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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)

BEDS Code	010100010030
School Name	William S. Hackett Middle School
School Address	45 Delaware Avenue, Albany, NY 12202
District Name	Albany CSD
School Leader	Mr. Michael Paolino
Dates of Review	October 7-8, 2014
School Accountability Status	Priority School
Type of Review	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet

School Configuration *(2014-15 data)*					
Grade Configuration	6-8	**Total Enrollment**	625	**SIG Recipient**	Yes

Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes *(2014-15)*					
# Transitional Bilingual	0	**# Dual Language**	0	**# Self-Contained English as a Second Language**	0

Types and Number of Special Education Classes *(2014-15)*					
# Special Classes	0	**# SETSS**	0	**# Integrated Collaborative Teaching**	3

Types and Number of Special Classes *(2014-15)*					
# Visual Arts	0	**# Music**	1	**# Drama**	0
# Foreign Language	2	**# Dance**	0	**# CTE**	0

School Composition *(most recent data)*			
% Title I Population	100%	**% Attendance Rate**	94.3%
% Free Lunch	100%	**% Reduced Lunch**	NA
% Limited English Proficient	11%	**% Students with Disabilities**	10%

Racial/Ethnic Origin *(most recent data)*			
% American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	**% Black or African American**	48%
% Hispanic or Latino	17%	**% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander**	13%
% White	21%	**% Multi-Racial**	0%

Personnel *(most recent data)*			
Years Principal Assigned to School	6	**# of Assistant Principals**	2
# of Deans	0	**# of Counselors/Social Workers**	2/2
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0	**% Teaching Out of Certification**	0
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	18%	**Average Teacher Absences**	10.5

Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools *(2013-14)*			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	16%	**Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4**	13%
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	NA	**Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)**	44%

Student Performance for High Schools *(2013-14)*			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		**Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4**	

Credit Accumulation High Schools Only *(2013-14)*			
% 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 *(2013-14)*			
Reward		**Recognition**	
In Good Standing		**Local Assistance Plan**	
Focus District		**Focus School Identified by a Focus District**	
Priority School	X		

Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA *(2012-13)*			
American Indian or Alaska Native	X	**Black or African American**	X
Hispanic or Latino	X	**Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander**	
White		**Multi-Racial**	X
Students with Disabilities		**Limited English Proficient**	
Economically Disadvantaged	X		

Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics *(2012-13)*			
American Indian or Alaska Native	X	**Black or African American**	
Hispanic or Latino		**Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander**	
White		**Multi-Racial**	X
Students with Disabilities		**Limited English Proficient**	
Economically Disadvantaged			

Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science *(2012-13)*			
American Indian or Alaska Native	X	**Black or African American**	X
Hispanic or Latino	X	**Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander**	X
White		**Multi-Racial**	X
Students with Disabilities	X	**Limited English Proficient**	X
Economically Disadvantaged	X		

SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:

- The school leader and instructional staff will continue to review curriculum maps and provide embedded professional development support to ensure alignment of CCLS curriculum along all content areas.

- The school leader and instructional staff will implement a new common planning time design to

collaborate around embedding CCLS across content areas and utilizing student performance data to inform instruction.

- The school leader and instructional staff will utilize inquiry data teams to foster collaboration among all content areas.

- Hackett Middle School will implement a PBIS program in an effort to reduce student discipline and office referrals by 10 percent.

Information about the review

- The review was co-led by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from the New York State Education Department. The team also included a district representative and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The review team visited a total of 38 classrooms during the two-day review.
- Reviewers conducted focus groups with students, staff, and parents.
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including curriculum maps, lesson plans, school-wide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- On the dates of the review, 20 of the school's mathematics teachers were not teaching in the school as they were participating in a district-initiated course and their classes were taught by substitute teachers and teacher assistants (TA).

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)-			X	

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
	based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students.				
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
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**	

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

The school has received a rating of *Developing* for Tenet 2 – School Leader Practices and Decisions.

- The school leader has worked collaboratively with the school community to develop and promote goals, a mission, and a vision that have started to improve the culture and climate of the school. The goals are well known in the school community. While end of year and beginning of year assessments indicate a growth in student reading and math skills, state assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math demonstrate little improvement. Attendance has increased to 95 percent and the common-core curriculum is partially in place.
- The school leader has used some programmatic, human, and fiscal resources strategically. All classrooms are equipped with SMARTBoards and computers, and teachers have been trained to incorporate technology into instruction. The use of technology impacts learning in some classes, as demonstrated in a grade eight-math lesson where students used technology to make a class presentation. The school leader was able this year to hire a cohort of teachers for the first time in six years and this opportunity has enabled him to make strategic appointments to promote school priorities. For example, instructional coaches were hired to support teachers in implementing the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), which are beginning to have an impact on instruction.
- While the school leader conducts frequent and targeted teacher observations, and reviews data to provide targeted teacher feedback and make strategic decisions about professional development (PD), student engagement during instruction is limited. As a result, some teachers have begun to post lesson objectives and improve questioning techniques, but differentiation is limited.
- A system is in place to track and monitor student behavior and academic performance, which provides the school leader with information to enable him to focus on specific students that need to improve their behavior and academic achievement. Four sub-committees that focus on specific aspects of the school, such as attendance, report quarterly to the Building Leadership Team (BLT) to provide it with a comprehensive overview of what is happening in the school. The school leader encourages teachers to share data about students in their grade meetings in order to begin developing student-specific goals and inform instruction to meet student needs.

Recommendation:

The school leader should set more specific academic goals and clearly identify the instructional strategies needed to drive improvement. The goals and defined strategies should be monitored on a routine basis through walkthroughs and data review to monitor progress toward intermediate benchmarks.

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

The school has received a rating of *Developing* for Tenet 3 – Curriculum Development and Support.

- The school leader has begun implementing the CCLS. Consequently, the curricula for the core subjects, except for social studies, are in place. The curricula for non-core subjects are less well established, but teachers are working in grade teams to align them with the CCLS.
- Teachers receive support through coaches and PD in implementing the CCLS, but the review team found inconsistent evidence of how teachers are using this support to align their lessons to the CCLS. While there was some evidence of differentiated strategies and rigor in curriculum plans, which are adapted from the EngageNY modules, this was not consistent across the school. The school leader's strategic use of instructional coaches to promote and support the introduction of the CCLS is beginning to have an impact on instruction. Although unit plans are based on EngageNY modules and aligned to the CCLS, teachers do not consistently plan and deliver individual lessons that include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that reflect student needs or include complex materials and higher-order questioning.
- Teachers have started to use data during grade meetings to identify achievement targets for students in collaboration with ELA and mathematics coaches. However, the review team found inconsistent evidence of teachers using this information to plan their lessons.
- There is no overall school plan to promote interdisciplinary curricular planning. Teachers meet and plan regularly in grade level and vertical teams, which at times results in interdisciplinary connections to increase student engagement, but this work is not consistent across the school.
- The school's extended day program provides some opportunities for project-based and interdisciplinary learning, such as the robotics team, science patrol, and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) projects with Siena College and the University of Albany.
- The review team found limited evidence of teachers using assessments to plan lessons to meet student needs. Students are not consistently given feedback based on data to ensure ownership of their learning and raise their achievement.

Recommendation:

Continue to use coaches to support and monitor teacher lesson planning that includes DDI protocols, complex materials, and higher-order questioning, and use coaches to assist teachers in providing timely and substantive feedback to students.

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

The school has received a rating of *Developing* for Tenet 4 – Teacher Practices and Decisions.

- The school leader communicates clear expectations for instructional practices, but as there is no common format for lesson plans it is difficult for the school leader to monitor planning to ensure its quality and consistency. The school leaders monitor curriculum planning through grade-level meetings and provide teachers with feedback to inform their weekly plans.

- Instructional practices are not consistently informed by data and do not always reflect student needs and learning styles and this hinders student achievement.

- During most classroom visits, instruction was not differentiated and did not engage or motivate students. Teachers did not consistently incorporate higher-order questions or levels of text complexity, and teachers did not consistently provide students opportunities to learn in different ways. While most teachers post and refer to CCLS aligned lesson objectives during instruction, effective implementation of the common core is not evident in all lessons, which results in a lack of student engagement and rigor. The majority of instruction observed was teacher-centered and delivered to the whole class, with limited differentiation and scaffolding. Students in the large student interview stated that they sometimes had opportunities to make choices about their learning, such as choosing tasks from a menu created by the teacher.

- Students stated that they felt safe offering opinions and asking or answering questions in classrooms. There were several incidences of disruption observed by the IIT team during classroom visits, and some students shared concerns about bullying, but stated that the school staff handles these issues. Most teacher feedback to students during classroom visits was not specific in identifying areas for continued growth for students. While some students engage in peer or self-evaluation using rubrics, students shared that they have difficulty interpreting the rubrics because of the complex language.

Recommendation:

In order to improve the quality of instruction, teachers should align their lesson plans to the CCLS by including differentiated instruction, scaffolding, higher-order questioning, and complex materials. Furthermore, teachers should use assessment data to inform students about their progress and to provide students with feedback to improve their work and 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**

The school has received a rating of *Developing* for Tenet 5 – Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health.

- The school leader has established a range of structures to support student social and emotional developmental health, such as Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS), Full Service Room, and partnerships with community agencies. The school has adopted PBIS and is in its first year of implementation. Designated PBIS coaches have provided teachers, hall monitors, and support staff with PD, which has resulted in the consistent launch of the program, as evidenced by the involvement of all staff and the positive response of students. Posters for expected behaviors

can be seen in most settings across the school. Staff reports that the introduction of PBIS is beginning to lead to improvements in behavior, such as quiet movement during transitions, and state that students are able to articulate the PBIS concepts. Teachers were observed redirecting students using the language of the PBIS components.

- The Full Service Room program that the school adopted to promote student social and emotional health is supported by a team that includes guidance counselors, social workers, a home school coordinator, PBIS coaches, and other staff, who support students both in and out of the classroom. Support staff members regularly have lunch with groups of students to facilitate informal conversations, develop positive relationships, and pre-empt potential problems. Parents and students stated that the school's on-site resources help provide students with immediate support.

- A partnership with the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) has been established to aid the school with cultural development and understanding, collaboration, and effective relationships within and across group identities. This has involved PD for both staff and students on how to implement the program. All parents and students interviewed commented positively about how the climate of the school has improved since last year.

- The school has developed and implemented a strategic plan to collect, analyze, and use data to identify and meet the social and emotional developmental health needs of all students. Sub-committees report quarterly the behavior, attendance, and academic data to the BLT; however, there is no comprehensive system to disseminate this data to other stakeholders, such as teachers and parents.

Recommendation:

Devise strategies to ensure that the data collected on student social and emotional developmental health is used with teachers to improve instruction, with students to improve their learning, and with parents to support their children.

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**

The school has received a rating of *Developing* for Tenet 6 – Family and Community Engagement.

- The school leader is working to ensure that communication contains information about academic achievement and details high expectations for student success. Parents stated that while the school shares data with families, the school does not consistently communicate strategies that parents can use to support their children's learning, which hinders their ability to promote student achievement.

- While the school organizes family nights for parents of English language learners (ELLs), the focus of these events has been explaining basic expectations regarding behavior, attendance, and homework rather than presentations about the CCLS. The school sends some information in Spanish to families and provides interpreters at some family events; however, parents stated they need further support. The school has organized some sessions on the CCLS for families that speak languages other than English, but parent attendance was low.

- The school refers refugee parents to the United States Center for Refugee Integration (USCRI) for assistance when needed.
- Some parents stated that the school website is not up to date and that some teachers do not make available current behavior or academic data online. This impedes reciprocal communication with parents and hinders their understanding about student needs.
- The student support team works with individual families of students with disabilities to help parents identify community resources and to support the families in advocating for appropriate services. The home-school coordinator helps families make contacts with appropriate agencies and acts as a liaison between the school and families.

Recommendation:

The school leader should further improve the communication with all parents, including those with ELLs and students with disabilities, so that all families have a better understanding of the school goals, curriculum, and instructional practices and are able to develop strategies to support their children's learning and be fully engaged in the school community.