



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	421800010003
School Name	Clary Middle School
School Address	100 Amidon Drive, Syracuse, NY 13205
District Name	Syracuse City School District
School Leader	Pamela Odom
Dates of Review	May 13-14, 2014
School Accountability Status	Focus School
Type of Review	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet												
Grade Configuration	6-8	Total Enrollment	465	SIG Recipient	<input type="checkbox"/>	Title 1 Population	78.5%	Attendance Rate	95.3%			
Free Lunch	70.1 %	Reduced Lunch	8.4%			Limited English Proficient	0%	Students with Disabilities	26.1%			
Number of English Language Learner Classes												
#Transitional Bilingual	0-		#Dual Language	0-								
Number of Special Education Classes												
#Self-Contained	41		#Consultant Teaching	3		#Integrated Collaborative Teaching	0					
#Resource Room												
Number of Special Classes												
#Visual Arts	1	#Music	1	#Drama	0		#Foreign Language	1	#Dance	0	#CTE	0
Racial/Ethnic Origin												
American Indian or Alaska Native	3.23 %	Black or African American	72.75 %	Hispanic or Latino	6.00 %	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	.69%	White	12.7 %	Multi-racial	4.62 %	
Personnel												
Years Principal Assigned to School	7		# of Assistant Principals	1		# of Deans	0		# of Counselors / Social Workers	3		
Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0%		Teaching Out of Certification	0%		Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.	3%		Average Teacher Absences	8.6%		
Credit Accumulation (High School Only) and Performance Rates												
% of 1 st yr. students who earned 10+ credits			% of 2 nd yr. students who earned 10+ credits			% of 3 rd yr. students who earned 10+ credits			4 Year Graduation Rate			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	8.7%		Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	5.8%		Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	37.8%		6 Year Graduation Rate			

Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA			
	American Indian or Alaska Native	X	Black or African American
	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
X	White		Multi-racial
X	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
X	Economically Disadvantaged		All Students
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Math			
	American Indian or Alaska Native	X	Black or African American
	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
X	White		Multi-racial
X	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
X	Economically Disadvantaged		All Students
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science			
	American Indian or Alaska Native	X	Black or African American
	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
	White		Multi-racial
	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
X	Economically Disadvantaged		All Students
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective			
N/A	Limited English Proficiency		

SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE SCHOOL:

Statement of Practice 3.3: Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans used include data-drive instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.

Statement of Practice 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.

Statement of Practice 5.4: All school stakeholders work together to develop a common understanding of the importance of their contributions in creating a school community that is safe, conducive to learning, and fostering of a sense of ownership for providing social and emotional developmental health supports tied to the school’s vision.

Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: Visionary leaders create a school community and culture that lead to success, well-being and high academic outcomes for all students via systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
2.2	The school leader ensures that the school community shares the Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) goals/mission, and long-term vision inclusive of core values that address the priorities outlined in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP).			X	
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.		X		
2.4	The school leader has a fully functional system in place aligned to the district's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) to conduct targeted and frequent observation and track progress of teacher practices based on student data and feedback.			X	
2.5	Leaders effectively use evidence-based systems and structures to examine and improve critical individual and school-wide practices as defined in the SCEP (student achievement, curriculum and teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health).			X	
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 2:				D	

Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support: The school has rigorous and coherent curricula and assessments that are appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for all students and are modified for identified subgroups in order to maximize teacher instructional practices and student-learning outcomes.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
3.2	The school leader ensures and supports the quality implementation of a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.			X	
3.3	Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans used include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.			X	
3.4	The school leader and teachers have developed a comprehensive plan for teachers to partner within and across all grades and subjects to create interdisciplinary curricula targeting the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities.			X	
3.5	Teachers implement a comprehensive system for using formative and summative assessments for strategic short and long-range curriculum planning that involves student reflection, tracking of, and ownership of learning.			X	
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 3:				D	

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
4.2	School and teacher leaders ensure that instructional practices and strategies are organized around annual, unit, and daily lesson plans that address all student goals and needs.			X	
4.3	Teachers provide coherent, and appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students.			X	
4.4	Teachers and students work together to implement a program/plan to create a learning environment that is responsive to students' varied experiences and tailored to the strengths and needs of all students.			X	
4.5	Teachers inform planning and foster student participation in their own learning process by using a variety of summative and formative data sources (e.g., screening, interim measures, and progress monitoring).			X	
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 4:				D	

Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health: The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
5.2	The school leader establishes overarching systems and understandings of how to support and sustain student social and emotional developmental health and academic success.			X	
5.3	The school articulates and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is aligned to a curriculum or program that provides learning experiences and a safe and healthy school environment for families, teachers, and students.			X	
5.4	All school stakeholders work together to develop a common understanding of the importance of their contributions in creating a school community that is safe, conducive to learning, and fostering of a sense of ownership for providing social and emotional developmental health supports tied to the school's vision.			X	
5.5	The school leader and student support staff work together with teachers to establish structures to support the use of data to respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs.			X	
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:				D	

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
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6.2	The school leader ensures that regular communication with students and families fosters their high expectations for student academic achievement.			X	
6.3	The school engages in effective planning and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders so that student strength and needs are identified and used to augment learning.			X	
6.4	The school community partners with families and community agencies to promote and provide training across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.			X	
6.5	The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.			X	
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:				D	

School Review – Findings, Evidence, Impact and Recommendations:

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	D
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Debriefing Statement: The school leader employs strategies and has established structures that are designed to lead to attainment of the school’s ambitious vision to become “the most improved urban middle school in America.” However, not all members of the school community are fully aware of their own role and responsibilities in support of the school’s mission and school goals do not specify the results intended by the various school initiatives. Systems to evaluate the many school initiatives are underdeveloped, resulting in the continuation of activities that may or may not be producing positive student outcomes.

Strengths:

2.3 **The school has received a rating of *Effective* for this Statement of Practice:** Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.

Overall Finding: The school leader has effected key strategic actions to strengthen opportunities for student success.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- In at least three key areas, the school leader has put in place systems and procedures that broaden opportunities for student success: a gender-based configuration; tools to enhance teacher knowledge and skill; and a commonly understood behavior management program.
- The school leader reported leading the effort to establish a gender-based program in response to continuing poor academic performance and recently she reported on the impact of the pilot to the Board of Education showing gains in student achievement results since the design’s launch three years ago. Recognizing the need to build teacher skills and knowledge to implement the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), the school leader collaborated with staff to establish expectations for productive use of data, grade-level and content-area meetings that embed professional development, and a common lesson plan template. The school leader indicated that the “Cougar Checks” system for behavior management grew out of an analysis of prior incentive systems and was informed by recent collaboration with the Peaceful Schools program. Each of these decisions and subsequent activities by the school leader represent strategic actions that have increased opportunities for student success.
- The school leader indicated that she is dependent on district decisions regarding staff placement but she takes the initiative to use formal and informal networks to identify potential staff with the targeted skills needed by the school. She reported that she pays particular attention to district-trained coaches who are interested in returning to the classroom following their service in the special assignment, one of whom is now a member of the Clary staff and a recognized expert in differentiation. The school leader conducts a personalized “Clary-fication” orientation for each new staff member. Her deployment of the Clary instructional coaches to focus intently on building

teachers' expertise enhances the capacity of the staff to execute a strong academic program. The school's resourceful use of the daily schedule has doubled academic time in ELA and mathematics through scheduled tutorial classes for struggling students.

- By participating in the district's "Promise Zone" initiative, the school leader indicated that the school has gained access to additional services and supports for her students and initiated the Peaceful Schools program to supplement the district-selected Positive Behavioral Supports and Interventions (PBIS) strategy for managing school climate. An additional social worker was assigned to the school who works with other members of the student support staff to provide for students' social and emotional developmental health.
- By embedding professional development (PD) for teachers and extra tutorial support for students within the contracted school day, the school leader demonstrated wise use of limited time and money to prepare the school to move forward.

Impact Statement: By making careful decisions to establish thoughtful academic and behavior systems and through the creative use of available resources, time and personnel, the school leader has increased opportunities for students to be successful.

Areas for Improvement:

2.2 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader ensures that the school community shares the Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) goals/mission, and long-term vision inclusive of core values that address the priorities outlined in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP).

Overall Finding: While the school leader employs a variety of strategies to communicate the school's mission and goals, the school community does not demonstrate a clear understanding of those targets beyond a generalized effort to improve.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- While many stakeholders interviewed during the review could cite the Clary vision "to become the most improved urban middle school in America," they described their role in achieving that vision in broad, general terms, such as to improve academic achievement, and not explicitly with precise actions, goals or targeted behavior. Students noted that the school mission is stated each day during announcements but they were unsure, beyond "doing your best," what was expected of them. Parents demonstrated awareness of the "most improved" part of the vision statement.
- The school's mission statement addresses intercultural understanding, worthy academic aspirations and noble character goals. It states, "At Clary Middle School, we promote intercultural understanding and build inquiring, knowledgeable young minds. Clary Middle School students are active, honest, compassionate, lifelong learners preparing for high school, college, careers, and beyond!" The school leader could not describe explicit actions taken toward 'intercultural understanding' by staff, students or families and cited only anecdotal evidence to explain why that aim is included in the mission. Both parents and students described their role in improving academic achievement, but they were less clear about the expectations or actions they might take

to build “intercultural understanding.”

- The school lists three of the Statements of Practice (SOP) from the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) as its goals in the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) and in the DTSDE Self-Assessment. The school leader reported that the goals were selected by the 12 member Clary Leadership Team and were selected based on the areas for improvement cited by the DTSDE district-led review of the school’s performance completed last year. Teachers in the focus group were uncertain they agreed with the school review’s finding that not all classrooms display high levels of student engagement and inquiry (SOP 4.2, 4.3), suggesting less than full consensus that the school’s goals, based on this finding, are accurate. Students reported in interviews that classwork was sometimes challenging, and the four parents interviewed for the review were confident their children were progressing toward the college and career target, though each confirmed that their children were generally strong academically. They were unable to describe the experience of families of children who struggle or who face cognitive or physical challenges.

Impact Statement: Without full agreement among staff, students and families on what actions each must take to accomplish the school’s ambitious vision to become “the most improved urban middle school in America,” that worthy aspiration is not yet being fully achieved.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Define explicit goals that capture all the elements of a SMART goal in collaboration with active participants from all stakeholder groups including students, teachers, families and community partners. Develop an action plan that makes explicit what each stakeholder group is expected to do to contribute to attainment of the goals.

2.4 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader has a fully functional system in place aligned to the district's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) to conduct targeted and frequent observation and track progress of teacher practices based on student data and feedback.

Overall Finding: The school leader is implementing the required actions of the district APPR and providing written feedback to teachers as designed. Tracking and monitoring of changes in teacher practices in response to leaders’ and coach’s feedback is informal rather than systematic.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school leader follows a structured schedule for announced evaluation visits aligned with the district’s APPR system. Evaluation report samples, reviewed by the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT), showed that feedback follows the language in the Danielson rubric, the central framework for the district’s APPR system. Teachers commend the usefulness of the feedback in guiding their own professional growth. However, the school leader described an informal process for assuring that teachers make use of the evaluator’s feedback to change teaching practice, one of the identified

needs cited in the school's previous review and included in its goals.

- In addition to the formal evaluation process outlined in the APPR, the school leader conducts periodic walk-throughs and “pop-ins” to monitor instruction. Evidence of the effectiveness of classroom practices of individual teachers or aggregated evidence across the school is not collected systematically or reviewed to guide PD decisions.
- The school leader employs the mathematics and the English Language Arts (ELA) instructional coaches to provide formative assessments of instruction and to offer technical assistance and embedded PD as a strategy to enhance teachers' professional expertise. A small group of teachers and the coaches piloted an “instructional rounds” process this year to examine classroom practices to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Two rounds of the pilot were conducted this year.
- The review team examined three sample teacher evaluation reports. The school leader provided samples from a strong teacher, a typical teacher, and a less skillful teacher. Evidence cited in the evaluation report describes the actions teachers take to conduct the class, and omit descriptions of student responses and their reactions to the teacher's instruction. The school leader rated each staff member positively, awarding 44 “effective” ratings and 17 “developing” ratings across 21 indicators in four of the Danielson domains for the teacher she identified as less skilled. While the school leader complies with the requirements of the district APPR process, constructive feedback in the samples provided was minimal.

Impact Statement: While each of the strategies for ensuring strong instructional practice have the potential to lead to improved outcomes, the quality of instruction observed at the school did not generate the desired level of student engagement or learning. The lack of detailed data showing whether teachers' instructional activities generate student learning results in an APPR process means that the process does not effectively contribute to improved student learning.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Include evidence of student responses to teacher actions in recording and documenting formal observations in order to connect teaching practices with student learning; use data from walkthroughs alongside formal observations to determine how well students are learning day to day. Use this data to complement data derived from longer-term standardized assessment data.

2.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** Leaders effectively use evidence-based systems and structures to examine and improve critical individual and school-wide practices as defined in the SCEP (student achievement, curriculum and teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health).

Overall Finding: The school leader employs strategies and has structures that form the framework of a coherent system for moving the school forward. However, the effectiveness of the strategies is not regularly assessed to ensure that school-wide practices are leading to improved student outcomes.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school lists a number of initiatives intended to establish effective classroom practices and a positive learning environment. The school leader identified two of those initiatives as her highest priority: consistent teacher practices and “Cougar Checks”.
- The school leader reported that teachers are expected to post and review teaching points in each class to define the learning objectives of the lesson. Teachers are also expected to post a “do now” activity to activate prior learning at the start of class and to conduct a daily formative assessment using the “ticket out the door” strategy. While each of these three actions was seen in many of the 36 classes visited during the review, their effectiveness in promoting student learning was not evident. There is no systematic collection of daily formative assessment data across the school to determine the quality and effectiveness of this approach.
- The “Cougar Checks” initiative is designed to provide daily feedback on student behavior to both students and their families. Checks for incomplete homework, inattentiveness or disruptive behavior deduct from accumulated points for positive behavior, which can be used to participate in incentive activities. While the “Cougar Checks” were understood by students, staff and parents as an earnest effort to ensure a productive learning environment, the strategy’s impact has been variable. A three year comparison of discipline incidents show declines in September, October, November, January and February following the launch of the “Cougar Checks” strategy, with increases in December, March and April, in comparison to prior years. The school leader reported that discipline incidents are disaggregated by teacher and targeted assistance provided for classroom management to those teachers with higher referral numbers. The school has yet to conduct a formal analysis of teachers’ use of “Cougar Checks” in relationship to discipline incidents and referrals to determine if initiative is producing its intended results where and when implemented with fidelity.
- The school leader reported that she conducts a quarterly review of standardized assessment data with grade-level teams, and deploys the instructional coaches to provide embedded professional development to ensure instruction is aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Anecdotal evidence indicates these strategies are informing teaching practices, but specific, systematic assessment of their impact has not been completed.

Impact Statement: While evidence-based strategies are in use, their impact on student learning cannot be determined without an understanding of the quality and consistency of each teacher’s use of those strategies. As a result, staff energy and effort are spread across multiple initiatives, some of which are not fostering positive gains in student outcomes.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Ensure that data and evidence from monitoring and evaluation strategies are used to best effect to drive improvements in school wide and individual practices so that the achievement of school goals is realized.

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	D
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Debriefing Statement: The school utilizes the Board of Education-approved English language arts (ELA) curricula and New York State-approved mathematics modules, which are reportedly aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Core subject area teachers collaborate around unit and lesson plans with the curricula and modules, and they receive support from the instructional coaches and school leaders to understand better understand how to plan according to the curriculum and CCLS. These plans are informed by analyses of summative data, but they are not systematically informed by formative assessment data and/or other measures of student academic progress. Interdisciplinary planning and/or integration of the arts and enrichment areas happen inconsistently. As a result, students are experiencing a curriculum that is not consistently and appropriately tailored to their unique and changing needs. The curricula are also not consistently providing meaningful cross-curricular connections.

Strengths:

All ratings for this Tenet are either **Developing** or **Ineffective** and therefore, comments are listed under **Areas for Improvement**.

Areas for Improvement:

3.2 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** 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.

Overall Finding: The school leader supports the implementation of the CCLS through the deployment of the instructional coaches, the monthly review of lesson plans, through data meetings with teachers and coaches and from classroom walk-throughs. While each of these strategies furthers the ability of teachers to plan and implement common-core aligned lessons, observations of classrooms reveal gaps between CCLS-aligned plans and the learning experiences provided to students.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school leader reported that regular data meetings and a common lesson plan template are two strategies she uses to support effective implementation of a CCLS-aligned curriculum. During the data meetings, ELA and mathematics teachers examine, with the school leader and mathematics instructional coaches who are also the data facilitators, the results of standardized (SRI and AIMSweb) and benchmark assessments (Engage NY modules and district ELA curriculum) at individual student and classroom levels. Members of the IIT attended a data meeting and found that, in a discussion guided by the school leader and mathematics coach/data facilitator, teachers listed which students needed reteaching or extra support during class or tutorial period to master specific learning standards. A review of the lesson plan template indicated that it includes a space for listing those students and for describing what strategies will be employed to remedy the identified learning gaps. However, in the majority of lessons observed during the review, the

support strategies written in the lesson plans were not evident in practice in the classrooms.

- The school leader uses formal observations, informal walk-throughs and pop-ins, along with deployment of the instructional coaches as strategies to ensure implementation of a CCLS-aligned curriculum at Clary. As noted, implementation of planned instruction using the state and school board-approved curricula in mathematics and ELA is not differentiated sufficiently to meet the needs of all students.
- The school leader provides embedded PD to ELA and mathematics teachers via the services of the instructional coaches who consult with teachers to help with both planning and implementation of the CCLS-aligned lessons. Teachers of other subject areas were instructed in the ‘habits’ of good readers, the foundational unit of instruction in the ELA curriculum, and were asked to incorporate CCLS skills and instructional shifts into their own lesson plans. The school leader encourages her staff to participate in the district’s Saturday Academy, a four-part professional development series designed to strengthen teachers’ knowledge and skills. The school leader reported receiving compliments from the district because Clary had the highest percentage of participants in the Saturday Academy program. Despite these plentiful professional growth opportunities, not all teachers at Clary are implementing quality learning opportunities.

Impact Statement: Despite the use of multiple strategies to support and ensure effective implementation of a CCLS-aligned curriculum, classroom instruction does not consistently demonstrate the rigor and coherence required to achieve the school’s vision. While teachers feel supported and better able to use differentiated strategies with their students, student achievement as reported on the latest benchmark assessment continues to lag behind expected targets.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Expand the capacity of the instructional coaches to provide embedded PD of exemplary classrooms. Integrate peer- and self-assessment of the quality of teachers’ implementation of the Common Core instructional shifts in all classrooms, not only ELA and mathematics classes. Include evidence of teachers’ use of CCLS-aligned instruction in the formal and informal observation processes.

3.3 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* 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.

Overall Finding: Although teachers track and analyze student achievement data mainly at the summative level, teachers do not yet consistently incorporate systematic data-driven instruction protocols in a formative manner as they execute their lesson plans within a unit.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Teachers collaborate regularly with their content-area and grade-level colleagues to develop lesson plans drawn from the EngageNY mathematics modules and the district developed ELA curriculum, both of which support the Common Core. ELA and mathematics teachers use the findings from their

periodic data meetings to identify groups of students in need of in-class extra support. Standardized tests (SRI and AIMSweb) are used to group students for tutorial sessions, extra mathematics and ELA classes designed to bring lagging skills up to grade level. Grade level teams collaborate with the special educators for their students to ensure the grade-level curriculum is available to all students. While the summative data on students is examined closely and used regularly, the daily formative tools in common practice are not examined to the same degree. Some teachers' lesson plans stated they will examine the "ticket out the door" responses daily and decide whether to reteach a topic based on student responses to the "ticket out the door" prompt. Others accumulate the "ticket out the door" work and review weekly, or invite students to use the end of class assignment as a self-assessment or generalized response to the lesson topic. The teachers and the school leader did not cite any formal protocol or established expectations for using the daily formative measures to adjust the sequence, pace or process of the instructional plan. Lesson plans provided to the review team followed a common template and, in ELA and mathematics, parallel the EngageNY modules or the district developed ELA curriculum materials. In many cases, the written plans cite rigorous and challenging learning outcomes/teaching points consistent with the CCLS. However, the section of the template asking for a description of "what the teacher does" and "what the student does" lists vague general descriptions in more than half the 20 lesson plans collected by the team. For example, in the framing, opening segment of the lesson, teachers list: "distribute the 'do now'" and, for students, "complete the 'do now'," a description that fails to demonstrate how this particular lesson fits into previous lessons and how it will fulfill a learning expectation for the particular students in the class. In the section of the plan asking teachers to list the students in need of additional support and how the teacher will check for understanding, 15 of the 20 lesson plans list generic actions such as, "Check in on them frequently," "Verbal prompts," "Monitor behavior," "Use ticket to self-assess," that do not specify how the teacher will know whether the lesson has led to learning.

- Reviewers noted that in only five of the 36 classes visited during the review, teachers followed lesson plans that were thoroughly detailed and skillfully executed, included differentiation, higher-order questioning, and scaffolded consistently with the intention of the common lesson plan template. In these classrooms, students were engaged and active participants in the learning experience. However, these effective practices are not commonplace across the school.
- Teachers reported that they have some flexibility in adjusting the pace of their progression through the grade-level curriculum, whether through the EngageNY modules or the district developed ELA pacing charts. In consultation with the instructional coaches, teachers indicated they can find time in a later section of the curriculum that allows them to reteach or review materials that is not fully learned by their students. In addition, the extra tutorial class, for ELA and mathematics students who struggle, offers additional opportunities for teachers to remediate where needed. Groupings for tutorials are adjusted based on standardized assessments administered three times per year but are not responsive to the daily and weekly data teachers collect.

Impact Statement: In the absence of clearly stated checks for understanding and regular review of daily formative assessments, teachers cannot be sure that interventions, supports and strategies to close achievement gaps are supporting students appropriately. As a result, student achievement is not progressing at a fast enough pace to foster college and career readiness.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Build on teachers' growing skill in using summative data to differentiate instruction by developing their skill in using data from the daily formative assessments; ensure that planning and instruction encompass data driven instruction protocols that lead to advances in student learning.

3.4 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader and teachers have developed a comprehensive plan for teachers to partner within and across all grades and subjects to create interdisciplinary curricula targeting the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities.

Overall Finding: Even though some teachers collaborate across subject areas to incorporate other disciplines into their own content, this collaboration is more informal than formal in nature and does not ensure consistent incorporation of the arts, technology, and enrichment opportunities in general.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- There is no formalized plan to promote interdisciplinary curricula. Collaboration among instructional staff across disciplines does occur informally and on occasions formally. Special subject teachers in art, music, physical education (PE), and technology have met at least once with the ELA and mathematics instructional coaches to encourage their inclusion of the CCLS instructional shifts into their own lesson designs. All core subject teachers and special subject staff designed and conducted lessons incorporating argumentative and persuasive writing. Special subject teachers do not have frequent opportunities to meet with grade level teams.
- Regular grade-level meetings foster informal collaboration, particularly between ELA and social studies, to create interdisciplinary lessons. Units on Ancient Greece, World War II and the Holocaust led to multiple opportunities for cross-discipline learning opportunities for Clary students. However, this informal approach means that students are provided with limited opportunities to learn in an integrated curriculum model as such opportunities are inconsistent and do not lead to a progressive accumulation of learning experiences that would better guarantee their academic success.
- Mathematics teachers reported they find fewer opportunities to infuse mathematics into other disciplines, except in science and technology education. Their interactions are informal and incidental rather than part of a strategic plan.

Impact Statement: Without formal structures in place and explicit expectations that teachers establish interdisciplinary links, students experience sporadic connections among the disciplines that do not lead to a greater understanding of how the content they are learning is purposeful and applicable in multiple areas.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Incorporate into grade-level meetings an agenda item structured around embedding various content

areas into lessons, inclusive of special areas. Use a segment of monthly faculty meetings to create interdisciplinary groups to share thinking and to identify potential links that would strengthen students' understanding of foundational concepts and skills.

3.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* 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.

Overall Finding: Teachers use a comprehensive system for analyzing and acting on summative assessment data, but this is not yet true for formative assessments or other data that are collected (such as fluency-based data). In general, feedback to students does not foster student ownership of learning.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- ELA and mathematics teachers participate in regular data meetings with a data facilitator to examine the results of standardized assessments at the individual student and classroom levels. From those meetings, students who need targeted support to meet specific learning standards are identified. Teachers identify those students on their lesson plans and detail scaffolding strategies of variable levels of specificity. However, planned strategies to provide individualized supports were not evident in most classes visited during the review, with the exception of the community-based and special education classes.
- As part of their monthly data meetings, ELA and mathematics teachers are asked to predict how their students will do on the next benchmark assessment. Teachers in the focus group interview reported that their predictions are typically quite accurate, which was confirmed by sample data meeting notes provided to the review team. Teachers expressed confidence in their growing skill in applying data to inform instructional plans but confirm that this confidence is not consistent across all grades and subjects.
- In addition to daily formative assessments ("tickets out the door"), teachers use mid-module tests, quizzes, and unit tests to assess student learning. Some teachers describe strategies for in-class grouping and adjustment of curriculum pacing in light of classroom data on student achievement. However, examination of classroom data does not follow a building-wide common protocol but is designed and conducted by teachers as they choose.
- Most student work posted in halls and classrooms were top scoring samples. The process of assessing written work, described by the high performing students interviewed during the review, includes the use of graphic organizers, outline, rough draft, peer review (using the CCLS writing rubric), final draft and teacher feedback. According to this sample of students, opportunities to revise assignments to earn a higher grade are available to students in ELA, social studies, and mathematics classes. With the exception of the writing rubric, feedback to students on the samples of work shared in the focus group and posted in classrooms and hallways consisted of noting right and wrong answers, with little written comment that could lead students to improve their outcomes. Students reported that they meet one-on-one with the teacher if they choose to re-do a piece of work.

Impact Statement: Teachers have focused on using standardized and benchmark assessments to identify supports and interventions for low-achieving learners. They have not yet established a systematic approach to

take full advantage of their daily formative assessments and other classroom measures to form fluid groups to provide timely, tailored instruction. Without practical feedback that helps them improve their work, students are unable to take responsibility for their own learning.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Ensure that all teachers use data effectively to inform, guide and drive curriculum planning, adjustments and adaptations; involve students in reviewing their academic profile and provide feedback that consistently guides students on what is needed to improve their work.

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

D

Debriefing Statement: The school is a welcoming environment for many students. A behavior system is operative throughout the school and teachers encourage a respectful, compliant school environment. Teaching points are aligned to the CCLS. However, instructional practices, lesson plans, and complexity of tasks do not consistently reflect the instructional rigor and/or higher-order thinking that is required by the Common Core Learning Standards. There is a variety of student data, formative, interim and summative, which is shared with teachers. While teachers are utilizing some data to group students for instruction, lessons and lesson plans do not reflect the use of the data to differentiate instruction or provide practical feedback to students. Therefore, students have inconsistent opportunities for high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.

Strengths:

All ratings for this Tenet are either **Developing** or **Ineffective** and therefore, comments are listed under **Areas for Improvement**.

Areas for Improvement:

4.2 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* 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.

Overall Finding: While lesson plans identify students who need additional scaffolds and supports to access the curriculum, most scaffolding strategies were appropriate for any student and did not clearly indicate differentiated support. As a result, there was limited specially designed instruction to meet individual student’s needs. Significant differences were observed between the planned and the enacted lesson.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Teachers reported that while the school leader and instructional coaches conduct regular data meetings with ELA and mathematics teachers, and teachers use information from data review to create plans to assist students who demonstrate specific needs, teachers of other subjects (science, social studies, language, arts, PE and technology) do not participate because they do not have access

to common assessments. Social studies teachers reported they are in the early stages of reviewing curriculum data. Among the teachers who regularly consult with the data facilitators, their ability to identify specific student needs is evident. However, with few exceptions, the teaching points and learning goals listed on lesson plans apply to the whole class, with differentiation in pace, process or products noted mainly for identified students with disabilities. Few of the lesson plan samples showed differentiated teaching points/learning outcomes for other students.

- Curriculum review by the IIT indicated that staff makes use of the mathematics curriculum provided by EngageNY which includes a year-long scope and sequence of topics. Likewise, ELA teachers use the district developed ELA scope and sequence and pacing calendar to guide their unit and daily lesson planning. Both sources include materials designed to address common areas of need. Teachers reported the school leader provides lesson plan feedback monthly, evaluating whether the plan displays evidence for each of ten required elements of the standard template: big idea/ big question; key vocabulary; teaching points; frame; support, student needing additional support; summarize; checks for understanding; building initiatives; reflection/ next steps. The 20 plans collected by the review team displayed wide variations in the quality and rigor of the information included in the plan. In many cases, scaffolding strategies are general and not clearly linked to the findings of the data review for the specific students in the class. However, in three examples, teachers created intentional groupings within the class connected to the results of their data analysis. Students in these classes received supports directly linked to their identified needs.
- Enactment of the written lessons varied in quality across the 36 classes visited during the review. Significant differences between planned strategies and observed activities were most obvious in the “checks for understanding” intended to be embedded in the flow of the lesson. Review team members saw few examples of teachers using the methods listed on their plans. Since students’ learning was not being checked frequently and regularly during the course of the lesson, many students wandered off task or merely waited until the teacher provided the correct answer before completing the assignment.
- The school leader reported that in order to engage students in setting targets for their own learning, the school initiated a strategy to have students write their own goals at the start of a new unit of instruction. Student goals are posted in classrooms and are expected to be reviewed with the teacher to track progress. However, many student goals examined during class visits were vague, broadly stated, or unrelated to the topic or subject at hand. Sample goals included, “Get a passing grade,” “Do all my homework,” “Learn how to divide fractions,” “Get better at writing.” In the focus group, not all students could recall one of their goals, though all remembered writing them. As implemented, the student goal-writing initiative has not contributed in a meaningful way to students’ improved academic performance.

Impact Statement: By not implementing strategies differentiated for individual needs, the school has not created learning opportunities that lead to increasing achievement for all students. While some teachers have a rich collection of data to know student strengths and gaps, not all teachers are able to develop and implement lessons that target those specific student needs.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school

should:

- As part of the school's formal and informal observation process, examine the alignment between written and enacted lesson plans; during observations, ensure that scaffolding strategies are being used effectively, and adopt tools and methods for tracking the academic progress of identified individuals and subgroups of students by learning standard or skill; ensure that the goal setting process is used universally to set challenging and achievable goals for all students.

4.3 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* 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.

Overall Finding: Teachers inconsistently incorporate the CCLS instructional shifts, higher-order questions, and texts and tasks that are appropriately complex.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The IIT found that while some teachers enact lessons that engage students in learning activities reflective of the CCLS instructional shifts, the majority of classes used traditional pedagogy, expecting students to supply right answers or follow particular mathematical procedures to solve a problem. Review team members visited 36 classrooms and cited few examples of "how" or "why" questions, little probing for alternative solutions or applications of the lesson concepts to new situations, all key expectations of the CCLS. In general, students were obedient and followed along with the teacher-led lesson. With clear exceptions for the community-based classrooms where lesson objectives were largely individualized, students in the majority of classrooms were expected to complete the same task at the same pace and produce the same product. In a number of instances, observers noted that more than half the class was unable to complete the expected tasks. In the 11 classrooms visited during a lesson summary or closing, four teachers required a "ticket out the door" that was indicative of the learning objective for the class. In the others, the "ticket out the door" asked students to offer a reflection on the topic or to assess their own learning, without offering a standard or criterion against which students should compare their work. Overall, while lesson plans generally reflect teaching points that align with the CCLS, the observed activities require far less cognitive challenge than is expected with the new standards.
- Students reported being challenged in some classes, generally the Regents-level classes and in mathematics and some ELA classes. Overall, students who participated in the focus group felt that most classes are not challenging, and all expressed their desire to have more challenging work. They explained that teachers go over and over material so that everyone can learn.

Impact Statement: As a result of instruction that does not consistently reflect the CCLS instructional shifts and engage students in rigorous learning experiences, students' opportunities to acquire and retain essential knowledge and skills are insufficient to prepare them for life, college, and career. Academic achievement remains well below expected levels.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Provide models of excellence for the essential CCLS shifts, perhaps including exemplar videos from EngageNY and other websites, during grade-level and whole-school faculty meetings. Ensure that coaches provide formative feedback to teachers focused on the level of rigor in their expectations of all students.
- The coaches and school leader should be consistent in following up to ensure improvement in recommended changes in classroom practices.

4.4 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** Teachers and students work together to implement a program/plan to create a learning environment that is responsive to students' varied experiences and tailored to the strengths and needs of all students.

Overall Finding: While the classroom and school environments are generally safe, opportunities for students to experience a learning environment that challenges them to high levels of achievement are limited. Classrooms are mostly teacher-directed with little differentiation in activities or learning targets that might enable students to progress at a pace appropriate to their strengths, interests, and needs.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- While the school has made a concerted effort to establish clear, consistent behavior expectations for students, academic expectations to address the diversity of student needs is less clear. The review team found during classroom visitations, that the school's behavior management system, including the Cougar Checks and Bucks and Paws strategies, is largely in place, though not universally or uniformly applied. Teachers at the beginning of the class reference academic expectations in the form of teaching points, but they are not mentioned again or used as a benchmark during the lesson to adjust the pace or gauge the progress of student understanding. End of class formative assessments ("ticket out the door") do not always require students to demonstrate their attainment of the teaching point.
- The IIT found, during classroom visitations, that teaching points/learning outcomes are the same for all students in a class, with the exception of community-based and special education classrooms, where learning targets were individualized. Scaffolding strategies were listed in many of the lesson plans examined by the team, but their implementation was not always obvious in the classroom. Many of the scaffolding strategies for targeted students were good teaching practices that helped all students, and did not address the unique learning need of those identified during the data meetings.
- The student support team reported that they provide PD, which teachers can attend on a voluntary basis that focuses on the changing needs of students as they move through adolescence or face challenges in their community and families. Teachers refer students to the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) or to the Schoolwide Behavior Intervention Team (SBIT) if they sense a student is in need of assistance. While the SBIT and CIT members consult regularly one-on-one with teachers to develop suitable interventions to resolve student issues, the school does not have a uniform plan to build all teachers' abilities to address skillfully the challenges faced by the adolescent population at the school. Students and parents confirmed that the school is physically safe, though their assessment of the academic challenge was more varied.

Impact Statement: While the school provides a learning environment that is physically and emotionally safe,

the school does not effectively differentiate instruction to address varied student intellectual needs. As a result, students encounter learning experiences that are not always appropriate for them or tailored to their interests and skills. With limited opportunities to tackle suitably challenging content, student engagement lags and student achievement is not optimized.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Create frequent opportunities to use peer coaching to build teachers' capacity to provide a variety of methods of teaching specific concepts and skills. Share successful teachers' practical examples of strategies to differentiate the pace, process or product of a lesson. Check that teachers adopt differentiation strategies through the formal and informal observation process.
- Invite students to provide feedback on the school's climate, both academic and social and behavioral. Share the findings with teachers, students and parents. Collaborate with students to develop strategies to revise programs to address student concerns.

4.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* 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).

Overall Finding: Mathematics and ELA teachers follow a structured process to use assessment data to establish class groupings and have adopted a variety of tools to monitor progress frequently. However, student goals do not demonstrate clear understanding of their academic targets or gaps. In addition, science, social studies and teachers of special subjects have less reliable assessment data available to them to guide their instructional decision-making.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Teachers reported that ELA and mathematics teachers meet regularly with the data facilitator to review benchmark and standardized assessment results and identify students in need of extra support for particular concepts and skills. New data is available approximately every six weeks, which may trigger shifts in the instructional groups. Several teachers reported using mid-module or unit assessments to define target groups for their class. One teacher described using student data to create 'center' groups who have similar learning gaps or strengths; activities are modified for each center group as they move through a sequence of lessons. While ELA and mathematics teachers follow a structured process for analyzing data and adjusting groupings to target instruction to specific student needs, not all teachers have been trained to use data skillfully.
- While some teachers follow a structured process for reviewing standardized and benchmark data and using their findings to adjust instruction, similar structures are not yet in place to make effective use of other forms of achievement data that is available in order to allow for more timely adjustments to instruction. A few teachers are devising their own procedures to use unit tests, quizzes, mid-module tests and the common daily "ticket out the door" to make critical instructional decisions. Some ELA and mathematics teachers described meeting with their instructional coach to

discuss how to adjust the pace of the curriculum when more than a few students are falling behind. There are other teachers, of science and social studies, and special subjects (art, music, technology, PE, home and careers, foreign language), who use their own professional judgment to adjust pacing or student grouping in their classes. Without a regular and efficient process to use daily or weekly data to modify instruction or curriculum pacing and to assess whether the adjustments are producing the positive impact intended, teachers are challenged to ensure students have every opportunity to reach academic targets.

- While teachers are collecting a variety of achievement data, students have not been involved in examining their own results for the purpose of discovering their strengths and gaps. Feedback to students on their submitted classwork was typically a summative grade. The students interviewed for the focus group explained that they meet with their teacher one-on-one if they want to improve their grade, and they reported that only ELA, social studies and sometimes mathematics teachers allow “do-overs.” Typically, work is returned without teacher guidance on the steps students need to take to correct errors or improve the quality of the work.

Impact Statement: Teachers are in the early stages of learning to use student data for instructional decision-making, taking the first steps by using interim and benchmark data for instructional grouping. Since only some teachers use data to make frequent adjustments to instruction, not all students experience learning activities that are engaging or that target their specific needs. Few teachers use data directly with students, limiting the student’s ability to be active participants in taking responsibility for their own academic progress.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Make use of the emerging skill in data analysis among mathematics and ELA teachers to expand the review of data to all teachers that will include the wide array of information available from daily formative assessments. Set an expectation that lesson plans document findings from assessments and that teachers work with students to review their own data to provide feedback and guidance to help them achieve at a higher level.

Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health: The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: The school leader and the student support team collaborate to leverage both internal and external community resources to address student needs. The school has programs and a responsive referral system that supports student social and emotional developmental health. However, the limited use of data to proactively identify student needs, and the lack of monitoring systems to revise professional development supports for staff, inhibit the establishment of an optimal learning environment for all constituents.

Strengths:

All ratings for this Tenet are either **Developing** or **Ineffective** and therefore, comments are listed under **Areas**

for Improvement.

Areas for Improvement:

5.2 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader establishes overarching systems and understandings of how to support and sustain student social and emotional developmental health and academic success.

Overall Finding: The social and emotional developmental health needs of all students are not being consistently met.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Based on interviews with the school leader and staff, the IIT found that the school leader, in collaboration with the student support team (counselors, psychologist, social workers), has established systems for referral and support that respond to concerns about the social and emotional developmental health needs of Clary students. While the school leader leverages both internal and external community resources to address student needs, the staff does not use a universal screening tool to identify social and emotional health issues before problems arise, and apply their efforts to those students who present overt signs of need or are referred by concerned staff or families.
- Student support services staff reported that while the school does not screen all students for indicators of concern in their social or emotional development, members of the Child Instructional Team communicate with staff from the feeder elementary schools to be aware of the already identified needs of incoming sixth grader students. Student support services staff and teachers indicated that members of the Child Instructional Team conduct in-class presentations for sixth graders in particular, and offer a year-long program on anger management for sixth grade special education students. Mentors are brought in to work with male students at the school. The implemented systems are responding to the identified needs of selected students. However, because the school does not use a screening tool designed to identify less visible social and emotional concerns of students, the school cannot be certain its existing efforts are meeting the needs of all students.

Impact Statement: As a result, not all students have an equitable opportunity to achieve academic success without the burden of social and emotional challenges.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Research and select a screening tool for broad screening of all students, and implement school-wide screening for both incoming and matriculated students to help identify students who may have social and emotional needs. Develop efficient systems that share essential information and provide guidance to all teachers in best practices for addressing the most common types of challenges faced by students.

5.3 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school articulates

and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is aligned to a curriculum or program that provides learning experiences and a safe and healthy school environment for families, teachers, and students.

Overall Finding: While there are programs in the school to promote positive behavior and social and emotional health, there are no systems to monitor effectively their consistent implementation and impact.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- According to students interviewed for the review, they feel the school is safe because of the visibility of the security staff in the building and in the neighborhood. They admit that during transitions and on the boys' side of the building, there are instances of disrespectful behavior between students that are not always of serious concern. The review team observed instances of disrespectful and/or disruptive behavior during class visits, confirming that the behavior management system is not yet achieving its desired effect.
- While the school-wide Peaceful Schools initiative and the district-supported PBIS program are designed to foster student social and emotional developmental health, their impact on student behavior and academic achievement is mixed. The "Cougar Checks" behavior incentive program and workshops for parents and students are focused on support for the school's mission to "promote intercultural understanding" and "honest, compassionate learners"; however, feedback from students, recent discipline data, and class observations suggest that the behavior system is not fully effective. Interviews with stakeholder groups indicated that training for teachers and parents to promote healthy and productive social and emotional practices among Clary students is minimal and the school has not collected evidence of the impact of the workshops on student performance.

Impact Statement: A lack of consistent application of behavior systems and training for staff in the skills needed to meet the needs of students results in a disconnect between the school's vision and the meeting of student needs. As a result, not all students are able to focus their energy on improving academic performance.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Ensure that all systems to support the social, emotional and behavioral needs of students are consistently implemented by all staff; ensure that PD is provided on an ongoing basis to build adult capacity to meet the social and emotional developmental health needs of all students.

5.4 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** All school stakeholders work together to develop a common understanding of the importance of their contributions in creating a school community that is safe, conducive to learning, and fostering of a sense of ownership for providing social and emotional developmental health supports tied to the school's vision.

Overall Finding: While the school has access to community supports that supplement the services provided by the school's experienced student support staff, not all stakeholders are fully empowered to ensure all students fulfill the school's mission to become "active, honest, compassionate" learners.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Members of the student support staff are the primary providers of services and supports to ensure students' social and emotional developmental health. Other stakeholders interviewed, including parents, staff and students, are not confident in knowing the roles they are expected to play in creating a safe and productive learning environment. Student support staff develops and implements behavior intervention plans for students referred by teachers, consults with teachers to improve their behavior management techniques, and provides whole class instruction for students to build their interpersonal skills. In addition, they coordinate the services of community agencies, primarily Brownell and Huntington, to ensure adequate supports for selected students and their families.
- At the opening orientation meeting, the student support team provided teachers information on referring students for assessment and intervention. Support staff described their eagerness and openness to provide guidance to individual teachers who choose to seek them out, but indicated that not all teachers do so, which diminishes the sense of shared responsibility and accountability for meeting the needs of students.
- At least one parent workshop during the school year addressed bullying, adolescent behavior, and the school's Cougar Checks, Bucks and Paws system. Only a small number of parents attended that session (16), and were able to benefit from the valuable information shared at the workshop. Discussions with parents indicated that they are not fully aware of the expectations the school sets for them with regard to playing an active role in addressing behavioral concerns.
- Teachers, students and parents expressed the belief that the school has established a safe learning environment both physically with the presence of security personnel and socially and emotionally. However, students indicated that instances of interpersonal conflict occur occasionally and that some students do not take responsibility for their own actions and behaviors.

Impact Statement: While services and supports are available to address the social and emotional developmental health needs of some students, not all parents, teachers and students are prepared to take a role in ensuring an optimum learning environment for all students.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Consult with the district parent partnership network to develop a strategy to ensure all stakeholders play a proactive role in helping to create a learning environment that is safe and productive and where the social and emotional developmental health needs of all students are fully met.

5.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader and student support staff work together with teachers to establish structures to support the use of data to respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs.

Overall Finding: Available data is not used effectively to ensure that the social and academic needs of students are fully met.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Based on document review and interviews with stakeholders, the IIT found that although there are structures in place, and staff work closely with the student support staff, there was no evidence available to assess whether current practices are meeting the needs of all students. Students receive services and supports based on referrals triggered by misconduct or academic struggles, a reactive rather than proactive approach that may overlook students with less visible problems. Tools are not in use that could yield data to anticipate potential needs and allow staff to preempt disruptions or escalation of distress.
- Based on interviews with the school leader, student support staff and instructional staff, the IIT found that data on the effectiveness of intervention strategies is shared with those involved with the student or family, but is not aggregated and explored in ways to help all teachers distinguish between effective and ineffective approaches to students’ social and emotional developmental health needs. The review team found that teachers and student support staff assume links between academic performance and social and emotional health needs but their assumptions are not corroborated with data. Without clear and specific data showing correlations between teaching practice, student academic performance, classroom behavior and student social and emotional developmental health, staff efforts to foster student success may or may not be targeted to the most effective strategies.

Impact Statement: As the school’s activities are not informed by reliable data showing strong linkage between actions and outcomes, student opportunities for social and emotional well-being and high academic achievement are limited.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Use all available data to identify and meet the needs of students and to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented strategies that are designed to increase students’ social and academic success.

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

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: The school provides a welcoming environment for families. There are communications between home and school but opportunities for reciprocal communication are not yet fully realized by all parents and families. While some parents and community agencies participate in planning opportunities for school improvement focused on student success, the lack of broader participation limits the information available to inform short- and long-term decisions. Furthermore, strategies to engage fully parents and community agencies as partners are in their nascent stages. While the school provides data to parents and/or families, some stakeholders are unclear about how this data is used to determine next steps in the process to support student success. Student progress and success is not meeting expected targets.

Strengths:

All ratings for this Tenet are either **Developing** or **Ineffective** and therefore, comments are listed under **Areas for Improvement**.

Areas for Improvement:

6.2 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader ensures that regular communication with students and families fosters their high expectations for student academic achievement

Overall Finding: Although the school leader has adequate mechanisms in place to communicate expectations to students and families, little information is available to demonstrate their full comprehension of the requirements for academic success.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Based on stakeholder interviews and document review, the IIT found that the school leader has multiple vehicles for communicating with families: an online parent portal; monthly newsletters; orientation and transition meetings for incoming and graduating students; fall open house; fall and spring parent conferences; and text and email connections. The ability of these methods to enable families to contribute to their child's success is not assessed in a systematic way.
- The four parents in the focus group demonstrated a surface level understanding of the school's mission and vision, expressing a generalized awareness of the school's aim "to be the most improved middle school." A parent satisfaction survey was circulated by the school but only 15 parents replied, yielding results insufficient to draw firm conclusions about families' understanding of the school's academic and behavioral expectations.
- Teachers reported that the school leader expects that parents be contacted often; at least when a student is sent out of the room or when a student's grade point drops ten points. A few teachers noted they regularly email or text parents and that parents text and email them, with both good news and concerns.
- The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) members participating in the focus group shared that they struggle to recruit broad participation in their work. The PTO distribution list includes only 30 to 40 email addresses. It was not clear whether this was an indicator of the level of internet access among Clary families, or an indicator of some other unidentified reason.

Impact Statement: While the school leader has created a system of communication between home and school, the system does not reach all families and, as a result, does not ensure that all are aware of student success expectations.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Assess the effectiveness of existing communication vehicles via survey or other methods. Strengthen or eliminate communication strategies that are not yielding the desired results and not

building families' knowledge and skill in supporting their child's success.

6.3 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school engages in effective planning and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders so that student strength and needs are identified and used to augment learning.

Overall Finding: While there are various opportunities for reciprocal communication between home and school, these opportunities are not fully realized by the majority of parents and families.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school hosted a parent workshop in November to review CCLS mathematics and ELA assessment data, to examine the school's behavioral expectations and to share cultural diversity initiatives. The workshop was attended by 13 parents, a small proportion of families at the school.
- The actively involved parents interviewed during the review noted they frequently text or email their child's teachers to stay informed about their child's progress, in addition to accessing the parent portal. They complimented teachers for keeping the portal information up to date. At least one parent noted that teachers text them also, indicating some evidence of reciprocal communication. The number of parents who initiate communication beyond the representatives present for the focus group is unknown. Communications are sent in home languages where appropriate but the school has not evaluated the effectiveness of its communication channels with parents or what parents would like to see improved.

Impact Statement: The opportunities for home-school communication are initiated with a small subset of parents and, as a result, a true partnership and shared ownership for whole-child development across the school community is limited.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Survey families to determine accessibility of online information, preferred methods for communication, preferred times for in-person school activities and preferred topics of interest. Use the results of the survey to create a communication work plan that accommodates the needs of the families.

6.4 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school community partners with families and community agencies to promote and provide training across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.

Overall Finding: There are limited partnerships between the school, families and community agencies aimed at understanding their shared and targeted responsibilities for student success.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Parents interviewed mentioned the district-provided Parent University as a tool they can use to become better advocates for their child's success. The number of Clary parents attending Parent

University activities was not available.

- The Clary PTO recruits volunteers to help with fundraising and manages the school picnic and other activities. The PTO president indicated that few families regularly participate. She noted that the small proportion of the school's families on the email list raises questions about the proportion of parents who can access available information through the school's online methods. Beyond the workshops noted previously, neither the school nor the PTO provides training for parents to strengthen their ability to promote their child's success. Discussions with school leaders indicated that a plan is being drawn up to provide PD aimed at developing the necessary skills in staff to build strong relationships with parents and families in order to create a more robust home-school partnership. The benefits of this are yet to be seen.
- The school participates in the district's Promise Zone initiative, bringing trained volunteer mentors into the building to work with selected students. Mentors and counselors from community agencies provided support for students' social and emotional developmental health. Training for the participants in the mentorships and community agency services is provided by these organizations and not by the school.

Impact Statement: Without purposeful, intentional efforts to create meaningful partnerships with families and community agencies to promote student success, student outcomes continue to lag behind desired targets.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- In collaboration with community partners, provide training for staff, and support and strategies for parents, to enable school and homes to work in unison in enhancing the chances of academic success for all students.

6.5 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.

Overall Finding: While some academic and social and emotional developmental health data are shared, as well as strategies to support student learning, parents do not have an understanding around how this data is used to establish short- and long-term goals. Parents are not always kept well informed of the need for urgency to accelerate student progress to enable the school's goal to prepare students for "high school, college, careers, and beyond" to be realized.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Interviews with stakeholder groups and a review of documents by the IIT indicated that data from state and local standardized assessments is shared with parents who attend fall conferences and sent home to those who cannot attend in person. Approximately half (49 percent) of the school's families attended the fall 2013 parent-teacher conferences, and the school has not gauged whether the explanations either sent home or shared in person were understood by the recipients. Three of

the four parents in the focus group attended the conferences and one noted a discrepancy between report card grades and the standardized assessment results for one of her children. She related that her child received high grades on her report card but performed poorly on the standardized assessments, which resulted in her child feeling deflated and her feeling confused. Her review of the data with the teacher did not clarify the confusion.

- Parents were unaware of the school's recent initiative to have students set monthly goals in each class. The school leader explained her decision to pilot the student goals effort within the building before involving parents.
- As noted previously, data from daily formative assessments is not collected systematically nor used to track regularly the progress of student learning. Except as initiated by either the parent or teacher when concerns arise on an individual basis, the daily assessment information is not shared or used to inform parents of their child's needs. Classroom tests and quizzes are expected to be posted on the parent portal, but there was limited evidence available to know how many parents make use of the online tool to monitor their child's performance.

Impact Statement: Without a clear understanding of the significant gaps between Clary students' academic achievement and expected or typical performance, parents are not aware of the urgent need to accelerate gains in learning in order to meet the school's aim to prepare students for high school, college, and careers. As a result, parents are not enabled to advocate for their children and help to prepare them for success.

Recommendation:

In order for the school's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the school should:

- Help families understand and interpret state, local standardized and classroom assessments to enable them to advocate for supports required to help them to be fully successful.