



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	54-11-02-06-0004
School Name	William H. Golding Middle School
School Address	193 Golding Drive, Cobleskill, NY 12043
District Name	Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School District
School Leader	F. Scott McDonald
Dates of Review	May 5-7, 2014
School Accountability Status	Focus School
Type of Review	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet																						
Grade Configuration	6-8	Total Enrollment	421	SIG Recipient	<input type="checkbox"/>	Title 1 Population	40.6%	Attendance Rate	95.9%													
Free Lunch	31.7%	Reduced Lunch	8.9%			Limited English Proficient	0%	Students with Disabilities	11.7%													
Number of English Language Learner Classes																						
#Transitional Bilingual	0		#Dual Language		0																	
Number of Special Education Classes																						
#Self-Contained	0		#Consultant Teaching		12		#Integrated Collaborative Teaching			0												
#Resource Room	7																					
Number of Special Classes																						
#Visual Arts	0		#Music		#Drama		0		#Foreign Language		#Dance		0		#CTE		0					
Racial/Ethnic Origin																						
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%		Black or African American		<1%		Hispanic or Latino		4%		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander		1%		White		94%		Multi-racial		0%	
Personnel																						
Years Principal Assigned to School	9		# of Assistant Principals		1		# of Deans		0		# of Counselors / Social Workers		3									
Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0%		Teaching Out of Certification		0%		Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.		7%		Average Teacher Absences		6.7%									
Credit Accumulation (High School Only) and Performance Rates																						
% of 1 st yr. students who earned 10+ credits			% of 2 nd yr. students who earned 10+ credits				% of 3 rd yr. students who earned 10+ credits				4 Year Graduation Rate		na									
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	28.1		Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		18.7		Science Performance at levels 3 & 4		84.7		6 Year Graduation Rate											
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA																						
	American Indian or Alaska Native										Black or African American											
	Hispanic or Latino										Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander											
	White										Multi-racial											
X	Students with Disabilities										Limited English Proficient											
X	Economically Disadvantaged										All Students											
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics																						
	American Indian or Alaska Native										Black or African American											
	Hispanic or Latino										Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander											
	White										Multi-racial											
X	Students with Disabilities										Limited English Proficient											
X	Economically Disadvantaged										All Students											
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science																						
	American Indian or Alaska Native										Black or African American											
	Hispanic or Latino										Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander											
	White										Multi-racial											
	Students with Disabilities										Limited English Proficient											
	Economically Disadvantaged										All Students											
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective																						
	Limited English Proficiency																					
SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE SCHOOL: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a common definition of literacy for use in school-wide instruction. 2. Ensure school-wide accountability for literacy infusion in all classrooms. 3. Provide goal-setting structures, so students can define their own progression to higher levels of achievement. 																						

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	
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 2:				D	

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
3.2	The school leader ensures and supports the quality implementation of a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.			X	
3.3	Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans used include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.			X	
3.4	The school leader and teachers have developed a comprehensive plan for teachers to partner within and across all grades and subjects to create interdisciplinary curricula targeting the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities.			X	
3.5	Teachers implement a comprehensive system for using formative and summative assessments for strategic short and long-range curriculum planning that involves student reflection, tracking of, and ownership of learning.			X	
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 3:				D	

Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions: Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn, so that all students and pertinent subgroups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking, and achievement.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
4.2	School and teacher leaders ensure that instructional practices and strategies are organized around annual, unit, and daily lesson plans that address all student goals and needs.			X	
4.3	Teachers provide coherent, and appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students.			X	
4.4	Teachers and students work together to implement a program/plan to create a learning environment that is responsive to students' varied experiences and tailored to the strengths and needs of all students.			X	
4.5	Teachers inform planning and foster student participation in their own learning process by using a variety of summative and formative data sources (e.g., screening, interim measures, and progress monitoring).			X	
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 4:				D	

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
5.2	The school leader establishes overarching systems and understandings of how to support and sustain student social and emotional developmental health and academic success.			X	
5.3	The school articulates and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is aligned to a curriculum or program that provides learning experiences and a safe and healthy school environment for families, teachers, and students.			X	
5.4	All school stakeholders work together to develop a common understanding of the importance of their contributions in creating a school community that is safe, conducive to learning, and fostering of a sense of ownership for providing social and emotional developmental health supports tied to the school's vision.			X	
5.5	The school leader and student support staff work together with teachers to establish structures to support the use of data to respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs.			X	
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:				D	

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
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6.2	The school leader ensures that regular communication with students and families fosters their high expectations for student academic achievement.			X	
6.3	The school engages in effective planning and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders so that student strength and needs are identified and used to augment learning.			X	
6.4	The school community partners with families and community agencies to promote and provide training across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.			X	
6.5	The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.			X	
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:				D	

School Review – Findings, Evidence, Impact and Recommendations:

Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: Visionary leaders create a school community and culture that lead to success, well-being, and high academic outcomes for all students via systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement.	Tenet Rating	D
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Debriefing Statement: The school leader, with teams of teachers, is working to create a school culture of continuous improvement that leads to increases in student achievement and personal development. The school mission of “Think, Strive, Believe, and Achieve” is well posted, but the school-wide vision is not clearly defined in documentation or communicated across the community. Targets in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP) are not expressed in Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) terms that explicitly set the overall direction for improvement. The priorities selected to drive improvement are important, being based on salient decisions about defining and developing accountabilities and strategies for improving literacy across the school; however, these priorities in themselves are too limited in scope to drive the overall purpose of the school.

Strengths:

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

Areas for Improvement:

2.2 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader ensures that the school community shares the Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) goals/mission, and long-term vision inclusive of core values that address the priorities outlined in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP).

Overall Finding:

The long-term vision and core values, which should drive school improvement forward, are not clear and therefore, cannot be effectively communicated.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Members of the school community are not in a position to explain the overall vision and core values of the school because there have been few systematic attempts to engage them in activities to establish or shape them. The school website contains up-to-date news items about events at the school, but does not carry information about the aspirations of the school or statements that clearly set out its vision, mission, aims, or purpose. Similarly, documentation that should explain and guide the overall direction of the school is not explicitly in place.
- Faculty members have worked with an external consultant on creating norms for staff collaboration, a mission statement for the school, protocols and templates for data use within team meetings, and a “roadmap” for two types of student goal setting; students goals are set with each student individually, and by a team of teachers. The superintendent was present for the majority of the meetings held during July and August 2013, and reported that expectations were clearly communicated for the development of a school-wide data-driven approach and the ongoing

supports to be provided. Purposeful attitudes and actions have resulted, with some evidence of impact on instructional practices noted, but this is not consistent across the school.

- The school has a SCEP, also created in August 2013. The school leader shared the important targets contained within it, but reviewers found that targets did not fully encompass school aims and were not expressed in terms that facilitated the monitoring and evaluation of improvement efforts. The school leader stated that good student progress over recent months rendered the SCEP largely redundant for the current school year. The school inquiry team and department chairpersons provided a sharper focus and supporting documentation to reviewers, but the school leader in collaboration with these staff have created only a loosely stated vision that is not in line with the specific recommendations in the District-Led School Review of June 2013. Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) interviews revealed that stakeholders did not have a clear understanding of the overall direction and “big picture” priorities of the school beyond slogans and priorities about improving literacy, as stated in the SCEP.
- The SCEP focuses significantly on developing and improving the teaching of literacy school-wide; established priorities including agreeing on a common definition of literacy for school-wide instruction, and specifying accountabilities for setting student defined goals. Although important, these initiatives do not project an overarching vision for the school. School leader responses regarding the vision in the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) self-assessment document were limited and not expressed in precise terms, linked to SMART goals. The “14 parameters” document reviewed by the IIT explained the importance of “shared beliefs and understanding,” but reviewers found these have little formal standing in the school and therefore, are not known or consistently followed.

Impact Statement:

The long-term vision for the school is not expressed or understood across the community, which limits a coordinated action to spur the accelerated improvement necessary to raise 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:

- Create and promote a long-term vision for the school; widen the scope and potential impact of the SCEP by using aligned SMART targets, agreed protocols, and clear lines of accountability systematically communicated across the school community.

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

Overall Finding:

Resources are organized by the school leader to bring about opportunities for student success; but, since the SCEP is limited and does not contain SMART targets to facilitate strategic and operational assessment of the

impact and “value for money” of decisions, the school is not ensuring that resources are being used to address the immediate and long-term needs of students.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school leader’s use of systems such as the master schedule, online classes, and block scheduling are leading to a more effective use of lesson time and support staff deployment. However, as written in the DTSDE self-assessment, and confirmed by the school leader and staff, there is little system monitoring and evaluation to determine the effectiveness of resource deployments and inform plans for improvement.
- Data analysis and data-driven instruction (DDI) are not integrated across grade levels in line with the District-Led School Review recommendations, as explained by the school leader and groups of teachers. The school is beginning to make some use of data for instructional purposes. Reviewers noted that conversations about the integration of data are occurring in grade-level meetings, but the use of data is not yet having sufficient impact on student achievement.
- The school leader is part of the district-wide administrative team where decisions about budget and personnel are collaboratively decided. Given this, the transfer of information to the SCEP is not sufficiently used or developed to provide a vehicle for the school to elucidate its needs. Reviewers found that the school does not fully use the vehicle of the district-wide administrative meetings to shape its own decision making process. Limited monitoring and evaluation of the use of time and resources restricts efficiency.

Impact Statement:

Resources are used to address the needs of the school, but identification of needs, and monitoring and evaluation of the impact of resource use, is not focused to bring about improvement and greater efficiency.

Recommendation:

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

- Define within the 2014-15 SCEP an incisive cycle of monitoring and evaluation to measure the effectiveness and impact of current resource deployment to better inform future decision making and resource targeting, and accelerate the rate of improvement in student success.

2.4 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader has a fully functional system in place aligned to the district's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) to conduct targeted and frequent observation and track progress of teacher practices based on student data and feedback.

Overall Finding:

The Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) provides for scheduled targeted observations and feedback to teachers. Reviewing procedures are compliant; however, data emerging from the process does not necessarily ensure continuous improvements in curriculum development and instructional practices across

the school and subject-wide.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school follows the district approved APPR plan. Observations take place as required by the plan and teachers reported receiving timely and helpful feedback. Reviewers confirmed that school leaders use schedules for observing and providing feedback to teachers; however, the extent to which observations and feedback are used to inform improvements in instruction and learning, and how teachers are held accountable for increasing student achievement rates, is inconsistent.
- Teachers use network team instructional coaches to help improve instructional practices, primarily in literacy, mathematics, and data use. Although reviewers found that APPR procedures are followed, the impact of professional development (PD) and coaching on student achievement and growth is not sufficiently monitored or evaluated; reviewers noted inconsistencies in the quality of student work and grading criteria across different subjects and grade levels.
- In line with the District-Led School Review recommendations, the school has created a PD plan to address literacy concerns across the curriculum. Staff training and coaching have been provided on the use of DDI to increase understanding about monitoring the progress students are making in learning. Through teacher interview and classroom observation, reviewers found these practices have not yet produced sufficient impact on curriculum development and improving instructional practices.

Impact Statement:

Existing systems and practices do not provide a structure that ensures improvement or holds teachers accountable for taking appropriate steps in their routine professional work to raise 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:

- Use the district APPR plan to inform a school-specific plan and system that enable the school leader to identify the effectiveness of current practices based on data; use this plan to chart expected progress in student performance, and hold teachers accountable for accelerating student progress.

2.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** Leaders effectively use evidence-based systems and structures to examine and improve critical individual and school-wide practices as defined in the S CEP (student achievement, curriculum and teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health).

Overall Finding:

Leaders are developing systems to examine school practices and the progress being made toward improving instruction; however, impact on student outcomes is not effectively tracked. Therefore, insufficient data is available about student achievement to inform ways to produce improvements in their learning.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- School leaders, in collaboration with the Inquiry Team, have begun a series of activities to improve school practices by using data sources and evidence-based decision making. Leaders reported that the Capital Region Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) facilitates the reinforcement of these activities through the Educational Systems Review process. Reviewers learned that a BOCES consultant has been working with staff on developing data analysis and synthesis skills as the foundation for driving an increase in DDI. While these initiatives are positive and are developing needed expertise, school leaders acknowledged that the lack of a defined vision and objectives for DDI improvements in the SCEP, limits the effect of these efforts in general practice. Data sources are not prominently used to drive instruction in most classrooms. Of the lessons observed by the review team, only a third used some data to explicitly plan and drive instruction. While lessons using data occurred across grades and English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science, reviewers observed this practice primarily in grade seven classrooms.
- Reviewers found little evidence of progress in school use of data to inform the wider functioning of the school. Parents reported that the school is open and helpful in providing information, but stated they have not been provided with comparative information about their children’s learning progress that is supported by data. The school is making use of the district’s “C-R Connect” data dashboard and portal, which provides a cumulative student record file for parents to view. The record file includes state assessments and specific test scores from reliable assessment tools and organizations, such as Fountas and Pinnell tests and Northwest Evaluation Association’s Measures of Academic Progress assessments. Activities identified in the APPR plan, such as performing student achievement analyses, are occurring, but results are not being consistently used to introduce new approaches or modify existing systems across the school.
- Review of the DTSDE school self-assessment document showed that leaders deemed use of school-wide evidence-based systems to be at a developing stage; documentation described curriculum practices and developments supported by coaches assigned to the school. The self-assessment openly acknowledged school-wide limitations in providing tangible data to inform the decisions that drive systematic and coherent improvement in individual and school-wide practices.

Impact Statement:

Progress in the areas of range of available data, analysis, and synthesis is not sufficient to pursue and ensure the needed school improvements.

Recommendation:

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

- Bring APPR and other observations of instruction, student learning and school performance, into a school-wide system that uses a data-rich platform to drive decision making, and includes built-in accountabilities to secure improved student outcomes.

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 in the process of developing curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in the areas of mathematics and ELA. The school is adapting EngageNY modules to modify district curriculum. Although time has been allocated for the development of lessons and instructional planning during team meetings, they are not consistently used to address the implementation of CCLS or to create cross-curricular activities. Some teachers use data to track student growth and adjust curriculum, as needed; however, this is not having enough effect in planning for differentiation. As a result, the rigor within assessments is not matched in the curriculum, and the needs of all groups of students are not met.

Strengths:

All ratings for this Tenet are **Developing** 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.

Overall Finding:

School staff is in the process of adapting EngageNY modules to align district curricula to the CCLS. However, this initiative is not consistently evident in curriculum planning, and program and lesson delivery.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- School staff described adaptation of EngageNY modules to modify district curriculum in mathematics and ELA; the effort is occurring with the support of BOCES instructional coaches, which reviewers observed in a grade six team meeting with an ELA coach. The school leader and staff reported that they are currently focused on authoring CCLS-aligned curricula in mathematics and ELA, and aligning other subjects. As recommended by the District-Led School Review, the school is providing training and time for curricular writing throughout the 2013-14 school year; however, consistent use of a curriculum template or tool has not been established.
- The DTSDE school self-assessment and additional documents showed that the curriculum in place is designed to address the CCLS and needs of students. However, it is driven by the perceptions of groups of staff, rather than steered by an overarching SCEP and precise curriculum formats. Reviewers noted that the school leader generally encourages a strongly defined curriculum, particularly in mathematics and science. However, alignment to CCLS and NYS standards across all areas of study is expressed in terms of agreeing protocols on how to share good practice, rather than accelerating the actual sharing to improve practice. Reviewers found that the content of curricula currently in use is often not demanding of students, nor appropriately matched to their

needs; however, reviewers also noted examples of appropriate levels of challenge and demanding content in some classrooms, which could be directly emulated.

- The mathematics department, in particular, has been provided with appropriate access to pedagogical support, materials, and use of the New York State (NYS) Replication Grant to allow staff to meet outside the school day for curriculum alignment; the impact of this effort is not yet evident across the school.

Impact Statement:

The curricula do not address the needs of all groups of students or contribute to college and career readiness consistently across all subjects. School leaders and staff are working on authoring CCLS-aligned curricula for mathematics and ELA, and have begun to align curricula across additional subjects.

Recommendation:

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

- Identify gaps in the school's curricula and ensure these are filled by accelerating alignment with the CCLS. Use existing school practices to expedite this, and external PD, when necessary.

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:

The lack of a cohesive school-wide curriculum that uses DDI, complex materials, and higher-order questioning leads to inconsistency and weakness in the planning and delivery of CCLS-aligned instruction across grades and subject areas.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The DTSDE school self-assessment document provided multiple examples of data collection and mapping, but did not address data monitoring and use in relation to improving rates of student progress and achievement levels. Other documents stated that student self-assessment was a major monitoring tool used by teachers; while useful, these assessments are based on student perceptions of lessons and their learning, and not benchmarked or quantifiable criteria. The quality of such data is lacking in reliability and rigor.
- According to the school leader and staff, and documented scheduling, daily grade-level team meeting time is available for teacher collaboration. Teachers at the vertical teacher focus group meeting explained that meetings occur over a six-day cycle, with each day in the cycle dedicated to one area, such as planning, pedagogy, data, and students and counseling. A daily discussion of CCLS curriculum development, the incorporation of instructional shifts, and the adaptation of instruction based on data does not occur. Meeting times are designated for curriculum and planning, but these are not resulting in lesson plans that include all the necessary components. The practicalities of

including DDI, complex materials, and higher-order questioning aligned to the CCLS and NYS standards are not agreed and acted upon as a priority. Reviewers observed little sequencing or scaffolding for progression in classroom visitations.

- Teachers have access to student data, but it is not used consistently across and within teams to adjust instruction to meet student needs. Observations showed that teachers use lesson plans that are inconsistently aligned to the CCLS, and with little use of complex materials and activities. The school is developing protocols to monitor and adjust curricula in support of the CCLS instructional shifts and NYS content standards, but efforts are not department-wide or school-wide.

Impact Statement:

Instructional plans and lesson delivery are limited in meeting the requirements of the CCLS and raising 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:

- Use existing school systems and meeting times to ensure that lessons are aligned to the CCLS and EngageNY.
- Ensure that lessons are systematically and collaboratively planned using DDI to address the achievement needs of all subgroups of students.

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

Overall Finding:

The school leader and teachers do not have formal partnerships to address interdisciplinary curricula. Teachers are beginning to collaborate and discuss ways to deliver interdisciplinary curricula that incorporate the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities for the benefit of student success.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Some teachers are beginning to collaborate and discuss ways to deliver interdisciplinary curricula. Encore team members, who teach non-core subjects and whom provide extra-curricular opportunities for students such as "Fun Friday," attend subject and grade-level team meetings without a specific mandate to make linkages in learning. This does not facilitate the development of enrichment opportunities that enhance core subject learning. The DTSDE school self-assessment listed a number of collaborations, but there was little documentation directing this type of programming. The self-assessment passively stated, "Teams have decided to discuss topics which will enable topics to be studied concurrently or to build on one another."

- The school leader identified the school librarian as the person in the best position to work across subjects within teams. Staff cited a model collaborative project involving the grade six social studies and reading teachers, which incorporated literacy development and technology use. From conversations with students, student work samples, and classroom observations, reviewers found that collaborative tasks incorporating the vocabulary found in the CCLS are sometimes used, but without actively linking or engaging students in discussions of interdisciplinary applications.
- Reviewed planning documentation and observations revealed that only a few teachers deliver interdisciplinary curricula within grades and subjects. In team meetings, teachers stated that interdisciplinary collaboration does not occur with consistency. A department chairperson pointed out that current students are not familiar with the higher expectations and shifts in learning, and do not yet know how to learn in this way.
- Teachers reported using a BOCES literacy coach for support in developing lessons incorporating literacy. However, in most classroom observations, lesson content and class discussion remained focused within a single subject area. Reviewers learned that vertical teaming and departmental coordination is not fully active, nor are teachers observing other classes, grades, and subjects, as recommended in the June 2013 District-Led School Review recommendations. While some inter-classroom visitations occur, a systematic provision for such practices is weak.
- In the few instances where teachers address interdisciplinary curricula and develop some partnerships, such as between science and technology and among ELA, social studies and science, school leaders are made aware of these interdisciplinary activities, but they are not part of any overall plan or initiative. While reviewers found that teachers meet regularly, there is little evidence that it is a productive practice relative to the meeting time and impact on student progress and levels of engagement. Reviewers noted that many good opportunities are not taken; for example, students learning about stained-glassed windows in an art lesson missed salient and related opportunities to link the purpose of such windows in cathedrals with themes in ELA or social studies. Teachers reflect on the impact of interdisciplinary curricula, but through informal methods of monitoring and evaluation, rather than a formalized system.

Impact Statement:

Students are provided some opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary activities, but the extent and impact of activities is not contributing to broadening academic understanding and heightening skill levels across a number of subjects in a meaningful way.

Recommendation:

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

- Encourage the teaching teams' desire to discuss and share topics in formal and informal ways; create an interdisciplinary curriculum. Ensure a teacher inter-classroom visitation schedule that allows for more collaborative team-planning, team-teaching, reflection, and deliberate implementation of interdisciplinary curriculum, as recommended in the June 2013 District- Led School Review.

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:

Teachers use a range of assessments to inform curriculum planning; however, students are given too little responsibility for raising the standards for their own learning, both through feedback of formative assessment and on ways to improve their performance on summative assessments.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- As observed by reviewers in planning documentation and lessons, some teachers are developing systems to analyze and use assessment data to inform the curricula and lesson and unit planning. While such initiatives are positive, reviewers found they are not comprehensive, nor are they driven by an overarching vision to raise standards and secure student ownership of learning.
- Teachers are using a variety of assessment systems. Reviewers found that rubrics describing summative and formative assessment criteria were useful, but saw evidence of feedback that was not aligned with curriculum planning and CCLS ambition. Student perception about the meaning of the descriptors in the curriculum assessment rubrics did not consistently align with the standards actually expected. These systems, although regular features of curriculum planning, are infrequently monitored and evaluated. As a result, limited improvements are seen in instructional practice and student achievement.
- As stated in the DTSDE self-assessment and accompanying documents, there are a number of methods and feedback channels from and to students. However, reviewers saw few examples of developed formative assessment feedback being used to adjust short- and long-term curriculum planning. Formative feedback in student notebooks was infrequently acted upon, and reviewers saw little evidence that students were held to account or given responsibility for raising the standard of their own work or performance on summative tests. Teachers reported that the outcomes of formative and summative assessment did not influence curriculum development significantly.

Impact Statement:

Pockets of summative and formative assessment are influencing short- and long-term curriculum planning, but these are not sufficiently developed school-wide to lead to improved student achievement through reflection, tracking, and ownership of their learning.

Recommendation:

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

- Ensure a consistency of understanding and practice across the school in using assessment data to inform and modify curriculum planning to accelerate student progress and raise levels of

achievement, to improve student understanding and tracking of next steps, and to hold students accountable.

Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions: Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn, so that all students and pertinent subgroups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking, and achievement.

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: The quality of instruction is improving, but practices are inconsistent. Effective, and occasionally highly effective, practices are used, where students respond to higher-order questioning and the challenges of working with appropriately complex materials. However, there is a lack of systematic implementation of these practices to ensure high levels of engagement and achievement by all groups of students. Too often practices do not provide multiple points of access for different groups of learners based on an understanding of their potential, prior learning and performance data. These inconsistencies limit student access to learning. Consequently, student rates of progress and levels of achievement are not as high as they should be.

Strengths:

All ratings for this Tenet are **Developing** 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:

Teacher leaders support planning time for teaching teams to share instructional plans and practices that reflect student needs and lead to increased academic achievement; however, data is limited and meeting time is not used as efficiently or effectively as it should to accelerate improvements.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Reviewers found that teacher leaders and coaches support staff in the use of instructional practices and strategies that encourages the alignment of teacher instruction with long-, medium-, and short-term plans. Reviewers observed two of the daily grade-level team meetings in grade six and grade seven, and held to address these issues with a shared agenda. Because the overall purpose of these meetings is loosely defined at the whole school-level, and because preparatory information for the meetings is not shared in advance, reviewers found that time was not efficiently used and discussion was anecdotal, rather than focused on clear objectives. Teachers are beginning to discuss how to align instructional plans with data, but plans are not driven sufficiently by them to accelerate implementation and improved outcomes for students. Plans, as described within the DTSDE school self-assessment, are the actions and initiatives of individuals and some grade-level teams, rather than collective and coordinated actions across the school.

- Students have goals to pursue, some of which are set by teachers, and some by themselves. In a few subjects, particularly in reading, goals are data-driven. However, work samples provided by students, and scrutinized by reviewers, showed that while the content of student work frequently showed knowledge and understanding, the skills used to present it were well-below standard. Reviewed annual, unit, and daily lesson planning had too little indication of the skill levels that students must show in their finished work. Expectations for students to build a portfolio of work, as was occurring in ELA, were not happening consistently in other subjects. Therefore, the tangible examples needed to share and raise school-wide expectations are too limited.
- Differentiated instructional practices and flexible groupings were used in five of the 15 lessons observed by reviewers. Reviewers found that use of differentiated instruction was not consistent across the school. Reviewers also noted some confusion over terminology, as some flexible grouping systems, where students rotate around activities over a series of lessons, are perceived as being “differentiated” or as having “multiple points of access.” While this is often a good organizational strategy, it does not adjust the levels of demand and rigor to student needs. Making the work that students undertake different and in line with their needs is not sufficiently prevalent in teachers’ thinking, planning, and lesson delivery, or in the broader culture of the school. Adjustments are made to the materials and learning processes for students with disabilities, but reviewers found little evidence of differentiating learning to meet the needs of all groups of students and individuals.

Impact Statement:

Planning and coordination of instructional practices are not promoting sufficiently high levels of school-wide engagement and inquiry to ensure that all students make the academic gains they are capable of.

Recommendation:

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

- Ensure teachers use planning time more efficiently, and assessment data more effectively, in devising annual and unit plans. Ensure instructional practices are adapted appropriately and interdisciplinary subject links developed to engage and motivate all groups of students and meet their different needs.

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:

Only a small number of teachers are providing a range of lessons that are engaging and CCLS aligned with higher-order questioning and appropriately challenging text complexity.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Teachers are beginning to plan lessons that align with the CCLS and are reflective of the CCLS shifts,

but this is taking place in pockets and is not a consistent practice across the school. Grade-level and subject department meetings are held frequently where worthwhile discussions among teachers determine the general direction of instructional planning. Given the generous resource time allocated to these meetings, teachers are not paying sufficient attention to ensuring that CCLS-aligned curricula are available for lessons. Too little collective attention is paid to the quality of student work, the precise standards expected of students across subjects, and the multiple points of access to learning required by different groups of students.

- Reviewer observations and staff observation feedback documentation identified the need for staff to use questioning techniques to promote and ensure higher-order thinking in a greater proportion of lessons. High expectations and the use of demanding texts with appropriately complex content were not routinely evident in instructional planning or delivery. Of the 15 lessons observed formally by reviewers, only five were assessed as being aligned with CCLS; four of these were in grade seven. CCLS-aligned lessons were observed in ELA, mathematics and science, which builds a basis for increasingly coherent practices in these subjects across adjacent grades.
- Reviewers found that school and classroom rules and expectations are frequently shared and discussed with staff and students. However, these discussions do not lead to multiple points of access being created for different groups of learners in enough classes. Instruction is modified as required by Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), as observed in a grade seven science class; and reviewers noted that some teachers used strategies and equipment that acknowledged student differentiation, including the use of adjusted instructional texts, headphones, and graphic organizers. Teachers spoke in meetings with reviewers about efforts to make special provisions for students who find work difficult or require acceleration. However, in classroom observations, few efforts were made to adjust programs beyond these two levels to accommodate the wide range of student ability or provide feedback on how to improve their work.

Impact Statement:

Coherent CCLS-based instructional practices are not in place across the school; therefore, there are too few differentiated opportunities to secure multiple points of access for students. As a result, students do not achieve as well as they should.

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 planning and lesson delivery are appropriately aligned to the CCLS, and include a range of instructional materials and activities with appropriate complexity and higher-level questioning to challenge, engage, and secure multiple points of access for all groups of students.

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:

Student perspectives are not always adequately reflected in the learning environment. Students feel physically and intellectually safe in engaging in learning in classrooms; however, the level of challenge is often not well matched to student ability levels.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The DTSDE school self-assessment listed a number of programs that teachers observe regarding expectations for student behavior and learning. School staff reported the development of a range of strategies, which included student-teacher conferences and absence passes that allow students to catch up via tutorials during designated times.
- Students spoke extensively about the merits and demerits of study hall sessions. Students reported that they were able to work independently with varying degrees of adult supervision and intervention. The commentary from students and staff about the value of study hall covered a wide range of views. Students tended to appreciate the ability to catch up with work in the 20-minute lunchtime slot; but many felt the time less useful, as they did not always understand the ongoing direction of their work. One student in grade eight, for example, explained that she would have preferred to take on more curricular activities, but because she was in accelerated programs, had been advised to keep the study hall time for completion and revision of that work. The sentiment she expressed, which was supported by others students in different circumstances, was that the time in study hall was not necessarily that profitable, although students appreciated the “trust and independence factor.”
- Reviewers found that student achievement expectations were often not at appropriate levels. Very able grade eight students, for example, shared work graded highly by teachers, in some cases at 100 percent; yet the handwriting was careless, grammar erratic and presentational forms inconsistent. Students admitted that this was “not OK,” but were quite content with their 100 percent gradings. In grade six, students shared some good work, but provided other examples in very compartmentalized classifications that showed a transfer of learning from one aspect of writing was not being made to another. For example, students who had obviously mastered certain writing skills had been given repetitive work on de-contextualized worksheets, rather than an opportunity to apply those skills to more challenging situations and stringent quality standards. A grade seven student shared some potentially good work in social studies. The content of the work was appropriately demanding, but the large map on which it was based was not titled and lacked orientation, a key, and a scale. The presentation did not do justice to the conceptual achievement behind it.

Impact Statement:

Instruction is not sufficiently differentiated, student voice is low, and student perspectives are minimally used. Therefore, student ability to engage and achieve 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:

- Develop a defined strategy for differentiated instruction and monitor its impact on student learning; routinely take student feedback and perception into account in addressing specific areas of concern.

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:

Teachers are beginning to use data to inform and adjust their instructional practices and student groupings; however, formative and summative assessment data are not sufficiently driving the process of student ownership of learning.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Teachers were observed using a variety of summative and formative assessment techniques that included daily classroom discussions, use of pre- and post-test data, and some differentiated activities based on a range of summative test assessments, such as NWEA MAP scores. In some cases, DDI was timely and purposeful. At key times, teachers used analyzed data to inform instruction; however, reviewer meeting and classroom observations showed this to be an inconsistent practice across the school.
- The use of assessment rubrics was observed in many lessons, in which students were given descriptors for four levels of outcome performance, such as thoroughly; literally; with gaps; and confused. In a grade eight ELA unit on writing, the rubric carried extensive assessment detail about a CCLS-aligned unit on “Response to Literature.” The rubric contained an excellent set of criteria for analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating literacy works to evaluate student performance at those four levels. While used by teachers to gauge lesson delivery, scrutiny of resulting student work showed that too little accountability is placed on students to present work that matches the “thorough” and “literal” levels.
- Some planning showed consideration of formative and summative assessments when making adjustments in student groupings and instructional practices based on students’ prior performance. However, in two-thirds of the lessons visited by reviewers, little use of formative assessment to adjust lesson organization was observed. With rubrics in use that accurately specify performance standards, not enough student feedback and discussion is occurring relative to those performance descriptors, either individually or in groups. Teachers too often present lessons via general commentaries, rather than setting differentiated tasks and directing students to raise their game by moving from “with gaps” to “literal,” for example.
- Assessment feedback is given to students, but this is limited and selective. Much of the student work examined by reviewers showed low skill levels, which in turn inhibited clarity in their conceptual development. Students admitted to reviewers that aspects of their work were carelessly presented and that they knew what a better standard would and should look like. On the other

hand, some examples of work were of a high standard, especially in cases where the student had brought something of their own experience or research to the project. One student shared a very moving poem, which had carefully been refined through editing stages and word-processed for final presentation. Such examples were the exception, rather than the norm.

Impact Statement:

Assessments and DDI do not lead to elevated student achievement, because expectations about baseline performance are often too low and feedback to students often fails to ensure that students take steps to close gaps in their achievement.

Recommendation:

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

- Change the priorities in grade-level and subject meetings to ensure analysis of formative assessment data on the comparative standards of student work and performance levels across subjects.
- Train students to understand what feedback they should anticipate based on assessment rubrics, the skill levels to be applied, and the presentational standards required to reach the highest level. Hold students accountable for what they are expected to do as a result of the feedback received.

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 is moving to improve school culture through the implementation of school-wide systems. Staff members are aware that bullying is an area of concern, primarily in the “less structured” areas in and around the school, and on school buses. The school has instituted a bullying prevention awareness campaign, but this has had little effect on behavior and interactions among students. School staff is implementing initiatives such as “Where Everyone Belongs” to replace Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which was discontinued. The lack of embedded school-wide programs does not adequately support students’ social and emotional developmental health, especially in relation to accelerating their academic progress.

Strengths:

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

Areas for Improvement:

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

Overall Finding:

The school leader has begun to lead improvements but the current culture, systems and understanding, including recent initiatives, is not school-wide or robust enough to effectively promote and adequately support the social and emotional developmental health of all students.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Students expressed concern and personal upset over incidents of bullying. Some students acknowledged that they were “mean” to other students, but claimed, “That is just the way it is.” Reviewers learned that school leaders and staff are not addressing this attitude overtly and forcefully enough to convince students of the seriousness of their complacency and the urgent need for them to change behaviors.
- The school leader is developing a system of referral and supports to address the social and emotional developmental health needs of students, although guidelines and practices are yet to be defined and agreed upon. Staff use of data to identify areas of need connected to students’ social and emotional needs is being developed through mechanisms such as the school’s referral form. Staff confirmed to reviewers that there are a number of school-wide initiatives being implemented throughout the school, but better coordination is needed to affect successful outcomes. Discussions with students confirmed that procedures are in place for them to consult with an adult, if they have any worries or concerns.
- The school leader provides time for the school support staff, consisting of guidance staff, social workers and the assistant principal, to meet with grade-level teams twice every six days. Staff reported that these meetings are informative, however, support staff knowledge and expertise is insufficiently used to enhance the social and emotional needs of students once they move beyond the classroom. While this, and other mechanisms, supports the sharing of information, they are not having enough impact on student attitudes or personally managed behaviors. The result is that many students recognize and admit to their own poor behavior and attitudes, but do not expect to be held accountable or to change their attitudinal patterns. This is not conducive to their social and emotional developmental health, and much less to those students on the receiving end of poor behaviors.

Impact Statement:

The social and emotional developmental health needs of all students are not effectively identified or supported beyond the classrooms, and are therefore, not being fully met.

Recommendation:

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

- Establish clear and comprehensive guidelines, and implement an overall referral and support system, to address the social and emotional developmental health needs of students. Communicate the system to the school community.

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.

Overall Finding:

The school is beginning to identify social-emotional health needs and incorporate supports in pockets across the school. There is no vision for a program, and insufficient action is taken to improve strategies for providing the support needed by groups of students. PD has not effectively developed adult capacity to support social and emotional developmental health needs.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- A vision for promoting social and emotional developmental health is not clearly documented or well promoted, although the school has taken steps to determine the climate in the school. According to the school's own bullying survey during 2013-14, more than 60 percent of the students who responded reported being bullied, and nearly 50 percent had heard negative remarks about students from adults. The school had initiated a bullying prevention awareness campaign, but students, staff, and parents reported that this has had little effect on behaviors and interactions among students. The survey also showed that two-thirds of students report that bullying occurs in the school. Of the 384 students who responded to the question, "Do you know the procedures for reporting bullying?" 348 or 90.6 percent stated, "Yes." This 90 percent of students reflected the views of students who felt they could talk to an adult about bullying at school. Students in both the large interview group and small interview group stated that teachers were helpful at conflict resolution when they were informed about incidents.
- Some staff members emphasized the importance of social and emotional development within the curriculum. In two of seven classes observed, teachers discussed high school and college career paths and the steps students needed to take to find success in those arenas. However, actions to address reported difficulties are not effective.
- Many students expressed concern about the way they are treated outside of the classroom, especially on the school bus ride to and from school. These described experiences were not reflective of a supportive and respectful environment conducive to learning. While the school leader is moving to support a cultural change within the school and beyond, current systems for student social and emotional developmental health are not addressing barriers to student outcomes across the wider school environment. Reviewers found that this occurs because systems take too little account of student feedback and lack the direct and comprehensive action necessary to secure change.
- The school is developing a curriculum to promote the teaching of social and emotional developmental health through a range of sessions and lessons, such as the work of grade six health education classes and the grade seven clubs, "Girls on Track" and "Girls on the Run." The school has recently introduced "Where Everyone Belongs", a school wide program to replace its PBIS program, which was discontinued. A significant percentage of students in grade seven have been identified to take an active part in driving this new initiative over the next 15 months. The school is actively building both student and adult capacity to support student social and emotional needs, and recognizes that more

staff PD is needed to better equip them with the required skill set to meet fully the needs of students.

Impact Statement:

The curriculum and climate across the school is not effective in securing the social and emotional needs of all students.

Recommendation:

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

- Tie PD and the curriculum to a vision for improving school climate. Create steps and rubrics that demonstrate what a positive school climate would look like in all areas of the school and in the wider community; develop a program accordingly. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the program in practice using mechanisms, such as audits, to ensure that the views of families, teachers and students inform the evaluation and development processes.

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

Overall Finding:

The school has begun to organize its work with school stakeholders to ensure the social and emotional needs of students are more consistently met and incorporated into daily practice.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school leader could identify protocols and processes in place, such as data days, but these are not part of a cohesive system for addressing the social and emotional needs of students that is understood by all stakeholders. Parents expressed a desire for a more robust structure. School staff reported developing and beginning to monitor systems that respond to the social and emotional needs of students, as evidenced by the bullying survey, which showed that students feel they can talk to adults about problems and have specific issues resolved.
- During interviews, all stakeholders reported that bullying is a concern and that attempts to change the climate of the school had not been as successful as hoped. It was reported during the school support staff meeting, that the school had participated in the PBIS program and that some aspects of the program were helpful in changing school-wide behavior. However, due to a lack of funding and an inconsistent "buy-in" by some staff members this program was discontinued. . The school is now in the process of incorporating other initiatives for school climate and culture change under a canopy of school-wide coordination, mainly through "Where Everyone Belongs." Discussions with stakeholders indicated that not all are aware of the roles they are expected to play in improving the culture and learning climate of the school. Students reported the existence of a somewhat ineffectual student council, and as such, students are denied an opportunity to play a proactive role in making school a

safe and secure place to learn.

- Current methods of supporting stakeholder understanding of the skills and behaviors addressing the social and emotional needs of students are piecemeal. However, early work on “Where Everyone Belongs” is coordinating and pulling together community efforts. Grade seven students are actively involved and already preparing for their roles as grade eight mentors to new, grade six students entering the school in September 2014. A sense of student ownership was discernible as students prepared to interview for these roles.
- The small team of staff leading these initiatives are drawn from different teams, and reported they have good avenues for assistance. They have access to a certified behavior specialist, two counselors, an attendance clerk, a nurse, and additional staff with specific skills in social and emotional developmental health. Within curriculum subjects, such as health education, physical education, and science, the small team has further skilled support in creating a physically and intellectually safe educational community. Nevertheless, too little is being done to provide regular “mini” PD on ways to incorporate conflict resolution, positive self-esteem, and character-education strategies that can be taught in the classroom. Staff reported seeking ways to incorporate inputs from staff in the elementary, middle and high schools, and from students, through a reconstituted mandate for the school council and “Where Everyone Belongs”, to draw students into being active participants in developing efforts.

Impact Statement:

A lack of consistent understanding of student needs is limiting action and student growth.

Recommendation:

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

- Involve stakeholders at all levels in changing the school climate by routinely seeking representative input in initiatives to improve students’ social and emotional developmental health, and ensure a momentum of change.

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 is initiating procedures to collect, analyze and use data to identify and determine the actions needed to meet the wide range of social and emotional developmental health needs of different groups of students and individuals; however, the school is not sufficiently informed about the social and emotional developmental health of its students.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school leaders and support staff are developing a plan to help teachers understand how to use

data to address the social and emotional developmental health needs of students, as shown in the Middle School Handbook. The school support staff and the assistant principal reported that data use was recognized as too limited. The school is trying to determine the role of the counselors in helping teachers interpret data and use it to support student social and emotional health. There are a number of outside agencies, such as Catholic Charities, that support students with the highest need; and there are firm procedures in place to respond to the data and information provided to assist those students. Reaching students and assessing their level of need and growth is accomplished primarily through self-reporting by students, behavioral referrals or personal information provided by teachers.

- The school community has established ways to collect data and is developing methods to address data use and interpretation for supportive actions. For example, in a grade-level team meeting, teachers identified students who had not received individual consideration about their progress and well-being. The planning of “case conferences” was classified around the differentiated performance of these students in terms of their levels of English language acquisition: high, average and low. Reviewers found that the consideration of the social and emotional needs of students based on academic or behavioral performance is not systematic, and therefore data is not available in sufficiently personalized, up-to-date forms that ensure progress is consistently sustained and year round.
- Reviewers found that the staffing pattern does not facilitate an expedient application of data in instruction and social and emotional support for students, as there is significant variation in the role structure. While the assistant principal is well aware of general matters pertaining to the social and emotional development of students, the vertical subject progression throughout the school and horizontal coordination of grade levels is inconsistent. Only in grade eight, is the team leader a subject chairperson responsible for vertical subject progression; in grades six and seven the role of team leader is separate from the role of vertical subject chairperson. Ties between horizontal grade coordination and vertical subject progression are not strong enough to ensure that student academic success and social and emotional development health are tightly monitored as interdependent factors.

Impact Statement:

Many students do well when given general encouragement, support, and opportunities to be socially and academically successful; however, when students encounter difficulty or perform below expectations, there is too much reliance on self-reporting by students, and too little anticipated intervention.

Recommendation:

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

- Institute a twice-yearly benchmarked assessment for all students to determine their social and emotional developmental health; use this and other data sources to monitor the progress of students, especially in relation to adjustments that need to be made in their weekly curriculum and instruction.

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
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Debriefing Statement: The school expresses commitment to building relationships with parents and families. Some family members feel welcome in the school. While communication takes place to inform parents and families about raising student achievement and enhancing their social and emotional health, the school lacks a sustainable structure that engages and empowers all families to be partners in student success. Because staff and parents do not consistently engage in reciprocal communication, many parents do not see themselves as partners with the school, and some staff believes their efforts are not supported at home.

Strengths:
 All ratings for this Tenet are **Developing** 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.

Overall Finding:
 The school leader provides information that makes students and families aware of news and events, and equips parents to assist their children in the practical aspects of school life. This communication with parents and families is primarily logistical, in contrast to communication that promotes an understanding of ways the school and parents work together to foster and support high expectations.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school website does not communicate a clear vision or educational ambitions for the school, parents, and other stakeholders. The school leader cites strategies and practices that are primarily print or electronic communications, such as the homework hotline, counselor blogs, connected messages, team newsletters, progress reports, and six-week report cards. The school leader has held “family association meetings” to encourage two-way communication, with limited attendance reported. Alternative options and strategies for two-way communication were not sufficiently evident in the school structure. Although the large geographical range of the school district is a limiting factor to parental attendance, parents and other stakeholders confirmed that too little is achieved in promoting an aspirational vision.
- Staff members are knowledgeable about student expectations in terms of their curriculum programs, levels of achievement and personal development. Staff also expressed a uniform approach to promoting ambitions for students with parents; however, this has been adopted without a properly stated long-term vision and without informing community understanding.

- The school community is developing a plan to encourage students and families to learn more about expectations. Parents at the meeting with reviewers described their current knowledge of the school with some satisfaction, but their desire for more information about ways they could support their children was clearly stated. School leaders and staff explained that family-school relationships are being worked on by school staff to foster higher expectations for student academic achievement. The use of the homework hotline and the district website are helping build this.

Impact Statement:

The school is successful in engaging only a small percentage of parents in reciprocal communication about high expectations and what they can do to support their students in reaching them; for the majority of students, academic and personal success is not effectively enhanced to help them to be college and career ready.

Recommendation:

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

- Improve the website and ensure that this becomes a vehicle to effectively communicate the school's high expectations for student academic achievement and educational ambitions to parents; implement practices to communicate regularly important messages about expectations, achievement, and ambitions to key stakeholders and the wider community.

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.

Overall Finding:

There are many forms of communication between the school, the staff, and families about student needs and support, but it is not reciprocal. The majority of communication takes the form of one-way or digital communication, as opposed to two-way communication regarding opportunities to support student achievement and growth.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school engages in some planning and communication that enables families to support their children's academic and social growth, but it is under-developed. A plan is being created for communicating with families about school and student issues through additional channels, such as school staff participation in the Community Steering Committee and coordination with other agencies, such as family support and probation. The school is beginning to reflect on the effectiveness of parental communication strategies. Initiatives such as blogs, parent conference forms, parents' nights, and open house have been introduced. Translation software is available and phone calls are arranged in families' native languages when required.
- Parents specifically expressed the desire to be provided with additional communication regarding what they can do to support student achievement. Parents conferences are offered on an "as needed" basis, but these are left to the initiative of parents, rather than being driven as a part of the

school's mission. The school does not have a commitment to having conversations with groups of parents who represent various student groups, such as those with children of high and low academic achievement, special education classification, diversity, first-time middle school parents and those with older students. The lack of conversations seeking stakeholder suggestions for improving communication pathways is limiting school improvement and the progress of students.

Impact Statement:

Staff is not engaged in reciprocal communication with the school leader or parents to increase parental understanding of student needs and how to support student achievement, which limits student growth.

Recommendation:

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

- Make a commitment to provide formal two-way communication opportunities for every parent to help them understand their children's needs and ways to support their achievement; seek parental views on communications between school and home, and act on suggestions for improvement.

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:

Limited resources are used to assist home-school partnerships, but these are not sufficiently developed or effective in ensuring that both parties are able to work together to help students achieve.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- There is no written, formalized plan for training parents and staff about effective home-school partnerships. However, parents reported that the school has an open policy and that parents have easy access to teachers, when required. Preliminary strategies are being initiated from grade-to-grade, including community agency presentations in some grades and classes, and partnership activities in some subjects, but at this stage these are occurring without any intentional continuity. However, a plan is being created to provide PD to staff on how to build better learning partnerships with the community and families.
- The school leader is in the process of developing a plan that will help parents find ways to support their children's learning and growth. The mathematics department is already actively trying to better equip students and their families to support student success in mathematics.
- The school leader and the leadership team are also developing a plan to help parents and school staff creates and sustain family engagement by providing training to representative demographic members about how to support student learning and growth via home-school partnerships.

Impact Statement:

Students are not sufficiently gaining, in either their academic progress or social and emotional developmental health, from home-school relationships and the combined support of teachers and parents.

Recommendation:

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

- Use the mathematics department model, and others, to begin to develop wider partnerships to support student success.
- Complete and implement plans to provide PD to staff; extend PD to advise parents about ways to support their children's learning and 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.

Overall Finding:

A small number of parents are using data the school shares to engage in dialogue with school leaders and staff about their children. Therefore, for the majority of families, understanding and advocacy are less than effective.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- School staff recognized the need to share and integrate data systems to identify family needs across partnerships, but in a considerate manner. Staff receives training to understand data, but this is not systematically passed on to parents. Student learning needs and success data are shared with families in ways they can understand through things like grading sheets, information sessions, and report sharing with parents. Parents explained that it is difficult to use the data contained in report cards, state assessment results, and beginning-of-year flyers in meaningful ways, though.
- Only four parents attended the meeting with reviewers, and the school does not have a formal Parent-Teacher Association. The majority of parents are not engaging in dialogue with faculty and school leaders about shared data, so it is difficult for the school to assess the empowerment of families to advocate for services they believe would address their children's needs.
- While school staff reported that information is shared with parents, this does not encourage dialogue among parents, or between home and school. Parents who do not attend information sessions provided by the school become detached over the longer-term. Attendance by parents at induction meetings when their children first join the school is good, but the school has few strategies in place to maintain the engagement of parents after this initial interest.

Impact Statement:

Only a small number of parents engage in dialogue about school practices and student performance data; therefore, understanding and advocacy by the parent body, as a whole, 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:

- Communicate data in ways that ensure parental understanding of the information shared. In line with the June 2013 District-Led School Review recommendations, ensure a community service agency presence in the school to drive advocacy for student and family needs.