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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)

2015-2016 School Year

BEDS Code	441600010012
School Name	Vails Gate
School Address	400 Old Forge Hill Road, New Windsor, NY 12553
District Name	Newburgh Enlarged City School District
School Leader	Ebony Green
Dates of Review	March 15, 31 and April 1, 2016
School Accountability Status	☐ Priority School ☒ Focus School
Type of Review	☒ District-led Review

School Information Sheet for

School Configuration (*2015-16 data*)					
Grade Configuration	K-5	**Total Enrollment**	601	**SIG Recipient**	

Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (*2015-16*)					
# Transitional Bilingual	3	**# Dual Language**	2	**# Self-Contained English as a Second Language**	0

Types and Number of Special Education Classes (*2015-16*)					
# Special Classes	5	**# SETSS**	0	**# Integrated Collaborative Teaching**	3

Types and Number of Special Classes (*2015-16*)					
# Visual Arts	0	**# Music**	0	**# Drama**	0
# Foreign Language	0	**# Dance**	0	**# CTE**	0

School Composition (*most recent data*)			
% Title I Population	87	**% Attendance Rate**	94
% Free Lunch	100	**% Reduced Lunch**	0
% Limited English Proficient	27	**% Students with Disabilities**	19

Racial/Ethnic Origin (*most recent data*)			
% American Indian or Alaska Native		**% Black or African American**	26
% Hispanic or Latino	54	**% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander**	
% White	13	**% Multi-Racial**	3%

Personnel (*most recent data*)			
Years Principal Assigned to School	3	**# of Assistant Principals**	1
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0	**% Teaching Out of Certification**	2
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	2	**Average Teacher Absences**	4

Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (*2014-15*)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	7	**Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4**	43
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	61	**Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)**	

Student Performance for High Schools (*2014-15*)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		**Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4**	
Global History Performance at levels 3 & 4		**US History Performance at Levels 3&4**	
4 Year Graduation Rate		**6 Year Graduation Rate**	
Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Designation		**% ELA/Math Aspirational Performance Measures**	

Overall NYSED Accountability Status (*2014-15*)			
Reward		**Recognition**	
In Good Standing		**Local Assistance Plan**	
Focus District		**Focus School Identified by a Focus District**	X
Priority School			

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

DID NOT MEET Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (*2013-14*)			
American Indian or Alaska Native		**Black or African American**	X
Hispanic or Latino	X	**Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander**	
White	X	**Multi-Racial**	
Students with Disabilities	X	**Limited English Proficient**	X
Economically Disadvantaged	X	**ALL STUDENTS**	X

DID NOT MEET Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (*2013-14*)			
American Indian or Alaska Native		**Black or African American**	X
Hispanic or Latino	X	**Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander**	
White		**Multi-Racial**	
Students with Disabilities		**Limited English Proficient**	
Economically Disadvantaged	X	**ALL STUDENTS**	X

DID NOT MEET Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (*2013-14*)			
American Indian or Alaska Native		**Black or African American**	
Hispanic or Latino		**Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander**	
White		**Multi-Racial**	
Students with Disabilities		**Limited English Proficient**	
Economically Disadvantaged	X	**ALL STUDENTS**	X

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

1. Differentiating instruction in order to appropriately engage all students. Teachers have received training in guided reading and guided math in order to identify students' needs and strengths and instruct them at their level. Teachers are differentiating by making sure students have various ways to access the instruction such as video, read aloud, charts, etc.
2. Using and analyzing data in order to plan instruction and assessments.

Information about the review

- The review was led by the deputy superintendent. The team also included a district representative from Special Education and a district representative from Curriculum and Instruction.
- The review team visited a total of 25 classrooms during the three-day review.
- Reviewers conducted focus groups with students, staff and parents
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including curriculum maps, lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- The school provided results of a student survey that 243 completed.
- The school provided results of a staff survey that 37 completed.
- The school provided results of a parent survey that 23 completed.
- The second day of the review was postponed due to illness on the part of the principal and a reviewer.

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	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
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).	☐	☒	☐	☐
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.	☐	☒	☐	☐
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.	☐	☐	☒	☐
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).	☐	☐	☒	☐
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 2:		**3**		
Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support: The school has rigorous and coherent curricula and assessments that are appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for all students and are modified for identified subgroups in order to maximize teacher instructional practices and student-learning outcomes.					
#	Statement of Practice	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
3.2	The school leader ensures and supports the quality implementation of a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.	☐	☐	☒	☐

#	Statement of Practice	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
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.	☐	☐	☒	☐
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.	☐	☐	☒	☐
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.	☐	☐	☒	☐
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 3:			**2**	

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

#	Statement of Practice	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
4.2	School and teacher leaders ensure that instructional practices and strategies are organized around annual, unit, and daily lesson plans that address all student goals and needs.	☐	☐	☒	☐
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.	☐	☐	☒	☐
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.	☐	☐	☒	☐
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).	☐	☐	☒	☐
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 4:			**2**	

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	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
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.	☐	☐	☐	☒
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.	☐	☐	☐	☒
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	☐	☐	☒	☐

#	Statement of Practice	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
	emotional developmental health supports tied to the school's vision.				
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.	☐	☐	☒	☐
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:			**2**	

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	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
6.2	The school leader ensures that regular communication with students and families fosters their high expectations for student academic achievement.	☐	☒	☐	☐
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.	☐	☒	☐	☐
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.	☐	☐	☒	☐
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.	☐	☐	☒	☐
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:		**3**		

	Tenet Rating	STAGE 3
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.		

The school is in *Stage 3* for Tenet 2 – School Leader Practices and Decisions.

- The school community is in the process of implementing a whole school reform model through the implementation of a socio-economic integration grant focused on STEAM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) and is refining goals, mission and vision to insure alignment. There is a noticeable change in school climate and culture as evidenced by students greeting adults in the hallways, adults discussing school-wide change and increased collaboration of teachers through the incorporation of teams focused on a variety of targeted priorities. Consistent protocols were observed during grade level and data team meetings. The SCEP mentions the development of a walk-though protocol that supports district and school based instructional expectations and lesson planning aligned to the Danielson Framework for teaching however, evidence of this protocol was not observed. As the school implements the STEAM focus, revised goals are being created to continue the measurable student achievement demonstrated through increased academic achievement on the NYS Assessment.

- The school leaders have strategically used resources to bring about improved student success. A major undertaking was the redesigning of Academic Intervention Services. Supports are now provided to student in grades kindergarten to grade five. Student are identified for supports based on local and state data. STEAM grant funds are supporting the instructional needs of the diverse population by developing project based learning activities aligned to the NYS CCLS. Evidence of the strategic use of resources has resulted in improved student success.

- The school leader continues to increase the instructional capacity of staff through opportunities for collaboration, classroom embedded support provided by the instructional coach, and feedback provided as a result of data analysis and classroom walkthroughs and teacher observations. The self-review references a series of teams, a school leadership team, social emotional team, special ed team, bilingual team and data team, that have been created to improve communication, time for collaboration and team planning. Through the student support team focus group, it was determined that awareness of the scope of work for each team was not understood or made aware to the other teams. In conversations with the school leader she shared that they are considering streamlining and integrating some of the individual teams. As a result, lack of coordination and collaboration amongst the teams has limited improvements to instructional practices and high quality instruction.

- The school leader is establishing systems to track and monitor individual and school wide practices in hopes they will lead to continuous school improvement. The self-review document makes reference to the review of lesson plans and the provision of feedback. During student focus groups and classroom visits, student work samples were reviewed and feedback was found to be generalized rather than providing specific areas for growth. As a result of classroom visits and an analysis of lesson plans it was apparent that district expectations for specific criteria within lesson plans was not present. Although emphasis on systems thinking has started, the established systems are not providing the necessary structure to regularly monitor all aspects of school at this time.

Recommendation:

- By June 2016, the school leader should work with a representative from each team in the school, not limited to but including, the data, social emotional, special education, and bilingual teams to create uniformity, while reducing redundancy, by aligning their focus to the school long term vision/mission and measurable goals following a consistent Professional Learning Community structure.

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**	**Stage 2**

The school is in *Stage 2* for Tenet 3 – Curriculum Development and Support.

- A widely understood expectation and vision for a rigorous curriculum aligned to the CCLS was not observed. The principal articulated goals, plans, some activities and staff training that have taken place towards curriculum development, however, nothing has been documented in writing. The principal and instructional coach documented work in progress on the STEAM curriculum, though stated this has not yet been shared with the entire staff. Grade level meetings and vertical team

meetings are regularly scheduled and utilized to discuss curriculum and data results, however no documentation or observable evidence that a rigorous curriculum adapted to students' needs is utilized building wide. Although staff is beginning to infuse STEAM into their curriculum, a rigorous curriculum that leads students to college and career readiness has not yet been fully realized.

- Lessons plans do not reflect the specific needs for student sub populations or the use of high order questioning. Although use of complex materials was evidenced in some classrooms, they were not consistently observed throughout the school. There was no evidence observed which indicated how assessment data analysis leads to adjustments to the curriculum or how student needs would be addressed. There was some documented use of CCLS aligned curriculum but there was also evidence of unaligned worksheets in math and literacy instruction. Although the school has provided opportunities for teacher collaboration, review of lesson plans and observations of student groupings did not reflect the incorporation of student needs, complex materials and higher order questioning, hindering opportunities for continuous success.

- While opportunities exist for horizontal and vertical teacher meeting, interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum were not observed. Special area teachers were not included in the grade level meeting observed. As reported by the principal, classroom and special area teachers have yet to provide input on STEAM curriculum development. All stakeholders reported the STEAM initiative as a positive experience and increasing engagement. However, no students could articulate what skills were learned as a result of these experiences. During a class-wide building activity visitation, no students could articulate connection to previous learning. Conversations with students revealed a lack of understanding of how the curriculum was helping them, other than preparing them for the next grade or preparing for state assessments. Staff, students, and parents indicated that the Reading Counts initiative has had a significant impact on student reading abilities and has greatly improved student engagement and literacy across the content. It is unclear how another literacy program in use, iRead, is connected to the curriculum. Aside from STEAM activities, opportunities to deepen students' understanding of the curriculum and provide additional opportunities for student success were not observed.

- Lesson plans did not reflect modifications based on assessment data. A wide range of assessments are administered and effective instructional practices are identified, however individual lesson plans do not consistently reflect what was learned from team meetings. Conversations with various school-based teams revealed that school data is discussed regularly but few actions result. Students communicated that specific feedback on schoolwork is rare. There was little evidence of actionable feedback on posted student work. So, while assessment analysis has become school-wide practice, changes to the curriculum have yet to occur and feedback to students has been inconsistent, preventing their ownership of learning and improved achievement.

Recommendation:

- The school leaders will work with teachers to implement a data analysis cycle using various data sources that includes analysis, design, implementation and evaluation in the strategic development of student groupings, adaptations to the curriculum and instructional delivery.

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	Stage 2

The school is in *Stage 2* for Tenet 4 – Teacher Practices and Decisions.

- Lesson plans do not reflect instructional practices designed for diverse groups of students. The instructional coach has engaged teacher teams in protocols to guide teachers through data analysis to determine student learning needs, however, development of differentiated tasks based on data was not observed. Groupings for both guided reading and guided math were posted in classrooms, but there was no evidence indicating data was used to change those groupings. In student focus groups and discussions, students report that reading and math groups remain the same throughout the year. While systems and protocols have been established for promoting increased student engagement and inquiry, these protocols do not incorporate unique student needs and learning styles, preventing instructional practices that lead to high levels of student engagement and achievement on a consistent basis.

- The instructional practices of teachers generally do not incorporate higher order questions, text complexity and multiple opportunities to learn on a consistent basis. While many of the classrooms utilize CCLS aligned curriculum, there were no examples, either in classroom lessons or in lesson plans, of high order questions being incorporated into the learning. There was evidence of unaligned worksheets in use on multiple grade levels and homogeneous reading materials being utilized for class-wide activities with no differentiation. Test prep materials were in use with no specific guidance on specific strategies or targeted standards. Consequently, not all of the instructional practices throughout the school are leading students to higher levels of engagement and achievement.

- Teachers' instructional practices do not consistently meet the diverse academic needs of all students and have yet to promote intellectual discovery and rigorous thinking throughout the school. Survey data showed that 37% of students feel challenged by the work assigned at school and 59% of students reported that school is consistently interesting; this was substantiated during conversations with students. Students appear to be grouped by ability and students reported this as well. There is, however, a feeling of physical and intellectual safety in most classrooms. Students in each focus group stated that teachers are both helpful and caring. No students reported being laughed at for incorrect answers in class and stated that this rarely happens to classmates; if it does it is dealt with by the teacher. So, while the instructional practices and environments that create physical and intellectual safety for students are being realized, the effects on intellectual discovery and increased achievement have yet to follow.

- The outcomes from data meetings do not result in targeted instructional strategies or data informed student groupings. Students stated that groupings rarely if ever change. During the vertical team meeting, it was shared that groupings are intentionally not changed. Teachers review and discuss data but no evidence was provided that instructional practices are adjusted. The analysis of data is not always timely, as evidenced by seven-week old assessment results being reviewed to guide instructional decision making. With such a lag in time, targeted instructional changes may be disconnected from student needs. Regarding student feedback, survey data reported that 95% of teachers provide feedback on student work, however the percentage of students who report they

receive written feedback always/a lot was 66%, 28% reported they receive such feedback only sometimes. In classroom and hallway observations, evidence of written feedback to students was sporadic and inconsistent. There was no evidence of student self-evaluation protocols. So, while teachers are reviewing and discussing assessment data, these discussions have yet to lead to adjustments to instructional strategies that will lead to higher levels of student achievement for all students.

Recommendation:

- School leaders should immediately work with grade level teams to analyze data from all consistent assessments that will be used to create and adjust student groupings and inform targeted classroom instruction.

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**	**Stage 2**

The school is in *Stage 2* for Tenet 5 – Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health.

- A system to identify the social/emotional developmental health needs has not yet been established. Building leaders cited examples of how staff support social/emotional developmental health in order to remove barriers to learning, but agreed they have no specific data to inform the creation of a formalized system. Therefore, there is no definitive information utilized to understand what barriers exist for some students, preventing an increase in their academic success.

- A school wide social/emotional program and materials have yet to be established. Both students and parents reported in survey responses and in focus groups that the staff is very supportive and responsive. Parents and students also report a high sense of safety. However, no systematic approach was identified. There has also been no professional development offered that focuses on students' social and emotional developmental health. Barriers to learning for some students still exist and the skills for social-emotional learning for all students are not being addressed building wide.

- Targeted interventions to support the unique needs of Vails Gate students have not been addressed. The school is implementing RTI for social-emotional learning as well as for academics. Relationships with community based organization have been established. A social-emotional learning team has also been established and is in initial stages of activity. The building principal did report that the barriers to learning for some subgroups is unknown and a needs assessment is necessary. Coordination between school staff and stakeholders is not yet in place. Therefore, supports for all students have not been implemented, skills for social-emotional learning are not being developed and barriers to learning for some students continue to remain.

- There is no strategic plan to address the social, emotional, developmental health needs of all students. While there are no formalized protocols in place, the school does review suspension and discipline data and addresses individual student needs as they arise. It was stated during the student support meeting that the review of data has not let to a formal school wide plan. A review of the SCEP identified the school would be focusing on ruler Emotional Literacy, a school wide

character education plan, and a fourth and fifth grade student government program. At the time of the visit, not of these items were observed. Until a strategic plan is in place, students will not receive the supports they need related to social-emotional learning, leaving what barriers to learning unaddressed.

Recommendation:

- By June 2016, school leaders should work with the social emotional learning team to conduct a needs assessment of the social emotional barriers to improved student learning on the part of all subgroups and use the findings to implement a school-wide SEL curriculum.

	Tenet Rating	Stage 3
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.		

The school is in *Stage 3* for Tenet 6 – Family and Community Engagement.

- The school leaders communicate with families through events and written communication the expectations for student success. The school leader expressed she uses every opportunity to communicate her expectations, both in written form and during school events. Survey results reported 69% of families are satisfied with how well the school communicates with them. The parents present during the parent focus group expressed appreciation and satisfaction with the communication efforts of the school, both from the building leader and from the staff. The parents expressed appreciation for the additional information included with student report cards, indicating reading levels and support strategies. The partnerships that have been established between the school, it's families and the community are supporting the building leader's efforts and high expectations.

- The school is providing multiple and equitable opportunities for reciprocal communication to both staff and families. The school provides written communications in both English and Spanish. Robo-calls are also done in both English and Spanish. Families who call the school's main office have the opportunity to communicate in either English or Spanish. The use of social media through Twitter and Facebook was reported by parents to be well received. Survey results indicated that 82% of respondents feel comfortable calling the school to discuss issues or concerns and 74% of those who responded feel the school leader is open about issues and concerns that impact school families. Parents in the focus group praised both the school principal and school staff for their quick responsiveness when issues arise. Reciprocal communication has increased the capacity of staff and families to support student social emotional growth.

- Attendance at trainings for creating and sustaining home-school partnerships is not reflective of the whole school community. The SCEP includes the collaborative development of a parent handbook to provide training on school data and educational terminology. Involved families and staff work together to support student achievement. The school works with families through events like "Bring your mom to school day" – "Bring your dad to school day" – "STEAM Fridays" – "Evening STEAM events". It was acknowledged by the building principal, support staff and by parents in the focus group that there are families who do not engage with the school staff or attend school activities. So while some students' families are fully engaged to support student success, a plan is needed to

engage those families who are not involved, thus increasing opportunities for improved student outcomes.

- Academic data is shared with stakeholders regarding student progress, however, data is not collected and shared regarding the social-emotional growth and well-being of students. Parents reported knowing when report cards were distributed and also stated that the staff is receptive and welcoming of communications at any time. Parents also reported an understanding of the various methods and assessments used to determine a student's reading level as well as the school's Reading Counts program and how families can support their children in that initiative. However, there are no systems or protocols in place that collect and share data related to the social-emotional needs of students. Parents therefore are not provided with additional information that could be used to provide additional services to increase student engagement and achievement.

Recommendation:

- By June 2016, school leaders should work with the Director of FACE to establish and implement communication strategies for active/engaged parents as well as, disconnected/disengaged parents.