



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	1406000110000
District	Buffalo Public Schools
District Address	712 City Hall, Buffalo, NY 14202
Superintendent	Pamela Brown
Date of Review	December 7, 2012
Schools Discussed in this Report:	Buffalo Academy for the Visual & Performing Arts Build Academy Dr. Lydia T. Wright School of Excellence Hamlin Park Elementary Harriet Ross Tubman Herman Badillo Bilingual Academy Highgate Heights International Preparatory at Grover Cleveland North Park Middle School Waterfront Elementary

District Grade Configuration	PK-12	Total Student Enrollment	33,437	% Title 1 Population	89.09% (11-12) 79.43% (12-13)	TITLE I POPULATION is based on Free Lunch + Reduced Lunch, Please check	% Attendance Rate	89.34% (11-12)			
% Free Lunch	82.59% (11-12)	% Reduced Lunch	7.08% (11-12)	% Student Sustainability	N/A	% Limited English Proficient	11.54%	% Students with Disabilities	19.1%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
% American Indian or Alaska Native	1.15%	% Black or African American	50.86%	% Hispanic or Latino	16.90%	% Asian, Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	6.38%	White	22.15%	Multi-racial	2.57%
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/ Appointed to District	1	Number of Interim Deputy Superintendents	1	Average Years Deputy Superintendents in Role in the District	.25	# of Directors of Programs	14 (See attached)				
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate in District	< 1% (8 teachers)	% Teaching Out of Certification in District	2%	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp. in District	4%	Average Teacher Absences in District	Unavailable at this time				
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
District in Good Standing	N/A	Focus District	Yes	Number of Focus Schools Identified by District	16	Number of SIG (a) Recipient Schools	6	Number of Schools in Status	44		
% ELA Performan levels 3 & 4	27.85%	% Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	29.94%	% Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	51.83%	% 4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	47.8%* Cohort 2008	% 6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	53.00% Cohort 2006		

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

Tenet 1 - District Leadership and Capacity: The district examines school systems and makes intentional decisions to identify and provide critical expectations, supports and structures in all areas of need so that schools are able to respond to their community and ensure that all students are successful.

Mark an "X" in the box below the appropriate designation for each statement of practice (SOP), and indicate in the OVERALL RATING" row the final designation for the overall tenet rating.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
1.1	The district has a comprehensive approach for recruiting, evaluating and sustaining high-quality personnel that affords schools the ability to ensure success by addressing the needs of their community			X	
1.2	The district is organized and allocates resources (financial, staff support, materials, etc.) in a way that leads to appropriate levels of support for schools based on the needs of the school community, which promotes school improvement and success.			X	
1.3	The district leadership has a comprehensive explicit theory of action about school culture that robustly communicates high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents.			X	
1.4	The district has a comprehensive plan to create, deliver and monitor professional development in all pertinent areas that is adaptive and tailored to the needs of individual schools.			X	
1.5	The district promotes a data-driven culture by providing strategies connected to best practices that all staff members and school communities are expected to be held accountable for implementing.				X
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 1:			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.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
2.1	The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for the school leader to create, develop and nurture a school environment that is responsive to the needs of the entire school community.			X	

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
3.1	The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports that are connected to the implementation of a comprehensive curriculum appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and are inclusive of the arts, technology and other enrichment subjects in a data-driven culture.			X	

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
4.1	The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for teachers to develop strategies and practices that lead to effective planning and account for student data, needs, goals, and levels of engagement.			X	

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
5.1	The district creates policy and works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and resources that positively support students' social and emotional developmental health.			X	

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
6.1	The district has a comprehensive family and community engagement strategic plan that states the expectations around creating and sustaining a welcoming environment for families, reciprocal communication, and establishing partnerships with community organizations and families.			X	

District Review Narrative:

Tenet 1 - District Leadership and Capacity: The district examines school systems and makes intentional decisions to identify and provide critical expectations, supports and structures in all areas of need so that schools are able to respond to their community and ensure that all students are successful.

Debriefing Statement: The District is urgently assessing the systems of individual schools in order to set clear expectations and provide supports and structures in all areas of need. This sense of urgency has not yet been responded to by all District and school staff, thereby resulting in low student proficiency ratings.

Statement of Practice 1.1: The district has a comprehensive approach for recruiting, evaluating and sustaining high-quality personnel that affords schools the ability to ensure success by addressing the needs of their community.

Area for Improvement:

- The District has structures that enable school leaders to benefit from committee partnerships concerning hiring of staff members. Interviews with District personnel indicated that school-based interview committees including school leaders, teachers, parents and students are being created. Each committee follows a questioning protocol during the interview process. Supports for instructional feedback, teacher retention and evaluations are also being developed. As a result of the District's efforts, the inclusion of school leaders in the hiring process has led to a more inclusive practice, but a comprehensive approach to hiring and maintaining high quality personnel in all schools has not yet been fully actualized.

Statement of Practice 1.2: The district is organized and allocates resources (financial, staff support, materials, etc.) in a way that leads to appropriate levels of support for schools based on the needs of the school community, which promotes school improvement and success.

Area for Improvement:

- The District is in the process of developing and implementing a plan to organize and allocate resources to individual schools in order to promote school improvement and success. Based on a review of the District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP) and interviews with personnel, significant misalignments of allocation of support and resources are beginning to be addressed by collaboratively working with school leaders to identify their school's human capital and fiscal needs. Because these efforts are in early implementation stage of this approach, significant school improvement across the District has not yet been seen at this time

Statement of Practice 1.3: The district leadership has a comprehensive explicit theory of action about school culture that robustly communicates high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents.

Area for Improvement:

- The District leadership team has a comprehensive and explicit theory of action about school culture that includes high expectations for all constituents. However, District personnel interviewed by the review team indicated that the theory of action is not yet shared by all District staff. As a result, the District leadership team's theory of action about school culture is in the beginning stages of being understood and articulated by all staff and is not yet driving improvement in student achievement.

Statement of Practice 1.4: The district has a comprehensive plan to create, deliver and monitor professional development in all pertinent areas that is adaptive and tailored to the needs of individual schools.

Area for Improvement:

- The District offers professional development (PD) opportunities in response to initiatives and evolving conditions rather than comprehensive planning to meet the needs of individual schools. District personnel interviewed by the review team indicated that District-determined support and generic PD is provided through turnkey and literacy coach training at individual buildings. PD is neither provided in all pertinent areas nor is it adapted or tailored to the needs of individual schools, resulting in staff often not being able to effectively implement the school's instructional program.

Statement of Practice 1.5: The district promotes a data-driven culture by providing strategies connected to best practices that all staff members and school communities are expected to be held accountable for implementing.

Area for Improvement:

- The District communicates expectations for the use of data and identifies practices connected to how teachers instruct students and school needs are identified. Based on a review of the DCIP and interviews with personnel, the review team found that the District does not adequately analyze District level data, such as student progress aligned to intervention programs the District has implemented and teacher retention rates. Furthermore, the District has yet to provide adequate supports to all schools in the analysis and application of data to inform instructional strategies. Therefore, teachers have limited skills to establish targeted instruction and school communities are not held accountable for implementing consistent best practices.

This section provides a narrative that communicates how school communities perceive the support provided by the district.

Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions

Statement of Practice (SOP) 2.1: The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for the school leader to create, develop and nurture a school environment that is responsive to the needs of the entire school community.

SOP Rating

D

Area for Improvement:

- Most school leaders of the ten schools reviewed indicated that the District provided support in response to their school needs by way of monthly meetings, led by Community Superintendents. For some school leaders, the monthly meetings serve as a communication link between the school and District leaders. In addition, instructional rounds are held, collaborative classroom visits are conducted to observe teaching and learning, and PD is provided. Other school leaders report that these collaborative opportunities are too infrequent and primarily focused on District-assigned tasks and offer insufficient support. Therefore, the support school leaders receive to assist with creating a school environment responsive to the needs of the entire school community is inconsistently provided across the District.

Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support Statement of Practice (SOP) 3.1: The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports that are connected to the implementation of a comprehensive curriculum appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and are inclusive of the arts, technology and other enrichment subjects in a data-driven culture.	SOP Rating	D
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Area for Improvement:

- Curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) are not yet fully implemented in all schools. The majority of school leaders reported that they receive support that is aligned to instructional needs, curriculum modules and District/school developed CCLS curricula, with a focus on English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. A mathematics support teacher, reading support teacher and literacy coach have begun to provide PD to teachers of Priority schools. Interviews conducted by the review team with two school leaders and a review of supporting documentation confirm that the District has begun to prepare all students for college and careers. However, data about individual school progress, the identification of patterns in student learning, and school effectiveness is neither thoroughly analyzed at the District level nor is the available data shared with school leaders. As a result, high levels of ownership and accountability are not fostered in every school.

Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions Statement of Practice (SOP) 4.1: The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for teachers to develop strategies and practices that lead to effective planning and account for student data, needs, goals, and levels of engagement.	SOP Rating	D
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Area for Improvement:

- Professional development provided by the District has traditionally been focused on initiatives and has not taken school or student data and learning into consideration. However, staff interviewed by the review team indicated that the District has begun to provide targeted PD based on what they have determined are the needs of school staff. During the summer of 2012, teams of teachers developed local pre- and post-assessments to measure student progress and establish Student Learning Objectives (SLOs). Additionally, the District has developed a school calendar that specifies what and when PD will be provided to staff during the 2012-13 school year. The lack of full collaboration with individual school leaders has limited effective planning that can improve student outcomes.

Tenet 5- Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health Statement of Practice (SOP) 5.1: The district creates policy and works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and resources that positively support students' social and emotional developmental health.	SOP Rating	D
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Area for Improvement:

- The District does not have an explicit policy that commits to providing opportunities and resources that positively support student social and emotional developmental health. Based on documents reviewed and interviews conducted, the review team found that the District has developed

partnerships with community organizations to assist schools in addressing the social and emotional developmental health needs of students and their families. Additionally, every school is expected to implement a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) program. Priority Schools have been assigned a student support team (SST) whose members receive training in PBIS, but other school staff do not receive follow-up PD. Inconsistent follow-up support to school staff has limited school ability to develop and implement strategies to address social and emotional developmental health needs and provide positive behavior supports and interventions to ensure the academic success of students.

Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement

Statement of Practice (SOP) 6.1: The district has a comprehensive family and community engagement strategic plan that states the expectations around creating and sustaining a welcoming environment for families, reciprocal communication, and establishing partnerships with community organizations and families.

SOP Rating

D

Area for Improvement:

- Many stakeholders are not familiar with the District's plan for family and community engagement. School leaders and some parents interviewed by the review team stated that the Superintendent has begun to share her vision, core beliefs, and theory of action when attending community meetings and events. Additionally, for each Priority school, the District has hired a parent facilitator to assist parents in supporting the academic success of their children and to facilitate parent access to needed resources. The District has developed a website as a vehicle for parents to access data regarding their children's participation and progress in school, and a variety of partnerships to improve family access to services. School leaders are expected to submit an annual report describing their plans for parent involvement. However, District efforts to increase family and community engagement are not uniformly acted upon by individual schools, as many of the communities expressed a sense of not being welcomed and a lack of reciprocal communication.

SYNTHESIS OF STRENGTHS ACROSS ALL SCHOOLS REVIEWED IN THE DISTRICT:

Tenet 2: School Leader Practices and Decisions

- Two of the ten schools were rated Effective for this Tenet. Evidence at each school indicated that these school communities share a vision concerning student achievement and well-being and how they collaborate as a community to realize this vision as outlined in the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP).

Tenet 3: Curriculum Development and Support

- One out of ten schools was rated Effective for this Tenet. According to teaching staff at this school, the school leaders are conducting rigorous formal evaluations, administrative walkthroughs, and reviewing lesson plans to determine alignment with Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to ensure CCLS-based practices are being implemented.

Tenet 4: Teacher Practices and Decisions

- None of the schools were rated Effective or Highly Effective regarding this Tenet.

Tenet 5: Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health

- Three out of ten schools were rated Effective for this Tenet. Evidence from each school indicated that a system has been established that allows each child to be known by a designated adult who coordinates social and emotional developmental health needs.

Tenet 6: Family and Community Engagement

- None of the schools were rated Effective for this Tenet.

SYNTHESIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS ACROSS ALL SCHOOLS REVIEWED IN THE DISTRICT:

Tenet 2: School Leader Practices and Decisions

- Nine of the ten schools received recommendations for this Tenet. Recommendations include but are not limited to the following:
 - Develop a vision statement with a representative group of stakeholders (school leaders, teachers and parents) that is visible in the school and distribute it to all members of the school community.
 - Collect and measure progress toward attainment of school goals that includes monitoring of the implementation of the SCEP.
 - Develop and implement a schedule for frequent, formal instructional observations and walkthroughs focused on the use of CCLS instructional practices. Provide relevant feedback through written evaluations and develop teacher improvement plans as necessary to improve instruction. Monitor and support Data Team efforts to share data and provide opportunities for instructional staff to learn how to use data to inform instruction.

Tenet 3: Curriculum Development and Support

- All ten schools received recommendations for this Tenet. Recommendations include but are not limited to the following:
 - Make the incorporation of CCLS in lesson plans and classroom instruction a priority by conducting regular classroom visits and providing teacher evaluations with relevant feedback.
 - Provide sufficient co-planning time for all teachers in the school, including special education, English as a second language (ESL) and special area teachers, for the consistent development of lesson plans that incorporate all aspects of the curriculum and include remedial, extension, and enrichment opportunities that address varied student needs.
 - Make it a schoolwide priority that all lessons promote higher-order thinking skills and require students to analyze information.
 - Create and schedule regular opportunities for all teachers to work in partnerships within and across grades and subjects vertically and horizontally to target what is taught and why it is

taught. Ensure that the standards-based curriculum integrates the arts, technology and other enrichments areas.

Tenet 4: Teacher Practices and Decisions

- All ten schools received recommendations for this Tenet. Recommendations include but are not limited to the following:
 - Monitor and evaluate teacher daily absences and teacher attendance at PD against classroom performance, with appropriate feedback provided after walkthrough and during evaluations.
 - Provide support to teachers to change the delivery of instruction from a highly teacher-directed style to one that meaningfully involves students in monitoring their own progress through self-assessment and frequent feedback, sharing of data, and discussions of the importance of student accountability in learning.
 - Inform and instruct teachers of their responsibility for connecting the analysis of data with instructional decision-making, student grouping, and targeted lesson planning. Use formative assessments, progress monitoring and frequent feedback to students to empower and encourage students to actively participate in, and take ownership of, their own learning process.

Tenet 5: Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health

- Eight of the ten school leaders received recommendations regarding this tenet. Such recommendations include but are not limited to the following:
 - Create a comprehensive school vision that includes goals for student social emotional development health.
 - Develop a communication system/network that informs and educates families and other constituents, and stakeholders outside of the immediate school environment of the school vision for student social and emotional developmental health and how it is connected to academic success. Implement a rigorous and transparent curriculum to teach and measure student skills and behaviors that demonstrate social and emotional health. Provide PD training for all school constituents in order to build adult capacity to support students in establishing a safe, respectful learning community.
 - Use data to identify areas of need and cultivate partnerships that positively impact and support student social and emotional developmental health. Develop a schoolwide system that provides each student with a designated adult who coordinates social and emotional developmental health needs, including referral and support to address barriers to social and emotional health and academic achievement.

Tenet 6: Family and Community Engagement

- All ten schools received recommendations for this Tenet. Recommendations include but are not limited to the following:
 - Create and provide a wide range of opportunities for families to receive, share, and improve their use and understanding of student data. Encourage families to advocate for necessary and sustainable student support.

- Provide PD to staff members regarding strategies teachers and student support staff can use to seek and sustain partnerships with families and community organizations that also support student needs.
- Collaborate to develop a school-based parent plan for 2013-14 that includes a system for families to participate in reciprocal communication with school staff about student academic, social and emotional developmental health progress to support student success.

DISTRICT LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Tenet 1: District Leadership and Capacity

In order for the District strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 1, the District should:

- 1.1: Fully develop strategies within the DCIP for supporting school leaders that lead to an understanding of staff evaluation, frequent feedback, and PD that supports reflection on practices.
- 1.2: Fully develop within the DCIP, strategies to ensure that resources are adequately allocated throughout the District to meet the needs of students, parents, and staff.
- 1.3: Ensure that the established theory of action and associated expectations are shared and understood by all District staff.
- 1.4: Establish a calendar of PD opportunities that are based on the assessment of school staff practices.
- 1.5: Ensure that the District communicates expectations for how data are to be used by staff members to support and establish goals for students.