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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE) CONCEPTUAL FRAME 4 REVIEW

2018-19 School Year

BEDS Code	
School Name	Benjamin Turner Middle School
School Address	623 S. 4th Avenue, Mount Vernon, New York, 10550
District Name	Mount Vernon School District
School Leader	**Mr. Rodney A. McBride**
Dates of Review	December 12, 2018
School Accountability Status	☐Priority School ☐Focus School
Type of Review	☒ 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	Rodney A. McBride	Principal
District Representative	Dr. Waveline Bennett-Conroy	Assistant Superintendent
Additional Team Members	Dr. K. Dunkley	Lead Reviewer
	Lori Bennett	Mentor Reviewer
	Roxieann Johnson	Math Specialist
	Michael Selkis	Special Education Specialist
	Lana Flemming-Thomas	English Language Arts Specialist

School Information Sheet for Mount Vernon High School

School Configuration *(**2018-19 data**)*					
Grade Configuration	6-8	**Total Enrollment**	361	**SIG Recipient**	
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes *(**2018-19**)*					
# Transitional Bilingual		**# Dual Language**		**# Self-Contained English as a Second Language**	
Types and Number of Special Education Classes *(**2018-19**)*					
# Special Classes		**# SETSS**		**# Integrated Collaborative Teaching**	
Types and Number of Special Classes *(**2018-19**)*					
# Visual Arts		**# Music**		**# Drama**	
# Foreign Language		**# Dance**		**# CTE**	

School Composition *(**most recent data**)*			
% Title I Population	73.1	**% Attendance Rate**	93.77
% Free Lunch	70.4	**% Reduced Lunch**	2.8
% Limited English Proficient	7.5	**% Students with Disabilities**	34.3
Racial/Ethnic Origin *(**most recent data**)*			
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0	**% Black or African American**	84.8
% Hispanic or Latino	15.2	**% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander**	.06
% White	14.7	**% Multi-Racial**	
Personnel *(**most recent data**)*			
Years Principal Assigned to School	.5	**# of Assistant Principals**	2
# of Deans	0	**# of Counselors/Social Workers**	
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0	**% Teaching Out of Certification**	
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	10	**Average Teacher Absences**	
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools *(**2017-18 or most recent data available**)*			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	25.16	**Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4**	8.95
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)		**Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)**	49.70
Student Performance for High Schools *(**2017-18 or most recent data available**)*			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		**Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4**	
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only *(**2017-18 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 *(**2017-18 or most recent data available**)*			
Reward		**Recognition**	
In Good Standing		**Local Assistance Plan**	
Focus District		**Focus School Identified by a Focus District**	
Priority School			

Accountability Status – Elementary and Middle Schools

Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA *(**2017-18 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 *(**2017-18 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 *(**2017-18 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.):

1.Vocabulary
2. Questioning and Discussion (HOT)
3. Writing Across the Curriculum

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 40 classrooms during the review.
- Reviewers conducted interviews with the principal.
- Reviewers conducted focus groups with the students and the teachers.
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including lesson plans, instructional artifacts such as worksheets, rubrics, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, 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			X	

	Learning Standards (CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.				
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 shared that with a student body of three hundred and sixty students, staffing levels now facilitated teachers having full teaching caseloads. The school leader emphasized that he tried to be as efficient as possible at placing staff in areas which are best aligned to their expertise -- such as assigning teachers who may be most effective at teaching remediation to English Language Arts classes. The school leader articulated his commitment to fiscal prudence by ensuring that teachers who previously had two preps were now scheduled to support daily instruction by providing pull-out services to students. Additionally, the school leader highlighted the fact that certified individuals filled all staff positions. He anticipated a music vacancy opening in January 2019.

The principal also noted the implementation of student cohorts to best meet the needs of all students. Specifically, the scheduling of students in cohorts provided an opportunity for teachers to collaborate on instructional strategies that best support teaching and learning for each cohort. The school leader reported that attending a Datawise training stimulated his renewed commitment to the learning community's focus on data. Concretely, the school leader and teachers discussed that professional learning community (PLC) meetings occurred weekly as a way of fostering teacher collaboration to increase student achievement. The principal also emphasized that the use of data undergirded the learning community's practice of student-centered learning.

The school leader discussed specific structures in place to advance academic achievement. For example, the principal described specific structures, such as: 1) academic intervention support (AIS) classes to provide students with additional support in Math and Reading, 2) Academic Power Hour (APH), which extends learning time for approximately eighty-eight students identified as eight to nine points away from moving to the next level, and, 3) a Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) program to help students and staff to build a positive learning environment.

The school leader emphasized that in the 2018-2019 school year, Benjamin Turner Middle School (BTMS) had thirty-four percent of its students designated as needing special education services. This high percentage of the student population with special needs has resulted in the daily implementation of a continuum of services such as afterschool, AIS, push in, and pull out to support student learning. Specifically, based on the iReady Math and Reading data, the number of students in Math AIS classes increased from seventy-five to one hundred students, out of a total student population of three hundred and sixty-one students. Importantly, students can transition out of AIS classes once they reach a certain achievement level. The school leader also stated that he

included a family engagement component to connect families to the instructional core by inviting students and parents/guardian to participate in a learning conversation that addressed curriculum, and students' performance on the state assessment in reading, math, and science.

The school leader discussed how weekly school leadership team (SLT) meetings inform instructional school achievement practices. The school leader emphasized that the learning community's unwavering focus on increasing student performance adds a component of professional development (PD) to every meeting, including the monthly curriculum meeting and faculty meeting.

The school leader stated that for the 2018-2019 school year, the learning community will focus on: 1) higher-order-thinking questions grounded in Costa's level of questions, 2) writing Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) level three questions for essential questions, 3) Cornell note taking, 4) academic versus content-specific vocabulary, and 5) writing across the curriculum. The principal also noted that reviewers should observe the use of: 1) pre-recorded notes in classes that provide intensive support to students, 2) Danielson Framework for Teaching and Marzano's six steps for an effective lesson, 3) students citing evidence, 4) Frayer model, 5) less teacher talk embedded in the gradual release model (I Do, We Do, You Do), and 6) teachers posting agendas.

The school leader shared that his vision was for BTMS to serve as the primary feeder school for the district's new STEAM Academy high school. Significantly, the school leader advances high school and college/career readiness through a partnership with Discovery Education and NASA that provides STEM support for a cohort of nine teachers.

During the review, reviewers noted several instances where students used profanity in the hallways and classrooms, despite the visibility and audibility of adults. Reviewers addressed students in some of these instances, but the use of profanity was so frequent that it cast a shadow on students' interactions with each other and negatively interfered with the learning environment in classrooms in particular -- and in the school in general.

Strengths

- Students demonstrate ownership of learning as evidenced by the implementation of the "reflection on assessment" instrument used primarily in English classes
- The majority of teachers had lesson plans (varied in scope and depth but all teachers had plans)
- Physical environment is enhanced by bright lights, building cleanliness, and murals on the walls
- Instructional materials are readily available in classrooms
- The majority of Math classes use Cornell Notes

Pockets of Teaching Excellence

- Science: Instruction employs multiple ways to check for understanding, visible in both classwork and homework; teacher used the students themselves as manipulatives; teachers had students write one thing they learned; teacher facilitated peer-to-peer learning by having students add one sentence onto

one item written by their classmate.

- Math: Instructors used exit slips as a data point to inform teaching the next day; teachers used Pearson Realize to organize groups for remediated, accelerated and on-track instruction
- Self-contained special education classes: Groups displayed positive student/adult interaction
- Social Studies: Reviewers observed tiered learning activities at 3 learning stations—#CUBA, Cornell Notes, Fortunately/Unfortunately
- Special Education: Classes have the foundational elements that teachers can build upon
- Explicit use of academic language in special education classes

Recommendations

Culture/Climate: Rebuild a positive school culture

- Leverage staff training/expertise to implement the district's character education program.
- Implement in three distinct phases all aspects of the positive behavior intervention support program (PBIS). Ensure the collaboration of the PLC by having all staff participate in visioning around clear expectations of school culture.
- Connect the re-energized focus on school culture to learning walks by having the school leadership team examine the progress of the learning community regarding PBIS and character education during walkthroughs.

Based on the results of these programs, ample evidence exists to show that the school leader utilizes systems, including expanded learning time, to organize operations and appropriate resources to advance 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 school review, both the school staff and principal delineated how the school implements a rigorous

and coherent curriculum -- appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) -- which instructors monitor and adapt to meet the needs of students. Specifically, to increase student achievement, the learning community implements: 1) a weekly PLC that provides teachers with time to collaborate on student-centered instructional practices, 2) monthly faculty and curriculum meetings focused on advancing teachers' effectiveness in Danielson's Framework for Teaching (FFT), 3) the use of the gradual release model in all classrooms, 4) the triangulation of data from learning walks, formal and informal observations, and instructional rounds to inform professional development focus, and 5) an ongoing professional learning strand to aid teachers' efficacy in unpacking the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and instructional objectives to create appropriate assessments.

The school leader shared that the entire school leadership team (SLT) follows a schedule to sit in on PLC teams to give the PLCs feedback. The SLT augments feedback to PLCs by meeting weekly on A days to discuss promising practices to accelerate learning outcomes. Additionally, the school leader stated that the literacy and math coaches provide one-to-one support to teachers, once per week and twice per week, respectively.

During the review, the teachers and the school leader elucidated the implementation of the gradual release model to deliver a rigorous curriculum. One teacher mentioned that she attempted to reduce teacher talk and deepen student thinking by having students make up their own questions using Costa's levels of questioning from AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination). The teacher emphasized that she learned this particular strategy from an in-district PD and found it helpful to develop tiers of questions based on "where students are or to assess where students were" in terms of content mastery for each lesson.

Teachers also described how they utilize several strategies to ensure that students' access the content, such as 1) WICOR (AVID-writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and, reading), and, 2) Students working together as they engage in accountable talk (i.e., letting students share when and why they have questions).

The learning community described how teachers' lesson planning addresses the instructional shifts to prepare students for high school and the New York State Assessments. The teachers articulated that they rely heavily on the curriculum and pacing guides provided by the district. One teacher and the school leader cited the use of ST Math (Spatial-Temporal) to ensure that teachers master the instructional shifts in Math. The teacher emphasized that since ST Math limited word usage, the program enabled students to focus on the math as a symbolic language and "to understand math concepts more." Furthermore, ST Math provided an opportunity to have "students start on objectives on grade level." The school leader also pointed out that having two teachers trained in Wilson reading, a reading specialist, and special education teachers who completed summer training in Orton Gillingham, demonstrates the school's commitment to having 96% of students performing at or above grade level on the NYS reading assessment.

Importantly, the school leader and teachers discussed instructional practices that are monitored and adapted to ensure that all students have access to the core. Specifically, to build a culture of learning, the PLC utilizes: 1)

scaffolding as a core instructional strategy to enable students to develop common language across content, 2) higher-order-thinking (HOT) questions, 3) exit tickets, 4) an opportunity for students to revise classwork based on teacher feedback, and 5) student groupings. Teachers stated that they differentiated the learning tasks for each group of learners. For example, in English classes, students may receive varying levels of complex texts, while other students may receive built-in extensions into class readings.

Notably, the learning community described how they set up learning stations in classrooms to group students for teaching and re-teaching based on assessment data. One teacher mentioned that she organizes her class into three learning stations: "one re-teaching group, one on-grade-level group that uses computers to gain more practice with the lesson, and one above-lesson group to which she assigns an enrichment activity." Additionally, teachers described how they use data to target instruction and academic support for different tiers of learners. For example, teachers shared that they use data from iReady to determine groups of students for AIS classes. One teacher stated that during AIS she was able to target students at their level "as well as to target groups of students who share a similar need."

Several teachers mentioned that they utilized the students' IEPs to determine the accommodations and modifications needed to ensure that students achieve learning goals. Teachers stated that they collaborated with the members of their cohort teaching team to determine the most effective strategies for different subgroups of students.

The learning community articulated that they analyze formative and summative data to inform the instructional foci of the school and to bolster academic supports. Interestingly, the school's goal is to treat each student as if they have an individual learning plan to ensure that all students access the CCLS.

Concretely, teachers discussed the various ways in which they differentiated instruction for students by using: 1) CCLS-aligned curricula, 2) PLC time to engage in vertical- and horizontal-team lesson planning, 3) designation of students in the afterschool programs STRONG and APH to give direct support, and 4) encouraging English language learners (ELLs) to think of answers to questions in their native language first.

One teacher noted that the sixth-grade team provided extra help to students during the teachers' lunch periods. During the student interviews, one student mentioned that they were able to go to "their Science teacher during lunch to get tutoring for topics" she did not understand.

Areas of Improvement

Although the learning community cited school-wide instructional frameworks such as gradual release and strategies such as higher-order-thinking questions, reviewers reported the absence of these strategies or an uneven pattern of these instructional frameworks in use. For example, in the majority of the forty lessons that the team observed, reviewers did not see visible evidence of lesson progression from the I Do-modeling, and We Do- guided practice to the You Do-independent practice. Based on the reviewers' walkthrough notes, the majority of lessons were primarily teacher-centered with minimal student discussion and peer-to-peer

interaction to amplify or extend learning. For instance, in an ELA lesson based on the story, "Wringer" by Jerry Spinelli, one reviewer noted "all of the questions were teacher-directed, and there was no student-to-student dialogue or discussion on a rich topic, 'How is Palmer changing from the beginning of the story to the end?'" The students did not ask and their teacher did not prompt them to utilize the HOT question stems that were posted on a classroom board.

Reviewers observed the implementation of lessons aligned to the CCLS and NYS standards in the majority of the 40 classrooms they visited during this school review. However, the lessons did not elicit deeper thinking. Reviewers noted posted learning targets, but learning appeared to be superficial as students were unable to explain what they were learning and why. In many cases, when they did describe the content they were studying, the majority of students did not use academic language. For example, in one Social Studies class, a student responded that they were learning about "wars and stuff." However, it was noted that in the majority of special education classes students demonstrated explicit use of academic language.

Although many teachers provided copies of lesson plans, the plans varied in scope and depth. Specifically, one reviewer noted that the lesson plans produced were outlines or copies from the curriculum unit. The lack of uniformity regarding the quality of lesson plans resulted in poorly planned lessons. Many lessons did not demonstrate rigor or intentionally sequenced and scaffolded learning activities. Consequently, the fidelity to lesson planning makes it difficult to conclude that all students receive access to a rigorous curriculum, which fosters a common expectation of college and career readiness.

Recommendations

- Implement a PLC learning cycle that focuses teacher learning in Danielson's 1e. (Designing Coherent Instruction) and Danielson's 3c. (Engaging Students in Learning). This will give teachers the criteria and move them towards more rigorous and engaging 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 and use student data. The administrative teams can 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 as the criteria.

- Organize lessons in a way that do not permit downtime or limit time on task. Lesson progression should include intentionally sequenced learning activities to maintain lesson cadence and to stimulate student thinking. Concretely, teachers should allow a specific number of minutes for each learning task, ensure clear expectations around the work product or outcome that each student should achieve by the end of the lesson, and compel student engagement in the learning process through discussion and questioning techniques.

- Teachers should ask higher-order-thinking (HOT) questions earlier in the lesson so that students have the opportunity to amplify and extend learning through student-to-student discourse.

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. Protocols must also be appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.

Debriefing Statement

The school leader and teachers stated that they attempt to develop unit and lesson plans, which include using data-driven protocols. The school leader shared that the learning community uses the beginning of the year (BOY), middle of the year (MOY), and end of the year (EOY) iReady data to assess students' performance and students' progress in reading and math. During the school review, teachers discussed how they implement data-driven protocols such as: 1) the use of the Danielson's Frequent Formative Assessment protocol to monitor students; 2) the district's data tracker measuring the students' results from benchmark assessments; 3) the use of scheduled PLC time to collaboratively examine student data; and 4) the method of real individual student data conversations, which provides an opportunity for students to learn about their individual progress, and participate in owning their learning.

Additionally, the school leader stated that all teachers submit weekly lesson plans and that teachers receive feedback from the administrative team to ensure that lesson plans address student achievement needs. Reviewers noted that the majority of teachers did have a lesson plan available for perusal. The school leader also shared that observation forms contained a place to record each student's level based on their iReady data.

One teacher shared that she maximizes the class dojo online platform to communicate academic progress with students and families. For example, the teacher makes daily postings to the class dojo portfolios that include awarding students points for classwork participation and homework completion.

During the interview, teachers explained how they used: 1) formative and summative data such as exit tickets to inform student groups for the next day, 2) teacher-created tests, which included spiraled content, and 3) a student self-reflection rubric for class participation and test performance to advance student ownership of learning. According to the teacher, "students create their own study rubric- they fill in what it would take for them to be the most successful in my class." One Science teacher also shared that she uses previous NYS Regents Science questions to plan daily instruction and to develop assessments.

Areas of Improvement

The delivery of observed lessons demonstrates that during daily instruction student groupings did not always reflect the use of data-driven instructional protocols to address student achievement needs. For instance, one reviewer reported that in an AVID class "students took ten minutes to select a group and organize themselves within the group. Another ten minutes was spent with individual students asking clarifying questions about the

assignment."

Based on the student interviews and student work artifacts during classroom walkthroughs, it became evident that the learning community inconsistently uses rubrics to provide students with actionable high impact feedback. In some cases, students were able to discuss how their teachers utilized the NYS assessment rubrics as an instructional tool to model what their final work product should resemble. Explicitly, one student stated that in her English class she was given an NYS rubric "to follow and then to peer check the work." This student also shared that she had to complete a student reflection and action plan to let her teacher know what she "still needed to work on and her action plan to do better." Conversely, other students were novices in their understanding of rubrics but did mention that their teachers graded their work and provided them with vaguely phrased feedback such as "good job."

Furthermore, reviewers reported some gaps regarding students' understanding of their individual learning goals and achievement indicators. Interestingly, during the interview, students discussed that in their classes, the average to be considered a good grade is a 65 and over. However, students who were college-ready and assigned to the AVID program thought that 75 and over denoted a good grade. One student stated that, "Teachers don't really set goals. I am always aiming high, to be better than I used to be before."

Recommendations

- Develop a culture of high expectations for all students with clear academic goals established for each student that leads to a standard expectation for college and career readiness. Leverage the student data conversations to inform all students of their progress towards goal attainment and next steps to help them actualize these outcomes.

- Provide the PLC with a common lesson design and lesson plan template within the collective bargaining agreement to organize rigorous lessons including: 1) a standard objective learning target, 2) success criteria for the learning target, 3) instructional strategies (differentiation and scaffolding), 4) knowledge of students and assessment/checking for understanding, 5) select pieces of data to inform in-class work groups, and 6) AVID higher-order-thinking prompts or stems.

- Incorporate a cadre of teacher team leaders in the implementation of the common lesson design and template across the learning community. Build buy-in and consensus across the learning community by having these individuals model effective lesson planning during PLC time and in-lab classrooms to support the achievement needs of all students.

- Implement the use of instructional rubrics more evenly across the PLC. Concretely, teachers should provide detailed assignment rubrics and feedback to students so that students have a clearer understanding of what is expected.

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

The learning community articulated several ways in which they utilize formative and summative assessments for strategic short- and long-range planning. Mainly, teachers discussed how they use exit tickets and end-of-unit assessments to see how many students have met the standard for a topic of study. One teacher referenced the use of Cornell notes, noting that she uses the summary component as a "quick exit ticket." Teachers also emphasized that they rely on item analysis test data to inform which questions they focus on during homework review and test corrections.

Teachers expressed that they use formative and summative assessment data to spiral concepts during daily instruction in the do-now and extended practice. Interestingly, one teacher shared that she used a survey to have students circle particular concepts for which they still felt they needed more direct support. This teacher would then weave additional support for individual students into the daily lessons. One teacher conveyed the unique manner in which teachers strategically collaborate on the seventh- and eighth-grade cohort ICT (Integrated Co-teaching) team. For example, one teacher shared how teachers ensure that they included accommodations and modifications from students' IEPs to achieve specific learning goals.

Both the school leader and teachers described how the learning community inputs unit test results into the data tracker to examine trends towards mastery, and to determine how to group students for RTI (Response to Intervention) and AIS. The school leader also stated that the information from data tracker feeds a master spreadsheet. The learning community then uses the master spreadsheet to: 1) make intra-class comparisons regarding the percentage of students passing or failing each class, 2) discuss approaches to re-teaching various topics, and 3) develop a problem of practice to address how best to influence the factors that teachers can control within their classrooms.

Areas for Improvement

Significantly, during the interviews, students struggled to describe how their teachers provided them with actionable feedback to improve an assignment or test grade. Specifically, two students shared that their teachers just gave their tests back (without feedback – only a score). One student stated that his teacher did write some comments on his test. Overall, students' understanding of rubrics was vague. In one interview group, students reported that they did not understand the grading system and stated they did not have a say in establishing the grading process. However, this interview group did share that if they needed help from their

teachers, they felt comfortable asking them.

Furthermore, one reviewer reported that students could not articulate what they had learned upon completion of their content unit or how they made corrections to a wrong answer or misconception. In general, it appeared that students were only focused on their test scores and not on the learning within the test.

A different reviewer noted that students shared that while their teacher did not always provide real-time comments about how to improve an assignment or grade on a test, the Math teacher allowed students to take the paper and online version of a test and then "use the top grade." The students stated that "teachers do not usually allow students to resubmit" assignments. However, similar to the sentiment expressed by the students mentioned above, one student stated that "I can pull my math teacher aside and ask what I don't understand or go to 4th-period Resource Room for Math for the teacher to go over items with you."

Several students mentioned that they felt "really comfortable speaking to the Science teacher" and that the Science teacher gives "credit cards when students complete assignments and do-nows that count towards credits on tests for up to fifteen points." During the interview, the work artifacts provided by students tended not to have written feedback. For artifacts that did have feedback, the comments included phrases such as "fantastic work," or "all the tasks were well done."

Additionally, the learning community did not highlight how they systemically included students in the ownership of their learning or how the PLC organizes for effort when students did not achieve goals within the designated period. For the most part, students were unable to articulate individual learning goals but were able to share that the passing grade was sixty-five in most classes and seventy-five for students assigned to the AVID cohort.

Therefore, while the school leader and teachers expressed that the learning community uses both formative and summative assessments to inform instructional strategies and lesson content, little evidence exists to indicate that the system includes students' coherent use of rubrics to complete assignments, and student tracking of individual progress in response to explicit teacher feedback.

Recommendations

- Strengthen the use of formative assessments (checks for understanding). The learning community should push for deeper thinking and more in-depth comprehension by asking HOT questions strategically during the lessons to elucidate and challenge students' thinking and conceptual understanding. The learning community should agree upon a menu of checks for understanding aligned to the AVID strategies that they will implement during daily instruction.

- Streamline teachers' use of rubrics and students' knowledge of rubrics to the student reflection process, providing students with the opportunity to make adjustments in response to teacher

feedback.

- Implement a PLC learning strand focus on "backwards design" to help teachers synthesize key data pieces to inform the most effective instructional strategies they should employ to meet the achievement needs of all students. Teachers should elaborate on backwards design lesson outcomes during grade and content PLC meetings.

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**

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

Both the teachers and school leader stated that the PLC implements student-centered instructional practices and strategies to organize annual, unit, and daily lesson plans that address student goals and needs. Specifically, all teachers are expected to include AVID-aligned strategies such as WICOR and the use of Cornell Notes, Costa's levels of HOT questions, and culturally responsive learning activities. One Science teacher stated her cohort team of teachers administered a cross-curricular tool to properly assess and reach students with different learning styles. This Science teacher reported that based on the results of the learning styles of tested seventh- and eighth-grade students, instructors decided to differentiate lessons using the integrated co-teaching model for students with disabilities (SWDs).

Teachers emphasized that a structured common prep period and the physical proximity of team teachers located in classrooms next to each other fostered consistent collaboration among teachers to modify daily instruction. Explicitly, teachers shared that they were able to "learn from their colleagues" by discussing in real time what is working and what is not working. One Math teacher described how she adjusted pacing based on informally observing one of her peers during interclass visitations. Specifically, this same teacher shared that since she was new to using the Envisions Math curriculum, she was a bit hesitant to implement the two-day lesson flow. However, after she visited a colleague's class, she became more confident and comfortable with utilizing the Envisions curriculum, especially the two-day lesson flow.

To recapitulate, the school leader articulated that building academic vocabulary, HOT questioning and discussion, and writing across the curriculum were at the core of the learning community's focus for the 2018-2019 school year. Accordingly, the expectation is that instructors should incorporate each core component during daily instruction for ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Teachers also referenced how the district provided instructional coaches to support promising pedagogical practices for middle school. For example, one teacher mentioned how the instructional math coach pushes in once per week on Tuesdays. The teacher shared that the Math coach assisted her with: 1) strategies to keep students organized, 2) thirty binders to provide a structure for students' notes, lesson sheets, tests and quizzes, and 3) a grading system to reward students who keep a well-organized notebook.

One teacher discussed how eight teachers deepened their collaboration as a part of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Change program to address students' goals and needs. Notably, one teacher shared the list of accommodations and modifications that he uses to guide his lesson planning to ensure that he addresses his students with special needs.

Areas for Improvement

During the review, observers reported limited evidence of AVID-aligned techniques within daily instruction to promote student engagement and inquiry. Reviewers also indicated that they did not observe writing across the curriculum in any of the forty classrooms the team visited. In one class, one out of four students had written work reflective of the ELA reading and writing CCLS. Reviewers noted that when they did observe students' writing, teachers used Cornell Notes. Also, inquiry and collaboration strategies were not visible in the majority of classrooms. However, teachers did post the WICOR chart in their classes.

Observers documented the lack of carefully sequenced learning tasks and lesson progression. For example, one teacher did not have the reading passage pre-prepared on the Smartboard but had to write the passage out on the computer as the students sat waiting. In another instance, three students came to a class late, and the teacher stopped twice before introducing the lesson.

Despite the learning community sharing that they used the gradual release model of instruction, the majority of learning experiences were teacher-directed with minimal student voice. Generally, teachers did not release students to independent practice through an authentic progression of learning. As a result, teacher-dominated learning limits the consistency and quality of how the learning community incorporates instructional practices to promote high levels of student engagement and inquiry.

Recommendations

- Streamline the lesson planning process to the teacher observation and feedback cycle to foster the learning community's implementation of student engagement and inquiry (Inquiry and Collaboration) pedagogical practices.

- Conduct a lesson study on student engagement, inquiry, and collaboration principles aligned with AVID.

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 learning community described how they implemented specific structures and strategies to provide instruction that is: 1) coherent, 2) appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLC), and 3) led by multiple points of access for all students. Specifically, the school and teachers stated that the: 1) implementation of the gradual release model of instruction provides a structure for student engagement during cooperative and independent practice-level vocabulary, and 2) use of Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) WICOR instructional strategies foster student engagement, and 3) building academic vocabulary led to multiple points of access for all students. To provide an example, one teacher described how she fostered higher-order thinking by having students generate questions based on the responses of their peers. The teacher mentioned that she utilized Costa's level of questions to give students a model of the types of questions that they can generate to extend or amplify learning. Both teachers and the school leader shared that the use of questioning and discussion in daily instruction were pivotal in serving as entry points for students in all subgroups.

Teachers stated that students access rigorous instruction through: 1) writing across the curriculum, 2) processing content through Cornell Notes, and 3) engaging in learning tasks outlined in the Envisions Math Curriculum. Several teachers explained how they ensured multiple points of access for students through specially designed instruction, especially in ICT classes.

Areas for Improvement

Despite the learning community's descriptions of how teachers ensured multiple points of access for students, reviewers reported limited engagement of students in both special and general education classes. One reviewer noted that teachers did not give enough wait time for students to respond to questions, which in many cases were at level one or two of Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK). Additionally, reviewers consistently reported that teachers primarily taught whole group lessons that showed minimal differentiation. This single point of access to instructional practices limit students' ability to participate in intellectual discovery and rigorous thinking.

Recommendations

- Focus teaching on student-centered learning, pull student engagement strategies through the PLC as a learning strand for teachers. Specifically, maximize select AVID strategies to improve student interaction with the lesson content and with each other. Each PLC should determine which student engagement strategies they will implement across the grade or cohort. Model, monitor and support

these student engagement strategies through the PLC, during walkthroughs, and standard-aligned lesson planning.

- Provide teachers with exemplars on the gradual release model of instruction, with specific emphasis on having coaches model the I Do, You Do, and We Do segments of the lesson. Additionally, implement model classrooms as learning labs so teachers can hone their practice in applying the gradual release model.

- Bolster student engagement by having teachers create lesson plans that explicitly show how students will have voice, i.e., participate in meaningful discussions and learning activities to increase student talk time and students' voices.

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 school leader and teachers described how they use a variety of formative and summative data sources to inform planning. For example, the learning community uses data from: 1) Danielson's Frequent Formative Assessments, and 2) iReady to progress monitor students in math and reading. Additionally, teachers explained that they utilized a myriad of standard curriculum and end-of-unit assessments. The school leader also shared that teachers provided students with their results from the data tracker and other teacher-made evaluations. Several teachers discussed how they used data from the exit tickets to inform student groupings for the next day's lesson and topics for re-teaching.

The school leader and teachers did not discuss the existence of a data wall or a place with an aggregate display of data in a common area so that students can track their academic progress. However, the school leader stated that he provided students and families with information on how to utilize Home Access to check attendance and academic grades. Notably, families can access iReady data from home as well.

In summary, the school leader and teachers stated that the PLC cross-fertilizes several data sources to determine which students to schedule for academic intervention services (AIS) and academic power hour (APH). Teachers emphasize that dynamic groups in AIS allow them to reach the highest number of students in need of intensive support.

Areas for Improvement

Limited evidence exists to support that the learning community uses a variety of formative and summative data to drive instruction. The learning community must solidify how teachers use formative and summative data to promote student participation in -- and ownership of -- learning. During the student interviews, the majority of students struggled to share a particular learning goal and to explain how they applied teacher feedback to

improve learning outcomes. Based on these observations, the learning community needs to urgently address how teachers provide students with meaningful feedback consistently and frequently to strengthen students' ownership of learning.

Recommendations

- Utilize PLC time to have teachers develop granular learning goals for individual students and each cohort of students nested in the analysis of data to drive academic achievement.
- Couple lesson planning with the feedback cycle to both teachers and students. As school leadership guides the work of lesson planning, administrators should help teachers refine their feedback protocol. Administrators should observe the feedback protocols in use during the learning walks.

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)	Dr. Waveline Bennett-Conroy X Issued by NYSED on _____ ☐Pending -- The requirements have been fulfilled, but I have yet to receive word from NYSED ☐Pending -- I have not yet fulfilled the requirements, but plan on doing so by the June 30, 2016. ☐N/A This is the only School Review with District Oversight and District-led review I am responsible for.