction and increase achievement. The review of portfolios indicated that rubrics are used to help students self-assess their work. The feedback given to students inconsistently provided actionable next steps to deepen student learning and to lead to genuine progress and understanding. Essay writing feedback on Google Docs was provided in real-time and was actionable. However, comments on most assessments were motivational such as, “nice work” or “good job”, rather than aligned to mastery expectations indicated in the rubric. Furthermore, there was minimal differentiation in the portfolio performance tasks. Students with disabilities were required to write less or respond to low-level questions, and tasks lacked scaffolds to build upon prior knowledge and promote skill development.

**Impact Statement:**

Limited use of data to make curricular decisions and adjustments, together with inconsistent and goal oriented teacher feedback, hinders student movement to higher levels of achievement or to greater ownership of their own learning.

**Recommendation:**

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

- Incorporate clear delineations in rubric language that reflect the instructional shifts and reinforce alignment between curriculum and assessment. Promote a grading policy that provides accurate, actionable, high quality feedback which encourages students to become active participants in their own learning and helps close their individual achievement gaps.

**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:** School leaders have provided teachers with PD for CCLS-aligned curricular implementation in core content areas as well as training on discussion protocols that support students with disabilities and ELLs in general education and self-contained classrooms. However, there is inconsistent practice using summative and formative assessment to identify gaps and make instructional decisions specific to student needs. This limits high levels of engagement and inquiry as well as deep conceptual understanding and knowledge for student achievement.

**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.

**Overall Finding:**

While core curricula are CCLS-aligned and unit plans reflect the instructional shifts, instructional practices and data-driven strategies that address student goals and needs are used inconsistently to drive the delivery of instruction.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- While core curricula are CCLS-aligned and unit plans reflect the instructional shifts, instructional practices and strategies that address student goals and needs inconsistently drive the delivery of instruction. There is limited strategic instruction to support students in the subgroups and to help them access the content being presented. Inconsistent practice using academic vocabulary and discussion protocols limit instructional decisions specific to student needs, which in turn limits high levels of engagement and inquiry as well as deep conceptual understanding and knowledge for student achievement.
- Instructional practice in ELA and social studies includes expectations to annotate texts, answer short

responses and write an extended response at the end of a unit packet. However, all students receive the same packet and checklists. While most core area teachers implement the school-wide discussion protocol that elicits a contribution from most students, little time is allotted to deepen student thinking or assist students who need additional help. Students assess each other's work and share "glows and grows" when they work in pairs or in small groups. However, students observed were inconsistently engaged in the activity, and teacher feedback to students seldom included suggestions for immediate or long-term improvement.

- The team observed that in a number of math lessons, the teacher dominated the lesson. There was limited opportunity for students to explain how to solve the equation and some students became disengaged when unsure how to proceed. Evidence of opportunities for writing short and extended responses, supported by contextual evidence, were in the portfolios and shared with IIT reviewers during the small student group session. The work in the students' folders was generally in packets which included multiple choice questions for comprehension, short reflections and essay responses. In humanities, online grading data from the multiple choice responses was aligned to revisions of instructional plans provided to reviewers. However, in other core areas, teachers provided limited evidence of data alignment to their delivery of instruction.

**Impact Statement:**

Despite curricula and unit plans that support the CCLS and reflect the instructional shifts, instructional practices and strategies that address student goals and needs inconsistently drive the delivery of instruction.

**Recommendation:**

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

- Arrive at a normed understanding of instructional excellence by reviewing NYSED exemplary student performance tasks, not only in-house work samples. Utilize the expertise of a CMP3 specialist or coach to provide modeling and mentorship. Focus these efforts on designing student accommodations and interventions that are aligned to data, which will lead to greater student inquiry and engagement, as well as consistent rigorous learning opportunities.

4.3 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** Teachers provide coherent, and appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students.

**Overall Finding:**

While school leaders have provided teachers with PD for CCLS-aligned curricular implementation in core content areas as well as training on discussion protocols, the implementation of strategies that support students with disabilities and ELLs in the general education and self-contained classroom is limited.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- During PLT, the school focused on the mentor text, Academic Conversations, to provide strategies for implementing the six CCLS ELA/literacy shifts to deepen understandings and connections by elaborating, clarifying, and questioning. In humanities, students were given opportunities to work with their group/partners and went back to the text to find support for the claim they were making. They then discussed if it was good evidence and shared their thinking or positions with their group/partner. However, in other classes, when asked to pair and share, many students simply waited for the teacher to solve and explain a problem or complete a task and then copied the solution without an attempt to explain the process independently or with their partner. As a result this opportunity to access greater conceptual understanding of content was missed.
- In math, a CCLS-aligned lesson plan focused on deep understanding. Students were to engage in pair and share academic discussions that required them to explain how they solved the problem and why they chose the process used. However, during the probability lesson observed, students superficially explained or wrote their predictions and how they used the information provided to analyze their thought-process. When working with partners, the focus was on spinning the spinner 30 times not on probability or any other concept that would support the development of the lesson. Similarly, in another class, when ELLs were questioned regarding their observations and charting of “frequency” in word problems, instructors looked only at the solution and did not allow the student to articulate their reasoning, either verbally or in writing, which is a CCLS expectation for all students.
- To support the CCLS shift toward text complexity, particularly for the students in the Hispanic subgroup, the school leader said that developing academic vocabulary was a priority. However, there was little evidence of a focus on precise academic vocabulary development during the lessons observed. This has a negative impact on struggling learners, ELLs and students with disabilities. In classes visited, students read the text in their packets and annotated the text by underlining, writing in the columns, or highlighting. However, because all students were using the same complex text, access for ELLs was limited.
- While the school leader’s self-assessment of practice indicated that teachers differentiate, not on tasks but rather on means of access and support for output by using visuals, graphic organizers and peer discussion, the team observed few modifications during lessons. Students read texts that were authentic and received support from the teacher reading them, who modeled their own thinking when reading the text. However, there were limited opportunities for students to respond to scaffolded questions and limited expectations that students would push their thinking boundaries and synthesize information, to respond to a higher order question. The teacher’s voice was the dominant voice during the mini-lessons, with little assessment of prior knowledge.

**Impact Statement:**

While lesson plans are CCLS-aligned and reflect the instructional shifts, packets and worksheets at times drive the delivery of instruction. Thus, the delivery of engaging, interactive lessons and meaningful development of

the content is inconsistent. In addition, strategic use of scaffolded questions that lead to higher order thinking was not the norm and academic vocabulary development was not observed in all classrooms

**Recommendation:**

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

- Increase teachers' capacity to align instructional practices to CCLS shifts and to make greater connection to college and career readiness by providing multiple points of access to core subject area content.
- Promote rigor in instruction and higher order thinking skills to better engage students in their own learning at higher levels so that they are able to achieve their targeted goals.
- Limit worksheet dependent lessons. Provide PD and one-to-one support to enable teachers to present content in a more interactive manner, scaffold questions to ensure all students can access the information being presented, and check for understanding before beginning, during and at the end of an activity.

4.4 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** Teachers and students work together to implement a program/plan to create a learning environment that is responsive to students' varied experiences and tailored to the strengths and needs of all students.

**Overall Finding:**

Teachers have both academic and behavioral expectations for their students but the plans are geared to generic achievement of CCLS standards, and instructional practice and delivery is not consistently tailored to student strengths and needs

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The school provides a safe environment that is responsive to the social/emotional health needs of students through the Respect for All initiative, and promotes peer mediation so that students hold one another accountable for appropriate behavior in school. The students' role in creating an intellectual learning environment is still developing. Student interviews indicate that there are insufficient high-interest classroom or library texts for the daily 25 minute sustained silent reading program and that students would like more input regarding academic enrichment activities.
- Teachers indicate that at Town Hall meetings, school-wide behavioral expectations are delineated by the school support staff. These are reiterated by the classroom teachers and reflect student productivity on a given day, week or quarter. Students receive a life skills report card grade, which supplements the academic report card in order to communicate a more complete picture of the whole child. Students are often asked to self-assess their behavior to give them a voice in the process. However, discussions with staff and students indicate that the life skills grade was stressed more for students with disabilities who had Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs), rather than used formatively for all students.

- Teachers and students are encouraged to use circle and fishbowl discussion groups where a small group of students sit in the inner circle in the center of a room and conduct a discussion together on a topic, while the rest of the students surround them in an outer circle and watch, take notes, and later pose questions and give comments about what they observed. These protocols were introduced in PD during PLT and promote more effective discussions allowing every child a voice in analyzing text. The team observed humanities classes employing the protocol prior to writing tasks. In these classes, every student was required to provide input and analysis on global claims, sub-claims and evidence, and explain why or how they had developed their contribution to the discussion. However, in other classes employing discussion protocols, student contributions were inconsistent and lacked depth. Additionally, more practice using academic vocabulary in content areas is essential to develop students' communication skills.
- The grade level teacher meeting, which the IIT team observed utilizing the looking at student work protocol, did not meet the stated objective for the protocol. The objective was to identify/ modify a sequence of lessons and use of materials for the argumentative essay that engage students in a high cognitive level of learning throughout the lesson. Evidence in classrooms of strategies for scaffolded questions that deepen understanding of content was not the norm and vocabulary development, visual supports and graphic organizers were inconsistently provided to support ELLs and students with disabilities.

**Impact Statement:**

While the school environment is physically safe and conducive to learning, inconsistent instructional practice and expectations limit intellectual inquiry as well as opportunities to demonstrate acquisition of learning to peers and teachers.

**Recommendation:**

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

- Engage in CCLS aligned instructional practices that promote intellectual growth and use interactive 21st Century media and materials tailored to the strengths of students to stimulate their thinking.

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

**Overall Finding:**

Most teachers visited had lesson plans and assessments aligned to the standards and school leaders provided PD support for teachers to analyze and utilize data in their delivery of instruction. However, precise, actionable feedback from teachers based on formative or summative data was inconsistently offered to students, limiting their next steps for personal growth and full participation in their own learning.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- Teacher/student conferences are held during the daily 25 minutes of sustained silent reading when students are independently engaged in reading a book of their choice. Teachers use this time to provide individual feedback on areas of concern or assess the comprehension of the text being read. Teachers of humanities also provide one-on-one feedback in the writing process, as teachers and students communicate using technology to revise essays on Google Docs, and teachers provide real-time feedback. However the team reviewed documents that indicated final grades of Level 4 or 100, when final copies still reflected areas that need improvement, which misled students as to their mastery on performance tasks. The grading system rewards progress rather than proficiency and therefore does not align with or directly lead to improved student achievement on NYSED assessments. During document review, the team noted few student failures school-wide because grading assesses progress towards mastery of the standards taught during the quarter. Most classrooms visited had lesson plans and assessments aligned to the standards. IIT observations indicated that beginner ELLs generally received actionable feedback from the ESL teacher, as did advanced ELLs when they worked in the humanities classes. This allowed ELLs to access reading materials with support. However, when ELLs attended math and science classes where the work was not differentiated or where their language proficiency influenced their ability to participate and understand content, the lack of feedback and structured next steps impeded their ability to access complex content and take ownership of their learning.
- Students are put into Response to Intervention (RTI) tiered groups based on their performance levels but there was limited evidence of goal setting for short and long term goals for groups of students based on grade level benchmarks. Goal setting and action planning for individual and groups of students are not practices embedded in the school culture despite data collection of formative and summative assessments. Item analysis of NYSED data was tracked to identify broad skill gaps. The analysis did not drill down to guide teacher work with individual students, although the school has a 10 to 1 student/teacher ratio and small class size of 16-20 students per class.

**Impact Statement:**

Teacher feedback and grading reward progress rather than addressing proficiency and therefore do not always lead to improved student achievement on NYSED assessments.

**Recommendation:**

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

- Continue to provide support for teachers to analyze and utilize data in their delivery of instruction and help them provide formative long-term growth goals and actionable next steps to students. Train staff in conferencing and self-reflection models and student self-assessment of academic tasks. Ensure teachers provide purposeful, frequent feedback with on-going discussions of the importance of student accountability and ownership of their learning.

<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>Tenet Rating</b>	<b>E</b>
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**Debriefing Statement:** The school community creates an environment that provides all stakeholders with experiences that promote students’ social and emotional developmental health. The school community reviews, monitors and shares academic, attendance and behavioral expectations to respond to the individual needs of students. As a result, barriers toward success have been reduced and students benefit from a safe instructional setting, healthy relationships and enrichment opportunities conducive to social success.

**Strengths:**

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

**Overall Finding:**

The school community has overarching systems and understandings to create an environment that provides stakeholders with experiences that promote students’ social and emotional developmental health. The school community reviews and shares academic, attendance and behavioral expectations to respond to the individual needs of students.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The school’s vision is exemplified in its motto, “Together WE Make the Difference!” and all stakeholders articulate their commitment to the values in CARES. These values guide the school’s work and they have succeeded in creating a climate of social and emotional support and mutual respect among families, teachers and students.
- The school leader works with the CARES Team, parent coordinator, SLT, and PTA to identify areas in need of improvement regarding safety and respect for inclusion in SCEP goals. School community members create a calendar of events that includes activities that promote and support the NYCDOE “Respect for All” initiative and give students the opportunity to become active in the community. Bulletin boards showcase student post-it notes that relate respectful interactions that occurred in the school, such as assisting students in translation, completing assignments, opening doors, carrying books and providing technology assistance.
- Stakeholder interviews reveal that all feel respected and valued and students indicate “that everyone has a place here.” The incoming sixth grade students are immediately known to the members of the SST who facilitate their transition to middle school and implement their mandated services. Seventh and eighth graders loop for two years, so they are well-known to their team of teachers and continue to interact with the SST in the Town Hall meetings. Teachers shared that looping with their students in grades seven and eight maximized learning time and helped build positive relationships with their students. They know their students well and build a trusting

relationship with them. Therefore, students indicate that they can always find an adult, from the guidance counselor to a teacher or the school leader to help them address a problem.

- If a student is having difficulty, there is a clearly defined referral process, which school stakeholders may complete in writing, or preferably online to facilitate monitoring of the situation, interventions enacted and student outcomes. There are multiple steps in this protocol that are known and discussed by all of the stakeholders. The support staff meets weekly as a team to discuss specific students and determine next steps. The meeting notes and agendas are clearly organized with specific outcomes to support the student and posted on Google docs. For students with disabilities, the SST may design a BIP and the IEP coordinator reports progress on BIP implementation as well as its impact on the student's academic performance. A teacher shared that the new behavior intervention plans require students to self-reflect on their actions, sometimes in front of the restorative justice peer mediation panel and give themselves a level/grade for their overall performance in the class. At end-of-week conference, the teacher also gives them a level/grade. This is compared to the student rating and new behavioral and academic goals are set. Teachers begin with the positive and then identify areas for improvement.

**Impact Statement:**

The systems established by the school leader help create an environment that provides all stakeholders with experiences that promote student social and emotional developmental health and support student academic progress.

5.3 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** The school articulates and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is aligned to a curriculum or program that provides learning experiences and a safe and healthy school environment for families, teachers, and students.

**Overall Finding:**

The students receive social and emotional developmental health support through the Respect for All initiative that is implemented and supplemented through weekly Town Hall sessions. At the Town Halls, the SST identifies strategies that promote the development of leadership and self-advocacy skills as well as organizational and study skills necessary for academic success.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The school participates in the citywide effort to promote respect for all by implementing the Respect for All program that celebrates diversity and combats harassment, discrimination and bullying. This initiative provides PD for school staff, as well as direct services to students, and thus supports and promotes the social and emotional developmental health of students. The goal of this work is to ensure that the school provides a learning environment where all students feel safe, valued and respected. Stakeholder comments made to the IIT support the finding that the school has achieved this goal.
- In response to the school's prior identification as persistently dangerous, the school implemented

the Restorative Justice Program / Fairness / Mediation as alternatives to suspension, which also provides an opportunity for greater student voice. Restorative justice emphasizes values of empathy, respect, honesty, acceptance, responsibility, and accountability and provides ways to effectively address behavior and other complex school issues. Students and staff report that it has contributed to the creation of a supportive environment and school suspensions have been significantly reduced.

- The school psychologist and guidance counselor shared that they turn-key network PD information on topics such as child abuse and bullying to the teaching staff. The teacher trained on IEPs and BIPs now goes into classrooms to ensure that modifications and interventions are being implemented. This teacher also works with and trains colleagues to readjust the BIP as needed. The life skills rubric was created last year based on Marzano's book, Classroom Assessment and Grading that Work and is used four times a year to promote and communicate to students and parents about school-wide behavioral progress.
- Community-based organizations (CBOs) partner with SST staff to provide student support. The CBOs also provide SST training on topics to be presented during the Town Hall meetings, based on themes for each month. For example, September centered on self-respect and school expectations. February's theme is respect for all with training provided by NYCDOE for this topic. Other outside agencies are invited in as guest speakers Grand Street Settlement provided a Comprehensive Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (CAPP) program on teenage pregnancy. Other guest speakers and topics included: "What does success look like" presented by Olympian Derrick Atkinson; the New York Road Runners Young Runners Organization educated students on fitness; and the Educational Alliance presented "Adolescents and Drugs." The NYPD offers advice on gang behavior, bullying prevention, and how to protect electronics. The school also partners with not-for-profits such as Credit Do to develop financial awareness and help students become more actively involved in the Lower East Side community. The ESL teacher is part of the SST and translates Town Hall activities for ELLs while focusing on long and short-term vocabulary goals.

**Impact Statement:**

Students benefit from a safe instructional setting, healthy relationships and enrichment opportunities conducive to social success.

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

**Overall Finding:**

All members of the school community understand their role and contribute to the creation of a safe and respectful environment that supports the social, emotional and academic well-being of the students.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- Based on observations in classrooms and common areas, as well as discussions during the Support Staff Meeting, Vertical Teacher Meeting, Large Student Meeting and Parent Meeting, the creation of a safe and respectful environment that supports the social, emotional and academic well-being of students is a priority. Stakeholders work together to support student social and emotional developmental health. In particular, the CARES Team, which includes school leaders, guidance counselor, dean, parent coordinator, and counselor, meets on a weekly basis to monitor progress toward SCEP goals and to modify, as needed, school discipline systems and intervention plans for students at risk. The school leader, guidance counselors, and school dean identify students at-risk for behavioral infractions or academic issues and schedule them to receive at least 40 minutes of counseling every week for a total of 60 days. Monitoring of progress is on-going and, if after the 60 days students require additional time, they are then placed permanently on the counselor's caseload until improvement is noted. Students are given daily or weekly behavior sheets completed by teachers and shared with parents, outside agencies including preventative, foster care and judicial. One student receiving IEP services who transferred into the school added "this school has saved my life!"
- As part of their responsibilities, counselors meet and/or communicate with parents/guardians/agency representatives at least two times a month to discuss student progress and the parental contacts are monitored on Google Docs by school leadership. The parent coordinator, the guidance counselor and the AP promote a positive learning environment and increase safety, respect and communication in the school by leading the weekly Town Hall Meetings and conducting classroom workshops. A teacher shared that she is able to modify her curriculum to make it more interactive for students in subgroups because she already knows their learning styles. Other staff point to more investigations in science and books on tape for those challenged by the more rigorous CCLS-aligned texts.
- Student contributions to the community were recognized when the school received the Excellence in Service in Schools award from Chancellor Walcott and Mayor Bloomberg for raising AIDS and Breast Cancer Awareness, supporting St. Jude's Hospital, maintaining a local school garden, and conducting a food drive. Student interviews confirm that these efforts continue.

**Impact Statement:**

The school community has provided a safe learning environment that views the students' social and emotional development as an integral component of academic achievement. As a result, students learn in an environment that nurtures them emotionally and socially and teaches them to contribute to their community.

**Areas for Improvement:**

5.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader and student support staff work together with teachers to establish structures to support the use of data to respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs.

**Overall Finding:**

The school responds to student social and emotional developmental health needs but is not collecting data in a systematic manner which impedes the school’s ability to track and monitor what is working and what needs to be revised.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The school schedule enables the student support team to meet with students in a Town Hall framework, while the teaching staff meets to design curricula. However, teachers and support staff have no common meeting time and indicated that therefore, they communicate on Google Docs regarding student behavioral referrals and to share academic concerns. This separation, while necessary for student supervision at Town Hall, limits the school’s ability to identify school-wide next steps and action plans for improvement, and to create school-wide systems and structures used and known by all teachers and support staff.
- During interviews, staff identified Google Docs as the system used by all stakeholders to monitor and communicate about the progress of all students regarding social and emotional developmental health. The support staff indicated that they are part of a mechanism that is designed to effectively address the emotional and social developmental issues of the at risk student. However, data-driven monitoring by leadership to ensure that the needs of all students are addressed, is informal. CARES anecdotal data, Restorative Justice cases, referrals listing dean interventions and attendance concerns all appear on Google Docs. However, data collection is not systematic or rigorous. This limits the school’s ability to track and monitor what is working and what needs to be revised.

**Impact Statement:**

Data collection is not systematic or robust enough to track and monitor what is working and what needs to be revised. This hinders identification of next steps and action plans for improvement to enable more students to become academically and socially responsible.

**Recommendation:**

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

- Provide designated time for support staff to meet regularly with teachers. Establish systems and expectations for each member of the support team to collect data in a targeted area of responsibility and to share this data with teaching staff. The team should use this data to identify areas of concern, develop intervention plans, monitor the progress of students and adjust the plans as indicated.

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

**Tenet Rating**

**D**

**Debriefing Statement:** The school provides multiple forms of communication to families regarding the

identification of student academic strengths and behavioral needs. While the school strives to maximize parental engagement in students' academic progress, there is insufficient training and support to empower families to better understand data.

**Strengths:**

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

**Overall Finding:**

The school creates a culture of open and frequent communication among staff, students, parents, and community agencies in multiple languages to maximize parental engagement in students' academic progress.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- During interviews, all stakeholders indicated that the school communicates with families in a variety of ways and that documents translated into Spanish and Chinese are available in school. The school leader communicates with families initially by disseminating a Parent Community handbook. The leader then uses the school website, email, school messenger phone messages, notices sent home with students, and mailed throughout the school year. The school has varied the times of the meetings in order to accommodate parent schedules.
- The parent coordinator engages parents to actively participate in all school activities and uses technology to communicate within the wider school community through Google Docs, blogs, and Twitter to celebrate student accomplishments. The parent coordinator creates a monthly school newsletter that keeps parents updated about school events and shares tips for how to help their children in school.”
- The school staff sends report cards quarterly, and mails school-wide progress reports three times a year to the parents. Student support staff members inform parents of student academic and behavioral concerns on an “as-needed” basis but also give each student a life skill grade related to achievement of behavioral expectations and outcomes. Families have access to Google Docs to track student progress and communicate with staff. The guidance counselor meets or personally communicates with parents /families at least two times per month to discuss their children’s progress, and provides both positive and cool feedback. Parents mentioned that they thought that the use of a daily or weekly behavior sheet provides them with good and timely feedback on how their child is doing in class. They appreciated the comments that the teachers make and the fact that they have to sign it and return it to guidance indicates that the school recognizes the importance of their role in supporting their child’s academic success.
- The school leader indicated that she is working hard to increase the number of parents that participate in responding to the surveys. Parents gave the school high ratings on the NYCDOE Learning Environment survey. Interviews with parents and students confirm satisfaction with the school’s welcoming, open-door policy, its responsiveness to family needs and concerns and its

communication efforts, commending the school's use of the class blog locker where teachers post assignments and the Google.docs essay writing module, which students frequently share with parents.

**Impact Statement:**

The school recognizes the importance of the role of families in supporting their children's academic success and that the team approach which includes the parents as an integral component results in a strong partnership between home and school.

**Areas for Improvement:**

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

**Overall Finding:**

While the school provides multiple opportunities for parental interaction with school stakeholders, incomplete understanding of rigorous CCLS expectations for college and career readiness (CCR) limit valuable family support for middle school efforts to improve student achievement.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- Monthly SLT and PTA meetings are scheduled on the same date to create stronger connections and synergy between the groups. This allows school leadership, teachers, parents, and students to plan and implement community building activities such as "Game Night," "International Food Day," and "Career Day" to encourage greater participation by parents and families and increase connections to the local community. However, only a small percentage of parents participate in SLT or attend parent workshops. The Leadership Program, comprised of the parent coordinator, the PTA president, and the school leader, helps to inform parents of best practices that they can use to further support learning for their children. However, the parent sign-in logs reflect the regular participation of only eight to 12 parents.
- The school provides detailed information to parents about the school's grading policy which is based on the work of Wormelli and Marzano and aligned to the state scoring policy of Levels 1 through 4. Teachers explain that they grade based on progress towards mastery and indicate that, "Students have mastered content when they demonstrate a thorough understanding as evidenced by doing something substantive with the content beyond merely echoing it." Currently, over 95 percent of report card grades are passing at the 65-70 range, even when students score at Level 1 on NYSED assessments. The school policy notes that, "the focus is less about their children passing and more about the work their children need to do to be proficient and on grade level in the content." While teachers and school leaders attempt to explain this distinction, evidence from discussions and documentation indicates that both parents and students were confused about what constitutes proficiency and mastery. They did not understand the achievement gap between student performance of two to three percent proficiency in ELA and math and NYSED CCLS exemplary middle school performance. Even students with 90+ averages indicated that they were unsure if

they would pass the NYS assessments. This is because the grades they received were reflective of their progress to date, rather than on “the direct connection between grades and expected performance on state exams,” which the grading policy espouses. As a result, parents are unclear about the school’s academic expectations for their children related to State expectations and this limits their ability to support student efforts.

- Each student has access to a laptop computer during instruction and each student has a protected Google account by which they share work with their teachers. Parents with access to a computer can view student work and teacher feedback at any given time. Teachers also meet with parents on a regular basis and are very accommodating to the parents’ schedules. Teachers may tutor on their own time, during lunch or before school, as part of plans they have arranged with parents. However, only proactive stakeholders who request and seek help in understanding middle school expectations are assured of receiving it.

**Impact Statement:**

While the school leader is eager to establish a stronger partnership with parents and families, without a comprehensive strategy to increase parental understanding of high expectations, valuable family support for middle school efforts to improve student achievement is limited.

**Recommendation:**

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

- Encourage and support the parent leadership of the community, particularly those who participate on the School Leadership Team (SLT), to expand their community outreach by working with the PTA to organize workshops and informational sessions and to develop strategies to encourage families to engage with the school to increase student academic progress. Develop a multi-faceted plan to inform parents about teaching and learning, which includes information sessions before concerts, award assemblies, Open House, Report Card night, when parental attendance is high, to foster more family involvement in their child’s college and career goal setting.

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

**Overall Finding:**

The school leader, teachers, and SST staff express an interest in working with parents to help students achieve both academically and socially. However, there is no comprehensive plan to teach parents and families how they can work together with the school to support the academic progress and social and emotional developmental health of their children.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- There is no comprehensive and strategic plan in place to ensure a systematic approach to equipping parents with support and training to enable them to become more active participants in their child’s

learning and academic successes. Although the school leader is developing a greater cognizance of what needs to be done and the parent coordinator has run a limited number of courses to help parents support student learning and growth, successful strategies and a formalized plan are not embedded in the school culture.

- The team received limited evidence about how teachers are trained to develop partnerships with parents and families. There have been some isolated examples of PD provided for teachers to begin to equip them with skills to build strong family relationships. However, this was not part of a strategic long-term plan involving the school, families and community agencies. As a consequence, work still needs to be done in this domain to equip teachers and staff with the skills that build and sustain partnerships with families that impact positively and sustainably on student academic growth.

**Impact Statement:**

The school does not have a comprehensive plan to promote and provide training for staff regarding how to develop strong partnerships with parents and for families to enable them to identify the strengths and needs of their children and to advocate for services to address the individual needs. As a result, opportunities to build and sustain effective home-school partnerships are missed, hindering the academic and social growth of students.

**Recommendation:**

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

- Create an integrated plan that connects all school and community efforts so that training for families and staff allows them to build partnerships that identify student strengths and needs and provide support for the sustained academic achievement of all students.

6.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.

**Overall Finding:**

The school staff recognizes a need to assist families to understand shared data that in order to empower families to understand and use the data to support student learning leading to higher levels of student achievement.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The school shares data with parents through report cards, teacher-generated progress reports, emails and phone contact, and through Google Docs and the school website. Parents who attended the parent meeting agreed that they receive progress reports and feedback from teachers at student achievement assemblies, the annual Open House, and by email and phone. However, there is no process to track how many parents are accessing the on-line sites or the impact the data or

information is having on families.

- During the parent meeting, the parents said that they receive data about their children but could not explain or share how they used the data to help their children academically at home. The teachers state that when they have kid talk presentations across content areas, parents are invited to attend. These sessions focused on academic and behavioral performance. Teachers indicated that a greater understanding of higher expectations related to performance data using rubrics is developing among families.
- The team heard limited evidence to indicate that the school is providing or sharing data regarding high expectations, preparation for specialized high school exams or knowledge about magnet schools that specialize in careers that align with their children's interests. The school leader indicated that the CARES team plans to design and conduct training modules and information sessions for parents. The workshop materials used will be translated and interpretation support will be provided in the dominant languages spoken by parents in the school. The school will host a curriculum night and create a parent resource guide with user-friendly instructional materials and suggestions. However, these aspirations have yet to translate into practice.

**Impact Statement:**

As a result of a lack of an integrated plan that makes data accessible and understood by all stakeholders, families are not empowered to take action or provide support in order to share responsibility for higher levels of student achievement.

**Recommendation:**

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

- Provide greater outreach through a variety of opportunities to engage families. Provide specific training to enable parents to understand individual student's performance data. Teachers, school support staff and CBO personnel should analyze, interpret and present the individual student data and its implications in a way that empowers both the student and his/her family support network to access resources that support both higher level academic progress and promote social/emotional well being.