



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)

Modified School Review



BEDS Code	66-23-00-01-0036
School Name	Cross Hill Academy
School Address	160 Bolmer Avenue, Yonkers, NY
District Name	Yonkers City School District
School Leader	Michael Walpole
Dates of Review	October 16-17, 2013
School Accountability Status	Priority School
Type of Review	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet											
Grade Configuration	PreK-5, 7,8	Total Enrollment	682	Title 1 Population	209	Attendance Rate	89.2%				
Free Lunch	75.7%	Reduced Lunch	6.0%	Student Sustainability	%	Limited English Proficient	5.6%	Students with Disabilities	14.03%		
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes											
#Transitional Bilingual	0	#Dual Language	0	#Self-Contained English as a Second Language				0			
Types and Number of Special Education Classes											
#Special Classes	10	#Consultant Teaching	0	#Integrated Collaborative Teaching				0			
# Resource Room	2										
Types and Number Special Classes											
#Visual Arts	3	#Music	2	#Drama	0	# Foreign Language	1	# Dance	0	CTE	#
Racial/Ethnic Origin											
American Indian or Alaska Native	.4%	Black or African American	34.3%	Hispanic or Latino	54.5%	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	2.8%	White	7.3%	Multi-racial	.6%
Personnel											
Years Principal Assigned to School	3 YRS 7/1/2010	# of Assistant Principals	3	# of Deans	0	# of Counselors / Social Workers		1/1			
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0%	% Teaching Out of Certification	0%	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.		12%	Average Teacher Absences	5%			
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
School in Good Standing		Priority School	X	Focus District		Focus School Identified by a Focus District		SIG Recipient	X		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	15 3.8%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	14 3.6%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	36 76.6%	4 Year Graduation Rate (HS Only)		N/A			
Credit Accumulation (High School Only)											
% of 1 st yr. students who earned 10+ credits	N/A	% of 2 nd yr. students who earned 10+ credits	N/A	% of 3 rd yr. students who earned 10+ credits	N/A	6 Year Graduation Rate		N/A			

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

SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE SCHOOL:

Describe the school's top priorities (no more than 5) based on the school's comprehensive plans (SCEP, SIG, DCIP, etc.):

1. Implementation of strategies for curriculum development under the CCLS.
2. Improved alignment of benchmark assessments to CCLS.
3. Formulation of a data team to make informed instructional decisions.
4. Develop instructional techniques that allow for multiple points of access for students.
5. Improve data sharing systems with all school stakeholders.

Mark an "X" in the box below the appropriate designation for each SOP.

Statement of Practice		H	E	D	I
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.		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	
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	
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	
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		
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	

School Review Narrative:

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

Strengths:

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.

- The school leader makes some decisions regarding staffing and programming. The school leader communicates with the District and advocates for the allocation of resources necessary for the school. The school leader articulated to the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that the District determines placement of teachers in schools based on seniority. However, teaching assignments are determined by the school, and the school leader indicated that he made assignments to maximize placement of teachers in grade levels that best align with teachers' skill sets. The school leader alluded to using Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) evaluations and regular discussions with assistant principals to determine teacher placement. In addition, the school leader worked with the after school program to help select the staff who would serve the students after school. The school consists of several academies, which the school leader developed to allow the teachers to have common planning time three times a week and opportunities for both horizontal and vertical planning. The school leader noticed that teachers were having difficulty transitioning to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and in response, he organized and initiated professional book studies to help teachers improve their understanding of the CCLS. The school leader advocated the need for new English language arts (ELA) materials to the District, and when the District responded that their school would have to wait, he turned to the Parent-Student Teacher Association (PSTA), and as a result, the PTSA purchased those materials for the school. In addition, the school leader noticed that many students have high levels of social and emotional needs, and as a response, he created a Crisis Intervention Teacher (CIT). The IIT found that despite budgetary constraints, the school leader's allocation of resources is targeted to help the school meet its needs. Because the school leader purposefully makes decisions regarding staffing and programming in alignment with school-wide goals and considers the needs of students and staff in addressing school priorities, available resources are directed to address the immediate needs of the school community.

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).

- The school leader has several systems in place to improve school-wide practices; however, the

systems are not necessarily coordinated or modified to meet school needs. Through interviews, the IIT (Integrated Intervention Team) learned of several systems and structures that the school leader has initiated. These initiatives include Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR), differentiated instruction, student interventions, Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS), integration of technology in the classroom, development of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and scheduled common planning time to discuss CCLS and data. In addition, the school has introduced other initiatives to improve school-wide practices such as the Crisis Intervention Teacher (CIT) and a mentoring program. The school leader indicated that the school recently reinstated the Data Team that had disbanded at the end of the 2010-11 school year for the purpose of discussing data driven inquiry in the school. However, there is not a set structure for item analysis of data, and data-driven instruction has yet to be developed fully at the school. While data is being collected in a number of areas, the IIT found little evidence showing that these systems and structures were interconnected and that various data collected was analyzed and used in combination. The lack of interconnected systems impedes the examination and improvement of individual and school-wide practices.

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.

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.

- At the time of the IIT review, the school was in the beginning stages of developing curricula to meet the needs of all students. The school leader stated in interviews that the school had begun using Engage NY modules and that professional development (PD) was being provided by school leaders during common planning sessions. Teachers reported to the IIT that the district provided them with curriculum maps and that the school leader has provided time during the day for teachers to participate in book discussions regarding the CCLS. The school leader and staff indicated the school uses vendor-created materials designed to support the CCLS and that teachers have received training in using the materials. While the curriculum used in the mathematics and English language arts supports the CCLS, the IIT did not see consistent implementation of the CCLS instruction shifts in the classrooms visited. In addition, lessons observed by the IIT did not consistently provide multiple points of access for students of varying needs. Although the school has begun implementing the CCLS, the curriculum delivered is not yet providing the high levels of student engagement and deep levels of understanding necessary for students to be college and career ready.

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.

- At the time of the IIT review, teachers were developing their ability to use data to drive instruction and address student needs. According to the school leader, only untenured teachers are required to submit lesson plans. Lesson plans reviewed by the IIT did not include modifications based on student needs. Teachers interviewed by the IIT shared that they use formative and summative assessments to determine areas where students need to improve. Some teachers reported using formative data to determine which students need additional help and to inform decisions about student grouping. Students receive academic interventions based on benchmark and quarterly assessments. Teacher aides rotate through Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and other intervention offerings to assist teachers providing individual or small-group instruction. The school leader indicated to the IIT that teachers have the opportunity to create unit and weekly lesson plans during common planning time. However, although the IIT observed teachers discussing student work during common planning time, the meeting minutes reviewed by the IIT were very general and did not include evidence of collaborative planning or discussions regarding student work. In addition, lesson plans reviewed did not include adaptations based on student needs. The IIT did not find evidence of lesson extensions in the classrooms visited by the team. Because staff members are in the preliminary stages of using DDI protocols to inform instruction, the school has not yet tailored the curriculum to meet the needs of all students. Consequently, not all students are being provided curricula that prepare them to meet the demands of CCLS across all grades and subject areas.

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.

Areas for Improvement:

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

- Teachers attempted to provide CCLS-based instruction; however, instruction was not consistently reflective of the CCLS shifts, and instruction was not found to provide multiple points of access for all students school-wide. The IIT also observed that students were not consistently engaged. The IIT found mostly large group lessons in the classrooms the team visited, and there was minimal interaction in most classes among students and between students and teachers. One reviewer noted that explicit vocabulary instruction was observed in only two out of the ten classrooms visited. Higher order questions were seldom asked in the classrooms visited, and students were not typically using evidence to support their answers. Without instructional practices that are rigorous and promote student engagement, the school is limited in its ability to ensure that students are receiving the learning necessary to improve student achievement.

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

Strengths:

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

- School constituents interviewed by the IIT described the school environment as being safe emotionally, socially and academically. During interviews with the IIT, teachers, parents, and students indicated a variety of ways in which they felt the school was a safe learning environment. Teachers shared with the IIT that they talked to students to assure them that it was ok to make mistakes, and teachers demonstrated to students how people can learn from making mistakes. Parents articulated in interviews that their children felt safe physically, and that there was no bullying in the school. Students and parents interviewed reported that they felt comfortable asking questions. One student said that teachers told students, "If you have a problem, come to me; we can talk." Students also mentioned that there is an anti-bullying program in the school and that they received support from the social worker at Margaret's Place, a site-based program that provides students affected by violence a professional counselor or social worker trained in domestic violence intervention and prevention. The IIT found, from interviews and a review of documentation, that the school is using the Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) model to monitor and respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs and to support teachers as they address student needs. The IIT observed PBIS matrices outlining expected behaviors posted in the hall and classrooms and witnessed teachers distributing PBIS tickets in classes. The school leader and staff interviewed also noted how they discuss being "Respectful, Responsible, and Safe" with students. In interviews with the IIT, students mentioned they receive points for good behavior and can also receive homework passes, and pizza parties. All members of the school community voiced that there were adults in the school with whom the students had healthy relationships. The school has a Crisis Intervention Teacher (CIT) and team of faculty members who help support students' social and emotional needs. The CIT indicated that she attends grade level meetings to support the teachers in addressing the social and emotional needs of students. The CIT also coordinates her work with the school social worker and psychologist and with other members of the Student Support Team (SST). In addition, the CIT leads the Pupil Services Team (PST), which discusses needs for students who are at risk. Because of the multiple supports that exist to assist student social and emotional developmental health, the school is able to provide an an environment that is conducive to learning and responsive to student needs.

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.

Areas for Improvement:

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

- The school is developing ways to share data in a manner that enables families to understand data fully and allows them to support student learning and success. In interviews with the IIT, the school leader, teachers, and parents discussed some of the ways data are shared with families. These include data presentations at the school Open House, PTSA workshops, parent-teacher conferences, report cards, quarterly data reports, and information on the school website. The school also uses Connect Ed, an online communication tool to share student progress with families. A parent workshop is scheduled to occur in November to help parents understand data. While data are communicated through a variety of means, the school leader mentioned that it is a challenge to have information on the website translated. The school does not have a well-developed plan to connect parents of all backgrounds to the resources available in the school and in the community. The IIT learned that the school used to have a Parent Room, which was designed to house resources for parents; however, the room was not used frequently, and it has since been designated for another purpose. Lastly, the school leader and staff did not articulate how the school used data to further their understanding of the specific needs of families. As a result, the school has not yet provided families with the necessary knowledge to support their children and increase student achievement.