



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**

<b>BEDS Code</b>	660900010010		
<b>School Name</b>	Graham School		
<b>School Address</b>	421 East Fifth Street, Mount Vernon, NY 10550		
<b>District Name</b>	Mount Vernon School District		
<b>School Leader</b>	Dr. Natasha Hunter-McGregor		
<b>Dates of Review</b>	February 6, 2019		
<b>School Accountability Status</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority School <input type="checkbox"/> Focus School		
<b>Type of Review</b>	<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)		
<b>Review Team</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation/Title</b>	
<b>School Leader</b>	Dr. Natasha Hunter-McGregor	Principal	
<b>District Representative</b>	Dr. Waveline Bennett-Conroy	Assistant Superintendent	
<b>Additional Team Members</b>	Dr. K. Dunkley	Lead Reviewer	
	Roxie Johnson	Math Specialist	
	Michael Selkis	Special Education Specialist	
	Lana Flemming-Thomas	English Language Arts Specialist	

**School Information Sheet for Graham School**

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School Configuration (2017-18 data)			
<b>Grade Configuration</b>	K- 8	<b>Total Enrollment</b>	448
		<b>SIG Recipient</b>	
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2018-19)			
<b># Transitional Bilingual</b>	0	<b># Dual Language</b>	0
		<b># Self-Contained English as a Second Language</b>	0
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2015-16)			
<b># Special Classes</b>	4	<b># SETSS</b>	0
		<b># Integrated Collaborative Teaching</b>	0
Types and Number of Special Classes (2018-19)			
<b># Visual Arts</b>	1	<b># Music</b>	1
<b># Foreign Language</b>	0.5	<b># Dance</b>	0
		<b># Drama</b>	0
		<b># CTE</b>	0.2
School Composition (most recent data)			
<b>% Title I Population</b>	63.7%	<b>% Attendance Rate</b>	92.9%
<b>% Free Lunch</b>	100%	<b>% Reduced Lunch</b>	0%
<b>% Limited English Proficient</b>	4.5%	<b>% Students with Disabilities</b>	7.22%
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)			
<b>% American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	6%	<b>% Black or African American</b>	80%
<b>% Hispanic or Latino</b>	8.8%	<b>% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</b>	0%
<b>% White</b>	5.8%	<b>% Multi-Racial</b>	7.22%
Personnel (most recent data)			
<b>Years Principal Assigned to School</b>	12	<b># of Assistant Principals</b>	2
<b># of Deans</b>	0	<b># of Counselors/Social Workers</b>	2.5
<b>% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate</b>	0	<b>% Teaching Out of Certification</b>	0
<b>% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience</b>	11%	<b>Average Teacher Absences</b>	5
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2017-18 or most recent data available)			
<b>ELA Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	28 %	<b>Mathematics Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	20%
<b>Science Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4 (4th Grade)</b>	88 %	<b>Science Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4 (8th Grade)</b>	61%
Student Performance for High Schools (2017-18 or most recent data available)			
<b>ELA Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	N/A	<b>Mathematics Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	N/A
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2017-18 or most recent data available)			
<b>% of 1st year students who earned 10+ credits</b>	NA	<b>% of 2nd year students who earned 10+ credits</b>	NA
<b>% of 3rd year students who earned 10+ credits</b>	NA	<b>4 Year Graduation Rate</b>	NA
<b>6 Year Graduation Rate</b>	NA		
Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2017-18 or most recent data available)			
<b>Reward</b>		<b>Recognition</b>	N/A
<b>In Good Standing</b>	X	<b>Local Assistance Plan</b>	N/A
<b>Focus District</b>		<b>Focus School Identified by a Focus District</b>	
<b>Priority School</b>			

**Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)**

Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (2017-18 or most recent data available)			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>		<b>Black or African American</b>	
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>		<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	
<b>White</b>		<b>Multi-Racial</b>	
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>		<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>			
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (2017-18 or most recent data available)			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>		<b>Black or African American</b>	
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>		<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	
<b>White</b>		<b>Multi-Racial</b>	
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>		<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>			
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (2017-18 or most recent data available)			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>		<b>Black or African American</b>	
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>		<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	
<b>White</b>		<b>Multi-Racial</b>	
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>		<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	

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Economically Disadvantaged
<p>Describe the school's top priorities (no more than 5) based on the school's comprehensive plans (SCEP, SIG, DIP, etc.):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Engaging Students in Learning (3c)</b> – (i.e. Learning target, Students knowledge of the lesson's purpose; pacing; "I Do, We Do, You Do" Strategy; appropriate instructional materials, deliberate planning and preparation)</li> <li><b>AVID (WICOR Strategy-Based) Implementation School-wide (Currently in grades 2-5, MS Elective)</b>   WICOR Strategies: Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, Reading  Refer to grade level vertical skill progression in the AVID Site Plan  (i.e. two/three column notes to support writing and academic vocabulary development, quick writes, RACE strategy, leveled questions, students working in groups, use of AVID binders, annotating text)</li> <li><b>Checking For Understanding (3d)</b> – i.e. (Minimum 3x per lesson, teachers call on volunteers and non-volunteers, checklists, thumbs up/thumbs down, use of white boards in math, exit tickets when applicable, pacing)</li> </ol>

## Information about the review

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

- The review team visited a total of 39 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 leadership directory, AVID binders, teacher data binders and student portfolios.

**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		
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**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	

<b>Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions:</b> 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.	<b>Tenet Rating</b>	<b>3</b>
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2.3 **The school is in Stage 3 for this Statement of Practice:** Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.

**Debriefing Statement**

The school leader implemented strategic human, programmatic and fiscal decisions to increase academic achievement aligned to the school’s mission, vision and school priorities. Specifically, the school leader examines the end-of-year district data and budget to schedule students based on need. Significantly, the school leader focused on the New York State (NYS) requirements for the middle school students and added an Algebra One and Living Environment course. The school leader stated that she deliberately hired staff members who would commit to the afterschool program to ensure a middle school math tutorial program in the extended day. The school leader emphasized that the learning community implements a tutorial during student lunch periods that constitutes a significant schedule change. Teachers who do not participate in the structured tutorial for students serve in their assigned administrative duty.

The school leader shared that she schedules the elementary school students according to the district’s expectations, i.e., implementing a guided reading period. The principal noted that due to programming constraints, the learning community reverted to thirty minutes from the piloted forty-two-minute period in the 2017-2018 school year. The principal discussed how she programmed for the different tiers of learners, articulating that she scheduled students in the lowest quartile for academic intervention services (AIS) with the two reading teachers. The school leader also expressed that tier two students received targeted support from classroom teachers who use data to inform the guided reading block.

The learning community implements a structured Academic Power Hour (APH) in collaboration with the STONG program. The school leader acknowledged that the Office of School Improvement provides tremendous financial and intellectual support through Title I funds to help the students make growth. Additionally, Graham is one of five schools selected for the Aspire grant that provides an opportunity for students to participate in Science Technology Engineering Arts and Math (STEAM) activities during the afterschool program. During APH, students receive targeted instruction in science on Mondays, math on Tuesdays, 8th-grade science on Wednesdays and English Language Arts on Thursdays. The school leader cited how the learning community leverages the data consultant in collaboration with the elementary and secondary coaches, administration and district personnel to analyze and disseminate the data; create a coaching plan, and finalize a professional development (PD) and inter-visitation schedule for the middle of year (MOY) and end of year (EOY).

The school leader engages in deep instructional work with teachers aligned to the AVID framework. This school leader discussed how the PLC advances student engagement through the AVID-related Writing Inquiry Collaboration Organization and Reading (WICOR) strategies. Notably, the school leader explained how the teachers use the curriculum and pacing calendars to institute a rigorous curriculum. The principal also shared that the assistant principal monitors the data tracker to assess students' progress, especially for students with disabilities (SWDs) and English Language Learners. The principal described the role of the coaches in meeting with teachers to discuss student and teacher needs, examine student data to make certain adjustments as needed, and in supporting the PLC structures and academic teams.

The school leader mentioned how the implementation of weekly professional learning community (PLC) meetings have resulted in a more collaborative culture. The pre-DTSDE self-assessment describes how the 2018-2019 schedule supports weekly and bi-weekly meetings with the coaches and Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) team to share best practices, analyze student work and reset goals. Regarding the instructional focus, in grades 3-8 the learning community continued its emphasis on explicit direct instruction, vocabulary, critical reading and writing strategies (AVID two and three column notes, RACE, Annotation and Marking of Text) with specific feedback to students; and in grades K-2 teachers will introduce students to the RACE Strategy by March 2019. The learning community plans to advance the progression of AVID skills in grade two.

The school leader discussed the school's demonstrated track record of success in increasing inquiry-based techniques to bolster student success. Concretely, the principal described how the PLC works on Danielson's 3b-questioning and discussion. The school leader shared that she expected teachers and students to advance thinking by asking a combination of Costa's level-one and level-two questions.

During the interview, the school leader emphasized 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.

### **Strengths**

To accelerate learning outcomes, the school leader has implemented a professional learning community (PLC) that convenes weekly to focus on promising practices to accelerate learning outcomes. The school has phased in the AVID program through the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model, with teachers in grade 5 receiving training and professional development.

Increasing student achievement (as measured by the NYS assessments) is one of the priorities for the school leader. The majority of programmatic, operational and instructional practices align with the school's focus on

increasing the proficiency rates of students in ELA and Math courses, as well as Living Environment and Algebra One Regents.

Based on the results of these practices, programs, and partnership decisions, the evidence demonstrates that the school leader effectively organized and appropriated resources to increase student achievement and fund targeted efforts aligned to the 2018-2019 school-wide priorities.

**Commendations**

- Clear evidence of student and teacher collaboration
- Exemplary classroom environment evidenced by leveled classroom libraries in most classes, instructional aids, and visible standards-based student work.
- High frequency of both teachers and students using academic language in Math. Students were able to explain terms such as fractions, mixed number, sum, minus, numerator, denominator, and place value.
- Consistent use of manipulatives in Math in the upper grades
- Clear evidence of special education teachers pre-viewing and front loading vocabulary and concepts at the front of the lesson
- Teachers ensured students have sufficient wait time to respond to questions, e.g., Do you need more time to think?
- Rigorous instruction observed in self-contained classrooms
- Teachers accessible for tutorials during the day and after school
- A palpable school culture of teachers caring about the children

**Recommendations**

- Implement a coherent, research-based early literacy program that includes sound instructional planning regarding content and structure, balanced literacy, centers, and stations.
- Foster teachers’ use of data to create targeted plans for specific students.

**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.

<b>Tenet Rating</b>	<b>3</b>
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**3.2. The school is in Stage 3 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 stated that the school implements a rigorous and coherent curriculum appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Noting the PLC's emphasis on student-driven instruction (SDI), the school adapts and monitors the curriculum to meet the needs of ALL students. The teachers and school leader expressed that the school implements a school-wide instructional plan to provide targeted support for, 1) students with disabilities (SWDs), 2) English language learners (ELLs), 3) students who intersect as both SWD and ELL, and 4) students scoring in the lowest achievement quartile. Specifically, the school engages with a data consultant to examine critical patterns regarding the achievement of all students, with emphasis on students with disabilities and ELLs. The principal, coaches, teachers, and special education use the data garnered from the consultant to inform professional development and to plan collaboratively. The trends shared by the data consultant also inform the areas of discussion during the once per week vertical and horizontal team meetings to determine the most effective pedagogical practices and school-wide instructional foci.

Importantly, the teachers described how the PLC: 1) modifies instruction for students with disabilities through pull-out services, 2) compares data in grade bands to group students during ELA instruction 3) includes a scaffolding activity in daily lessons to provide students with instructional support to access lesson content, and 4) implements SDI in consultation with special education teachers to apply the strategies that work best for each child.

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 tools to plan coherent units of study. One teacher cited the use of the data warehouse as a vital tool in determining which standards teachers needed to elucidate. This teacher stated that they researched actual questions from data warehouse from previous years that did not reflect high student mastery. In addition, several teachers emphasized that this year in ELA, the PLC focused on, 1) students using close reading strategies, 2) text annotations, and 3) using academic vocabulary. Both teachers and the principal mentioned the implementation of the Envisions Math program and the importance of teaching it with fidelity to increase student engagement. The school leader also shared that the learning community utilizes the Develop Inspire Grow (DIG) program in pre-k and the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) program in grades 2-5 to ensure quality implementation of a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula.

The majority of PLC members discussed the use of various pieces of data to organize students in small groups for Response to Intervention (RTI). Teachers expressed that they utilize the results of iReady assessments to provide scaffolding for students in need. The iReady assessment designates students as AOI, i.e., accelerated, on track, or in need of intervention. One teacher mentioned that she modifies the curriculum by using an abundance of hands-on activities such as manipulatives and computer tasks to augment learning during the iBlock for math. One teacher discussed that in addition to modifying lessons through SDI and testing accommodations that she



utilized the data from Dibels and iReady to construct groups, especially when planning for phonics and comprehension instruction.

Both students and teachers explained the opportunities for students to access extra academic support and remediation via afterschool tutoring, APH, and STRONG programs. The reviewers concluded that in some instances it appeared that these extended-day programs supplanted differentiated instruction during the regular school day.

Teachers discussed several examples of using the data gathered from exit tickets in math, math journals and “to alter or change particular math lessons.” One teacher mentioned that she tries as much as possible to encourage students to share feedback regarding what she could do better to help them master a math concept or activity.

### **Areas of Strength**

The instructional staff implements specific practices to ensure access to rigorous and coherent curricula for all students. Reviewers noted clear evidence of the impact of these practices on teaching and learning. Specifically, teachers, instructional staff and school leadership collaborate to implement research-based programs such as AVID, coupled with a strong focus on student engagement-related practices that still need further refinement. The consistent collaborative among PLC members fosters a learning environment that is responsive to meeting the needs of different learners. During the classroom observations, the reviewers observed some congruence with the practices that the school leader and teachers articulated.

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

### **Debriefing Statement**

The evidence illustrates that teachers attempt to develop unit and lesson plans that include--and are monitored--using data-driven protocols. However, the delivery of observed lessons demonstrates that lessons do not fully incorporate data-driven instructional protocols that teachers monitor to address student achievement needs. Reviewers visited a total of 39 classrooms.

The principal and staff stated that they apply a multi-pronged approach to implement data-driven protocols, such as, 1) iReady online reading comprehension and math data to target supports and student groupings; 2) Waterford and Dibels; 3) the examination of interim and summative data during monthly PLC and curriculum meetings (i.e., performance on teacher-made assessments, AVID assessments); and 4) implementing the Envisions Math 2.0 curriculum coupled with the use of the data tracker in math to design lessons that support the three tiers of students designated at AOI. Both the school leader and teachers described how the data consultant contributes to and sustains a culture of teachers using data to 1) design lessons and units of study

and 2)target interventions. The teachers also mentioned that they cross-fertilized iReady and PBIS data to support student learning.

The teachers articulated that the ELA coach used data to provide support in writing and the Math coach helped teachers to determine which topics to emphasize during instruction and which lessons they can combine. The teachers expressed that the coaches were helpful during the weekly PLC meetings and noted that the special education coach provided teachers with a repertoire of strategies to use for the different tiers of learners. Several teachers stated that they utilize data to address instructional practices and examine classroom trends and learning patterns across each grade. The PLC provides teachers with an opportunity to engage in collegial inquiring by 1) asking questions about what instructional practices work well, 2) describing teaching and learning challenges, and, 3) determining the next actions to take to increase academic achievement. One teacher referenced the use of Schoology in Algebra to support middle school students.

Overall, the teachers stated that the data consultant was invaluable in assisting with the triangulation of the different data sets to support collaborative lesson planning. Additionally, teachers discussed the data sets in vertical and horizontal grade-level meetings. The pre-DTSDE self-assessment document highlighted that teachers “made adaptations to the areas of reading, writing, and comprehension based on collaborative discussions with the coach, consultant, and administrative team” as they implemented the new Journeys curriculum in grades 2-5.

#### **Areas for Improvement**

Although both the teachers and school leader discussed how the learning community implements school-wide data-driven instructional (DDI) protocols, aligned to the various instruments-iReady, Dibels, reviewers concluded that teachers used data in a limited way to strengthen individual and tiered student outcomes. During lesson delivery, although the majority of teachers had lesson plans, lessons did not always reflect specific ways in which teachers would differentiate instruction for students. Based on the classroom visits, one reviewer noted that it was not apparent how teachers utilized data to address students’ academic needs or student groupings during daytime classroom instruction. This same reviewer also concluded that opportunities for small group instruction seem to exist only at lunchtime and afterschool.

During the review, it became evident that students did not regularly engage in conversations about their individual achievement data. To provide an example, when someone from the review team asked students to articulate a specific benchmark or EOY reading goal, many students were unable to do so. In one instance, a student was unsure of the next-level goal based on the completed writing piece and the attached rubric.

The majority of classrooms that the team visited during the review reflected whole class instruction, and teacher-centered instruction with teachers dominating most of the talking and thinking during the lessons. In

one class during the ELA block, all of the students read the same text even though the schedule showed that guided reading should take place.

In general, the lack of differentiation to inform small group instruction and the use of limited student-engagement practices make it challenging to lead students towards a standard expectation of college and career readiness.

### **Recommendations**

- Implement a PLC study on differentiation of instruction.
- Implement a “Student Data Conversation Cycle” aligned to the data reviews with teachers and the data consultant. Use the conversations to inform students of their learning goals and the progress they make towards goal attainment. During this week, and during other designated class times, teachers should use RTI time to discuss individual student learning goals in reading and math. Student conversations should include clear next steps and areas of focus so that students know what they need to concentrate on to improve their performance.

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 administers common assessments and uses the iReady data for pre- and middle-of-the-year assessments. The pre-DTSDE review document described how teachers provide evidence-based feedback to students based on the AVID assessment rubrics and RACES strategy. The learning community uses this data to identify schoolwide learning goals and to establish grade-level and student-specific SMART goals in AVID classrooms. One teacher mentioned how students are able to track their individual data in iReady and how to use this data to apply the GROWTH mindset. Reviewers saw clear evidence of AVID data binders to monitor students’ progress. The AVID data binders included items such as the students’ iReady data in reading and math. The AVID PLC agendas in the binders also reflected the areas of focus for the PLC. Specifically, the agendas highlighted the school’s focus on the, 1) AVID site plan, 2) RACE strategy using the 2 and 4 point NYS rubric, 3) Homogeneous grouping for strategic support, 4) Inter-visitation, 5) Parent workshop, and 6) MOY ELA iReady results and analysis of data.

The school leader and teachers both discussed multiple types of formative and summative assessments that they used to inform 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 tired interventions during RTI, 2) the use of exit tickets to see who is on target to inform student groupings for progressive lessons, 3) accuracy of responses to check for understanding during class time (thumbs up/thumbs down, individual whiteboards, students working in pairs, binder checks, use of colored cards, two and three column notes, questioning 4) designing lesson plans to address learning gaps or deficiencies. One of the teachers also shared that the counselor had met with every eight grade student to discuss plans for high school and to discuss their status on the report card. Teachers also cited the use of data from summative assessments such as iReady, and Dibels to modify and plan lessons and to determine instructional strategies.

Teachers emphasized that they facilitate student ownership of learning by providing targeted feedback during tutoring and use checklists and rubrics to let students know the expectations for learning and where they fall in the process.

### **Areas for Improvement**

During the classroom visit debrief, reviewers noted that some evidence of formative assessments (checking for understanding) was observable in the classroom visits across the school. Primarily, reviewers noted that teachers walked around the classroom, used thumbs up and thumbs down, and asked questions as the predominant mode to check for understanding. Importantly, reviewers consistently pointed out that some teachers did ask questions during the lesson, but at times 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 a completed rubric that the teacher used to score the particular assignment. Despite receiving the rubric and the grade, several students struggled to find the words to explain what feedback they received from their teacher to improve the assignment.

In one instance, a teacher checked the student's work in the binder with red markers but did not include specific feedback that the student could use to improve the assignment. Furthermore, one reviewer noted that two of the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade portfolios had limited authentic reading/writing responses and more phonics-based work included. Another student was able to share her level of reading but was unaware of the sixth grade benchmark that she needs to meet for promotion. A review of the students' portfolios revealed a pattern of non-specific and low-impact feedback. For example, on one piece of work, the post note indicated that the student "uses good transitions, but she needed to work on organizing and supporting her thoughts." When the reviewer probed the student to explain what the feedback meant, she was unable to materialize the feedback in connection to the piece of writing piece that she presented and did not know the next steps to improve the assignment.

The absence of various types of formative assessments made it challenging to accurately assess daily teaching and learning outcomes to ensure that students were adequately prepared to meet 21st-century college and career readiness standards.

**Recommendations**

- Focus a walkthrough on the selected AVID formative assessment, i.e., checks for understanding lesson study across all the PLC.
- Use PLC time to model the selected formative assessment strategies that teachers will implement with fidelity to promote student mastery. Conduct a crosswalk of the AVID-related checking for understanding strategies with the “Tools for Formative Assessment,” compiled by K. Lambert as a pressure test to implement the most effective formative assessment.
- Create formative assessment lab classrooms in each grade and content area for the middle grades
- Streamline the feedback and formative assessment protocols to increase the points of entry for students during a lesson or unit of study.

<b>Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions:</b> 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.	<b>Tenet Rating</b>	<b>2</b>
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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 school leader and staff described how the PLC implements student-centered instructional practices and strategies to organize annual, unit, and daily lesson plans that address student goals and needs. Specifically, teachers discussed the specific use of strategies such as, 1) close reading with an emphasis on annotation, students using graphic organizers and quick writes, 2) using targeted AVID-aligned WICOR strategies such as Costa’s levels of HOT questions, think/pair/shares, RACES, four square, two- and three-column notes, learning carousels, and jigsaw to personalize student learning.

Both the teachers and school leader stated that the learning community’s focus on close reading strategies and word problem-solving techniques in Math should result in increased academic achievement. During the review,

teachers and the school leader delineated ways in which the PLC's curriculum meetings, horizontal and vertical PLC meetings -- coupled with multiple data sources -- were incorporated to support annual, unit, and daily lessons to address student goals and needs. Explicitly, teachers shared that during PLC meetings they were able to plan lessons and discuss targeted interventions to adapt and align to the CCLS and to the different levels of learning in the classroom. One teacher shared that she appreciated the expertise of the reading specialist in providing in-class technical assistance regarding research-based reading strategies.

The teachers, school leader, coaches, and data consultant regularly engage in collegial conversations about how best to meet the learning needs and provide tiered supports to students. The teachers cited the importance of the PLC meetings, the use of the instructional coaches, and the input of the reading and math specialists to ensure that curriculum and instruction aligned to student goals and needs. Both teachers and the school leader highlighted the focus of amplifying academic language during daily classroom instruction. Several teachers emphasized the use of the instructional techniques identified above and specific AVID-related math strategies such as Q-tips and CUBES.

### **Areas for Improvement**

The strong pedagogical emphasis on academic language was visible in many of the observed classrooms. Reviewers observed the high frequency of academic language in use. However, the reviewers reported that the majority of instructional time was teacher-centered, with teachers dominating classroom talk. Additionally, during the thirty-nine class visits the review team did not observe differentiated instructional groups to meet the needs of varying levels of learners.

One reviewer asserted that it appeared that teachers follow the district's pacing calendar to create lessons without utilizing the data that they collect through iReady and Dibels to modify lessons. To give an example, one teacher shared a xeroxed copy of a district outline of a lesson with notes as a lesson plan. Notably, during one second grade class, despite the teacher sharing student test data and the grouping plan for reading, all students read the same-level text, "Click Clack Moo," for the second time focusing on context clues.

Generally, the review team concluded that during classes, teachers need to implement practices and additional structures that support students in explaining their thinking and using accountable talk stems to build on the responses of their peers.

Despite pockets of inquiry and collaboration, the high frequency of teacher-centered lessons negated the quality of evidence-based instructional practices that demonstrate high levels of student engagement and inquiry across the entire learning community.

### **Recommendations**

### **Focus on English Language Arts**

- Teachers should plan lessons for different levels of students in their classroom, utilize leveled libraries for guided reading and reading groups, and develop reading strategy groups during the iBlock and reading block.
- Teachers should triangulate the various data sets to differentiate phonemic awareness and word work activities.

### **Implement the Gradual Release Model of Instruction with Fidelity**

- In the next 15 days, implement a PLC learning strand on the gradual release model of instruction in tandem with companion lesson studies on the AVID-aligned inquiry and collaboration strategies.
- Create lab classrooms for AVID inquiry and collaboration strategies. Pair teachers who are proficient in these IC strategies with other teachers in need of support to bolster students' ability to do the thinking and engage in productive struggle within daily instruction.

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, they referenced the use of the PLC, sharing best practices to meet students' strengths and needs. The teachers also emphasized that the literacy and math coach provide ongoing professional development for close strategies in reading and word problem-solving strategies in math, respectively.

Specifically, the school leader and teachers engage in reflective practice and integrate instructional strategies, such as, 1) Socratic Seminars, 2) teacher wait time and calling on non-volunteers and volunteers, and, 3) note-taking strategies such as quick writes, two- and three-column notes, and one-pagers.

To ensure rigorous instruction, teachers explain that they push students' critical thinking skills by challenging them to create their levels of Costa's questions and leverage technology by using platforms such as Schoology and Plickers in the middle school living environment class to provide students with real-time feedback and increase engagement during daily lessons. One teacher discussed how the two- and three-column notes provided a "valuable strategy" for students to practice note-taking skills. Both teachers and the school leader assert that by developing coherent lesson plans coupled with AVID-related instructional practices, the PLC ensures multiple points of access for all students.

To ensure multiple points of access, the principal and the teachers discussed how they implement specially designed instruction (SDI) and incorporate corresponding pedagogical practices to meet students' individual education plans. A review of one of the teacher's SDI checklist showed specific strategies for meeting the needs of all learners, 1) academic modifications (color-coding systems, manipulatives, extended time, 2) processing speed (extra tasks, providing a demo or concrete example with oral explanation, 3) communication (repeating directions, highlighting keywords, gradually building complexity of task, and 4) long-term memory (provide cheat sheet for reference and written lists of tasks).

Significantly, teachers discussed ways in which they utilize the Envisions Math 2.0 and Journeys ELA curriculum in grades 3-5 to provide interventions and acceleration for on-track, intermediate and advanced learners.

### **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 student engagement and inquiry in classes in the majority of classrooms. In the early learning classrooms, the literacy approach was not consistently visible to observers. Again, the reviewers did note some promising practices such as the use of manipulatives in some early childhood classrooms.

Significantly, the review team indicated that teachers mainly taught whole-group lessons that showed minimal differentiation. Since whole group instruction limits multiple points of access for all students, teachers need to surgically refine how they tackled the CCLS-instructional shifts by engaging students in high-order-thinking activities and student engagement to foster intellectual discovery and rigorous thinking.

### **Recommendations**

- Organize a "Graham Early Literacy Education Committee" to review and establish instructional expectations and determine the companion in instructional materials in early childhood classrooms.
- Scale the instructional practices in model early childhood classrooms across the PLC.
- Provide multiple points of access for all students by expanding the use of technology (PLICKERS), whiteboards, and Schoology. Teachers should use 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 learning community described the use of a variety of formative and summative data sources to inform planning and foster student participation in their own learning. For example, the learning community uses a mix of the following data sources to progress monitor students, 1) Grades 2-8 iReady ELA and Math Data to assess phonemic awareness, phonics, high frequency words, vocabulary, fictional and informational comprehension, 2) BOY, MOY, and EOY assessments, 3) Grades K-1 DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) Data to assess early grade readiness, 4) iLit90 Data, 5) Waterford Technology Data for grades K-1 and, 6) Pre-K Assessment Data.

The principal shared that the expectation is for teachers to complete trackers and maintain data binders. Both the principal and teachers explained that they regularly discuss data to support RTI planning to address students' academic, emotional and social needs.

Notably, the PLC provides intensive tiered supports for learners. The school leader also utilizes the assessment data to provide feedback to teachers regarding lesson planning and to determine learning targets and to develop the AVID site plan. The pre-DTSDE review document states that teachers provide feedback to students regarding academic progress. Further, the PLC leverages faculty and curriculum meetings to develop a consensus around common instructional practices to personalize instruction and address student needs.

### **Areas for Improvement**

During the student interviews, reviewers examined work in students' portfolios that included Science, ELA, and Mathematics. The portfolios included authentic work as well as photocopies. When reviewers asked students to describe how they could improve their grades based on their academic progress, generally students responded that they needed to study harder and do what was required of them by their teachers. Interestingly, very few students were able to articulate specific strategies that they could use to improve their academic performance.

Additionally, while feedback included a combination of numerical scoring and written comments based on a rubric in some cases, the majority of students were unable to explicitly state what they learned from the feedback and how they should use it to improve learning going forward.

One eighth grade student did share that he "uses the feedback from his teachers and applies it across all content areas." This student also shared, "'iLIT' is a schoolwide program where students read books; then teachers can make students assignments based on the book and the student work gets graded on the computer." This student enjoyed the iLit program very much.

As previously highlighted, in the majority of classrooms, reviewers observed "teacher-centered" and "whole class" instruction – especially prominent in the middle school. Notably, evidence-based and high-quality instructional classrooms that did exemplify "student-centered" learning with differentiated activities and high

levels of student engagement do exist and should serve as a reference point to scale effective teaching across the PLC.

Taken together, the lack of high impact feedback to students across the PLC, coupled with limited student engagement practices, and the lack of consistent differentiation diminish the number of opportunities available to promote student participation in their own learning.

**Recommendations**

- Ensure that the feedback cycle includes an opportunity for students to discuss and explain their individual learning goals with teachers and the next steps they need to take to make progress or increase achievement. Structure an instructional walkthrough focused on teachers providing students with high impact and actionable feedback. Use the evidence-based classrooms as a model and learning lab for the PLC.
- Provide teachers with written feedback exemplars to student work that they can apply.
- 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)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Issued by NYSED on _____  <input type="checkbox"/> Pending -- The requirements have been fulfilled, but I have yet to receive word from NYSED  <input type="checkbox"/> Pending -- I have not yet fulfilled the requirements, but plan on doing so by the June 30, 2016.

	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A This is the only School Review with District Oversight and District-led review I am responsible for.
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