



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	660900010005	
School Name	William H. Holmes School	
School Address	195 North Columbus Avenue, Mount Vernon, 10553	
District Name	Mount Vernon School District	
School Leader	Daniele Davis-Morrow	
Dates of Review	March 6, 2019	
School Accountability Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority School <input type="checkbox"/> Focus School	
Type of Review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conceptual Frame 4 Review (A district-led review of SOPs 2.3, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.5)	
Review Team	Name	Affiliation/Title
School Leader	Daniele	Principal
District Representative	Dr. Waveline Bennett-Conroy	Assistant Superintendent
Additional Team Members	Dr. Karren Dunkley	Lead Reviewer
	Roxie Johnson	Math Specialist
	Lana Flemming-Thomas	English Language Arts Specialist

School Information Sheet for Holmes School

School Configuration (2017-18 data)			
Grade Configuration	Pre-K-7	Total Enrollment	382
		SIG Recipient	NO
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2017-18)			
# Transitional Bilingual	0	# Dual Language	0
		# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	0
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2015-16)			
# Special Classes	3	# SETSS	0
		# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	0
Types and Number of Special Classes (2015-16)			
# Visual Arts	33	# Music	37
		# Drama	0
# Foreign Language	2	# Dance	0
		# CTE	0
School Composition (most recent data)			
% Title I Population	68%	% Attendance Rate	93%
% Free Lunch	61%	% Reduced Lunch	7%
% Limited English Proficient	11%	% Students with Disabilities	20%
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)			
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0.3 %	% Black or African American	85.9%
% Hispanic or Latino	19.1 %	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1%
% White	12.6%	% Multi-Racial	0%
Personnel (most recent data)			
Years Principal Assigned to School	2	# of Assistant Principals	1
# of Deans	0	# of Counselors/Social Workers	2
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0	% Teaching Out of Certification	0
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	2	Average Teacher Absences	7.3
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2017-18 or most recent data available)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	41%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	37%
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	94%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	NA
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	X	Local Assistance Plan	
Focus District		Focus School Identified by a Focus District	
Priority School			

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (2017-18 or most recent data available)			
American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American	Yes
Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	
White		Multi-Racial	
Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient	
Economically Disadvantaged	Yes		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (2017-18 or most recent data available)			
American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American	No
Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	
White		Multi-Racial	
Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient	X
Economically Disadvantaged	No		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (2017-18 or most recent data available)			
American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American	Yes
Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	
White		Multi-Racial	
Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient	
Economically Disadvantaged	Yes		

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

Tenet 1

Results of the 2018-2019 DTSDE data will indicate 100% of teachers improving in the areas of small group instruction, differentiation, student engagement, establishing SMART goals and monitoring progress, interventions and collaboration by the end of the 2018-2019 school year. Administration will engage teachers in Year Long

Professional Development based on needs and data to improve teachers practice. This will result in 10% increase in the number of teachers rated Effective to a rating of Highly Effective in Domain 3 components. Evidence will be indicated through benchmark assessments, RTI documentation, progress monitoring data as well as formative and summative assessments.

Tenet 2

As a result of the 2017-18 DTSDE, 100% of teachers will effectively implement rigorous, grade appropriate instruction that is aligned with the CCLS during the 2018-19 school year. Implementation will be measured using the following assessment tools: i-Ready, DIBELS, benchmark, formative, summative, and standardized assessments. Rigorous instruction will be defined as instruction that supports an environment in which each student is expected to learn in accordance with high expectations regarding the following: 1) skills for life, 2) critical thinking, 3) problem solving, 4) analyzing, 5) collaboration, 6) leadership, 7) adaptability, 8) effective oral and written communication, 9) creativity and 10) curiosity for information.

Teachers will use low-level entry scores to identify students for progress monitoring and will provide them with appropriate interventions. Math assessment scores will increase by 5% from BOY to MOY and another 5% from MOY to EOY.

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 48 lessons during the review.
- Reviewers conducted interviews with the principal, teachers and students, respectively.
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including lesson plans, instructional artifacts such as the data binders, student portfolios, agendas from Professional Learning Community (PLC) and Curriculum Meetings and snapshots of schoolwide data.

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
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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	

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

3

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 organized personnel to increase academic achievement by examining the school’s data and determining where to focus staff and target resources. Specifically, the school leader concentrated on expanding the cadre of teachers for the middle grades as the school continues to transition to a grow-a-grade middle school model. Importantly, the school leader compiled and presented a list of positions and resources including additional classroom spaces that the school needed in order to ensure a successful 2018-2019 school year. The school leader presented this list of required resources to the superintendent and his cabinet. The school leader expressed that she communicates the need for appropriate funding to meet the evolving needs of the school during the annual budget defense. The school leader also shared that she had to downsize specific grades to accommodate the increasing number of middle school students.

The school leader articulated that she implements a purposefully planned extended learning program. This program includes Academic Power Hour (APH) for students to ensure that they receive targeted support in English Language Arts (ELA), Math, and Science, three days per week from 3:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m., totaling six additional hours of instructional support. Initially, only specific students participated in the APH based on achievement data. However, due to the demand from families, the APH program facilitated the participation of all students who want to attend. Also, the learning community provides students with academic intervention services (AIS) during the regular school day using small group instruction to improve content mastery in Math and ELA.

The school leader promotes reflective practice and data-driven inquiry among teachers beginning in September. Significantly, the learning community uses the beginning of the year (BOY) and middle of the year (MOY) assessment data to determine how to program, and place students in the most appropriate learning environment. This learning community utilizes data garnered from the students’ NYS summative assessments to plan instructional strategies and programs for the school year. For example, for the 2018-2019 school year, the PLC implemented a school-wide focus on writing across the curriculum, using small group instruction, grouping students according to learning levels for support during Response to Intervention (RTI) periods, and the use of graphic organizers to help scaffold learning. Notably, the school leader instituted a workshop model in ELA and the six-part lesson flow in Math based on the Envisions curriculum.

Despite scheduling challenges, the school leader has implemented a professional learning community (PLC)

that convenes twice monthly to focus on promising practices to increase student achievement. Notably, the school has fully implemented the PLC model, with teachers engaging in twice-monthly PLC meetings afterschool, bi-weekly curriculum meetings, and vertical and horizontal PLCs. The school leader expressed that the master scheduler did not integrate PLC meeting times into the building's master schedule for the 2018-2019 school year. However, since professional learning communities provide an invaluable anchor to build a collaborative culture, the school leader developed a plan to support the PLC structure. The principal also shared that during PLC meetings, teachers discuss how best to unpack the standards and the tools they can use to ensure students' access to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Importantly, during the PLC time, the school leader coaches teachers regarding the instructional shifts and the use of data to inform short-term and long-term instructional goals. The school leader also shared that in place of instructional coaches, she developed teacher leadership capacity by implementing "a case manager" model where identified teachers lead grade level teams and PLCs.

During PLC meetings, teachers also participate in articulation around the specific learning needs of students and share concrete strategies to ensure the success of each student. The school leader highlighted that she develops teachers' pedagogy by exposing them to a myriad of research-based instructional strategies. The principal discussed how she promotes rigorous lesson planning and encouraged teachers to utilize proven strategies that include SGI, differentiation and higher order thinking (HOT) questions in their pedagogy. The principal also stated that she reinforces learning around these select strategies during school-wide professional development (PD) days.

The principal ensures the seamless collaboration between the special education teachers, English as a New Language (ENL) teacher, and two reading teachers. Additionally, the school leader highlighted that clear expectations for staff and students drive shared decision-making practices. The school leader has a demonstrated track record of success in building partnerships to advance student success. Specifically, she develops strong partnerships that undergird the learning community's commitment to every student achieving at or above grade level. To provide an example, the school's partnership with Just Inspire helps to institutionalize the use of data across the learning community by increasing teachers' efficacy in examining data in a granular way to inform daily instruction and interventions (including acceleration). The principal also cited a strategic partnership with Concordia College that allows the K-8 learning community to collaborate with a higher education counterpart to adequately prepare teachers for the 21st-century classroom. The school leader leverages the Concordia partnerships to recruit, hire and sustain personnel that enable the school to meet the academic and social needs of the students. The Concordia associate teachers also provide in-class academic support for students during the regular school year.

Increasing student achievement (as measured by the NYS state assessments) is one of the priorities for the PLC. The majority of operational and instructional practices align with the school's focus on increasing proficiency rates of students in ELA and Math.

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

Commendations

- A strong culture of collaboration exists, i.e., teachers collaborating with each other and students collaborating with each other.
- Visible data-informed groups in the majority of classrooms
- Clear evidence of student knowledge and use of rubrics
- Efficient use of teacher aides and personnel, especially in self-contained classrooms
- Inquiry-based learning environment as students asked questions about their learning
- The use of foster grandparents to support learning in classrooms
- Exceptional demonstration of time on task by teachers and students
- Students were able to explain what they were learning and why
- High expectations for learning in self-contained classrooms; Teachers were exemplary in tiering groups, chunking the lesson, and providing visuals and cues for verbal and non-verbal learners
- Students exhibit a strong sense of school pride and civics
- A strong culture of learning focused on increasing student achievement
- Teachers possess knowledge of data and how to use it to drive learning outcomes
- Visible learning targets in all classrooms
- A high frequency of teachers use academic vocabulary, hence, more robust evidence of students using academic vocabulary.

Recommendations

- Implement a content and rigor PLC learning strand for the middle grades’ teachers. Develop a companion action plan to differentiate rigorous teaching and learning expectations for middle school 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.

Tenet Rating

3

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, 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 that eleven percent of the students are Multi-Language Learners (MLLs) and twenty percent of the students are students with disabilities (SWDs), the school adapts and monitors the curriculum to meet the needs of ALL students. During the review, the school leader discussed how the school implements a school-wide instructional plan to provide targeted support for: 1) students with disabilities (SWDs), 2) Multi-language learners (MLLs), and 3) students who intersect as both SWD and MLL. Specifically, the PLC collaborates with a data consultant, to examine significant trends regarding the achievement of all students, with emphasis on students with special learning needs and MLLs. The principal and teachers use the information from these data reviews to drive lesson planning and to determine the focus of bi-weekly curriculum and twice monthly PLC meetings.

The principal discussed how she shared “ten lesson plan templates and explained to teachers to go into Office 365 to share their lesson plans with colleagues.” The school leader stated that some teachers might use a binder to organize their lesson plans while others may email lessons. Notwithstanding, the principal provided feedback to all teachers on their lesson plans, with attention focused on grouping students and teachers’ plans to differentiate and accommodate the learning styles and needs of all students. The principal regularly engages in conversations with teachers to ensure that they follow the district’s curriculum maps and pacing guides. The school leader also expressed that she furnishes teachers with consistent feedback based on walkthroughs and classroom observations.

Trends that the data consultant identify determine the areas of focus for ongoing professional development and help to inform the tiered interventions offered during the RTI period and daily classroom practices. Teachers disaggregated data to determine which students are on track, in need of intervention, or accelerated. Mainly, during the RTI block: 1) Tier one students work independently or in groups to challenge and enrich their learning, 2) Tier two students work with a teacher for direct teaching to increase their reading fluency and deepen their comprehension of texts, and 3) Tier three students are seen by the Reading Specialists for direct phonics and reading instruction using multisensory programs and strategies from Spalding, Orton Gillingham, Leveled Literacy Intervention, Language Live, and iReady lessons.

The RTI team share strategies and interventions, and consistently assess the rigor of lessons and student engagement to ensure cohesive, comprehensive, and adaptive curricula. Both the teachers and principal emphasized that the school schedules RTI meetings every six weeks to ensure proper tiering and placing of tier two and three students.

During the review, the teachers stated that they expose students to a rigorous curriculum through the use of the district’s pacing guides, “working with a particular standard for a given day or week until the majority of students demonstrate mastery.” One teacher mentioned that if a student did not grasp the standard, then she would spiral this concept while teaching new content and target instruction during small groups. Teachers

noted that in the lower grades, the Spalding program provided them with an instructional focus on early literacy that builds phonological awareness by “helping students to sound letters.” One teacher cited the use of the Orton Gillingham framework and sentence frames as vital tools in helping students access the CCLS.

Additionally, the teachers emphasized that this year in ELA, the learning community focused on: 1) students identifying the main idea, 2) activating students’ prior knowledge when they go to different classes, 3) using the Frayer model to promote students’ understanding of vocabulary, 4) visuals, 5) root words, and 6) vocabulary self-selection (VSS). In Math, one teacher mentioned the use of the CUBES strategy to scaffold students’ ability to dissect “word problems and analyze what they have to do.” The majority of teachers discussed the use of iReady and DIBELS data to organize students in flexible groups for RTI. One teacher mentioned that she modifies the curriculum by using the RACE model to augment learning for her students in the primary grades.

Teachers also discussed the various ways in which they differentiated instruction for students based on their Lexile score. Concretely, teachers select text modified to students’ reading level while teaching the literacy skill. Teachers also provide explicit instruction on text structure and features to ensure students’ access to the curriculum.

The ENL teacher referenced how she differentiated resources for Multilingual Learners (MLLs) to expose them to a CCLS-aligned curriculum. For example, she shared the use of cognates to strengthen students’ decoding skills. Both the principal and the teachers described how the English as a New Language (ENL) teacher provided push-in services to support MLLs. The school leader stated that the ENL teacher closely collaborated with the two reading teachers to meet the diverse needs of their students. Teachers also discussed how they used select principles from specially designed instruction (SDI) to scaffold and differentiate learning for all students. The school leader also highlighted the interface between the general education teacher and consultant teacher to ensure a meaningful push-in and pull-out service model for students with disabilities and for particular use in the integrated co-teaching (ICT) classrooms.

Areas of Strength

The learning community activates specific structures and practices to ensure access to rigorous and coherent curricula for all students. The review team documented strong evidence of the impact of these practices on teaching and learning. Specifically, the PLC collaborates to implement research-based programs such as Spalding and Orton Gillingham, coupled with specially designed instruction and data-informed groupings to ensure differentiation. This range of teaching strategies provides students with multiple points of access to the CCLS. The embedded and systematic, collaborative approach among all staff demonstrates the commitment to meeting the needs of diverse learners. During the classroom observations, the reviewers noted that the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms was congruent with the practices articulated by the school leader and staff.

The review team noted that of the forty-eight lessons observed, only one lesson did not align to the CCLS. In this seventh-grade Spanish foreign language class, the teacher showed students the McFarland USA movie and required them to answer twenty-three level one recall questions. For example, question number nine asked, “Where did they have to work? Question twenty-one asked, “What school does Coach decide to work for?” When asked to explain the learning target for the day, the majority of students responded that they were watching a movie. When the reviewer probed for students to share why they were watching the McFarland USA movie and to explain the connections to learning Spanish or the learning target, all of the students stated that they did not know or were not sure. The reviewer observed this Spanish lesson for seventeen minutes and did not hear any Spanish used by students or the teacher during this entire time.

Recommendations

- Provide targeted standards-aligned lesson planning support for the seventh-grade foreign language teacher. The teacher should couple the content in the District’s Foreign Language curriculum maps with the World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages.
- Participate as a member with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and specifically engage with the organization regarding promising practices for middle school students to learn a foreign language through student-centered activities that promote students’ mastery of the target language in a meaningful and authentic way.

3.3 **The school is in Stage 3 for this Statement of Practice:** Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans they use include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.

Debriefing Statement

Clear evidence illustrates that teachers attempt to develop unit and lesson plans, which include--and are monitored--using data-driven protocols. Importantly, the review team concluded that the delivery of observed lessons demonstrated that teachers fully incorporate data-driven instructional protocols to address student achievement needs. Reviewers visited a total of 48 lessons. During the interviews, the principal and teachers stated that they use a multi-tiered approach to implement data-driven protocols such as, 1) the use of iReady BOY and MOY data to target supports for students in RTI, and SGI; 2) the use of Common Core assessments, DIBELS, Aimsweb, and Spalding in grades K-2; 3) the examination of interim and summative data during PLC and curriculum meetings (i.e., performance on weekly teacher-made assessments based on the Journeys and Collections ELA curriculum, teacher anecdotes, Running Records, benchmark assessments, ELA and Math mock assessments); and 4) designing lessons and extended learning support for students by triangulating academic achievement data. The learning community discussed how instructional staff cross-fertilized the various datasets to plan units and lessons in teams horizontally.

As previously mentioned, the data-driven instruction (DDI) cycle helps the PLC to determine the grouping

profiles and tiered supports to students during RTI. The PLC then creates an action plan based on student strengths and weaknesses and assign students to classrooms and interventionists, accordingly. This action plan translates to the use of the tier one needs assessment to create SMART learning goals for students. The school leader stated that the PLC progress monitors students every four to six weeks and then spirals a new DDI cycle and a tiered system of supports based on whether or not students meet their learning goals. The pre-DTSDE self-assessment stated that grade level PLCs reviewed progress monitoring results and examined student work to “incorporate new strategies, change goals and adjust grouping profiles to incorporate more complex materials that focus on higher-order questioning.”

Significantly, the data consultant shares longitudinal data with teachers to strategically plan for enrichment or acceleration during daily ELA and Math instruction. Teachers discuss this data in grade-level PLCs. The data consultant gives the learning community the information they need to engage in deep conversations during faculty meetings, distinguish where students require more support and formulate SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound) student learning goals based on that data.

Teachers also discussed how the interventionist team conducted strategy sessions with PLC members to develop innovative action plans for students who persistently struggled. One teacher emphasized that the RTI problem-solving team invites all teachers to send information on students who consistently underperform.

Areas of Strength

Reviewers concluded that the learning community implements DDI protocols in an even manner. Both the teachers and school principal cited the use of school-wide data-driven instructional (DDI) protocols, aligned to the various instruments (i.e., iReady, DIBELS, Aimsweb and Spalding). The majority of teachers had lesson plans that reflected data-informed groupings and specific ways in which teachers would differentiate instruction for each group. One observer noted that of the ten classrooms they visited, seven of the lesson plans were robust including only the Aim, Do Now, and Standards. The same observer indicated that students were able to fluently explain what they needed to work on in each group. Significantly, during the interviews, students explicitly discussed and shared artifacts regarding how their teachers incorporated rubrics into daily instruction.

During the interview and examination of student work artifacts, an exemplary pattern emerged regarding the use of rubrics across all grades and subject areas. The majority of students explained that their teachers used rubrics for short and extended writing responses and that they “used rubrics after the first draft to improve their work...I had to write about everyday life in the 1890s. I had a first draft and final draft using a rubric. I got a four on the assignment, and a four says my response is clear, focused and well-organized throughout.” Another student shared that his teacher used rubrics in Math “when it appeared that the students really need help.”

In general, the use of rubrics seems to be consistent across the learning community, making it possible to lead students towards a standard expectation of college and career readiness.

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

At the beginning of the academic year, the school leader establishes a baseline based on the review of BOY assessments. The learning community progress monitors students every four to six weeks in tandem with the administration of the DIBELS assessment in the lower grades and the trend data from the NYS ELA and Math exams, iReady and NYSELAT exams. The principal described how the school uses these first assessments as baseline benchmarks to capture students' learning needs and to establish schoolwide, grade-level and student-specific SMART goals. Reviewers saw clear evidence of a school data wall, which was in a prominent place in the hallway to monitor students' progress. The data wall included students' progress in Math, ELA, and Science.

The school utilizes data from multiple sources to identify patterns and to tier instructional support for students. The school leader and teachers described how they: 1) employed the DIBELS benchmark to determine interventions for students in the lower grades, 2) used iReady, Journeys, and Common Core benchmarks as summative assessments, 3) examined students' performance on NYS ELA, Math and NYSELAT exams, 4) cross-fertilized beginning- and middle-of-the-year data to analyze convergence and divergence trends, and 5) used trend data to implement high-leverage intervention strategies during the RTI block, daily instruction, academic power hour and academic intervention services.

Examples of formative assessments include: 1) pre-assessments before teachers begin a unit of study or chapter, 2) the use of lesson guides for small group instruction which serve as quick checks and checking for understanding to identify students that may need help, and 3) accuracy of responses to teacher-made assessments such as Think-Pair-Share/ Turn and Talk, journal entries, conferences, quick writes, and entrance/exit tickets.

Teachers described how the PLC differentiated instruction by utilizing visual cues, modifying texts, and learning tasks for SWDs, MLLs and all students based on specially designed instruction principles. Teachers shared that they use the data to construct SMART learning goals for students and that as a part of the progress monitoring process the learning community regularly revised these goals. Several members of the PLC mentioned that teachers discussed students' achievement data with them. Students then co-created SMART learning goals with their teachers to empower and facilitate ownership of learning.

Areas for Improvement

Although students mentioned taking the iReady assessments, a significant number of students stated that they were unable to explain their current academic levels. One seventh grade student expressed that he was unsure of his NYS assessment score and his iReady BOY results. Another fifth-grade student stated that he set “academic goals by writing down what he can improve on-make it better.” The student continued that “I use to not separate paragraphs. I had huge blob of words-so I have to work on indenting and separating paragraphs.”

When reviewers asked to elucidate on specific reading and math goals, a third-grade student reported that her goals were to “indent paragraphs and make her handwriting neater. Now I indent, and my handwriting has gotten better.” This same student continued that she also didn’t know her iReady data but believed she was at “the end of 5th grade in Math.”

Notably, all of the teachers’ data binders contained students’ individual iReady data. However, the evidence did not support the contention that the learning community consistently shared the data with students and engaged students in progress monitoring and co-creating or revising their SMART learning goals.

The review team acknowledged that there are pockets of teachers providing feedback to students. However, the examination of learning artifacts coupled with the responses during the student interviews and classroom visits revealed an irregular pattern of feedback across the PLC. To provide an example, one reviewer noted that during the interview, students shared that they primarily receive verbal feedback from their teachers. One of the fifth-grade portfolios included multiple pieces of work, which the students explained included the first and the final draft because they had to “make it better and elaborate more on vocabulary.” However, none of the pieces of work provided the student with written feedback as a guide to produce the final essay. When reviewers probed him to explain how he improved the vocabulary, the student did share that he replaced the word “made with manufactured” and also corrected some grammar, which was a bit off, and “had to write the dates in some of the companies and manufacturers.”

One reviewer pointed out that of the ten classrooms she visited, feedback on student work was inconsistent and that no classes had visible student reflection on learning or goal sheets to indicate the next level of learning. Overall, based on the conversations with students, classroom visits, and examination of student portfolios, it was difficult to detect how teachers regularly use feedback data to improve learning outcomes. This gap in practice results in fewer opportunities to engage students in appropriately challenging tasks that lead towards a common expectation of college and career readiness.

Recommendations

- The PLC should identify clear protocols and timelines to formalize student conferences for sharing data with students and establishing SMART goals.

- Organize a student conference calendar aligned to the iReady and progress monitoring calendar to consistently engage students in revising and rewriting goals that strengthen student ownership of learning. Establish a plan to communicate and discuss students’ individual learning goals aligned with the data cycles. During these discussions, teachers should share clear benchmarks so that students know what they need to focus on to approach and demonstrate content mastery.
- Implement a process for student reflection; Students should reflect on SMART goals so that they can articulate where they are academically and what they need to do to progress to the next level.

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	3
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4.2 **The school is in Stage 3 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 use of procedures such as: 1) ensuring bell-to-bell instruction to maximize each instructional minute, 2) using the “do now” to connect to previous lessons and to activate prior knowledge, 3) having students reciprocate learning by reading the learning targets and objectives and telling what they are learning and why, 4) guiding practice and note-taking that leads to independent practice, 5) reviewing exit slips to check for understanding, 6) implementing student choice to promote student engagement and rigor, and 7) modeling the use of question stems with students to help them think about learning and how they learn.

Teachers also discussed how they frontload vocabulary and concepts to encourage connections in the younger grades. For example, one teacher stated that for each text, students had to think about and write text-to-self, text-to-text, or text-to-world connections.

Importantly, several teachers stated that they focus on giving students an opportunity to complete learning activities that reflect the multiple intelligences framework. The PLC discussed how they promoted literacy proficiency by having students interact with fiction and non-fiction texts to improve reading, writing and listening competencies. One teacher reported that they required students to summarize at the end of each lesson by writing their thoughts on a post-it note.

In some cases, teachers leverage technology to increase student participation in learning. For example, teachers use Smartboards during daily instruction and YouTube videos to help students crystallize concepts that they demonstrate difficulty mastering.

One teacher referenced that they were excited to implement the Envisions program in Math, as it provided their students with an opportunity to develop critical thinking and procedural skills. One teacher referenced that students utilized CUBES as a strategy for solving Math word problems.

The learning community emphasized the instructional focus on writing across the curriculum, citing that textual evidence and applying Math to everyday life should result in higher levels of student learning. During the review, teachers described how common planning time during monthly faculty and curriculum meetings and PLC meetings fostered consistent collaboration among staff regarding promising instructional practices. Explicitly, teachers asserted that they improved as practitioners because they had a chance to think aloud with their colleagues on how best to modify and target instruction. One teacher shared that she relied on her grade-level PLC members to determine which differentiation strategies to use.

Summarily, the principal shared that the cornerstones of the instructional program for the 2018-2019 school year consist of: 1) using appropriately leveled texts for the different tiers of learners, 2) writing across the curriculum, and 3) integrating Math problem-solving techniques. As a result, she expected teachers to incorporate these strategies as the governing instrument for differentiation.

Both the teachers and the school leader also explicated how implementing the district's curriculum materials such as Journeys and Collections in ELA, and Envisions in Math, helps teachers to adapt and align plans that meet the various learning needs of all students.

Strengths

The strong pedagogical emphasis on academic language was visible in many of the observed classrooms. Reviewers reported that the majority of instructional time was student-centered, with students dominating classroom talk in the lower grades. Reviewers observed the high frequency of academic language in use. In one Math class students engaged in peer-to-peer feedback regarding whether or not a mathematical inference was valid. During this discussion, students stated the following: "His inference is not valid because he only chose ten random people." Another student responded, "A survey is not valid if the data is collected in a random way." Students challenged each other's thinking and were able to explain and apply the meaning of the word inference fluently and with validity in math contexts.

To provide another example, in one seventh grade ELA class, students had to give reasons and cite text evidence in response to the following question: "Why did it make sense for Anita and Joseph to present their

essays in chronological order?” Interestingly, the majority of students were able to explain when the teacher asked why the chronological format mattered and shared with a reviewer that they were using the NYS four-point rubric to guide their draft of this informational essay. Students also readily identified the components and format of an informational essay, using the model reviewed by the teacher to help to elucidate their thinking.

During one self-contained class, students employed academic language to discuss the essential question: “How do inventions help athletes?” Notably, several students (independent of any prompts) responded that the “technology helped athletes to jump higher because the materials that made the pole were flexible.” The student continued to share that the word “flexible means when you stretch something out...like when my father uses a rubber band to put up his hair.” Reviewers documented a plethora of examples of students interacting with their peers in groups and engaging with the content and learning process in an inquisitive and curious way.

Overall, reviewers indicated that during lessons, students illustrated their understanding of concepts by using: 1) graphic organizers to display their thinking, and 2) manipulatives to create a visual representation of their solutions in math.

The consistent and systemic implementation of inquiry-based and collaborative instructional practices advances student achievement and the learning community’s capacity to meet student goals.

Recommendations

- Focus a PLC learning cycle on teachers modeling. Teachers should consistently provide students with standards-aligned instructional models and exemplars.

4.3 **The school is in Stage 3 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 implements specific structures and strategies to provide instruction that is: 1) coherent, 2) appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLC), and 3) accessible, as it leads to multiple points of access for all students. Specifically, both the teachers and the school leader described how teachers explore research-based practices during PLC and curriculum meetings to ensure that they effectively instruct all groups of students. The school leader emphasized that teachers receive regular professional development at the building level regarding differentiation strategies that bolster students’ abilities to access and master the curricula.

To ensure instruction that stimulates and challenges students’ thinking, teachers explained that they planned

activities at the mid to higher end of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK). The ENL teacher discussed how she used leveled readers to provide multilingual language learners with access to grade-level skills and vocabulary. She mentioned that it was important to “build students’ comprehension, as emerging learners produce less language.” Several teachers shared how they used the SDI checklist to include stringent accommodations and modifications for students with individual learning plans. To provide an example, one teacher’s SDI checklist stated that a student would receive: 1) extended time to complete assessments, 2) small group instruction, and 3) a staff member reading tests to them, as a part of their academic modifications.

The learning community delineated additional modifications and scaffolding strategies such as: 1) providing students with a word bank aligned to Webb’s DOK, and 2) using a Journeys cheat sheet to access vocabulary at a Lexile level that is below grade level -- complemented by listening to audio that teaches the same skill and text to interact with the content at a higher level. Both the teachers and school leader shared that they devise data-informed lesson plans coupled with activities that promote higher-order and critical thinking.

Teachers also stated that they ensured multiple points of access for MLLs by using cognates to build students’ understanding of vocabulary, visuals, sentence starters, question stems, and graphic organizers. Teachers emphasized that there is a strong culture of collaboration between the ENL teacher, special education teachers, and classroom teachers to support MLLs, SWDs, students who intersect as both, and all students.

The learning community mentioned several ways in which they differentiated for on-track, intermediate and accelerated learners. For example, teachers implement: 1) small group instruction, 2) opportunities for peer tutoring, 3) scaffolding learning activities during RTI groups, 4) think-pair-share group activities, 5) multisensory movement and 6) hands-on technology to personalize learning.

Strengths

The learning community provided clear descriptions of how teachers ensured multiple points of access for students. The reviewers reported visible evidence of student engagement, collaboration and inquiry during lessons. Importantly, explicit teaching of vocabulary and intentional use of academic language were visible in the majority of classrooms that the review team members visited.

During the student interview, one student shared that the teacher works with different groups of students based on need. He shared that he usually “doesn’t need the extra help but that other students do.” This student also explained that: “Some students go to RTI and other students were able to use the laptop for help with their test.”

During the majority of classrooms reviewers visited, teachers used data to group students according to their instructional level. To provide an example, in one ELA class, the teacher worked with her tier three students to assist them with vocabulary, and guide reading and completion of the “cause and effect” assignment. During this lesson, the teacher also circulated to check on the progress of the remaining students. The reviewer observed a MLL student working on a laptop to complete a reading assignment in her native language of

Spanish.

Summarily, teachers tackle the CCLS instructional shifts by engaging students in intellectually challenging and inquiry-based learning activities. The instructional practices that the majority of PLC members utilize promote intellectual discovery and rigorous thinking leading towards a common expectation of college and career readiness.

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 learning. For example, the teachers use iReady, and DIBELS, to progress monitor students. One teacher stated that she maintains Running Records to assess students' fluency and advancement towards academic goals. Teachers also mentioned that they share the iReady report with students "so they can see their progress." Both the teachers and the school leader outlined how the learning community uses a myriad of end-of-lesson assessments, including exit tickets and partner shares to tier students and provide support during AIS, RTI, and SGI. One teacher referenced that she provided a space for students with individual learning plans to graph their academic status so that they can create a visual representation of their level.

A data wall displayed in the school's hallway provides a visual snapshot of the achievement levels of students and trends by grade level in Math, ELA, and Science. The data wall reflects the results of the NYS assessments.

The PLC members reiterated that teachers utilize a variety of data sources to tier students for instruction and target interventions. Notably, the school provides intensive services for ELL students, SWDs, and struggling learners. The school leader also utilizes the assessment data to provide feedback to teachers regarding lesson planning and to determine individual, grade level, and schoolwide learning targets. During PLCs, faculty and curriculum meetings, the staff develop a repertoire of strategies and agree on common instructional practices to personalize instruction and address student needs.

Notably, in a few classes, teachers provided feedback that translated in students making adjustments to improve their work. For example, in the first draft of an authentic writing assignment, the student wrote, "The spread of machinery and factories make industries and companies better." After receiving written feedback from the teacher, which a reviewer observed, the student revised the sentence to state, "The spread of machinery in factories make industries and companies better financially, and things were made quickly and efficiently."

This example demonstrates that when students receive clear, real-time and actionable feedback, learning

outcomes will improve.

Areas for Improvement

During the review, reviewers concluded that teachers were inconsistent in providing students with consistent and actionable feedback related to their academic progress and work products. During the student interviews, it was difficult for the majority of students to articulate specific feedback from teachers that would guide them to improve their work and reach their particular academic goals. Additionally, the majority of students struggled to share one specific 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. The lack of written and useful feedback diminishes student participation in the learning process.

Recommendations

- Activate a system of feedback that is visible and meaningful to students. Establish protocols to support teachers in providing verbal and written feedback to students in a consistent manner.
- Focus a PLC strand on teachers using written feedback as a core instructional tool to aid students’ mastery.

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)	X 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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