



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



Name of principal:	Theresa Haley
Name/number of school:	Hughes Elementary School
School address:	345 Jamesville Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13210
School telephone number:	(315) 435 - 4404
Principal's direct phone number:	
Principal's e-mail:	THaley@scsd.us

School Information Sheet

School Configuration (2014-15 data)					
Grade	2 – 5	Total Enrollment	267	SIG Recipient	No
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2014-15)					
# Transitional Bilingual	0	# Dual Language	0	# Self-Contained English as a Second	0
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2014-15)					
# Special Classes	3	# SETSS		# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	0
Types and Number of Special Classes (2014-15)					
# Visual Arts	1	# Music	1	# Drama	0
# Foreign Language	0	# Dance	0	# CTE	0
School Composition (most recent data)					
% Title I Population	74	% Attendance Rate	88.8		
% Free Lunch	70	% Reduced Lunch	4		
% Limited English Proficient	12	% Students with Disabilities	27		
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0	% Black or African American	74		
% Hispanic or Latino	8	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	9		
% White	6	% Multi-Racial	4		
Personnel (most recent data)					
Years Principal Assigned to School	5	# of Assistant Principals	1		
# of Deans	0	# of Counselors/Social Workers	2		
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0	% Teaching Out of Certification	0		
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	4	Average Teacher Absences			
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	3.6	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	6.0		
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	55.7	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	N/A		
Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	N/A	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	N/A		
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)					
% 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	N/A		
6 Year Graduation Rate	N/A				
Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2013-14)					
Reward		Recognition			
In Good Standing		Local Assistance Plan			
Focus District	✓	Focus School Identified by a Focus District			
Priority School	✓				

Accountability Status

Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (2012-13)			
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	*		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (2012-13)			
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	*		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (2012-13)			
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	✓		

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:			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)-			X	

	based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students.				
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 promote and provide training across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.			X	
6.5	The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.			X	
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:				D	

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

Developing

The school has received a rating of **Developing** for Tenet 2 – School Leader Practices and Decisions.

- The school’s mission and vision were created with input from some stakeholders and is visible throughout the school. There is a plan to address focus areas identified within the school’s SCEP, however SMART goals that align to the long-term vision do not exist. The vision is posted throughout the school and was heard on the morning announcements. In an interview the school leader described that Hughes’ vision was developed five years ago, at the start of her tenure as principal, and a vision setting process was used at that time. The school leader reported that the vision is revisited each summer, “so that I know everyone is on board.” She creates cross-grade level groups and each group makes edits. Revisions are made by the leadership team and presented back to the staff. Interviewed staff described going through this process until there was a shared commitment to the vision and then each staff member signs the statement; this signed vision statement was observed by reviewers in the staff’s meeting space. The school leader and interviewed teachers discussed how a similar process is used to create an action plan for each focus area identified in the SCEP: “Each School Leadership Team (SLT) member takes a SCEP area to their constituent group. They create a plan, we come back together as a whole group, swap areas and provide feedback. Then we do a carousel walk so that everyone is able to read and put down their thoughts for each area.” The school leader stated that she then makes a ‘cheat sheet,’ that captures each topic and aligned activities that the team has come up with. Both the school leader and interviewed teachers referenced this cheat sheet while discussing the school’s goals. When asked about end of year goals, the school leader stated that they are comparing this year’s data to last years, on individual units of study, and looking to see an increase in performance. While the vision is uniformly seen and heard throughout the school, the achievement of SMART goals cannot be quantified at this time, therefore it’s impact is limited.
- The school leader has made strategic decisions that have improved programming for students and teachers, as well as hired and sustained personnel that allow staff to focus on meeting the needs of students. In an interview, the school leader explained how she has assigned two teaching assistants (TAs) to run the Behavior Intervention Center (BIC). The two TAs rotate times that they are in the BIC, providing students with two different but equally able personalities to interact with. The school leader noted that due to the low number of students in the BIC and having two staff members assigned there, at any given time at least one TA is able to circulate amongst classrooms and be proactive in supporting students’ behaviors and, similarly, the school Sentry pushes into specials with specific grade levels. Instructional coaches are conducting regular walk-throughs and relaying information to the administrative team on observed trends; the school leader reported that this provides her with more data on what is happening in classrooms, allowing her to more strategically provide teachers with support. Hughes has an active partnership with SUNY Cortland and student teachers were observed in every classroom. The school leader shared her reflection that this partnership has allowed for students to have more small group instruction and intervention. In regard to fiscal resources that the school has control over, the majority of these funds are used for PBIS incentives. According to the school leader, teachers create the incentives and some of them require money. She uses the provided Wegman’s

card to recognize staff at random times throughout the year: having a coffee cart or pancakes on a snow day, for example. Thus, the allocation of fiscal, human, and programmatic resources ensures that the immediate needs of the school community are met during the current school year.

- Using the Teaching and Learning Rubric aligned to the district's APPR, the school leader and administrative team have created a system to conduct weekly walkthroughs of classrooms, track progress of teacher practices, provide feedback through conferences, and encourage staff to take ownership of their development. Hughes uses the district's process of pre-conference, observation and post-conference for formal evaluations. The teaching roster has been divided so that whichever administrator conducted the announced observation also conducts the unannounced observation. The school leader shared that they use this system so that the same person can review a teacher's evaluations, scores and feedback over time to determine if there has been progress made from one round to the next. All data and documents related to a teacher's growth is kept in an electronic folder that the each member of the leadership team has access to. A consistent walkthrough form is used to leave teachers with feedback and was provided for the review team. In an interview, the school leader described how she deconstructed the Teaching and Learning Rubric with her staff and is building the mindset that, "getting feedback on the right things will lead to an increase in positive instructional practices." At a meeting, "I take a section of the rubric and give teachers examples of what instruction looks like at each competency level. Or I show a video – I'll give them a score and have them provide the evidence, or I have them score." She attributed this time spent on norming has led to lowered anxiety with teachers in regard to the observation process. The school leader stated that when the instructional leadership team is in classrooms they also provide feedback aligned to a chosen tenet, including an unofficial rating, evidence and specific next steps the teacher can take to move to the next level of proficiency. Instructional coaches provide observational data from both their classroom walkthroughs and student academic data from meetings with teachers; the school leader reported that this information is used to guide the walkthrough scheduled and/or identify specific teaching practices that will be looked for and feedback provided around. Interviewed teachers spoke to the constant informal feedback they receive and how it consistently has concrete evidence as well as actionable and feasible next steps. They noted that the school's administration and instructional coaches are always available to discuss a comment or suggestion and unanimously felt that "teachers have the chance to reflect and develop before the next round of observations and feedback." Math and special education teachers, in a teacher interview, spoke to the collaborative coaching model that they are using and attributed this practice to furthering their development, "It's great to go into someone else's classroom and see what ideas you can use and then when someone comes into your classroom you get feedback from your peers. It pushes us to get better." Through the structure of observation and debriefs, as well as professional development offered, the administrators and staff are participating in the district's Annual Professional Performance Review process and are showing ownership over continuous improvement.
- The school leader uses systems to track and monitor individual and school-wide practices related to improvements in areas defined in the SCEP. In an interview, the school leader mentioned using data-driven instructional meetings, observation notes and feedback from instructional rounds, and the monthly newsletters as means of monitoring instructional practices and student achievement; progress monitoring data is used to assess the effectiveness of the Student Intervention Team's work. Given that the school does not have SMART goals, progress towards critical school-wide goals cannot be quantified at this time.

Recommendations:

- Identify priorities within the SCEP and write aligned SMART goals.

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

Effective

The school has received a rating of **Effective** for Tenet 3 – Curriculum Development and Support.

- Hughes is employing several structures to support the implementation and monitoring of rigorous CCLS aligned curricula. The school is using the district’s ELA and math curriculum, which is reportedly aligned to CCLS. Provided schedules and teacher interviews noted that horizontal and vertical meeting time is built into the schedule for all faculty and that specific data-driven instructional meetings are scheduled for three times within a unit of study. Furthermore, a yearlong schedule of professional development dates and topics was reviewed and, in teacher interviews, it was confirmed that these topics have indeed been covered according to plan. In an interview, the school leader shared her schedule for instructional rounds and provided an example, around higher-order questioning, of how data gathered from this plan is used to deliver pedagogical support to teachers. The structures in place for use of the curricula are supporting teachers in meeting the needs of students.
- With the support of the school’s instructional coaches, teachers develop unit and daily lesson plans to meet the demands of CCLS and data-driven instruction. The school is using the district’s ELA and math curriculum, which is reportedly aligned to CCLS. In an interview, the school leader shared the non negotiable components of lesson plans, across all grades and subject areas: student-friendly objectives that are shared with students throughout the lesson, an exit ticket or form of assessment measuring mastery of the day’s objective, small and whole group differentiation techniques, and higher level questions. In separate interviews, the school leader and teachers described the data-driven instructional (DDI) process that all teachers engage in: The first DDI meeting takes place prior to the start of a unit. Teachers bring student data from the school-created unit pre-assessment to analyze misconceptions, make decisions on instructional strategies and student groupings, scaffold skills for sub-groups based on data, and set individual targets for students. Teachers also create common exit tickets for the unit during this first DDI meeting. The second DDI meeting occurs halfway through the unit and is when teachers analyze student performance on the mid-term assessment and make any necessary adjustments to instructional strategies and/or student groupings. At the third and final DDI meeting for a unit, teachers analyze student performance on the end-of-unit assessment and reflect on what specifically about their teaching practices led to this success. Instructional plans at Hughes demonstrate data-informed instructional designed to meet the demands of CCLS instructional shifts and teachers are planning for the needs of all students.
- Interdisciplinary planning is practiced in isolation. Interviewed teachers shared some examples of students engaging in cross-curricula activities, however all examples were within the art or physical education classes. Teachers acknowledged that the interdisciplinary planning is initiated by these two teachers and is not a school-wide practice. As a result, students have limited opportunities to engage in meaningful cross-curricula activities that increase their ability to be successful.
- Teachers are using a range of assessments to guide and inform their curriculum planning and are

providing on-going feedback to students that support ownership of their learning. In separate interviews, the school leader and teachers described the data-driven instructional (DDI) process that all teachers engage in: The first DDI meeting takes place prior to the start of a unit. Teachers bring student data from the school-created unit pre-assessment to analyze misconceptions, make decisions on instructional strategies and student groupings, scaffold skills for sub-groups based on data, and set individual targets for students. Teachers also create common exit tickets for the unit during this first DDI meeting. The second DDI meeting occurs halfway through the unit and is when teachers analyze student performance on the mid-term assessment and make any necessary adjustments to instructional strategies and/or student groupings. At the third and final DDI meeting for a unit, teachers analyze student performance on the end-of-unit assessment and reflect on what specifically about their teaching practices led to this success. All teachers that were asked, by the review team, about student groupings were able to show and explain how specific data was used to create or adjust groups. According to teacher and student interviews, students set goals and track progress on summative assessments such as SRI and running records. In the teacher interview, it was noted that fifth grade students complete a reflection on their academic efforts and progress every two to three weeks. This reflection was also mentioned by interviewed students and provided in the school's documents. Some provided lesson plans included rubrics with established criteria for success and space for teacher comments. The alignment between curriculum and assessment and the use of assessment data is leading to improved student achievement.

Recommendation:

- Based on grade-level benchmarks, set achievement targets for each instructional unit (classroom and school-wide) and create a plan to track progress throughout the unit.

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	Developing
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The school has received a rating of **Developing** for Tenet 4 – Teacher Practices and Decisions.

- School and instructional leaders ensure that teachers plan according to data and based on individual learning goals for students. In separate interviews, the school leader and teachers described the data-driven instructional (DDI) process that all teachers engage in: The first DDI meeting takes place prior to the start of a unit. Teachers bring student data from the school-created unit pre-assessment to analyze misconceptions, make decisions on instructional strategies and student groupings, scaffold skills for sub-groups based on data, and set individual targets for students. Teachers also create common exit tickets for the unit during this first DDI meeting. The second DDI meeting occurs halfway through the unit and is when teachers analyze student performance on the mid-term assessment and make any necessary adjustments to instructional strategies and/or student groupings, and plan for interventions. At the third and final DDI meeting for a unit, teachers analyze student performance on the end-of-unit assessment and reflect on what specifically about their teaching practices led to this success. Completed teacher reflections were provided for review. Though student goals are not based on

grade-level benchmarks, the school's current instructional practices are beginning to promote high levels of student engagement and inquiry.

- Teachers at Hughes are using CCLS-aligned lessons and instructional strategies that engage students and stimulate high levels of thinking. The school is using the district's ELA and math curriculum, which is reportedly aligned to CCLS and all texts observed by the review team were appropriately complex for the grade level. All provided lesson plans, as well as those observed in classrooms, were aligned to CCLS. Higher-order questions were observed in all lesson plans, and in execution in most classrooms. In separate interviews, the school leader and teachers spoke about the focus on higher-order questions. From walkthrough data in January, the instructional leadership team found that the percentage of higher-order questions asked was lower than last year. In response to this, a professional development was conducted on the next half-day where everyone was given a teacher's transcript and had to identify and classify the questions asked. Teachers then had to script out the questions for a chosen lesson and turn them in; they were provided with feedback from the instructional team. Two weeks later, instructional coaches and administrators went into every classroom, at various points in the schedule, and provided feedback on higher-order questioning. The percentage of higher-order questions asked increased from the data collected in January. Instructional practices are leading to high levels of student engagement and achievement.
- Teachers and students are working together to create a learning environment that is responsive and tailored to the experiences, strengths, and needs of all students. All teachers are using strategies from Responsive Classroom to build and maintain a positive classroom culture. Interviewed teachers, as well as provided documents, noted that the entire school spent the first six weeks of the year focused on building procedures, protocols, routines, and classroom culture. Teachers attributed students being able to easily transition from one area/teacher to the next and meet expectations to the success of the first six weeks. The school leader noted that the three values of the school are compassion, empathy, and ownership and that there is a school-wide assembly each Friday where these values are explicitly taught and discussed by both faculty and students. She also described the Round Table structure: the school psychologist and social worker spend thirty minutes a week in each classroom building upon the compassion, empathy or ownership lesson that was taught at the Friday assembly. Interviewed students commented and agreed with the statements of, "Hughes is like a family to me," and, "We all have nicknames, just like a family." Both interviewed students and parents stated that though bullying is rare, it is treated seriously when there is a concern. In separate interviews, parents of students with disabilities and special education teachers spoke to the welcoming environment for all students and that they have never seen students isolated by peers or teachers. One hundred percent of interviewed parents agreed with the statement that they feel comfortable sending their student(s) to school every day. The interviewed student support staff described Hughes as having a "strong sense of community," and spoke to the ease with which new students transition to the environment. Teachers, in an interview, said that they are intentional about making learning relevant to their students and change the names and/or topics in questions to increase engagement. Interviewed students and teachers spoke about the Taste of Hughes, a school-event that acknowledge and celebrates various cultures represented within the school. As described by students, each homeroom chooses a specific culture to study (one that is represented within their class) and then presents their findings and shares a food with the rest of the school. Students and parents are able to move from class to class to learn about the different cultures represented within the school community. The learning environment at Hughes is physically and intellectually safe for all students.

- Teachers use data and assessments to inform and adjust their instructional strategies and groupings and students receive specific feedback in a timely manner. In separate interviews, the school leader and teachers described the data-driven instructional (DDI) process that all teachers engage in: The first DDI meeting takes place prior to the start of a unit. Teachers bring student data from the school-created unit pre-assessment to analyze misconceptions, make decisions on instructional strategies and student groupings, scaffold skills for sub-groups based on data, and set individual targets for students. Teachers also create common exit tickets for the unit during this first DDI meeting. The second DDI meeting occurs halfway through the unit and is when teachers analyze student performance on the mid-term assessment and make any necessary adjustments to instructional strategies and/or student groupings, and plan for interventions. At the third and final DDI meeting for a unit, teachers analyze student performance on the end-of-unit assessment and reflect on what specifically about their teaching practices led to this success. Completed teacher reflections were provided for review. In provided samples of student work, specific feedback was noted from teachers (“Awesome job identifying the central theme,” “What from the beginning helps you understand...?”) and rubrics included scorings and comments. In the teacher interview, it was noted that fifth grade students complete a reflection on their academic efforts and progress every two to three weeks. This reflection was also mentioned by interviewed students and provided in the school’s documents. In the student interview, one hundred percent of students agreed with the statement that they receive feedback regularly on their work. They made statements such as, “I always get feedback on written assignments,” and “I should change my work according to the feedback.” Students in the upper grades talked about how they sometimes provide feedback on a classmate’s work or their own. In classroom observations, teachers were seen stopping a discussion or independent work based on “what I’m hearing pairs say,” reteach a concept, or project work on the document camera to provide feedback. Teachers were also observed making notes on which individual students or groups were answering a question a particular way, and then incorporating those notes while reviewing the answer or strategy with the whole class. In interviews, teachers and the school leader talked about using a mock assessment to gather additional data and adjust instructional strategies. As part of this mock assessment, students in state-testing grades took a practice test. Teachers were charged with observing how students took the test – which used strategies learned throughout the year, which students demonstrated frustration after a short time or on a specific section, and when the majority of students started to lose stamina. Instructional coaches led teachers through an analysis of these behaviors and teachers created a plan to address testing behaviors and motivation. Data based instruction is timely and purposeful, leading to increases in student achievement.

Recommendation:

- Provide differentiated support to staff on writing and asking higher-order questions.

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

Effective

The school has received a rating of **Effective** for Tenet 5 – Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health.

- The school leader has established an environment that allows all students to be known by an adult, ensures that staff uses research-based practices for referral and support and data to identify areas of need, as well as leverages resources to promote student social and emotional developmental health needs. Interviewed parents, teachers and students all point to the small class sizes and how it allows for a “family-like” environment. In an interview, the school leader articulated that the DDI process serves as a Tier 1 intervention and allows multiple adults to have a sense of where each student is academically. The School Intervention Team (SIT), she explained, handles tier 2 interventions, and students are referred to SIT if and when they are showing limited success with classroom interventions and groupings. When a student is referred, a SIT member is assigned as a case liaison and is responsible for all communication with the student, teachers and family. Student teachers from SUNY Courtland conduct progress monitoring over a ten week period and the case liaison meets with the teachers and student teacher to ensure that interventions are strategic, carried out with fidelity, and that data is properly documented. When necessary, after ten weeks the SIT meets with the parent to discuss moving the case to the Pupil Support Team (PST) to determine if more intense interventions are needed or if an evaluation will start. The school leader noted that all referrals to the SIT have been academic in nature. For behavior concerns, she mentioned the use of the BIC, a reset or a coach pass. Coach passes are used when a student has gone through several resets already or is acting belligerent and any staff member that has a relationship with the student can be a coach. Coaches are expected to do a reset or restorative conversation in the BIC. Support team members, as well as interviewed teachers, spoke to the same referral steps and use of the coach system. All interviewed staff members also mentioned receiving training from Peaceful People on how to implement Check-in Check-out (CICO) systems and the 2x10 structure, as well as the school’s Round Table structure where the school psychologist and social worker push into classrooms. The school leader and support team members, in separate interviews, discussed how academic, behavioral, and attendance data from Educators Handbook is all used when discussing students’ successes or challenges and that an administrator is present at every SIT meeting. Members of the SIT, as well as interviewed teachers, noted that this new system of focusing on the whole child allows for teachers to be pulled out of class for meetings less frequently. The implemented systems and structures effectively address barriers to the social and emotional developmental health needs of students and their academic success.
- The school uses curricula that incorporate research-based practices that facilitate the teaching of social and emotional developmental health, and provides professional development to build adults’ capacity to promote a safe and healthy school. All teachers are using strategies from Responsive Classroom to build and maintain a positive classroom culture. Interviewed teachers, as well as provided documents, noted that the entire school spent the first six weeks of the year focused on building procedures, protocols, routines, and classroom culture. Teachers attributed students being able to easily transition from one area/teacher to the next and meet expectations to the success of the first six weeks. The school leader noted that the three values of the school are compassion, empathy, and ownership and that there is a school-wide assembly each Friday where these values are explicitly taught and discussed by both faculty and students. She also described the Round Table structure: the school psychologist and social worker spend thirty minutes a week in each classroom building upon the compassion, empathy or ownership lesson that was taught at the Friday assembly. Interviewed students commented and agreed with the statements of, “Hughes is like a family to me,” and, “We all have nicknames, just like a family.” Both interviewed students and parents stated that though bullying is

rare, it is treated seriously when there is a concern. All interviewed staff members also mentioned receiving training from Peaceful People on how to implement Check-in Check-out (CICO) systems and the 2x10 structure. While the school is beginning to monitor and revise the professional development plan, students are learning in a safe and healthy school community.

- Protocols and processes for stakeholders to understand their individual role and consistently contribute towards providing students’ social and emotional developmental health are beginning to be implemented. According to interviews with the school leader, teachers, and support staff, all school personnel are aware of and consistently contribute towards ensuring the school’s vision of social and emotional developmental health by using Responsive Classroom techniques and following the established referral system and interventions. Parents of the twelve students that have CICO sheets are signing the daily sheets, however evidence was not provided on how the majority of parents are contributing towards the school’s vision. Interviewed support staff mentioned that getting parents to agree to more intensive services or a special education evaluation has been a challenge for them this year. Not all school stakeholders are able to articulate how the school meets the social and emotional development health needs of students and, as a result, cannot fully contribute towards achieving this vision.
- The school is using data to respond to students’ social and emotional developmental health needs. In an interview, the school leader articulated that the DDI process serves as a Tier 1 intervention and allows multiple adults to have a sense of where each student is academically. The School Intervention Team (SIT), she explained, handles tier 2 interventions, and students are referred to SIT if and when they are showing limited success with classroom interventions and groupings. When a student is referred, a SIT member is assigned as a case liaison and is responsible for all communication with the student, teachers and family. Student teachers from SUNY Cortland conduct progress monitoring over a ten week period and the case liaison meets with the teachers and student teacher to ensure that interventions are strategic, carried out with fidelity, and that data is properly documented. When necessary, after ten weeks the SIT meets with the parent to discuss moving the case to the Pupil Support Team (PST) to determine if more intense interventions are needed or if an evaluation will start. The school leader and support team members, in separate interviews, discussed how academic, behavioral, and attendance data from Educators Handbook is all used when discussing students’ successes or challenges. In an interview, the school leader explained her expectation for the support staff using data: referral data is maintained by grade and separated into academic versus behavioral and attendance data is tracked and followed up by a specific member of the SIT. Graphs based on CICO data are created by each case liaison and analyzed at each meeting, if not beforehand. The use of data and structured plan to deliver supports and services to students by the school community increases opportunities for students to become academically and socially successful.

Recommendation:

- Create a plan, inclusive of protocols and processes, to address all stakeholders’ roles in meeting students social and emotional developmental health needs.

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

Tenet Rating

Developing

The school has received a rating of **Developing** for Tenet 6 – Family and Community Engagement.

- The school communicates with families around academic expectations and student progress, yet it is unclear as to if these communications are well understood by all families. In an interview, the school leader stated that both a school-wide and grade-level newsletter go home monthly and includes information on what students are learning in upcoming units, as well as tips for how parents can help students at home. The school leader shared that she vets each communication that goes home to families to ensure that it aligns with the school's mission and is in parent-friendly language. She expressed that despite the school's consistent efforts to engage families, "There hasn't been much impact. We sent home a letter that lays out how to become a better reader. It was parent friendly and we sent it out two times. When I talk to parents, they know if their child is below/on/above grade level, but it's clear that they haven't read or understood the letter about what needs to happen to get to the next level." Interviewed teachers also spoke about the newsletters as a communication tool, and several different versions were provided for review. Members of the Student Support Team noted that the school leader has an expectation that outreach to families is three positive communications for every one constructive communication. Interviewed students and parents mentioned "passing the state test," as the school's most prevalent academic expectation. While the school is communicating with families around academic expectations, at this point the relationship between families and the school does not yet contribute to student needs being met and students achieving the academic success required to become college and career ready.
- The school occasionally considers translation needs for the whole school community when communicating with families about school and student issues. In an interview, the school leader noted that in previous years the ESL teacher would translate whenever possible, however she no longer works at the school. Interviewed teachers said that they use students to translate specific messages to families and that the refugee center serves as an available resource. Provided school-wide communications, such as newsletters and grade reports, were observed only in English. With the current practices and means of communication, all families are not being leveraged to maximize their support of their child's academic achievement and social emotional growth.
- The school is beginning to teach parents ways to support student learning and growth. In an interview, the school leader stated that both a school-wide and grade-level newsletter go home monthly and includes information on what students are learning in upcoming units, as well as tips for how parents can help students at home. The school leader shared that she vets each communication that goes home to families to ensure that it aligns with the school's mission and is in parent-friendly language. Interviewed teachers also spoke about the newsletters as a communication tool, and several different versions were provided for review. Both the school leader and interviewed teachers spoke about the written communication that went home to parents about the importance of homework completion that included strategies for families to use at home, yet the school leader's reflections indicated that those efforts did not yield the desired response. The school leader and interviewed teachers mentioned opportunities for parents to attend curriculum nights focused on literacy. While the school is in the process of creating more strategic partnerships with families most strategies only reach a small sub-group of parents and, as a result, are not building a strong home-school connection for students.
- The school shares data regarding student learning needs and successes, however it is unclear whether

it is in a way that families can truly access and understand. In an interview, the school leader stated that both a school-wide and grade-level newsletter go home monthly and includes information on what students are learning in upcoming units, as well as tips for how parents can help students at home. The school leader shared that she vets each communication that goes home to families to ensure that it aligns with the school's mission and is in parent-friendly language. She expressed that despite the school's consistent efforts to engage families, "There hasn't been much impact. We sent home a letter that lays out how to become a better reader. It was parent friendly and we sent it out two times. When I talk to parents, they know if their child is below/on/above grade level, but it's clear that they haven't read or understood the letter about what needs to happen to get to the next level." Interviewed teachers also spoke about the newsletters as a communication tool, and several different versions were provided for review. Teachers, in an interview, spoke of specific grade levels that send home reading logs or student academic reflections, and both require a parent's signature. The ways in which data is shared does not yet empower families to take action to support student learning, leading to higher student achievement.

Recommendation:

- Develop a plan that would include all community stakeholders to share the responsibility for student academic progress.

Remarks on How to Prioritize the Recommendations:

Though there is no single way to approach school improvement, in order to achieve optimal results efficiently, here is how the Outside Educational Experts would have thought about prioritizing the provided recommendations (note: you will have to put some thought into which of these recommendations can be implemented concurrently, and which may only be able to be addressed partially for the time being given your available time and capacity):

- Provide differentiated support to staff on writing and asking higher-order questions. This recommendation can be prioritized for the remainder of the school year. With current data on teachers' proficiency levels to write, ask and respond to higher-order questioning, create and provide differentiated support to sub-groups of teachers. Each sub-group should have specific criteria that they are working towards achieving and receive aligned feedback.
- Develop a plan that would include all community stakeholders to share the responsibility for student academic progress. The recommendation for Tenet 6 can be planned for during the duration of the school year, with the intent of a summer or fall roll out. Determine how parents can be involved and what opportunities the school can provide to facilitate this. Distribute a parent survey with questions around means of communication, their availability and interest to become involved in school activities, and assess their comfort level of helping their students with academics at home. Use this information to develop a family engagement plan that involves parents and guardians in their child's academic progress.
- Create a plan, inclusive of protocols and processes, to address all stakeholders' roles in meeting students social and emotional developmental health needs. Similar to the recommendation above, this focus on Tenet 5 can be planned for during the duration of the school year with the intent of a summer or fall roll out.

Determine how the school can involve families and the greater community in Friday assemblies, PBIS incentives or Round Table activities.

- Identify priorities within the SCEP and write aligned SMART goals. For the 2015-2016 school year, the school leader and leadership team should write SMART goals for priority areas. These goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound. Post and track progress towards these SMART goals in an area that is visible to all stakeholders.
- Based on grade-level benchmarks, set achievement targets for each instructional unit (classroom and school-wide) and create a plan to track progress throughout the unit. Using assessment data from the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years, set achievement targets that are based on grade-level benchmarks for all grades and subject areas. Use the existing DDI structure to track on-going progress and create a system for students to also track their progress towards this goal.