



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE) CONCEPTUAL FRAME REVIEW



2019-20 School Year

BEDS Code		
School Name	Grimes School	
School Address	58 S.10 th Avenue, Mount Vernon, NY 10550	
District Name	Mount Vernon School District	
School Leader	Erik Van Gunten	
Dates of Review	December 13, 2019	
School Accountability Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority School <input type="checkbox"/> Focus School	
Type of Review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conceptual Frame 4 Review (A district-led review of SOPs 2.3, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.5)	
Review Team	Name	Affiliation/Title
School Leader	Erik Van Gunten	Principal
District Representative	Dr. Waveline Bennett-Conroy	Assistant Superintendent
Additional Team Members	Dr. Karren Dunkley	Lead Reviewer
	Dr. Marguerita Circello	MLL Standards Administrator
	Dr. Joyce Corpas	Supervisor for Curriculum and Instruction, Special Education

School Information Sheet for Grimes School

School Configuration (2019-20 data)					
Grade Configuration	K-8	Total Enrollment	464	SIG Recipient	Yes
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2017-18)					
# Transitional Bilingual	0	# Dual Language	0	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	0
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2019-20)					
# Special Classes	5	# SETSS	2	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	0
Types and Number of Special Classes (2015-16)					
# Visual Arts	1	# Music	1	# Drama	0
# Foreign Language	1	# Dance	0	# CTE	0
School Composition (most recent data)					
% Title I Population	100	% Attendance Rate	93.9		
% Free Lunch	100	% Reduced Lunch	0		
% Limited English Proficient	6.9	% Students with Disabilities	22		
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0	% Black or African American	84.8		
% Hispanic or Latino	19.9	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2.2		
% White	12.9	% Multi-Racial	0		
Personnel (most recent data)					
Years Principal Assigned to School	3.5	# 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	15	Average Teacher Absences	3.5		
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2019-20 or most recent data available)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	33.6	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	26.3		
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	67.1	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)			
Student Performance for High Schools (2019-20 or most recent data available)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4			
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2019-20 or most recent data available)					
% of 1st year students who earned 10+ credits		% of 2nd year students who earned 10+ credits			
% of 3rd year students who earned 10+ credits		4 Year Graduation Rate			
6 Year Graduation Rate					
Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2019-20 or most recent data available)					
Reward		Recognition			
In Good Standing	X	Local Assistance Plan			
Focus District		Focus School Identified by a Focus District			
Priority School					

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (2019-20 or most recent data available)				
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 (2019-20 or most recent data available)				
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 (2019-20 or most recent data available)				
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				

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

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

1. Use of formative assessment
2. The use of effective learning targets
3. Student goal-setting
4. PBIS Tier II supports
5. Data-Driven Instruction

Information about the review

Dr. Karren Dunkley, led the review in collaboration with Dr. Waveline Bennett-Conroy, Assistant Superintendent.

- The review team visited a total of 24 classrooms during the review.
- Reviewers conducted one interview with the principal, teachers and students, respectively.
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including lesson plans, instructional artifacts such as the School Comprehensive Education Plan(SCEP), 2019-2020 Managing For Results (MFR) goals, Professional Learning Community (PLC) agendas, snapshots of schoolwide data, and student work.

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 Statement of Practice. Provide the letter rating in the OVERALL RATING row as the final overall tenet rating.

Statement of Practice		Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.			X	

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		Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
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	
3.5	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	

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	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
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	
4.5	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	

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

2

2.3 **The school is in Stage 2 for this Statement of Practice:** Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.

Debriefing Statement

The school leader stated that he tweaked the schedule every single day, emphasizing that the Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) program starts the day off in a meaningful way for the students and staff. The principal noted that he created a master schedule to ensure a holistic instructional program that included: 1) Common planning periods for professional learning communities, 2) Opportunities for enrichment such as Book Club, Art Club, African Dance and Physical Education, and 3) Forty-five minute periods to allow sufficient time for teachers and students to delve into more in-depth learning experiences. The school leader expressed that he had to create a master schedule that addressed the limited spacing capacity in the building, noting the addition of one eighth grade class for the 2019-2020 school year.

The school leader emphasized that the master schedule operated on a six-day cycle, which allowed for a PLC meeting to take place each day. The schedule also facilitates all teachers participating in a data period at least once per cycle. The school leader provided the review team with a flow chart that depicted the organization of the school's data teams. The flow chart illustrated the cross-connections and communication between the: 1) PBIS Data Teams –Tier I and Tier II, 2) Data-Driven Instruction Committee and SCEP Team, 3) Instructional Cabinet, 4) RTI Data Team, and 5) PLCs and Vertical Learning teams (VLTs). The principal stated that emerging trends or needs from the pertinent data sets drive the data cycle.

The school leader discussed the 2019-2020 school goals related to: 1) SCEP-Costa's Levels of Thinking, Formative Assessments (CFUs), Lesson Planning (Learning Goals), Culture/Behavior, 2) Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID)-Costa's Levels of Thinking, Student-Goal Setting, Organization, 3) Professional Development –Costa's Level of Thinking, Formative Assessment (CFUs), Lesson Planning (Learning Goals), and 4) Family and Community Engagement (FACE)-Goal Setting. The SCEP plan documented measurable outcomes and related actions to achieve these goals.

The school leader discussed several staffing challenges that the school confronted this year. Specifically, he noted the lack of personnel due to the reassignment of a Spanish teacher to home on December 12, 2019, as well as the fact that there is no technology teacher or reading resource teacher. The school leader highlighted the negative impact on students with disabilities (SWDs) in grades K5-8, noting that although these students are the most in need of services, the school is unable to provide services without a resource room teacher. The principal also shared that several weeks before the school year began, Grimes received two additional K-2 cohort classes. To supplement the eighth-grade academic program, the school opened up an eighth-grade lab daily.

The principal discussed the spike in crises due to the number of students in both general education and special education settings that require emotional and behavioral support. The DTSDE self-assessment noted that

although four safety agents were recommended, only two safety agents were assigned to the school this year. The school leader expressed that the demand for resources to address the social, emotional, and behavioral crises often prevented administrators from adequately fulfilling their instructional leadership roles. The school leader articulated his commitment to meeting the social, emotional, and academic needs of his staff and students. As a result, the principal noted that he was collaborating with Essential School Solutions to provide expert support to the learning community to address these areas.

The school leader expressed that he was especially proud of the school's implementation of the Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) program as Tier Two students received additional supports, and an increasing number of teachers now understood the referral and the disciplinary process. The principal shared that the school students in tier two had marked improvement in behavior. Additionally, the learning community welcomed a new social worker and new guidance counselor, who are both novices to Response to Intervention (RTI).

The school leader stated that the school extends learning time through the Academic Power Hour (APH) for seven classes of students totaling approximately eighty-eight students. The vast majority of students who attend APH are test-taking targeted students enrolled in grades three to six. Students receive enrichment in Math, English Language Arts (ELA), and Science, three days per week.

The principal shared that new school social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook provided a tool for the school to share important information with families. The school leader expressed that he received a 92% positive feedback rate from families.

During the interview, the school leader emphasized the school's formative assessments' goals, and the importance of teachers checking for understanding at multiple points during the lesson, citing that reviewers should observe a minimum of three checks during each lesson.

Commendations

- Visible learning goals in 100% of classrooms.
- Students in the classrooms and the interview were able to discuss their SMART goals authentically. Specifically, students knew their goals, the steps they needed to take to get to the next level, and had engaged in a conversation with their teacher about their SMART goals. SMART goals were visible in the majority of classrooms.
- A clear focus on college and career access and readiness as eighth-grade students take Living Environment and Algebra 1.
- Positive classroom environment, as evidenced by well-behaved scholars, and a culture of readiness to learn.
- Print rich learning environment as evidenced by anchor charts in classrooms illustrating learning protocols such as RACES, #CUBA, Accountable Talk, and Close Reading.
- A strong emphasis on procedural fluency in math classes. High frequency of both teachers and students using academic language in math. Students were able to explain terms such as compatible numbers, quotient, divisor, and dividend.

Recommendations

- In concert with the instructional cabinet, develop a coherent, research-based early literacy program that includes sound instructional planning regarding content and structure, the balanced literacy framework, learning centers, and differentiated stations.
- Implement a structured PLC strand for all teachers to improve their awareness of the academic needs of students in their classrooms who have disabilities. This should include an in-depth study of the students' individualized education plans (IEPs) and the opportunities to differentiate learning for these students.
- Develop a 90-day ELA action plan to include explicit writing models, practice, and connections during daily instruction aligned with the New York State (NYS) 2pt. and 4pt. rubrics. Refine the writing workshop class pilot to include targeted focus and professional learning on the mini lesson and conferring segments.
- Implement a PLC study on rigor. Specifically, determine three to seven schoolwide best practices and instructional strategies to embed rigor in daily instruction, i.e., through meaningful multistep cognitive learning tasks, authentic learning processes coupled with different instructional materials, and scholarly questioning (Costa's level two and three questions), dialogue and discussions.
- Align staffing and resources to address the chronic rate of absenteeism at Grimes School.

The results of these programs demonstrate that sufficient evidence exists to show that the school leader utilizes systems -- including a data-informed professional learning community structure and extended learning time -- to organize operations and allocate resources to improve student achievement.

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

2

3.2 The school is in Stage 2 for this Statement of Practice: The school leader ensures and supports the quality implementation of a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula. All curricula are appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), which teachers monitor and adapt to meet the needs of students.

Debriefing Statement

During the review, both the school leader and staff expressed that the school implements a rigorous and coherent curriculum appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). One teacher stated that the learning community ensures alignment with the district's curriculum maps, identifying standards and subject areas that the students tend to struggle with for increased attention during daily instruction. Another teacher emphasized that for the 2019-2020 school year, teachers determined grade-level focus for specific standards during APH.

The principal shared that the PLC continued its focus on student-driven instruction (SDI) from the 2018-2019 school year to ensure that the school adapts and monitors the curriculum to meet the needs of ALL students.

During the interview, teachers referenced the services that SWDs receive in the resource room, coupled with the collaboration between consultant and classroom teachers, to ensure that the learning community meets the academic needs of all learners. One teacher stated that she modified instructional materials to address skills by using texts at the appropriate reading level so that SWDs can master the skills required. Another teacher expressed that she worked collaboratively with the consultant teacher who pushes-in and in many cases used color codes to differentiate instructional levels and to scaffold instruction.

The teachers and school leader articulated that the school implements a schoolwide instructional plan to provide targeted interventions for: 1) students with disabilities (SWDs), 2) English language learners (ELLs), and 3) students in Tier Three scoring in the lowest achievement quartile. For example, the learning community implements select AVID strategies to support students with persistent learning gaps, coupled with the review of student data to examine critical patterns regarding the progress of all students. The school leader, literacy coach, and teachers use the data reviewed by the five vertical data teams to inform professional learning during PLCs and to plan collaboratively. The trends shared during these data meetings also drive Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and schoolwide learning goals.

Significantly, the teachers discussed how the PLC: 1) Modifies instruction for students with disabilities through pull-out services, 2) Modifies instruction for general education students, 3) Compares multiple data sources to group students during ELA and Math instruction and, 4) Scaffolds learning in daily lessons to provide students with instructional support to access concepts and content.

One teacher noted that in her general education classroom, she differentiated for students' learning needs by using sentence frames, academic vocabulary, and varying small group instruction based on the data. Another teacher shared that she provided her students with multiple opportunities to express their ideas orally with peers before writing. This teacher also emphasized the benefit of having students engage in peer editing before producing a final work product.

Teachers discussed several examples of monitoring and adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of multilingual language learners (MLLs). One teacher mentioned that she: 1) Tries as much as possible to encourage students to solve problems in English before providing the assessment in the student's home language, 2) Provides students with an English and Spanish glossary that they keep as a resource throughout the year, and 3) Uses the website learning.com as an instructional tool because it translates all lessons into Spanish.

During the review, the teachers stated that they expose students to a rigorous curriculum through the modification of the Journeys curriculum in ELA. Teachers shared that unpacking the district's curriculum maps and standards provided them with the instructional resources to plan cogent lessons. Teachers referenced the following: 1) Teachers implement select AVID inquiry and collaboration strategies such as #CUBA, 2) Students use close reading strategies, and 3) Students build academic vocabulary across content areas. Both teachers

and the principal also mentioned: 1) Increasing students' practice with NYS-released test questions, including multiple-choice and open-ended responses, and 2) Incorporating higher-order-thinking questions based on Costa's levels of thinking.

One teacher shared that he supported the quality implementation of a rigorous curriculum by allowing students wait time to think about the question and circling back to hit higher level thinking topics. Another teacher expressed that she had students engage in learning activities that entailed them having to choose a side and formally defend a position.

Two teachers discussed how they use various pieces of data to organize students in small groups for Response to Intervention (RTI). Specifically, they utilize the results of iReady assessments to tier learning tasks. The iReady assessment designates students as AOI (i.e., Accelerated, On track, or In need of intervention). The self-assessment highlighted that the one-to-one data sessions with the literacy coach and the consultants focused on targeted interventions to augment learning for tier two students.

Additionally, the principal shared the 2019-2020 leadership directory, which reflected the school's implementation of a distributive leadership model. Concretely, several committees provide an opportunity for teachers and staff to engage in collaborative leadership.

Areas for Improvement

Reviewers observed the implementation of lessons aligned to the CCLS and NYS standards in the majority of the 24 classrooms they visited during this school review. However, the experiences did not elicit deeper thinking or require students to engage in activities that foster critical, creative or collaborative thinking. Importantly, math lessons tended to incorporate more academic language and critical thinking learning tasks than ELA lessons. Reviewers observed posted learning goals in 100% of classrooms. However, the majority of lessons occurred primarily in whole group.

Overall, teachers used lesson plans that appeared consistently aligned to the learning goals but did not use a variety of complex materials that demonstrated a progression of sequenced or scaffolded skills. Based on the reviewers' walkthrough summary notes, the majority of lessons were teacher-centered, with teachers dominating most of the critical thinking and lifting during the learning experience. At times, when teachers asked questions, due to minimal student discussion and peer-to-peer interaction, students were not able to elevate or extend learning. To provide an example, in one sixth grade ELA lesson, the teacher asked students to respond to the prompt 'what are two reasons that Justin has given to support his claim?' Although, the teacher provided an opportunity for students to answer the question, during the shareout, students did not build on the responses of their peers and were not asked to offer a counterclaim to the reasons shared by their peers. Furthermore, in one instance where a student did not identify all of the reasons why Justin believed that zoos should not be closed, instead of asking another student to discuss any additional reasons, the teacher

stated one of the other reasons, i.e., that some families could not travel to Africa.

Additionally, many lessons did not have a precise closure or lesson summary. In the majority of classes, observers did not see visible differentiation taking place, i.e., evidence of small group instruction, a variety of text, or instructional materials.

Summarily, the majority of lessons observed lacked rigor. This lack of rigor coupled with the use of limited student-engagement practices, make it challenging to lead students towards a standard expectation of college and career readiness. As a result, the lack of fidelity towards the implementation of rigorous lessons makes it difficult to conclude that all students receive access to a rigorous curriculum, which fosters a common expectation of college and career readiness.

Next Steps if Developing or Ineffective

- Implement a PLC learning cycle that focuses on promoting rigor (critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, oral and written communication, analyzing information, and encouraging creativity and imagination) in daily instruction coupled with high-quality student engagement in learning. This PLC rigor study and learning cycle will propel teachers towards more rigorous and meaningful lesson planning. It appears that teachers are utilizing the district curricular units but are failing to plan lessons that result in acceptable pacing and progression that are rigorous. The instructional cabinet should follow up by conducting individual and team teacher observations and provide frequent feedback that support and ensure teacher growth in the areas above, using Danielson's rubric, and select rigor/student engagement protocols as the criteria.
- Compel quality student engagement in discussions by asking higher-order-thinking (HOT) questions earlier in the lesson so that students have the opportunity to elevate and extend learning through peer-to-peer discourse.
- Replicate the PLC's model of formative assessments currently in use as a strategy for implementing the rigor/student engagement focus strand.

3.3 **The school is in Stage 2 for this Statement of Practice:** Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans they use include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.

Debriefing Statement

The school leader and teachers stated that they develop unit and lesson plans that include the use of data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols. However, the delivery of the lessons revealed that lessons do not fully incorporate data-driven instructional protocols that teachers monitor to address student achievement needs. Reviewers visited a total of 24 classrooms.

The principal and staff stated that they apply a multi-faceted approach to implementing data-driven protocols, such as: 1) Collaborating with the coaches to delve deeper into the different data sets to target the specific needs of students, 2) Examining beginning of year (BOY) iReady online reading comprehension and math data to specify supports and student groupings; 3) Analyzing NYS scores weekly tests, written student work, performance on schoolwide protocols such as RACES for responding to text, and 4) Reviewing interim and summative data during PLC and data team meetings (i.e., performance on teacher-made assessments, exit tickets AVID assessments). One teacher mentioned that the Envisions Math 2.0 curriculum embeds tiered supports in the lesson to target instruction for students designated at AOI.

The learning community also discussed how the vertical data teams contribute to and sustain a culture of teachers using data to: 1) Design lessons and units of study, and 2) Target interventions during RTI. The school leader and teachers also discussed how they cross-fertilized iReady and NYS data to determine how best to move 60% of students within ten points of reaching the next proficiency level. The school leader shared that the majority of teachers uploaded lesson plans onto the Schoology platform, which provided an opportunity to provide interactive feedback to teachers.

The teachers discussed how they analyzed student data during grade-level common planning time and weekly PLC meetings. Based on the data analysis, the learning community then determines a repertoire of strategies to increase achievement across the different tiers of learners. Several teachers discussed how they utilize data to set measurable student goals in English and math. Both the teachers and the school leader shared that the learning community conferences with all students regarding their academic goals and the next steps. During the review, the majority of students were able to discuss their specific learning goals in ELA and math, explaining the steps required to get them to the next level of achievement.

Overall, the school leader shared that the Managing For Results [MFR] process was invaluable in assisting the teachers and the leadership team in establishing global school goals and individual teacher goals. The principal also expressed that the literacy coach stepped into the role of leading the data meetings, which provided additional support to teachers to plan lessons collaboratively. Interestingly, the principal articulated the goal of looping teachers with the current cohort of sixth-grade students. The principal also mentioned that teachers discussed the data sets in vertical team meetings. The pre-DTSDE self-assessment document highlighted that teachers "utilize rubrics to provide targeted feedback to students and "consult with administration, data consultant, and literacy coach on DDI protocols and research-based strategies."

Areas for Improvement

The delivery of observed lessons demonstrates that during daily instruction, student groupings do not always reflect the use of data-driven instructional protocols to address student achievement needs. For instance, one reviewer reported that in the nine classes they observed, no evidence existed to show the specific ways in which teachers would differentiate instruction for students.

Despite the majority of teachers having lesson plans, reviewers noted that it was not apparent how teachers utilized data to organize student groupings or to address students' academic needs during daily instruction. Only one reviewer reported observing a guided small instructional group. Furthermore, one review team documented that of the nine classes they visited, only one room had a visible data wall. Additionally, reviewers observed very little evidence of standards-based student work on display.

Based on the student interviews coupled with a review of student work and artifacts, the reviewers concluded that the learning community inconsistently uses rubrics to focus students' learning and to provide students with high impact feedback. To give an example, only a few students in the interviews were able to discuss how their teachers utilized rubrics, particularly the NYS assessment rubrics, as an instructional tool to anchor feedback regarding what the final learning products should resemble. For example, one fourth grader stated that her teacher "reminds the class to do better on the NYS test and not to lose points," but that the teacher did not have a chance to give them the 2 pt. and 4 pt. rubrics as of yet. One eighth grade student was familiar with the NYS extended response 4 pt. rubric. She shared that her teacher did provide the rubric but noted that the teacher did not regularly use the rubric to discuss the grade that students received or to give feedback about the next steps to improve the piece of work.

One teacher mentioned that she used rubrics for students to preview a piece of writing "to judge where they fall."

Recommendations

- Teachers should update data binders and display data walls aligned with coherent schoolwide data protocols. Ensure that data walls are visible in the classrooms so that students can track their individual progress as well as the overall progress of the class.
- Develop common expectations for electronic and physical data binders.
- Provide job-embedded professional learning for the PLC that highlights promising practices to organize data-informed small group instruction and tiered learning activities and supports. Grade level teams should identify the critical practices that they will use to guide lesson planning and instruction for student groupings.

3.5 **The school is in Stage 2 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.

Debriefing Statement

Both the teachers and school leader emphasized that the learning community continued its focus on formative assessments as a major SCEP and school goal for the 2019-2020 school year. During the interview, the school leader shared that reviewers should observe teachers checking for understanding at least three times during each lesson. One teacher mentioned that she utilized rubrics to facilitate student ownership of learning and to let students know the expectations for standards mastery.

The pre-DTSDE review document described how the PLC analyzes BOY and MOY data and student work to assess effectiveness of instructional strategies. The learning community uses various data to inform schoolwide learning goals and to establish grade-level and student-specific SMART goals. One teacher mentioned how the learning community tracks students' iReady data to implement small group, and tiered supports during RTI periods. Reviewers did not see clear evidence of data binders to monitor students' progress.

The PLC agendas focused on formative and summative assessments for strategic short- and long-range curriculum planning includes: 1) AVID WICOR (Writing to learn, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, Reading to Learn, College and Career Readiness) strategies, and 2) School Goal: Writing Learning Targets. Reviewers also perused resources provided to teachers such as, 1)The 'Secret Sauce' of Formative Assessment, 2)NCTE Position Statement, 3)Formative Assessment That Truly Informs Instruction, 4)EL Core Practice 29, Checking for Understanding in Daily Instruction, and 5)Incorporating Checking for Understanding Techniques in Daily Lessons.

The PLC shared how they use multiple types of formative and summative assessments to drive short- and long-range curriculum planning. Examples of these assessments include: 1) Beginning-of-year and middle-of-year data to roster students for academic power hour and tiered interventions during RTI, 2) The use of exit tickets to see who is on target to inform re-teaching, 3) Accuracy of responses to checks for understanding during class time (reviewers observed teachers using thumbs up/thumbs down, and individual whiteboards, questioning, 4) Designing lesson plans that include specific formative assessments to address learning gaps or deficiencies. The DTSDE self-assessment documented that a review of lesson plans for the week of December 19, 2019, revealed that 73% of lessons, i.e., 22 out of 30 included specific formative assessments.

Teachers also cited the use of data from summative assessments such as the NYS exams,, iReady, and DIBELS to modify lessons, plan for targeted instruction and supplement learning (APH, RTI, AIS). The learning community also emphasized that they benefited from the formative professional learning workshops held during PLC and curriculum meetings. The self-assessment also noted that the learning community established TAPPLE (Teach First, Ask a Question, Pair-Share, Pick a Non-Volunteer, Listen, Effective Feedback) as a schoolwide norm.

Areas for Improvement

Reviewers noted that visible evidence of formative assessments (checking for understanding) was observable in the lessons across the school. Specifically, reviewers observed teachers asking questions, walking around the classroom, using AVID WICOR strategies, including thumbs up and thumbs down, as the predominant mode to check for understanding. The review team noted that teachers consistently asked questions during the lesson. Still, most of the time, questions tended not to elicit higher-order thinking, i.e., Costa's level-two and -three questions.

During the review of the students' portfolios, reviewers observed samples of CCLS-aligned work along with the grade received for the particular assignment. In several instances, teachers wrote 'Glows and grows' on student work. However, in many examples, students' work only showed circled answers checked as wrong or right. In two instances, despite receiving a graded extended response aligned with the NYS 4pt. rubric, two students struggled to articulate the actionable feedback they received from their teacher to improve the piece of work. Additionally, students struggled to articulate how they reflected on their learning and adjusted their habits of mind to address explicit teacher feedback. Overall, the review team concluded that the majority of portfolios had limited authentic writing responses.

Although students were unable to reflect on learning for particular work products, they shared that what they were generally learning would help them to: 1) Get prepared to go the next level, 2) Move them towards college and career, 3) Apply for and get a job, 4) Make money to help their families, and 5) Become a teacher or an engineer.

Notable, during the interview, several students did share that their teachers conferenced with them about their grades, explicitly explaining the reason for the grade and the next steps to improve the piece of work. For example, a student stated that, "the teacher will send links on websites to help them select what works best for them."

The minimal opportunities for student reflection coupled with the lack of uniformity regarding the implementation of rubrics as an instructional tool make it challenging to accurately assess daily teaching and learning outcomes to ensure that the school adequately prepares students to meet 21st-century college and career readiness standards.

Recommendations

- Build spaces for student reflection during daily lessons and conferences. Implement a student self-reflection protocol evenly across the PLC. Explicitly, teachers should provide students with an opportunity to discuss their understanding of the feedback, i.e., what is expected to improve academic achievement.
- Implement the use of rubrics more evenly across the PLC and have students interact with rubrics at the beginning of the unit to set expectations for work products. Use the rubric as a self-assessment tool for students during conferencing and as an end-of-unity activity for students to track and own their learning. Explicitly, teachers should provide detailed assignment rubrics, standard NYS rubrics and provide feedback aligned to these rubrics so that students have a clearer understanding of shared expectations.

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Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions: Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn, so that all students and pertinent subgroups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking, and achievement.	Tenet Rating	2
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4.2 **The school is in Stage 2 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.

Debriefing Statement

The learning community discussed how they organize annual, unit, and daily lesson plans to address student goals and needs. The teachers also emphasized that implementing the district’s curriculum materials such as Journeys and Collections in ELA, and Envisions in Math, helps teachers adapt and align lesson plans that address the various learning needs of all students.

Teachers cited the following instructional practices to ensure high student engagement: 1) A focus on procedural and conceptual skills in math (students must justify multiple choice answers and write down why the wrong answers are wrong), 2) Compelling students’ use of Costas Levels of Thinking (level two and level 3 questions) so that they can apply what they are learning, and ask questions in a way that demonstrates critical thinking, 3) Use of manipulatives and tools, including cubes, journals, and whiteboards to show learning in first grade, 4) Envisions-aligning student interventions based on three quick check problems, teacher group students as AIO (the intervention group meets with the teacher, the on-track group does additional practice questions, the accelerated group completes higher-level games provided by Envisions). This teacher also shared that students rotate as needed within groups based on the data to clarify misconceptions.

Both the school leader and teachers expounded on how the learning community established student SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound) goals across grades K2-8. The self-assessment reflection stated the following theory of action regarding the goal setting: *“If students understand their current performance levels and use that knowledge to set individual goals, and if they create action plans in order to reach the goals, then the students will develop a better awareness of their strengths and areas of need and will become more motivated to achieve at higher rates.”* During the review, 100% of students interviewed could discuss their SMART goals and the next steps required for them to get to the next achievement level.

Teachers also described how PLCs, grade-level common planning time, and curriculum meetings fostered

consistent collaboration among staff regarding practices aligned with schoolwide and PLC goals. Teachers shared that they valued the collegial inquiry process of creating PLC goals. The vertical data team also developed schoolwide goals informed by data and the needs assessment.

Areas for Improvement

The strong pedagogical emphasis on formative assessments and conceptual and procedural fluency in math was visible in many of the observed classrooms. However, during the twenty-four class visits, the review team did not observe differentiated instructional groups meeting the needs of varying levels of learners. As noted in tenet 3.2, the reviewers reported that the majority of instructional time was teacher-centered, with teachers dominating classroom talk.

The reviewer noted that teachers follow the district's pacing calendar and curricular guides to create lessons. However, it does not appear that teachers utilize the iReady and DIBELS data to modify lessons and target instruction. In all but one class, the review team did not observe any small group instruction. Furthermore, all students read the same-level text across all grades.

Despite evidence of formative assessments and standards-aligned lessons, reviewers did not see explicit use of data-informed groupings that included the use of diverse instructional resources and strategies to meet the needs of varying levels of learners.

Recommendations

- Differentiate instructional resources, instructional processes, and learning tasks for the three tiers of learners. Align enrichment for your on-track, intermediate, and accelerated learners inside the classroom during daily instruction and RTI and outside the classroom during academic power hour.

English Language Arts

- Teachers should plan lessons for different levels of students in their classroom, utilize leveled libraries for guided reading and reading groups, utilize the culturally responsive library to provide extended opportunities, and develop reading strategy groups during the RTI and reading block.

4.3 **The school is in Stage 2 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.

Debriefing Statement

The school leader and teachers described how the learning community implemented specific structures and strategies to provide instruction that is: 1) coherent, 2) appropriately aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLC), and 3) leads to multiple points of access for all students. For example, teachers referenced

the use of formative and summative data points such as: 1) DIBELS, 2) iReady, 3) Waterford, and 4) common interim assessments to progress monitor how best to meet students' strengths and needs. The PLC also shared that the literacy coach and instructional cabinet provide ongoing professional learning for close reading to improve students' reading comprehension and decoding skills.

Regarding CCLS-based instruction, the PLC implements AVID-related WICOR instructional strategies, such as: 1) Philosophical chairs, 2) Four corners, 3) Teacher wait time and calling on non-volunteers and volunteers, 4) Embedding opportunities for students to write, and 5) Peer edits to build students' proficiency in mastering standards and skills.

One teacher highlighted that the PLC ensured multiple points of access for students by making connections between instructional strategies to create continuity from grade to grade.

To ensure rigorous instruction, teachers explained that the PLC pushes students' critical thinking skills by challenging them to create higher-order levels two and three. One teacher expressed that she chooses multiple choice questions strategically to incorporate a myriad of skills.

The principal stated that the learning community implements specially designed instruction (SDI) and explicit direct instruction (EDI) to meet individual students' learning needs.

One teacher discussed how she utilizes Envisions Math 2.0 to provide remediation and acceleration for on-track, intermediate and advanced students. Both the teachers and school leader assert that by developing standards-aligned lesson plans coupled with AVID-based formative assessments and instructional practices, the learning community ensures multiple points of access for students.

Areas for Improvement

The PLC provided clear descriptions of how teachers ensured multiple points of access for students. However, the review team reported limited evidence of differentiation in the majority of classrooms. In the early learning classrooms, teachers did not implement a coherent, balanced literacy framework that was visible and consistent to observers.

As discussed in tenets 3.2 and 3.3, the review team reported that although some students had written feedback, the feedback was minimal, with minor connections to the grading procedure and rubrics in use.

However, the majority of students, whom reviewers interviewed, were capable and experienced in explaining their academic goals and the next steps required to improve learning outcomes.

Summarily, the review team indicated that teachers mainly taught lessons that reflected minimal differentiation. Daily instruction that does not include multiple opportunities for differentiation or engage students in formative assessment-aligned feedback limits student ownership and ability to participate in

intellectual discovery and rigorous thinking.

Recommendations

- Implement an early literacy focus to establish uniform instructional expectations for grades K-2 and determine the companion early childhood resources and instructional practices.
- Provide multiple points of access for all students by using small groups to target instruction and use data to inform student groupings.

4.5 **The school is in Stage 2 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).

Debriefing Statement

The self-assessment described the variety of formative and summative data sources used by the PLC to inform planning and foster student participation in their learning. Specifically, the PLC uses a myriad of data sets to progress monitor students, including: 1) DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) Data to assess early grade readiness, 2) iReady, 3) BOY, MOY, and EOY assessments and, 3) common interim assessments.

The self-assessment reflection stated that students maintain assessment folders containing assessments, teacher feedback, and student reflections. Both the principal and teachers expressed that they frequently discuss data to inform RTI planning for small groups (Tier II, Tier II, Tier III) to address students' academic, emotional, and social needs.

The principal and teachers discussed how they use assessment data to set SMART goals in both ELA and math. The pre-DTSDE review documented that teachers conference with students to provide targeted rubric-aligned feedback to students regarding academic progress.

Areas for Improvement

During the review samples of work in students' portfolios included SMART goals, AVID binders, and sample work in Science, ELA, and Mathematics. The portfolios included authentic work as well as Xeroxed worksheets. As noted, student feedback tended to include a combination of numerical scoring and written comments. In some cases, students received rubric-based feedback.

One sixth grade student did share that he "uses the feedback from his teachers to improve his grade and conferences with him on the side." This student also shared, "that the teacher speaks with other students to let them know how to find evidence from the text, i.e. to go back in the text to find evidence."

As previously discussed, the review team observed “teacher-centered” and “whole class” instruction – in the majority of classes. The PLC can leverage math classrooms that exemplify “student-centered” learning with differentiated activities to serve as a model to build capacity for effective teaching across the learning community.

Taken together, the uneven implementation of teachers providing actionable, high impact, rubrics-aligned feedback to students, coupled with the lack of consistent differentiation, diminishes the number of opportunities available to promote student ownership of and participation in their learning.

Recommendations

- Implement clear rubric-aligned feedback protocols. Structure instructional walkthroughs focused on teachers providing students with high impact, actionable feedback aligned with the formative assessment learning strand. Use model math classrooms as models and learning labs for the PLC.
- Provide the PLC with written feedback exemplars that they can apply to written student work and during daily instruction.
- Improve the visibility of teachers using data to inform student groupings and in-class differentiation for different tiers of learners.

Report Quality Assurance from the District

I certify that I have led this review on behalf of the district and assert that this District-led Review aligns with NYSED expectations and protocols.

Name	Karren Dunkley, Ed.D.
Title	Lead Reviewer
District Lead Credential status (choose one)	<p>X Issued by NYSED on _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pending -- The requirements have been fulfilled, but I have yet to receive word from NYSED</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pending -- I have not yet fulfilled the requirements, but plan on doing so by the June 30, 2019.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> N/A This is the only School Review with District Oversight and District-led review I am responsible for.</p>