



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code/DBN	620600010012
School	George Washington Elementary School
School Address	67 Wall Street Kingston, NY 12401
District	Kingston City School District
School Leader	Valerie Hannum
Dates of Review	May 23-24, 2013
School Accountability	Focus
Type of Review	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet																							
Grade Configuration		Pre-K - 5		Total Enrollment		440		% Title 1 Population		81%		% Attendance Rate		93%									
% Free Lunch		74%		% Reduced Lunch		7%		% Student Sustainability		90%		% Limited English Proficient		17.5%		% Students with Disabilities		NP					
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		5		# Consultant Teaching		NP		# Integrated Collaborative Teaching				0											
# Resource Room		3																					
Types and Number Special Classes																							
# Visual Arts		1		# Music		1		# Drama		0		# Foreign Language		0		# Dance		0		# CTE		1	
Racial/Ethnic Origin																							
% American Indian or Alaska Native		2%		% Black or African American		21%		% Hispanic or Latino		35%		% Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander		1%		% White		36%		% Multi-racial		5%	
Personnel																							
Years Principal Assigned to School		5		# of Assistant Principals		0		# of Deans		0		# of Counselors / Social Workers		2									
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate		0%		% Teaching Out of Certification		0%		% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.		4		Average Teacher Absences		NP									
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)																							
School in Good Standing				Priority School				Focus District				Focus School Identified by a Focus District		X		SIG Recipient (a)				SIG Recipient (g)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4				Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4				Science Performance at levels 3 & 4				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									

NP = Not Provided

Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA
(Mark an "X" in the field(s) where school is identified for not meeting AYP.)

	American Indian or Alaska Native	X	Black or African American
X	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
X	White		Multi-racial
X	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
X	Economically Disadvantaged		

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
X	White		Multi-racial
X	Students with Disabilities		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		
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Describe the school's top priorities (no more than 5) based on the school's comprehensive plans (SCEP, SIG, DCIP, etc.).

SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE SCHOOL:

1. Eliminate the achievement gap.
2. Reinstate three-year-old students.
3. Provide Montessori-certified teaching staff.
4. Reinstate the Authentic Montessori model, which includes a guide and co-guide, 24 students per classroom, and balanced grouping that consider age, ethnicity, and English as a second language (ESL) and special education designations.
5. The fourth grade traditional program will include differentiation and scaffolding of instruction to the meet the needs of students on all academic levels.

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

Mark an "X" in the box below the appropriate designation for each tenet, and mark in the 'OVERALL RATING' row the final designation for the overall tenet.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
2.2	Leaders ensure an articulated vision, understood and shared across the community, with a shared sense of urgency about achieving school-wide goals aligned with the vision as outlined in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP).		X		
2.3	Leaders effectively use evidence-based systems to examine and improve individual and school-wide practices in the critical areas (student achievement, curriculum & teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health) that make progress toward mission-critical goals.		X		
2.4	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize resources concerning human, programmatic and fiscal capital so that school improvement and student goals are achieved.		X		
2.5	The school leader has a fully functional system in place to conduct targeted and frequent observations; track progress of teacher practices based on student data, feedback and professional development opportunities; and hold administrators and staff accountable for continuous improvement.		X		
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 2:			E		

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 and staff support and facilitate the quality implementation of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in Pre K-12.			X	
3.3	Teachers ensure that unit and lesson plans that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS coherent curriculum introduce complex materials that stimulate higher-order thinking and build deep conceptual understanding and knowledge around specific content.			X	
3.4	The school leader and teachers ensure that teacher collaboration within and across grades and subjects exists to enable students to have access to a robust curriculum that incorporates the arts, technology and other enrichment opportunities.		X		
3.5	The school leader and teachers develop a data-driven culture based on student needs, assessments and analysis, which leads to strategic action-planning that informs instruction and results in greater student achievement outcomes.			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	Teachers use instructional practices and strategies organized around annual, unit and daily lesson plans to meet established student goals and promote high levels of student engagement and inquiry.			X	
4.3	Teachers provide coherent, appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students to achieve targeted goals.			X	
4.4	Teachers create a safe environment that is responsive to students' varied experiences, tailored to the strengths and needs of all students, and leads to high levels of student engagement and inquiry.		X		
4.5	Teachers use a variety of data sources including screening, interim measures and progress monitoring to inform lesson planning, develop explicit teacher plans and foster student participation in their own learning process.			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 cultivates the development of overarching systems and partnerships that support and sustain social and emotional developmental health.		X		
5.3	The school articulates and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is connected to learning experiences and results in building a safer and healthier environment for families, teachers and students.		X		
5.4	All school constituents are able to articulate how the school community is safe, conducive to learning and fosters a sense of ownership that leads to greater student outcomes.		X		
5.5	The school leader and student support staff work together to develop teachers' ability to use data to respond to students' social and emotional developmental health needs, so students can become academically and socially successful.		X		
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:		E		

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
6.2	The school atmosphere is welcoming and fosters a feeling of belonging and trust, which encourages families to freely and frequently engage with the school, leading to increased student success.		X		
6.3	The school engages in effective planning and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders so that students' strength and needs are identified and used to augment learning.		X		
6.4	The entire school community partners with families and community agencies to promote and provide professional development across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.		X		
6.5	The entire school shares data in a way that empowers and encourages families to use and understand data to promote dialogue between parents, students and school constituents centered on student learning and success.			X	
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:			E		

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.	Tenet Rating	E
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Debriefing Statement: The school leader shared a clearly articulated vision based on the Montessori program that was embraced by members of the school community. The school leader has created structures that foster collaboration to ensure best practices are utilized and decision-making was based on an analysis of outcomes.

Strengths:

2.2 The **school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** Leaders ensure an articulated vision, understood and shared across the community, with a sense of urgency about achieving school wide-wide goals aligned with the vision as outline in the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP).

- The school leader, in collaboration with a group of staff and parents, developed a school vision and established goals aligned to the vision; the school goals focused on student achievement. According to staff, the vision was communicated through a variety of methods that include the distribution of published materials, presentations, and every day contact with the school staff. Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) review of the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) showed that the vision goes beyond supporting students’ academic, creative, physical, social, and emotional development, to instilling a joy of learning in every child. Teachers stated that the vision of the school encompasses educating the whole child, language development, and student social-emotional independence; and a team of teachers and parents revise the goals periodically. In each classroom visited by the IIT, students worked in learning centers based on need. According to the school leader, the grouping targets students who are self-confident, independent, life-long learners to realize their highest potential. Students are expected to demonstrate fundamental skills, as well as critical thinking and creative problem solving, through their work with Montessori materials. The school self-assessment noted that the Montessori program reflects the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and had the support of staff, families, and students. According to the school leader, school staff measure and assess curriculum maps daily through record keeping and teacher observations of students’ academic performance. Widespread understanding and dissemination of a common school vision engenders community support for supporting goals and elevates student achievement.

2.3 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** Leaders effectively use evidence-based systems to examine and improve individual and school wide practices in the critical areas (student achievement; curriculum and teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health) that make progress toward mission-critical goals.

- The school leader has established school-wide systems aligned to school goals. The IIT review of the school self-assessment showed that the school’s Montessori program provides cycles of continuous data collection, assessment, and analysis of outcomes that leads to a progression of instruction

individualized to meet the needs of each student. The school leader and teachers reported that classroom functions include students working independently in a multi-age environment following a scope and sequence of work that supports the CCLS, with recordkeeping that includes daily observations. The school leader has created uniform assessment systems and shared the systems with stakeholders. Teachers stated that a common classroom language is used for Montessori programs; the Marvin Marshall classroom management system has been adopted for discipline; morning meetings, called *ABC Meetings*, are held daily; cohort meetings, called *Ask-Adjust and Problem Solves* occurs weekly; and data discussions and collaboration occur regularly. Teachers described what they called “Walking Wednesdays and Fridays,” during which teachers perform morning home visits to gather neighborhood children and walk with them to school. Teachers stated that the school leader’s classroom visits to all classes was beneficial because the Montessori philosophy supports the implementation of the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process. Teachers added that the formal evaluation approach based on the Danielson Framework includes pre- and post-observation conferences with the school leader, as well as identifies and communicates goals through the APPR process. The established systems further the use of individual and school-wide practices that encourage progress towards mission-critical goals.

2.4 The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice: Leaders make strategic decisions to organize resources concerning human, programmatic and fiscal capital so that school improvement and student goals are achieved.

- The school leader plays an active role in recruiting staff members who have Montessori certifications or embrace the philosophy; however, the school leader does not have the autonomy to make final school staffing recommendations. The school leader stated that due to district-wide staff reductions teachers were transferred to the school without being knowledgeable in the Montessori program. As described in the SCEP, a school goal was to build community partnership programming to highlight the positive effects of the Montessori program on student development; additional programming includes an after-school enrichment program called Teachers, Organizations, and Parents for Students (TOPS), a bilingual family outreach program and literacy support provided through retired Montessori guides. According to the school leader, additional staff members included two teachers of English as a second language (ESL) who provide services to English language learners (ELLs), one academic intervention services (AIS) teacher, and a bilingual family liaison to support the translation services needed in the school. The school leader makes decisions that enable the school to meet the needs of students and the school community, which leads to school and student success

2.5 The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice: The school leader has a fully functional system in place to conduct targeted and frequent observations; track progress of teacher practices based on student data, feedback and professional development opportunities; and hold administrators and staff accountable for continuous improvement.

- The school leader conducts regular observations and provides feedback to teachers based on student performance data. According to teachers, the formal APPR process was beneficial and included a pre- and post-observation conference with the school leader; the Danielson Rubric was used to formally and informally observe and evaluate all teaching staff. The school leader reported

that school-based professional learning communities (PLCs) provide opportunities for ongoing discussion, analysis of student learning data, and the sharing of best practices. Professional development (PD) provided through PLCs were situated in the Children’s House for three to six year olds; Elementary I, for six to nine year olds; and Elementary II, for nine to twelve year olds, and provided horizontal and vertical collaboration time for teachers. Teachers stated that student portfolios and student observations are used on a daily basis. Teachers also reported collecting and using data from developmental reading assessments (DRAs); Montessori parallel task assessments replicating grade level district requirements; Renaissance Learning’s Star Literacy and Star Math assessments; NYS assessments; Holistic Rubrics for 6+1 trait skills; and teacher-developed student learning objectives (SLOs) to track progress. The school functional system that holds staff accountable promotes continuous improvement.

Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support: The school has rigorous and coherent curriculum 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: Although the school leader and staff are implementing age appropriate instructional and sensory learning practices in the lower grade levels, curricula, assessments, and materials are not fully CCLS-aligned. As a result, instructional practices and student learning outcomes are not maximized.

Strengths:

3.4 The **school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader and teachers ensure that teacher collaboration within and across grades and subjects exists to enable students to have access to a robust curriculum that incorporates the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities.

- Documents reviewed indicated the school’s Montessori Method was a project based learning method. In addition, a document review found that the school leader ensures that learning method has inclusion of technology and the arts across all grades and subject areas. According to the school leader, teachers meet by grade level and department on a regular basis; meeting agendas reviewed by the IIT found that technology and the arts were addressed in meetings to ensure incorporation into the school curricula. Staff reported that collaboration also occurred through dedicated time in PLCs. Collaboration and access to curricula that embrace the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities increases school improvement efforts.

Areas for Improvement:

3.2 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader and staff support and facilitate the quality implementation of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards in Pre K-12.

- The school leader and teachers meet regularly to help ensure consistency with the curricular; and lead teacher meet with assigned grade levels or departments to share best practices and monitor CCLS implementation. However, a complete alignment of the content, skills, and assessments necessary for successful CCLS-supported instruction has not yet occurred. Teachers stated that PD

provided by Ulster Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES), grade level meetings focused on EngageNY module exposure, training with literacy team coaches, and in-service workshops have delivered some benefit in the implementation of CCLS-supported English language arts (ELA) and mathematics curricula. Staff stated that the district provides some PD, but it is not targeted PD since the district lacks knowledge of Montessori methods. In classrooms visited by the IIT, it was difficult to determine the instructional goals and skills; reviewed curricular documents were inconsistent in addressing the elements to be taught. ELA documents consisted of an extensive written curricula divided by strand, CCLS standard, and the skill addressed; however, other curricula documents were focused on scope and sequence with no alignment to the CCLS. Teachers stated that curricula are broken down by weeks with a focus on the Montessori Method but modified for state testing. Review of the SCEP showed that staff provides instruction aligned with the Montessori Method but not to the CCLS. Inconsistently aligning curricula to the CCLS limits student motivation and engagement toward becoming college and career ready.

3.3 The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice: Teachers ensure that unit and lesson plans that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS coherent curriculum introduce complex materials that stimulate higher-order thinking and build deep conceptual understanding and knowledge around specific content.

- The school curriculum was not aligned to the CCLS; and higher order thinking skills were randomly integrated into the unit topics. Although the IIT observed some instances of higher order thinking skills in the classrooms visited, these were limited to students using self-correction for problem solving based on feedback from the teachers' observation notes. Teachers reported that they are trying to comply with the district expectations by focusing the curriculum on teaching, thinking, and learning strategies to build students skill levels. In the absence of a rigorous, higher-order thinking curriculum, aligned to the CCLS, the school limits the intellectual demands of students and decreases academic achievement.

3.5 The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice: The school leader and teachers develop a data-driven culture based on student needs, assessments and analysis, which leads to strategic action-planning that informs instruction and results in greater student achievement outcomes.

- The school does not have a clear data system. However, action plans reviewed by the IIT found that the school does handle a great deal of information obtained from several sources such as assessment of classroom observations data using the Montessori materials and process. During interviews, the staff reported using data to identify student learning needs and achievement. The IIT found other sources of data including classroom observations, DRAs, writing assessments, running records, STAR Literacy and Math, and other district grade-level assessments that were inconsistently used to inform instructional planning. Based on classrooms visited, the IIT found that teachers observe students and collect student performance data, while students worked at their learning centers. Teachers stated that they use the observation data to provide feedback to students about their progress. Although multiple sources of data was available to the school leaders and teachers, there was little evidence to suggest that school leaders and staff systemically work together to analyze, interpret, and make decisions about student and school needs. In the absence of a data-driven culture to identify student needs, and inform instructional strategies, the

rate of student achievement declines.

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 sub-groups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: The school is a safe environment for student learning. The students engage in inquiry-based learning and teachers provide timely and targeted feedback. However, differentiation was not evident in the instructional practices, particularly for targeted student populations. As a result, not all students experience rigorous and challenging classroom instruction, which decreases the rate of student achievement.

Strengths:

4.4 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** Teachers create a safe environment that is responsive to students' varied experiences, tailored to the strengths and needs of all students and leads to high levels of student engagement and inquiry.

- All teachers reported that they embraced the Montessori philosophy. Classroom observations showed that the classroom environment was one in which students were actively engaged in learning. The IIT observed respectful learning centers where students understood their role as learners. IIT reviewers did not observe any behavioral issues during classroom visits, even as students, in large classes, engaged in a project, which required movement from one learning center to another. A learning environment personalized to individual student needs promotes student engagement toward increasing achievement.

Areas for Improvement:

4.2 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** Teachers use instructional practices and strategies organized around annual, unit and daily lesson plans to meet established student goals and promote high levels of student engagement and inquiry.

- Teachers have well prepared lesson plans that reflect an understanding of individual student needs; goals were created for individual students, as well as for groups of students. Students view teachers as both coaches and facilitators. Teachers stated that they are assigned to a grade level with multi-age groups within the same classroom, which allows instructional materials to be inclusive and individualized. Staff reported that students participate in daily meetings to discuss their work plans or goals for the school day. At the end of each day, students discuss their completed work and reflect on the concepts they have mastered. The IIT observed that some lesson plans had SLOs that referenced CCLS standards as targeted learning outcomes. School staff reported that ELLs were grouped for ESL instruction based on English proficiency levels as determined by the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). However, a review of other lesson plan documents by the IIT found inconsistent references to the use of data. Differentiation was referenced for students identified as advanced or struggling; however, it was not explicit in the plans what aspects of the content, task, or product was being differentiated. In addition, during classroom visits, it was not evident the planned accommodations were delivered for targeted

subgroups of students even though the teachers circulated the classroom, and frequently provided support to some students during the course of the lesson. The minimal use of data to inform lesson planning and goal setting limits efforts toward school improvement.

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

- Students explained the Montessori philosophy, expressed the importance of independent learning, and described their teachers as coaches, helpers, and guides. Document reviews found that the school uses the Montessori Peace curricula and a 20-week cultural curricula cycle for elementary science and math. Teachers presented a broad range of instructional modalities including class meetings, small group instruction, individual instruction, and independent learning. For example, in many classrooms visited, instruction was student centered with students taking ownership for their learning. The IIT observed teachers, working with small groups of students and using age-appropriate techniques such as manipulatives to teach students how to count by 1,000 in a pre-K classroom. However, in the classrooms visited, the IIT did not observe explicit use of the CCLS shifts to indicate that the curriculum and instruction were supported the CCLS. The inconsistent approach to CCLS instruction and its relevant curricular shifts impedes students' ability to experience multiple points of access to a rigorous curricular and limits the rate at which students learn and achieve academic success.

4.5 The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice: Teachers use a variety of data sources including screening, interim measures and progress monitoring to inform lesson planning, develop explicit teacher plans and foster student participation in their own learning process.

- The school self-assessment listed a variety of data sources used by teachers to help create and deliver lessons that support appropriate grouping strategies and determine adequate levels of instruction; data sources included, DRAs, running records, STAR Literacy and STAR Math, NYS assessments, teacher developed SLOs, and other district assessments. However, during classroom visits, the IIT reviewers observed staff reliance on informal feedback to inform adjustments in instructional practices. Teachers stated that they primarily use student portfolios and student observations to monitor progress. At the time of the visit, the school had inconsistent practices of using data from a broad range of resources to inform instructional decision-making. Lesson plans reviewed found no clear strategic instructional practices used for lesson delivery and no specific information regarding student text-based writing or speaking. In addition, lesson plans did not provide multiple entry points for all learners, or indicate aligned rubric or assessment guidelines that would provide guidance for interpreting student performance. The lack of data analysis, from multiple sources, to inform instructional decision-making, limits students' ability to progress at a higher rate.

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	E
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Debriefing Statement: The school has systems in place to promote and support students’ emotional and social development. Staff continuously monitors experiences that lead to healthy relationships, and provides a safe and respectful environment; both make the school environment conducive to learning for all students.

Strengths:

5.2 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** The school cultivates the development of overarching systems and partnerships that support and sustain social and emotional developmental health.

- The school creates a nurturing learning environment for each student, which staff reported has been a hallmark trait of the Montessori program. Documents reviewed by the IIT found that the Montessori three-year cycle has a deliberate system designed for teachers to build strong relationships with students. School staff reported that the school leader shakes hands with each student at the beginning and end of each school day; and the IIT observed that teachers, staff, and the school leader knew each student by name. School staff reported that many informal parent-teacher conferences are held at the end of the school day to promote and maintain strong family-school relationships. Staff and parents reported that the school dog and tortoise are a comfort to students, and offer an opportunity for students to be caring and responsible for someone other than themselves. The school culture to support and address the health and emotional well-being of each student encourages an increase in student success.

5.3 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** The school articulates and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is connected to learning experiences and results in building a safer and healthier environment for families, teachers and students.

- The school leader and staff embrace a vision for a learning environment that supports the health and emotional well-being of students; and links it to the academic success of the learner. During classroom visits and walking through the hallways, the IIT found that staff reinforces the philosophy of the Montessori program. Students expressed that they felt cared for by their teachers and felt safe at school. Parents stated that the school teaches social and organizational skills, and explained that they observed their children using these skills at home, as well. Parents reported that students have learned to monitor their own needs, be polite, stay healthy, and help others. In addition, parents reported that they have learned skills from their own children, as well. The school vision supports an environment rich in positive learning experiences, which increases positive learning experiences for all students.

5.4 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** All school constituents are able to articulate how the school community is safe, conducive to learning and fosters a sense of ownership that leads to greater student outcomes.

- School staff, students, and parents reported that the school has a safe learning environment. Students expressed feeling safe and well cared for by school staff; parents expressed similar feelings about student safety. Parents reported they have great confidence in the school leader and teachers, and stated that they felt comfortable communicating with all school staff. According to the school leader, everyone that comes into the building has to sign in for security reasons, and parents receive calls when their children do not report to school. Parents stated that through song, children are taught not to bully others, and that all problems have solutions. Parents shared that students who are absent due to illness are provided support; parents stated that the school focuses on the child academically and emotionally by providing support services such as special education services and reading support. Parents reported receiving monthly report cards, and added that they receive phone calls to discuss academic and behavioral information when their child is struggling. Because all school stakeholders are aware of the behavior and safety expectations, the school increases efforts to focus on positive student outcomes.

5.5 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader and student support staff work together to develop teachers' ability to use data to respond to students' social and emotional developmental health needs, so students can become academically and socially successful.

- The school leader and staff use data to identify and address student needs. The school leader and staff reported meeting regularly in large groups and on an individual basis to assess student attendance and behavioral data, and identify appropriate supports to meet student social and emotional developmental health needs. Based on documents reviewed and staff interviews, the IIT found that the school leader and school psychologist work collaboratively with teachers to develop action plans using student data that address student social and emotional health needs. Analysis of student social-emotional data supports school staff in their ability to respond to student needs, which increases opportunities for student success.

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

E

Debriefing Statement: The school has an open-door policy and provides a welcoming place for families and stakeholders, within the diverse school community. Parents and students espouse pride and loyalty to the school, which gives them a sense of belonging and values their culture.

Strengths:

6.2 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** The school atmosphere is welcoming and fosters a feeling of belonging and trust, which encourages families to freely and frequently engage with the school, leading to increased student success.

- The school environment was welcoming and respectful of all stakeholders. Students and parents expressed affection for the school, the school leader, and staff, and described a sense of connectedness to all staff. Flyers for multicultural community events were visible throughout the

school. Parents reported volunteering in the school; and parents stated that the school has a committee for parents and family members to help organize events and participate in the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). According to parents, information was available in English and Spanish, and the school has a bilingual family outreach person, who was always helpful when any problem arose. School staff stated that the school provides opportunities for families to engage with the school community through events, such as weekly student led school tours, family visitations, the Children’s House monthly tea event, and *Pot Luck Back to School Night*. Prioritizing the school-family connection encourages frequent communication and increases students’ ability to experience academic and social success.

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

- The school has ongoing open communication with families. Most interactions are based on informal meetings to ensure staff addresses specific needs. Parents stated that the school demonstrates respect and acknowledges the diversity of knowledge and culture held by families and community members. Taught through a song, students reported that they learn respect for all. Parents stated that the school sends written reports of student progress home on a monthly and bi-monthly basis; and staff notifies families of teacher-parent conferences by phone. Parents stated that they are respected, listened to, and welcome to discuss any aspect of their children’s education with teachers and the school leader. In addition, parents stated that making an appointment with staff was easy, and described a respectful relationship that includes an open door policy. Parents reported that the school provided written and verbal communication in Spanish and English. Although the school website is in primarily in English, it includes a “Google Translate” feature that provided translation services in 71 languages. Because the school structure fosters open communication, students and parents have the opportunity to interact with school leaders and staff, which allows families the opportunity to be active participants in their children academic growth and development.

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

- The school makes a concerted effort to form linkages between parents and the school to support student academic and social success. Teachers reported that they participated in several PD workshops that provided training in how to support student success. Parents stated that some community agencies assist families with resources; other parents stated that they find announcements on bulletin boards for activities and events offered through organizations, such as Family of Woodstock, the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), and libraries. Parents reported that the school provided a workshop for families about discipline strategies, which many parents attended. The school collaborates with numerous organizations, such as the YMCA, The College of St. Rose, Marist College, Ulster BOCES, the Boys and Girls Club of Ulster County, the Institute for Family Health, the Forsyth Nature Center, and the Old Dutch Church. Consequently, partnerships with community agencies strengthen the school and community relationships that

support student growth and success.

Areas for Improvement:

6.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The entire school shares data in a way that empowers and encourages families to use and understand data to promote dialogue between parents, students and school constituents centered on learning and success.

- The school communicates information to parents and families regarding student achievement data; however, not all parents understand how to use the data to support student needs. Parents interviewed by the IIT expressed appreciation for the school's open communication but were not clear how to interpret the data to determine student success and areas in need of improvement. For example, parents stated that they receive reports about their children's performance on state examinations that include information on performance levels, and information to help them interpret the data. However, parents reported that they needed more one-on-one assistance to understand the data results, the implications for the school, and to explain how it affects their child. Because not all families understand the data the school shares, parents are unable to advocate for student opportunities that relate to learning and achieving success.

Recommendations:

Tenet 3: Curriculum Development and Support

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 3 the school should:

- 3.2: Ensure that all curricula are CCLS-aligned. Ensure that curriculum maps that are vertically and horizontally aligned in terms of content, skills, and assessment. Provide resources and ongoing support to ensure school staff is able to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to develop and implement rigorous CCLS-aligned curricula across all grades and subjects.
- 3.3: Establish a lesson plan format; provide PD to explicitly communicate and support the expectations for effective lesson planning and quality instruction that encompasses the elements of the format; and hold staff accountable to the explicitly communicated expectations.
- 3.5: Adopt a school-wide data-driven system that all staff can embrace and practice. Provide PD, resources, and ongoing support to all staff on how to use summative, interim, and formative assessment data to inform instruction, examine student work to develop next steps of instruction, and capitalize on student ownership and accountability for their own learning. Monitor implementation of the school improvement initiatives to ensure implementation of appropriately aligned curricula and achievement of the SCEP and DCIP goals. Use the findings to inform strategic action planning and next steps to promote greater student achievement outcomes.

Tenet 4: Teacher Practices and Decisions

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 4 the school should:

- 4.2: Ensure that lesson planning is explicit about what aspects of the content, task, or product is being differentiated. Monitor that accommodations are provided during the delivery of instruction, specifically for targeted student subgroups. Ensure all staff use data to inform lesson planning and goal setting to increase efforts toward school improvement.
- 4.3: Ensure instruction includes clear multiple points of entry and intervention supports for all students so they can acquire the skills, knowledge, and understanding required to be college and career ready. Provide staff with PD, resources, and ongoing support to plan and implement CCLS-aligned instructional strategies that identify and address targeted student goals and provide multiple points of access for all students.
- 4.5: Establish comprehensive systems with clear structures, protocols, expectations, and accountability to facilitate support staff and instructional staff use of summative, interim, and formative assessment data to inform instructional decision-making. Ensure data-driven instruction include that students monitor and analyze their own progress. Provide timely feedback to students and monitor progress with regard to their learning, and provide ongoing next steps to achieve success. Track the effectiveness of instructional practices in improving student achievement.

Tenet 6: Family and Community Engagement

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 6 the school should:

- 6.5: Establish a data based school culture that espouses success for all students. Develop and implement an overarching system to ensure the measurement, analysis, and use of data to identify needs and determine support strategies for students and families. Ensure that all relevant data is made accessible to all school constituents in all pertinent languages, and provide a wide range of learning opportunities for staff, students, families, and organizational partners to elevate their understanding of student data and its implications for student success. Provide data in an easily understood format appropriate to each group of stakeholders; and ensure that data is used to identify the next steps for support