



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	140600010135
School Name	Middle Early College High School
School Address	290 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14202
District Name	Buffalo City School District
School Leader	Susan M. Doyle
Dates of Review	January 14-15, 2014
School Accountability Status	Priority School
Type of Review	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet											
Grade Configuration	9-12	Total Enrollment	295	SIG Recipient	<input type="checkbox"/>	Title 1 Population	78%	Attendance Rate	93.2 %		
Free Lunch	66.1 %	Reduced Lunch	9.2 %	Student Sustainability	100%	Limited English Proficient	2%	Students with Disabilities	13.9%		
Number of English Language Learner Classes											
#Transitional Bilingual		#Dual Language		#Self-Contained English as a Second Language							
Number of Special Education Classes											
#Special Classes	0	#Consultant Teaching	0	#Integrated Collaborative Teaching			4				
# Resource Room	0										
Number Special Classes											
#Visual Arts	2	#Music	0	#Drama	0	#Foreign Language	2	#Dance	0	#CTE	1
Racial/Ethnic Origin											
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.3%	Black or African American	71.2 %	Hispanic or Latino	9.5%	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	White	18.6 %	Multi-racial	0.3%
Personnel											
Years Principal Assigned to School	10+	# of Assistant Principals	1	# of Deans		# of Counselors / Social Workers	2				
Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0%	Teaching Out of Certification	0%	Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.	0%	Average Teacher Absences	18%				
Credit Accumulation (High School Only) and Performance Rates											
% of 1 st yr. students who earned 10+ credits	0%	% of 2 nd yr. students who earned 10+ credits	0%	% of 3 rd yr. students who earned 10+ credits	100%	4 Year Graduation Rate		83%			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	n/a	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	n/a	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	n/a	6 Year Graduation Rate					
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA											
American Indian or Alaska Native				Black or African American							
Hispanic or Latino				Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander							
White				Multi-racial							
Students with Disabilities				Limited English Proficient							
Economically Disadvantaged				All Students							
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Math											
American Indian or Alaska Native				X				Black or African American			
Hispanic or Latino								Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander			
White								Multi-racial			
Students with Disabilities								Limited English Proficient			
Economically Disadvantaged								All Students			
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science											
American Indian or Alaska Native								Black or African American			
Hispanic or Latino								Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander			
White								Multi-racial			
Students with Disabilities								Limited English Proficient			
Economically Disadvantaged								All Students			
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective											
Limited English Proficiency											
SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE SCHOOL:											
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement the Common Core Learning Standards across the curriculum. 2. Continue to incorporate literacy across the curriculum. 3. Continue to create a safe, nurturing school climate that promotes and supports student social-emotional and academic programs. 4. Continue to promote college readiness by creating a supportive college learning environment; gradually introduce college coursework supports and grow college partnerships to better prepare students for success. 											

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	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		X		

	learning.				
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 3:		E		

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

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

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
5.2	The school leader establishes overarching systems and understandings of how to support and sustain student social and emotional developmental health and academic success.		X		
5.3	The school articulates and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is aligned to a curriculum or program that provides learning experiences and a safe and healthy school environment for families, teachers, and students.		X		
5.4	All school stakeholders work together to develop a common understanding of the importance of their contributions in creating a school community that is safe, conducive to learning, and fostering of a sense of ownership for providing social and emotional developmental health supports tied to the school's vision.		X		
5.5	The school leader and student support staff work together with teachers to establish structures to support the use of data to respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs.		X		
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:		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 promote and provide training across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.		X		
6.5	The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.		X		
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:			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: All stakeholders were involved in creating the school goals and long-term vision that are seen, heard, and known across the entire school community; the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) was collaboratively created and is regularly monitored by the building’s School Based Management Team (SBMT). The school leader collaborated to create a five-year high school program aligned to student achievement. School leaders communicate the need for appropriate staff to the district, and manage the school budget well. Systems for monitoring instructional practices positively influence student achievement. The school leader encourages staff to use interconnected data systems to analyze school-wide practices, but systems are not yet embedded, and at the time of the review were not having a consistent impact. However, the school is realizing its goals and mission related to high school graduation, and moving closer to its goal of students obtaining associate degrees upon graduation.

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 has promoted a vision that drives sustained school improvement. Stakeholders reported to the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that the school community was involved in creating the school’s SMART goals and long-term vision. The goals and vision are highly visible and well communicated. Parents and staff stated that the SBMT, which includes representatives from the whole school community, regularly monitors the SCEP. School priorities are outlined in the SCEP and other school improvement documents. IIT review of the SCEP showed it to be a useful document containing specific targets related to areas of school life ranging from the academic to social and emotional developmental health matters. The school leader has shared a data-driven mission for student achievement and well-being with the school community. A teacher stated, “Everything is data-driven here. It is part of our life, whether we like it or not.” The recent appointment of a data coordinator has strengthened the use of data in the school, including the use of data-driven instruction (DDI). Teachers stated they received comprehensive spreadsheet data related to groups of students they teach, and value data coordinator input on the validity of test items they use. Parents commented that the school’s Parent Portal gives them daily access to a full range of data relating to their child that includes information ranging from academic achievement from test scores and homework assignments, to details concerning absence, tardiness, and detentions. The SBMT meets monthly to monitor and evaluate progress toward SMART goals and priorities in the SCEP. At the culmination of the school year, the SBMT shares targets that have been exceeded, met, and not met. The whole school community contributes to establishing and sustaining a vision and goals aimed at improving student achievement.

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 collaborates with the school community to create and use transparent systems and protocols that offer students and teachers the opportunity to benefit from a flexible and thoughtful program aligned to student achievement. IIT interviews with stakeholders showed evidence that this collaboration is successful. Students are interviewed, accepted, and families commit to the completion of a five-year school and college program before enrollment. The program includes a four-week summer course yearly, which is a central element of the school's expanded learning time program. It is directly aligned to student achievement, since it offers both opportunities for students to obtain remedial support in areas of weakness and extensions in other areas. The school leader makes hiring decisions to meet the academic and social needs of the students, such as the recent appointment of the data coordinator. The school leader also communicates the need to the district for appropriate staff, and applies a thorough screening system for potential new staff before hiring occurs. Teachers stressed that this is essential because of the specific nature of the school, which requires some staff to teach both high school and college content, and provide unstinted support to students both in and out of school. The school leader identifies fiscal capital available to the school community throughout the school year. Last year the school was awarded a global budget for staffing; the school leader reported analyzing school needs and making strategic decisions to fund targeted efforts aligned to school-wide goals that considered the needs of all students and staff members. In this context, the school leader created a new part-time post of data coordinator, made part-time posts of academic intervention service (AIS) staff in math and ELA into full-time posts, and appointed a full-time guidance counselor. Students noted that teachers are always prepared to offer additional help and support after school in scheduled after-school clubs and classes, and informally on a one-to-one basis. During the review, large numbers of students were observed purposefully engaging with teachers, or working independently, several hours after the end of the school day. During interview, a grade nine student stated, "Teachers care about us and want us to pass. They are always prepared to help us after school on their own time." Many teachers reported that, when the school opened, they followed with the school leader in a move from a previous school. The formal extended school program and abundant informal learning opportunities offered by teachers after school ensure that available resources are used to bring improvement and meet most 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 leaders provide systems of review that lead to continuous improvement. Teachers stated that the school had a plan aligned to the district's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process for regularly scheduling and observing instructional practices. Teachers explained that the plan considers student data, and the feedback from school leaders is high quality and evidence-based. Reviewers through observation and school documentation confirmed these assertions. The school leader stated that the school had sanctioned an initiative originated by

teachers called “Instructional Rounds,” which involves three teachers observing two classes, with individual teachers focused on observing the teacher, the learner, or the content of the lesson. According to the school leader, it was surprising to many that the analyzed data showed that most lessons were teacher-led, rather than student-driven. This finding was confirmed by classroom visitations conducted by the review team. Teachers stated that the school leader uses observation data and other measures of teacher effectiveness to offer advice, provide targeted support for individual teachers, and identify ongoing professional development (PD) opportunities to groups of staff. At the time of this review, PD opportunities were primarily related to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Teachers noted that PD on the CCLS had prepared them well for implementing new curricula. One physical education (PE) teacher stated, “I was recently at a meeting with over one hundred teachers in my subject area, and gave a talk about incorporating literacy into PE. I felt confident and equipped to do it because of the useful PD available in our school.” Systems in place hold school leaders and staff accountable for continuous improvement.

Area for Improvement:

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

- Systems that use evidence and data to impel the school’s drive to improvement are forming. The school leader encourages staff to use systems that are interconnected and based on analysis of school-wide practices. The staff received DDI training in 2013, and some common planning time to assess and collate data has been scheduled, although teachers reported that the scheduled time was inadequate and needed to be supplemented by ad hoc meetings. Reviewers found that the appointment of a data coordinator had spurred school staff to work on developing evidence-based systems to monitor and revise staff practices; however, the school is in the early stages of developing these systems. The lack of a data room where records are on permanent display for reference and information is a handicap to embedding the system. At the time of the review, reviewers noted that data is not always widely shared or used. For example, the student support team (SST) reported collecting data related to student absence and tardiness, and discussing it in scheduled review meetings; however, the results of these discussions are not shared with teachers. While there is an expectation that teachers will use available data to guide instruction and curriculum plan, this is not a consistent practice. The lack of coherent systems used to regularly monitor and improve practices impacts adversely on student learning and chances of academic success.

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	E
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Debriefing Statement: The school leader has a plan with explicit goals to meet the needs of all students and sub groups that includes a detailed schedule for PD and collaborative meetings to facilitate the implementation of CCLS-aligned curricula. The school leader provides and ensures access to pedagogical support, materials, and

training in the area of CCLS. However, there are inconsistencies in planning for instruction, putting intended plans into practice, and using student data. Consequently, lessons incorporate varying degrees of sequenced, scaffolded skills, rigor, and engagement. The school addresses interdisciplinary curricula and develops partnerships in the absence of a formal plan; however, there is a well-established school-wide approach to literacy across the curriculum. Many teachers are using data to adapt curricula to improve student achievement, and are developing multiple types of assessments to ensure alignment between curriculum and assessment and provide ongoing feedback to students to support ownership of learning.

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 ensures a systematic plan with clear goals to meet the needs of students and subgroups, and implement the CCLS. For example, reviewers found that one special education teacher works alongside teachers of English language arts (ELA) in grades nine, ten, and eleven, and also teaches chemistry in grade eleven. Similarly, other special education teachers co-teach mathematics and social studies, and also teach grade nine mathematics and grade ten earth science classes. This allows for increased targeted support in each subject area. Reviewers found that the school leader employs strategies to provide teachers access to pedagogical support, materials and training in the areas of CCLS curricula and instructional shifts. An effective school PD plan that combines support for early release days and the implementation of CCLS is in place. Furthermore, school leaders “turnkey” information on CCLS and instructional shifts gleaned from monthly district level meetings for school leaders. The school has scheduled vertical collaborative meetings for teachers of different content areas to facilitate CCLS implementation. Additionally, because of the close-knit networks between teachers, there are numerous opportunities for the sharing of good instructional and curriculum implementation practices on an informal basis. Teachers reported attending a three-day summer conference of the Middle College National Consortium (MCNC) that provided a focused training on CCLS implementation. This conference provided an opportunity for staff to work with teachers from similar schools on common concerns, such as modifying instruction for individuals and subgroups. The school leader also ensures that staff benefit from district-provided PD focused on the implementation of coherent curricula. The school leader reported that staff use district-provided CCLS materials for mathematics and ELA, and units aligned to the CCLS and New York State (NYS) standards in the areas of social studies and science from EngageNY. ELA and mathematics teachers “turnkey” CCLS information to non-core teachers as a means of support. The support provided by school leaders enables teachers to implement a coherent curriculum that meets the diverse needs of students.

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 curriculum is connected across subjects in ways that increase student engagement and opportunities for success. IIT classroom visitations, a study of the SCEP and curriculum binders showed that school leaders and teachers do not have formal partnerships to address interdisciplinary curricula. However, the absence of such a plan has not prevented a concerted effort by staff to create an inter-disciplinary curriculum, with a particular emphasis on the development of literacy skills that engages students and promotes academic growth. There is a well-established school-wide approach to literacy across the curriculum that was observed in many lessons, classroom posters, and vocabulary-building activities. A literacy committee was formed in 2004-05 that developed a school-wide plan to improve oral and written literacy across all subjects through word walls, reading with your pen, timed writing, and the eradication of common errors in writing. For other cross-curricular initiatives, content area teachers are encouraged to meet afterschool as horizontal teams. As a result, math teachers reported incorporating calculator use into their lessons on a regular basis, and using the Navigator system to conduct quick polls to increase student participation and monitor progress throughout the lesson. Overarching curriculum themes in ELA have led some teachers to use the web to introduce students to thematic learning by incorporating fine arts, music genres, and architecture. There is collaboration between science and computer teachers that enables students to create joint projects, as well as collaboration between ELA and computer teachers that allows students to create concepts maps, fable comics, and storyboards. Teachers stated that they reflect on the impact of interdisciplinary curricula even though there is no formal structure to facilitate such reflection. They also reported that they modify cross-curricular projects they are involved in based on informal discussions with colleagues. The opportunities that the school provides for students to have access to cross-curricular activities heightens their engagement in learning and better prepares them for college and real-world experiences.

3.5 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* 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.

- Teachers use multiple types of assessment to ensure alignment between curriculum and assessment. Reviewers observed the use of many forms of assessment in lessons, such as pre- and post-assessments, multiple-choice questions, matching words to definitions, quizzes, rubric use, and bell quizzes for a quick review of student progress. Reviewer observation and an examination of school documentation showed that teachers provide ongoing feedback to students that support their ownership of learning. There is a mandatory homework club for some students who are not progressing satisfactorily, but most students reported that this is not viewed as a punishment. Students stated that the program provides excellent support and feedback. The student support binder documents that all students have an annual scheduled meeting with the school counselor to discuss graduation requirements and credits earned toward high school and college graduation, as well as career, academic, personal and social goals. In classrooms and hallways, teachers were observed providing ongoing feedback about student performance to students, supporting student ownership of learning; reviewers noted student work displays featuring performance rubrics. Alignment between curriculum and assessment leads to improved learning.

Area 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.

- Most teachers individually develop unit and lesson plans based on student data, with inconsistent collaborative practices used. Classroom visitations, and reviewer examination of lesson plans and curriculum binders, showed that curriculum development to meet the demands of the CCLS and grade level DDI protocols is limited. In 2012-13, school leaders monitored all teacher lesson plans to assess whether student data was used in planning, and the demands of CCLS were met. School leaders found that the quality of plans was inconsistent, and some plans showed no evidence of DDI protocols. At the time of this review, school leaders continue to monitor all lesson plans when they conduct APPR observations, and also monitor the plans of probationary and temporary teachers on a weekly basis. Reviewers found that lesson plans often have CCLS citations for reference, but are not fully aligned with CCLS and the use of complex materials. Reviewed lessons often did not incorporate a progression of sequenced skills that are systematic in supporting student needs. Nevertheless, there were some lessons observed which did demonstrate use of complex materials and effective guidance, and confirm the developing nature of this effort. For example, in a grade eleven social studies class, students read a primary history source for detail, after which the teacher guided students' thinking on constitutional rights to a real-life application, and the citing of supporting examples from a prior field trip to a court procedure. In a grade ten global studies classroom, the teacher presented a skillfully planned lesson on the Opium Wars by first having students do independent vocabulary preparation as a homework assignment; the work was extended in class using a range of video clips and demanding primary source material, and then finally related to real life current events. An inconsistent use of systems including DDI protocols results in not all groups of students showing growth that leads to increases in student achievement.

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

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: The school is beginning to support teachers in aligning plans to data. There are post-secondary and long-term goals for groups of students. Students are focused on going to college, with a universal understanding of school-wide expectations and the process for meeting them. The school promotes a common understanding of the classroom environment envisioned by the school community, and explicitly teaches student behavioral expectations. Some teachers use strategies that acknowledge diverse groups of students and their needs. Teachers foster student understanding, but do not always adapt the curriculum to support and extend students' variable needs. Teachers foster student participation in the learning process by setting individual post-secondary goals, which enables students to aspire to reach their full potential in a positive school climate and culture.

Strengths:

4.4 **The school has received a rating of *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 learning environment is conducive to providing opportunities for student engagement. From discussions with students, classroom visits, examination of lesson plans and student displays in hallways, it is clear that teachers use a program that promotes a common understanding of the classroom environment envisioned by the school community. It explicitly provides students with behavioral expectations, and recognizes acceptable and safe behaviors through KAT (be kind, be accountable, be on time). The plan is fully enforced as witnessed by positive student behavior at all times during the review. Reviewers observed that teachers consistently ensured that students listened to their peers, put up their hands to ask questions, and had reliable systems of behavior management. In one grade eleven ELA class, students were immediately silenced by the teacher saying, "I'm hearing too much noise." In a grade nine global studies class, students were taught specific expectations for to earning points as an audience during a student presentation. Some teachers used strategies that acknowledged diverse groups of students and their needs. In a grade nine earth science lesson, the teacher used different presentation strategies involving scaffolding and supports to ensure all groups and individuals could follow. In a grade ten PE class, the skill of using the weight machine was modeled by the teacher, and students then helped teach fellow students. IIT classroom visits, examination of lesson plans and discussions with students showed that teachers foster student understanding and adapt to the changing needs of the student population. Because teacher-student relationships are positive and teachers aware of individual student needs, teachers are able to create thoughtful learning environments that incorporate student values and perspectives. Students, teachers, and parents reported that the climate and culture of the school was very positive. Students commented positively about the family-like atmosphere, small classes, and positive support from teachers. One grade twelve student said, "I feel that I now have a future. I never thought that I would graduate from school, and now I am at college." The impact of the school's actions results in a learning environment that is physically and intellectually safe for students.

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.

- The organization of instructional plans and practices using data that lead to increases in student achievement is developing. Teachers stated that there was a lot of peer support and sharing of good practices, both formally and informally within the school. Teachers and students unanimously reported that short- and long-term goals for groups of students are established based on grade-level benchmarks. Students are focused on going to college, with clear college completion expectations and an awareness of how to meet them. Teachers of mathematics and ELA are using district-provided modules aligned to CCLS. Other teachers are beginning to develop unit and lesson plans that are aligned to the CCLS and reflective of the CCLS shifts to instruct all groups of students, but the

implementation of practice in the classroom is inconsistent. Additionally, reviewers found that school leaders are in the beginning stages of support to teachers in the alignment of instructional plans to data. However, despite recent efforts of the school leaders, at the time of this review impact was limited. Efforts have included a recent training on DDI, where numerous concrete examples were provided to staff on how to achieve a beneficial alignment between planning and data. Despite teacher-leader feedback following instructional walkthroughs that encouraged the use of instructional practices and strategies aligned to newly developed programs, the impact evidenced in classrooms was limited. Just over half of the lessons observed during the review were closely in line with CCLS expectations. Therefore, there are variable levels of student engagement and inquiry, which hinders greater academic achievement.

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.

- The implementation of the CCLS in teacher practice in the classroom is inconsistent. While some content areas have the CCLS suitably incorporated, such as teachers of mathematics and ELA using district-developed modules closely aligned to CCLS, other teachers are only beginning to develop lesson plans that are aligned to the CCLS and reflective of the instructional shifts. Just over half of all lessons observed during the review were closely aligned with CCLS expectations, with students engaged in rigorous collaborative pair or group work using differentiated material and activities, displaying ownership of their learning. Some teachers asked higher-order questions, and some instructional materials contained high levels of text and content complexity; but this was not consistent across the school, even though most teachers interviewed stated this was a key feature of their lessons. Evidence from observation and lesson plans showed that teachers monitor and adjust curricula to support the CCLS instructional shifts and NYS content standards, but inconsistently ensure that higher-order thinking skills are used; teachers inconsistently provide the necessary supports and extensions for all groups of students across core content areas and grades. However, reviewers noted some examples of teachers asking higher-order questions to cue an inference. For example, a teacher asked, “Knowing the event that happened, what would you expect next?” In several lessons, students exhibited higher-order thinking skills without being prompted. For example, in one lesson a student added to a class discussion, “I hear a contradiction in what we’re talking about,” and then continued to make the point. Inconsistent school-wide instructional practices limit high levels of student achievement.

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

- Teachers are beginning to use data to adjust student groupings and instructional strategies. Teachers reported having subject meeting discussions to plan modifications in instruction by matching tasks to specific students or groups of students; but no consistent classroom implementation resulted. Many teachers are beginning to use summative and formative assessments that benefit their instructional decision-making. In many classrooms visited during the review, teachers taught the same lesson for the whole class, with little opportunity for students to progress at their own pace or make decisions about their learning. Teachers also inconsistently

provided data-based feedback to students. In some classes, teachers used multiple forms of assessment, such as in-out tickets, quick polls, annotated papers, and rubrics to aid feedback and understanding. In one class, a bell quiz was administered and corrected immediately so that students knew who had to attend the mandatory homework club. In a weight training class, the teacher spoke to all students individually to give feedback. In two ELA classrooms, a student performance poster with rubrics aligned to CCLS was posted. However, this was not witnessed by reviewers school-wide. Inconsistent use of data-based instruction limits high levels of achievement for all groups.

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 vision and systems support and sustain student social and emotional developmental health and learning. The school systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health by aligning its program to provide structured experiences in an intellectually and physically safe learning environment. As a result, the school community and college stakeholder collaboration, achieves the vision of making a high proportion of students academically and socially successful.

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.

- Systems are in place that identify the social and emotional developmental health needs of students and ensure appropriate support. Teachers, parents, and students stated there is a system that allows each student to be known by an adult, and that this promotes students’ pursuit of success. Reviewer findings supported these views. There are well- established seminar and focus groups for each grade level in which academic requirements, as well as social issues, are discussed with students in small groups twice weekly. The mandatory four-week summer program also provides an opportunity for staff to connect with students and provide for their academic and social needs. The links between college staff ensure that students are well known by instructors. The school leader ensures that all staff know and use the research-based program of “Check In/Check Out” for referral and support to address social and emotional developmental health success. Reviewers observed the practice being carried out effectively during the review. The school leader administered a culture and climate survey to teachers and students that provided data to identify areas of school-wide need and focus school resources on student social and emotional developmental health. After analyzing the survey, the SST reported targeting “school connectedness” by writing each student’s name on a post-it, and displaying them on a classroom wall. Each post-it was removed if two teachers said they had a close rapport with the student whose name was on it. A few post-its remained after the exercise, and teachers and the SST devised strategies for ensuring that these students would become “connected” to staff. Staff reported familiarity with strategies advocated by the Middle Early College Consortium at its annual conference on sharing data in the areas of referral and support. SST

members pointed out that referral forms were frequently revised in the light of new data. School systems promote student social and emotional developmental health and, in turn, 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.

- Programs are used to address the social and emotional developmental health needs of students and provide a safe and healthy school environment. Teachers and students reported that they participate twice weekly in scheduled sessions called “seminars “where they discuss issues relating to student social and emotional developmental health. Students said that in these sessions, there was a fixed curriculum, but they could also discuss a wide range of related issues and topics. One student stated, “We talk about school work or behavior, get career advice, go over homework, or talk about personal problems or perhaps a newspaper article.” The SST meets with every student annually to discuss student goals and achievement. SST members also meet with parents of students who are falling behind. Reviewer examination of school-provided documentation and the SCEP confirmed that there are common lesson plans for Safe and Civil Schools, which includes an anti-bullying program. These have a positive influence on behavior around the school. Staff reported that they receive PD support on referral procedures and updated protocols in the area of social and emotional developmental health needs of students. Teachers also stated that the SST has scheduled input during common planning meetings, and they support individual teachers as needed. All new teachers automatically receive PD from the SST. Teachers also sit on the Safe and Civil Schools Committee, and promote the school community's vision of a safe and healthy environment. Parents reported that the school program develops independent thinkers. There is a plan to monitor and revise the PD provided by the SST staff to enhance its effect on improving teacher skills in meeting the social and emotional needs of students. Because of the school’s positive actions and programs, students learn in an intellectually and physically safe and healthy school community.

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 uses a strategic plan that clarifies school community member roles in contributing to how student supports are provided to all groups of students in ways that foster ownership of learning and development. There is a close involvement with the college receiving the students; for example, a special education teacher from the school is based full-time at the college to support students with disabilities who works in conjunction with the college’s Office of Disability and college professors. This helps students integrate safely into their new environment. Across the school community, students, teachers, professors, and parents work together and have an active role in ensuring the school vision pertaining to the academic and social development of students. Discussions with different stakeholders indicated that they recognize the role each has to play in supporting the school vision for student social-emotional security and success. The school has a system for monitoring student needs; for example, teachers ensure student attendance by going to the college

to monitor attendance and participation in college level classes. Additionally, there are collaborative meetings between school and college staff regarding social and emotional developmental health supports. Parents have wide access to student data through use of the Buffalo City School District Parent Portal, the school social worker, and home visits conducted by some staff. The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) encourages parent participation through monthly meetings, mailings, and telephone calls. There are also several Safe and Civil Schools initiatives, such as student of the month, perfect attendance recognition, and KAT awards, which foster positive student attitudes. Because of school initiatives and efforts, school constituents are aware of the role they play in creating school and college environments that are safe and meet student social and emotional developmental health needs.

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.

- School leaders and support staff work together to collect and utilize data to support students. There are structured times and scheduled meetings for the SST to meet as a group, as well as with other staff and committees to use data to address student academic and social-emotional developmental health needs. The school has a plan that uses collected and analyzed data to deliver services and supports to students. The SST uses attendance, tardiness, and academic data to drive decision-making. Youth Risk Survey data is made available to staff to enable them to bring areas of need into sharp focus, via seminar and health classes. Other data are shared with staff and college partners to help develop plans focused on areas of deficiency to improve college readiness and success in college classes. Teachers use Regents exam results, including item analysis, to drive instruction and focus on improvement areas. Additionally, core teachers share data to encourage a focus on areas of deficiency that can be included in summer camp programs to improve instruction in the following year. As a result, students have the opportunities and potential to become academically and socially successful.

Areas for Improvement:

All ratings for this Tenet are **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.

Tenet Rating

E

Debriefing Statement: The school leader ensures that regular communication with students and families fosters high expectations for student academic achievement, and commitment to the program. The school engages in beneficial and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders, so that student strength and needs are identified and used to improve learning. The school staff uses data to identify family needs and target intervention strategies. As a result, parents’ ability to support their children is enhanced.

Strengths:

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

- The school leader makes it a school-wide priority for all students and their families to be aware of school-wide expectations. The school website provides up-to-date information on academic achievement and high expectations. The website clearly states that students who enter the school have to commit to a five-year school and four-week summer program, in which they are dual-enrolled in high school and college. In IIT interviews with students and parents, it was clear that all were fully aware of and supported the school's high expectations. The school community implements a plan to foster conversations with students and families regarding high expectations for student academic achievement, and provides tips and tools focused on student learning and development. The school leader reported holding meetings with students and parents at the beginning of each school year. The school leader meets with junior students and parents to clarify the full-time college status during senior year, and discuss student majors. Additionally, the school leader holds meetings with senior students and their parents to discuss completion of the financial aid "Say Yes" forms and senior responsibilities. Parents are required to read the school and college syllabus with their child and return it with a parent signature. Each student is given a current college transcript, which includes the classes required to graduate. Teachers also review grades individually with students. The school staff reviews parent responses to school efforts to build family-school relationships at bi-monthly PTO meetings, parent nights, through an online survey of parent views and concerns, and by encouraging families to come to the school to meet with staff to discuss important issues and concerns. In this way, the school can adjust its strategies for responding to parent needs, if required, and promote the school's readiness to listen to parental input to improve relations between home and school. The positive family-school relationship contributes to student needs being met, which increases student ability to achieve and progress in college programs.

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

- The school has a plan providing for a range of reciprocal communication with families about school and student issues and concerns. Teachers send notes home, make phone calls, and send emails. Additionally, progress reports and the syllabus for each college and high school class are mailed home. The school website is a powerful tool for providing up-to-date information to parents. The school maintains call logs for parental contact. There are summer conferences with students and parents for students at risk of failing, and conferences are held with seniors and their parents' at mid-year. The school ensures that all documents and notices are translated into other languages, as required, and translators are available when needed. Parents stated that sometimes sign language was used to communicate to the hearing-impaired. The school staff monitors the effectiveness of its strategies for communicating with parents, and responds to family feedback concerning issues raised at meetings and individual parental visits to the school. The positive efforts made by the school to assist families, allows parents to support their children's academic achievement and social emotional

growth.

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

- The school leader collaborates with school staff and college partners to ensure that classroom teachers and guidance staff understand how to sustain family engagement by teaching parents how to support student learning and growth. Training is provided to staff building strong partnerships between school and home. School staff train parents on the use of the Parent Portal, and provide information and training on the CCLS and college courses and requirements. Parents are encouraged to visit the school and participate in lessons. The school nurtures good partnerships with parents from the outset to solidify the commitment parents are required to show to enable their children to enroll. The annual conference of the MCNC provides a limited amount of PD to school staff on sustaining partnerships with families. The school community maintains a strong home-school connection, sharply focused on supporting student achievement, which leads to increased student success.

6.5 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* 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.

- School leaders, the data coordinator, and members of the SST use data to identify family needs and target strategies to address them, such as providing access to outside agencies. Reports on student progress and achievement are sent home every five weeks. Data used to review student progress at SST meetings are shared with students, and sent home to parents. Collated data about student achievement is shared at PTO meetings, including graduation rates and information on report cards. Letters are sent home if students are falling behind in their work, or if seniors are in jeopardy of not meeting graduation requirements. Parents reported that student data are shared in ways that families can understand. One parent commented that data about her child with special needs was communicated regularly and clearly. Families are empowered to support student learning, which leads to increased student achievement.

Areas for Improvement:

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

Recommendations:

Tenet 2: School Leader Practices and Decisions

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 2 the school should:

- 2.5: Ensure that all staff use interconnected data systems showing analyses of school-wide practices to improve instructional practices and raise student achievement.

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 and evaluate the consistency of teacher collaboration to develop unit and lesson plans based on student data; ensure actions meet the demands of the CCLS and grade level DDI protocols to improve planning and subsequently, student learning and achievement.

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 that instruction is based on annual, unit, and daily lesson plans aligned to the CCLS and regularly evaluated by school leaders, so that strengths are disseminated and weaknesses addressed.
- 4.3: Check frequently and regularly to ensure that all teachers provide coherent and appropriately aligned CCLS-based instruction that includes the development of higher-order thinking skills and the reading of challenging texts; ensure instruction meets the needs of all students, while raising academic aspiration.
- 4.5: Provide appropriate PD on using DDI throughout the school, so that the needs of all teachers are met; follow up to ensure learning from PD is consistently implemented in classrooms to bring about increased rates of academic growth for all groups of students.