



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



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| BEDS Code | 320900011329 |
| School Name | DreamYard Preparatory School |
| School Address | 240 E 172 nd Street, Bronx, NY 10457 |
| District Name | NYC CSD 9 |
| School Leader | Alicia Wargo |
| Dates of Review | December 17-18, 2013 |
| School Accountability Status | Priority School |
| Type of Review | SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) |

School Information Sheet for 09X329

| School Configuration (2013-14) | | | | | |
|---|-------------|------------------|---|---|-------|
| Grade Configuration | 09,10,11,12 | Total Enrollment | 345 | SIG Recipient | N/A |
| Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2013-14) | | | | | |
| # Transitional Bilingual | N/A | # Dual Language | N/A | # Self-Contained English as a Second Language | N/A |
| Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2013-14) | | | | | |
| # Special Classes | 11 | # SETSS | 7 | # Integrated Collaborative Teaching | 29 |
| Types and Number of Special Classes (2013-14) | | | | | |
| # Visual Arts | 16 | # Music | 16 | # Drama | 17 |
| # Foreign Language | 10 | # Dance | 11 | # CTE | N/A |
| School Composition (2012-13) | | | | | |
| % Title I Population | | 80.1% | % Attendance Rate | | 79.5% |
| % Free Lunch | | 99.7% | % Reduced Lunch | | 0.0% |
| % Limited English Proficient | | 24.3% | % Students with Disabilities | | 19.8% |
| Racial/Ethnic Origin (2012-13) | | | | | |
| % American Indian or Alaska Native | | 3.8% | % Black or African American | | 29.1% |
| % Hispanic or Latino | | 65.5% | % Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | | 1.3% |
| % White | | 0.3% | % Multi-Racial | | N/A |
| Personnel (2012-13) | | | | | |
| Years Principal Assigned to School | | 0.51 | # of Assistant Principals | | N/A |
| # of Deans | | 1 | # of Counselors/Social Workers | | 3 |
| % of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate | | 3.9% | % Teaching Out of Certification | | 18.5% |
| % Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience | | 42.3% | Average Teacher Absences | | 8.2 |
| Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2012-13) | | | | | |
| ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4 | | N/A | Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4 | | N/A |
| Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade) | | N/A | Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade) | | N/A |
| Student Performance for High Schools (2011-12) | | | | | |
| ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4 | | 53.9% | Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4 | | 48.5% |
| Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2012-13) | | | | | |
| % of 1st year students who earned 10+ credits | | N/A | % of 2nd year students who earned 10+ credits | | N/A |
| % of 3rd year students who earned 10+ credits | | N/A | 4 Year Graduation Rate | | 33.3% |
| 6 Year Graduation Rate | | 66.7% | | | |
| Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2012-13) | | | | | |
| Reward | | | Recognition | | |
| In Good Standing | | | Local Assistance Plan | | |
| Focus District | | X | Focus School Identified by a Focus District | | |
| Priority School | | X | | | |

Accountability Status – High Schools

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

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: | | | 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 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: | | | E | | |

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: | | | 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 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 | | | | X |

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|-----|--|--|--|----------|--|
| | promote and provide training across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success. | | | | |
| 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 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 |
|---|---------------------|----------|

Debriefing Statement: The school leader has collaboratively developed with teachers and teacher leaders a strategic plan and SMART goals aimed at the vision of making students Life Ready. The plan supports identified strategies and goals by acquiring and re-directing financial and human resources to build a school community and culture that supports the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). These efforts, of recent design, have created a sustainable school-wide framework to empower staff to achieve school-wide goals.

Strengths:

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

- The school leader developed, with teachers and teacher leaders, a strategic plan and SMART goals aligned to the school’s vision of “making students life ready.” The school leader told reviewers that all staff gathered low-inference data, using a common template, which enabled the entire staff to identify the school’s collective areas of strength and growth opportunities. The staff then established priorities based on an analysis of the available student performance data and incorporated the priorities in the SCEP. During a review of documents, the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) noted this analysis in the Instructional Focus 2013-2014 report produced by the school staff. The report includes three major areas of focus: Academic, Socio-Emotional, and College- and Career-Readiness, which links to the school’s core values of scholarship, artistry, and character. The school goals are aligned to the major areas of focus and the core values. In discussions with the IIT, the school leader shared that the staff has established benchmark to determine the degree to which the school achieves the goals. The strategic plan specifies pre-, interim, and post- measurements of student progress toward the achievement of the range of data points identified. For example, in the area of academics, data points include items such as, “ELA and math pass rates will improve to 65 percent.” “Eighty percent of students will increase their Lexile Score by one to two grade levels by the end of the year.” The strategic plan, vision, and SMART goals provide staff and students with a clearly defined set of expectations for performance. The IIT noted the staff’s strategies for communicating and emphasizing the plan included the posting of school-wide goals and values throughout the building and placing goals aligned to the plan in every classroom. In addition the school leader reported that students create individual goals aligned to the school-wide goals each marking period. Students questioned during the large and small focus groups were able to articulate the core values and areas of focus within the school. The responses of staff interviewed by the IIT also demonstrated support of the process described by the school leader. The school community knows and embraces the SMART goals and vision, which enables the entire community

to work together to support students to become college- and career-, and life- ready.

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 has reorganized programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources to implement the strategic plan and SMART goals and to build a school community and culture that is focused on the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). During discussion with the IIT, the school leader told reviewers that after she and the School Leadership Team (SLT) analyzed lesson observation data that indicated students did not have adequate time in lessons to respond to the extended writing and the increased independent reading expectations of the CCLS instructional shifts, she expanded the learning time for the core subject areas in the master schedule from forty minutes to one hour. The school leader analyzes the fiscal capital available to the school, making critical and strategic decisions to fund targeted efforts aligned to school goals, and considers the needs of all students and staff members. The school leader, during discussions with the IIT said that she and the SLT worked together to replace over twenty-five percent of the staff in 2012. The school leader told reviewers that she made decisions to hire applicants based on how well the applicant skills and abilities with the new demands of the CCLS and the planned school-wide initiatives. The school leader also said that she chose to keep a guidance counselor position, in lieu of hiring an assistant principal (AP) to provide a greater range of services to the students. To fill some of the functions that an AP would handle, such as curricula monitoring, she trained and mentored an administrative intern who has a background in instructional coaching and curriculum design. The school leader collaborated with staff to implement the advisory program and purchased the Circle program to provide greater social emotional and academic support to students. The school leader also indicated that she reallocated funds to buy Reading Plus materials to support the efforts of the Building Bridges program, which targets students with disabilities and students with limited reading skills. Furthermore, the school leader increased the number of teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) from two to three in response to student data indicating that many English language learners (ELLs) were not progressing at an acceptable rate. The school leader has also redirected financial resources providing a strong emphasis on professional development (PD). Examples include training for teachers of English language arts (ELA) in methods to address students with writing deficiencies and Advanced Placement (AP) training. Staff also attended the Model Schools Conference sponsored by the International Center for Leadership in Education. The school leader also noted that she has engaged a range of community partnerships and grants to support PD and specialized programs. For example, the Cultural After School Adventures (CASA) program provides extended learning opportunities at the end of the school day to provide English language instruction to ELLs and their families at the school. The school leader's strategic decisions to maximize available resources and bring additional resources to the school community, enable staff to address the immediate needs of the school community.

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

- The school leader has developed and implemented a plan, aligned to the district’s APPR plan for frequently observing and providing actionable feedback on teaching practices throughout the school year. The team reviewed documents that included the current, updated “2013-2014 Instructional Observation Tracker” maintained by the school leader. This document records the types and frequency of feedback discussions between the school leader and teachers. According to the school leader, during each marking period, she engages staff members who have experienced excessive student failures in professional discussions to set instructional practice targets. These conferences are in addition to the scheduled sessions that align to the Danielson framework and are required of all teachers. During the vertical teacher interview, teachers reported that observations include pre- and post- observation conferences that provide teachers with instructional feedback and next step directions. In addition, the staff reported that teachers meet with the school leader and the instructional coach to talk through the feedback generated by the formal and informal observations and those areas for improvement are followed-up in subsequent observations. The staff also reported that an outside teaching coach is available to teachers at least twice per month to give feedback on teacher practices. One teacher told reviewers that at one point he needed significant support. He indicated that he received very pointed feedback from the school leader and coach and after implementing recommendations he now sees the school leader and the instructional coach less often. The teacher reported that he is more effective in his teaching and this perception was substantiated by the school leader. The school has a system of professional supervision and evaluation of instruction that holds staff members accountable for continuous improvement of their practice and of student achievement.

2.5 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* 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 established systems and structures to examine and improve individual and school-wide practices. A review of documents substantiated the description provided by the school leader, instructional staff, and the support services staff of the structures put in place by the school leader to address the range of practices defined in the SCEP. The school leader reports and teachers affirm that the school leader analyzes course pass rates by teachers, every marking period. Any teacher with a course pass rate below 60 percent meets with the school leader to discuss the cause of the poor performance of the students. The school leader provides Instructional coaches to assist individual teachers or groups of teachers in need of support as identified by the review of student performance data. During the subject/grade level meeting visited by the IIT, reviewers observed ELA teachers, under the direction of their instructional coach examine the work of a student and all of the activities that prepared the student for the final written product in order to determine how well the planned instruction generated the expected learning. The school leader uses a distributive leadership model that involves school leaders sharing responsibility for implementing school-wide initiatives. For example, the school leader has delegated to Department Heads the responsibility to monitor student pass rates. The school leader has also established a system of defined meetings to address the academic and social/emotional health of the students, including the weekly Student

Intervention Team (SIT) and the weekly vertical teams that follow an agenda set by the school leader. Department Heads meet twice per month with the school leader, the support services staff meets weekly to discuss issues concerning individuals or groups and the school leader meets weekly with new teachers to address their needs and provide instructional feedback. According to the school leader, Skedula, an on-line system provides parents with student performance data and gives parents opportunities to communicate directly with teachers. Based on constituent interviews, visits to classes, and a review of school documents, the IIT found that the school has effective systems that support improved student performance and professional growth, which positions staff to make measurable progress toward the critical school-wide goals.

Areas for Improvement:

All ratings for this Tenet are either Highly Effective or Effective and therefore, comments are listed under Strengths.

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

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement:

The school has begun to implement, monitor, and evaluate units and lessons intended to reflect the CCLS and the CCLS instructional shifts. There are inconsistencies regarding rigorous and coherent curricula as well as multiple points of access for all students. As a result, student achievement of state-wide benchmarks is not fully realized.

Strengths:

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

- The school leader has implemented a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula that includes targeted goals to address the needs of students. The plan includes a well-defined schedule for PD and the opportunities for collaborative meetings with teachers where there is a specific focus on meeting the needs of students, particularly identified subgroups. Through interviews and a review of documents, the IIT determined that the staff collaborated to develop this plan based on a review of the school-wide performance data, the expectations of the CCLS and the CCLS instructional shifts. The plan includes protocols for the uniform development of curriculum maps, instructional units, and lesson plans. The school leader informed reviewers that the school staff has set a goal of developing six units of instruction in all subject areas that appropriately support the CCLS and key instructional shifts. The plan also prioritizes the implementation of standards in

writing, reading, speaking, and listening because the school, according to the school leader, “identified the standards that would have the most leverage in getting our students to achieve at higher levels on Common Core-aligned learning tasks.” Because 80 percent of the students are reading below grade level, 18 percent identified as ELLs and 20 percent identified as students with disabilities, improving reading scores was identified as a critical component of that plan with a particular focus on reading strategies for the poor readers. Consequently, the school leader increased core class periods by twenty minutes in length to provide for extended reading time and periodic monitoring of Lexile scores was incorporated into the instructional program. The school leader indicated that she monitors the curricula, unit plans, and lesson plans generated by this plan. This structure of priorities, expectations, PD, instructional coaching, and feedback provides a foundation for teachers to create and use curricula that meet the needs of students and prepares students to be college- and career-ready.

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

- The school has a plan for targeting the arts and other enrichment opportunities across the school that includes all grade levels and different subjects. The school has fostered partnerships with a wide variety of community cultural agencies and funding organizations that serve to provide access to training for the performing and visual arts. Reviewers learned through discussion with staff, that two students from the school were selected as first and second place winners in the MOTH, a creative oratory activity featured on National Public Radio High School Slam competition. In grade nine, students participate in arts integration classes that provide interdisciplinary connections between core courses and visual art. The school offers art classes and a theater arts class during the school day. Additionally, the school offers enrichment activities during the after school program. Over the summer, students were provided with an opportunity to travel to Amsterdam for purposes of cultural enrichment. Staff indicated to the review team that these enrichment opportunities serve to engage students in their society and their learning. Based on the IIT’s visit to grade level meetings and a review of meeting minutes reviewers found that teachers across grade levels regularly collaborate to provide a wide range of integrated curricular learning experiences for students. When interviewed by the IIT, students confirmed that integrated curricular experiences are common at the school. During class visits, reviewers observed that the teacher in a technology had students develop self-descriptions for the website, which aligned to the writing designs and rubrics of the ELA classes. In addition, during the IIT’s visit to the theater arts class, reviewers observed that the teacher included a vocabulary component to her lesson building an ELA and arts connection. The school has developed a plan that provides students access to curricular and enrichment experiences that make learning meaningful and relevant for students, which increases opportunities for students to engage in cross-curricula activities that support their ability to be academically successful.

Areas for Improvement:

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.

- While teachers are making progress in developing unit and lesson plans that align to the CCLS, teachers inconsistently implement lessons based on DDI protocols. During the Vertical Team meeting, reviewers observed, that teachers worked collaboratively under the direction of their instructional coach, using a rubric and following protocols to analyze and evaluate a student work product in ELA. In addition, teachers utilized curricular map, unit plan, and lesson plan templates that provide for identification of the CCLS standards being addressed in the lesson. However, the IIT observed lessons that implemented CCLS standards or instructional shifts in less than half, 7 of 16 classes visited. The team did observe some lessons that incorporated instruction and associated learning resources that led to a progression of sequenced and scaffolded skills for groups of students. For example, reviewers observed a math lesson, where teachers grouped students according to subgroup affiliations such as, ELL or student with disabilities. Students in this class benefited from activities that were differentiated to scaffold instruction. However, the review team observed that this practice was not evident in the majority of classes visited by the IIT. Teachers inconsistently apply DDI protocols and scaffold instruction, which reduces the impact of this standard of practice in meeting the demands of CCLS across grade/subject areas for all students.

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.

- Although teachers have a plan for using formative and summative assessments for short- and long-range curriculum planning, it is not fully established so that all teachers ensure alignment between assessments and learning. The plan includes a series of interventions should a student fail to make adequate progress, including an after school program, additional support during the regular school day, and additional support for ELLs and students with disabilities. Through a review of documents and interviews reviewers learned a Lexile score for each student was determined through the administration of a pre-test providing a base line for establishing individual reading improvement goals for each student and including interim and summative Lexile tests. While printed rubrics, as a means of student reflection, tracking of, and ownership of learning were available for many subject areas, students indicated that these rubrics were used inconsistently in classes. In addition, reviews of student work during the small group interviews indicated that there were inconsistencies in the amount of feedback and next steps provided by teachers to students. The inconsistent implementation of instructional practices that directly address specific academic needs diminishes the impact that these practices have on improving student achievement.

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| 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 | E |
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Debriefing Statement:

The staff collaborates regularly and supports one another in creating a learning environment that addresses student need. Although teachers are at different stages of implementing building-wide instructional practices, school and teacher leaders have developed structures to support teachers’ use of data to address the needs of students and identified subgroups.

Strengths:

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

- The staff uses a range of programs and a collaboratively developed plan to promote a common understanding of the classroom environment and teach students behavioral expectations. The school staff uses the Advisory Program to teach explicit lessons on the school core values. The school and teacher leaders have identified, in collaboration with students, six core character values for all students. During interviews, when the IIT asked students to name the core values, the students named the six values of empathy, respect, responsibility, self-discipline, ambition, and perseverance without hesitancy. Staff told reviewers that the students exhibiting exemplary behavior are honored each marking period during an advisory period. The school has recently implemented the Circles program, a research based program available through the Office of School and Youth Development (OSYD) that provides opportunities for students and staff to work together to resolve conflicts in the school. Strategies used include creating a Circle with the entire class so that everyone has a feeling of intellectual safety in the classroom. During discussions with the review team, the school leader, teachers, and students agreed that the advisory period, the circle programs, and other strategies have had a positive impact on school climate. The school leader said that since adopting these programs, student attendance has increased and student suspensions have decreased from 235 to 65. One student said, “Students this year do not laugh at you if you do not give the correct answer. Teachers now provide an atmosphere of acceptance for wrong answers. Teachers are getting deeper in the relationships with you.” Another student said, “I am so proud of the teachers because they are always helping the students. Now I can speak more in English. I used to be afraid to speak in class because I was afraid I would be wrong. The teacher insisted and told me not to worry. Now I am not afraid to get the wrong answer.” The school leadership encourages staff to work together with students to develop and implement strategies that acknowledge diverse groups of students and their needs. During interviews a support staff member said, “The school leader and counselors meet with teachers to provide information that might assist the teachers in better understanding the student.” In addition, the Dean of students plays a key role in ensuring that classrooms are safe for all students. Staff reported to the IIT that

the Dean was asked to observe a class and to establish guiding principles to help build a community in that particular class. The school has designed and implemented programs and strategies that promote a learning environment that is intellectually and physically safe for all students.

4.5 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* 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).

- The school and teacher leaders have developed systems and structures for fostering among teachers, the use of summative and formative data sources to inform planning and student participation in their own learning. Reviewers observed staff implementing this practice throughout the visit. During class visits, the IIT found that many teachers analyze student data and use it to adjust student groupings and to inform their instructional practices and strategies. Interviews with staff indicate that SITs periodically review individual or group student performance data across subject areas and provide opportunities to adjust levels of intervention or placement. The IIT observed this process during the grade/subject meeting and noted the thoroughness of the review of the academic progress of individual students. Teachers are required to establish individual goals with students to respond to progress reports. Teachers told reviewers that they post reading goals in classrooms to encourage students' participation in their own learning. During instruction teachers used assessments and check-in to monitor students' understanding of tasks. The review team observed many teachers using exit slips, which provides teachers with formative daily feedback. The IIT observed that in many classes, teachers formed groups based on data addressing the abilities of ELLs and students with disabilities. One example, of many, occurred in a math class where ELLs and students with disabilities were provided additional support and multiple points of access based on their abilities, academic needs and learning styles. The school leaders have developed structures that support teachers' use of data to inform planning, which provides increased opportunities for students to take ownership over their own learning.

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.

- School and teacher leaders are engaged in the strategies for developing annual, unit, and daily lesson plans that are informed by data. While teachers have an awareness of these strategies, the team noted inconsistent use of the strategies during classroom visits. Through a review of documents and discussions with the school leader the IIT found that staff has established annual, unit, and daily lesson planning protocols, which are supported by PD and monitored by the school leader and the instructional coaches. The team members reviewed detailed lesson plans for all observed classes. The lessons reviewed generally included an overarching essential question, a reference in ELA and math to the CCLS standards addressed by the lesson, a desired result, and a source of evidence of successful learning. However, the lesson plans were not uniform across subjects. While the school and teacher leaders indicated that they have clarified performance

expectations for teachers and supported the implementation of those expectations, the classroom visits conducted during the review indicate that there are inconsistencies in the application of the planning protocols from teacher to teacher and subject to subject. Additionally, some plans do not reflect consideration of strategies that address individual and subgroup needs. The school leader indicated that she expects teachers to create class goals for each marking period as well as short- and long-term goals for groups of students. However, team observations and discussions with teachers indicated that these expectations are not consistently present in every classroom. The school leader indicated that the teacher leaders and coaches are engaged in providing ongoing support aimed at improving the alignment of the teachers’ practice to these newly developed instructional plans and goal setting protocols. However, the current Inconsistencies in implementation limit instructional activities that provide targeted interventions and promote high levels of student engagement and inquiry.

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.

- While some teachers have lesson plans that support the CCLS, teachers inconsistently provide instruction that reflects the CCLS. The team reviewed a school document entitled, “Life-Readiness Meets the Common Core”, which includes a definition of multiple points of access as the term is used at the school. The school staff has defined this term to be a series of instructional strategies that seek to develop higher-order thinking skills. These strategies include the use of the guided question, graphic organizers, annotation, brain bounce, Socratic seminar, and tackling the task. The school leader indicated that he expects all teachers are expected to use include multiple access points in their instruction. A review of documents confirms that the staff received PD strategies to create multiple points of access. However, evidence from classroom visits indicate that not all teachers are asking challenging questions that engage students of differing abilities. In addition, reviewers found that teachers unevenly ensured that lesson plans and instruction were reflective of CCLS shifts. Only in seven out of 16 lessons observed by the IIT did teachers use materials that reflect the CCLS. While some teachers used complex text in most classes observed by the IIT, teachers inconsistently used instructional materials that contained high levels of text and content complexity. The lack of consistent lessons that engage students in rigorous CCLS aligned learning, limits students levels of inquiry, engagement and achievement.

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

Tenet Rating

E

Debriefing Statement:

The school has structures in place to address and support student social and emotional developmental health. Protocols have been established for regular discussion about student strengths and needs. As a result, the school community creates a support system that promotes a safe learning environment conducive to academic growth and success

Strengths:

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

- The school leader has created a multi-level approach to support and sustain student social and emotional developmental health and academic success. The school leader has established a network of interrelated teams focused on both the social-emotional development of individual students and their academic performance. The SIT team, which includes grade level teachers and support staff, meets weekly to discuss the academic and social/emotional/behavioral progress of students. The IIT attended a SIT meeting and observed the staff reviewing one student's performance and then providing next-steps analysis to accommodate the student's learning and social/emotional needs. The school leader indicated that she provides PD, coaching, meeting protocols, monitoring and feedback for the SITs. In addition, the school leader has provided an Advisory program within in the school and provided staff with training in the Circle's strategy. The advisory and circle programs allow students to develop unique, non-academic relationships with a particular adult in the school community. Students interviewed in the large student group affirmed that Advisory, when combined with the Circle approach, was effective in settling disputes between students and resolving misunderstandings between students and teachers. The school leader indicated that she has also established a Support Services Team that meets weekly to discuss social/emotional planning, including school-wide initiatives and empathy circles. The Support Services Team also develops behavioral plans and interventions and conducts student and parent conferences. The school has established and implemented overarching systems that effectively address barriers to students' social and emotional developmental health and academic 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 aligned to a curriculum or program that provides learning experiences and a safe and healthy school environment for families, teachers, and students.

- Evidence from school documents and meetings with staff and students demonstrate that the school has a clear set of core values that are well known to the students and the staff. In addition, the school leader with the support of the staff, has put in place an array of formal structures for monitoring the social and emotional developmental health of students in order to determine how best to engage students in their own learning. The IIT reviewed documents that indicate that the SITs bring support services staff and teachers together to assess the academic and social/emotional developmental health needs of individual and groups of students. The Advisory program brings students and staff together to resolve issues that arise among the members of the school community. During discussion with the IIT, staff members informed reviewers that they also use the advisory period to provide structured lessons on the development of the school's core values. Staff also reported that OYSD has provided training on the Circle program. The school leader reported that other PD is provided frequently to ensure that staff skills are enhanced to meet the changing social and emotional needs of students. The Advisory and Circle programs coupled with the SITs

have contributed to the establishment of a cooperative atmosphere among members of the school community. These efforts support a school setting that students and staff indicate is a safe learning environment.

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.

- The school community has and uses a plan that incorporates protocols and processes to identify and set expectations for all school community members to ensure that each person knows his/her role in providing supports to meet the needs of all groups of students. The IIT reviewed documents that outline the components of these protocols and processes including, the Ladder of Referral plan, the core values focus, and the Life-Readiness focus. The review of documents and discussion with staff, show that the support services team developed the Ladder of Referral plan to ensure that school staff responses to inappropriate behavior align with the discipline code. Students interviewed by the IIT shared that they participate in the school's behavioral management process through the Advisory and the Kid-Talk programs. Although parent involvement in this process has been limited, the parent call log reviewed by the IIT show that teachers notify parents, via phone call or text, regarding student behaviors that need to be rectified or reinforced. Parents interviewed by the review team confirmed that they receive automated telephone calls if a child is late to school and calls from teachers reporting poor performance or misbehavior. The majority of parents attending the focus meeting reported receiving telephone calls from teachers applauding a child's achievement. One student reported, "Teachers call our parents. They have a relationship with our parents." The school has and uses systems and practices that promote a common understanding of the school's expectations concerning student social and emotional developmental health. As a result, all stakeholders contribute toward helping provide a positive learning environment for all students.

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

- The school leader has instituted formal and frequent opportunities for teacher and student support staff to work together and use of data to identify and to respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs. The school leader told reviewers that the student support staff meet formally twice per week to review the performance, anecdotal, and behavioral data for individuals or groups of students. The data school staff reviews include credit accumulation, student pass rates, overage unaccredited data, attendance data, and disciplinary referrals. The student support staff then meets once per week with the SITs to share that data in order to coordinate with teachers an effective response to student social and emotional developmental health needs. The staff provides additional support for identified students as needed. An expanded group, including the SIT, the school leader, the Dean, and/or other school support staff, monitors the process to determine other available school structures that staff can use to improve student performance. For example,

students that are that are not making academic progress because of attendance issues have been assigned to the mentorship program, which brings the student in contact with a particular staff member on a regularly for directed support. The school staff effectively uses data systems to respond to students' needs, which increases opportunities for students to become academically and socially successful.

Areas for Improvement:

All ratings for this Tenet are either **Highly Effective** or **Effective** and therefore, comments are listed under **Strengths**.

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.

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| Tenet Rating | D |
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Debriefing Statement:

The school is developing a culture of partnerships to support student achievement and well-being; however, opportunities are limited for all parents to understand data and be more engaged in supporting staff efforts to increase student outcomes.

Strengths:

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

Areas for Improvement:

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

- While the school leader has established regular communication channels with students and families, the school has provided limited information to parents about the school's expectations for student academic achievement. Parents report that they receive messages in Spanish and English from the automated telephone messaging service to notify them whenever their children are late to or absent from school. Parents also said the bi-lingual parent coordinator provides follow-up telephone calls or text messages concerning attendance issues. Student support services staff report using texting, telephone calls, and parent-school conferences to maintain contact with parents. Parents also reported that the parents of grade 12 students received mailings with Spanish translations explaining the college application process. Eight of the ten parents interviewed reported that they had received telephone calls from teachers complimenting their children. While these structures and systems are designed to maintain communication with parents, in interviews with the IIT, students and parents indicated that not enough information is focused on increasing

parent awareness regarding school expectations, the path to graduation and age appropriate information about college and postsecondary Career Technical Education. During interviews with the IIT, some students communicated what they believed are the school's expectations. One student reported, "Teachers want us to graduate, go to college, succeed in life, and not make the wrong choices." However, the parents interviewed by the IIT were unclear about the academic goals of the school. The parent coordinator reported that she has not conducted any workshops this year to address the range of academic initiatives occurring in the school. Parents reported that they had not received a handbook that includes information on how to contact the school, the disciplinary code or the array of before, during and after school programs available to their children. Although parents are encouraged to participate in the school's leadership team and the parent association, the school's parent coordinator reported limited participation. The school leader and the parent coordinator reported that they are in the process of reviewing the current efforts to build stronger family-school relationships. Presently, school staff's communication efforts provides limited information to parents about school expectations, which hinders families from partnering with the school to support students' in becoming college and career ready.

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.

- While the school staff uses a range of multiple tools to communicate with families about school and student issues and concerns, some of methods do not meet the needs of all families represented at the school. The IIT reviewed documents that were available in the two prevalent languages of the school, Spanish and English. The school has a small population of students whose parents speak Haitian-Creole; however, reviewers did not find evidence that school translates documents into Haitian-Creole. In discussions with the review team parents reported that they had not received invitations to attend school functions such as games, plays, or the art show. One parent indicated he learned of an upcoming art show only because his daughter told him so. The school uses Skedula, an on-line software program to provide academic information to parents. Staff indicated that support services members provide training on this system during parent conferences. However, this method of communication and training does not address the need of all parents as parents interviewed by IIT said that many parents at the school do not have computers available at home. The school does not have a defined plan for monitoring the level of effective communication with parents and making adjustments when necessary. The current communication process limits the opportunities for families to support their child's academic achievement and social emotional growth.

6.4 The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* 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.

- There is no formal, written plan for promoting and providing training to parents on how parents can support student success in academic and social and emotional developmental health. The parent coordinator reported that she is currently working on a plan for creating workshops for parents in

areas to support student success. Although the school leader has identified the need to plan activities to strengthen the home-school connection, the IIT found limited evidence of such a plan. The lack of a formal plan to provide training for staff and families to seek and sustain partnerships to support students hinders students' opportunities to benefit from healthy home-school connections that promote student success.

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 teams use academic, social, and behavioral data to identify the needs of students for learning and success. However, the school does not consistently share data with families in ways that increase families' understanding of the data. The school leader, the SITs and the student support services team indicated that they are developing in their ability to identify family needs and target strategies to address those needs. Data is reported to families primarily through the progress reports which are mailed home. According to the school's DTSDE self-assessment document, "When parents come to meetings with Guidance or other members of support services, parents are given Progress Reports or asked to log onto Skedula to see their child's progress." Parents interviewed by the IIT informed reviewers that that the guidance they received regarding how to log onto Skedula did not prepare them to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children. In addition, because some parents do not have access to a computer those parents cannot access information from Skedula. Current systems for sharing data and assisting families in analyzing data are limited, which hinders the ability of some families to take action to support student learning.

Recommendations:

Tenet 3: Curriculum Development and Support

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

- 3.3: Monitor unit and lesson planning to ensure alignment with the CCLS and NYS content standards. Monitor teacher use of DDI protocols to develop units and lessons that incorporate a progression of sequenced and scaffolded skills addressing the identified needs of students in all groups, including students with disabilities and ELLs. Provide PD and support for teachers, to enable them to monitor and adjust curricula, and incorporate a variety of complex materials supporting the CCLS, with supports and extensions for all students.
- 3.5: Improve efforts to deploy rubrics for students to *use* to complete assignments. Provide PD to enable teachers to use rubrics to provide constructive and instructive comprehensive feedback to students. Provide PD for teachers to enable them to guide students in the use of rubrics to assess their own work and take a greater responsibility for their own learning.

Tenet 4: Teacher Practices and Decisions

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

- 4.2: Ensure through additional PD and close monitoring of teacher performance that teachers consistently develop plans that employ those instructional practices and strategies which have been adopted by the school. These plans should be informed by data and include strategies that are adaptive and aligned with the identified strengths and needs of students, including ELLs, students with disabilities and students in other sub-groups.
- 4.3: Monitor teacher practice to promote greater consistency in the use of instructional practices that are aligned to the CCLS, reflect the instructional shifts, stimulate student thinking by using instructional materials that contain high levels of text and content complexity and increase the number of questions and activities that promote higher order thinking skills.

Tenet 6: Family and Community Engagement

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

- 6.2: Develop a plan, with timelines, to foster conversations and communications with the families regarding high expectations for student academic achievement, requirements for graduation, and information about post-secondary planning as well as provide strategies and tools focused on student learning and development. Develop a protocol to monitor and adjust these communications.
- 6.3: Collaboratively develop with the parent coordinator a comprehensive, written plan to utilize available services for the translation of school communication with parents in all languages and in a variety of ways

concerning student progress and achievement. Provide regular opportunities for purposeful and authentic feedback about the quality of the school's communication strategies with families and make adjustments to these strategies when needed.

- 6.4: Collaboratively develop a comprehensive, written plan to teach parents ways to support student learning and growth. Provide PD to staff on how to seek and sustain partnerships with parents.
- 6.5: Ensure that student data is shared in a way in which families can understand student learning needs and can identify successes and are encouraged to advocate for student support. Provide training for parents to enable them to use the school's data system, Skedula, and access internet resources available through the NYC DOE homepage. Assist parents with access to computer resources, as needed.