



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code/DBN	130502020000
District	Dover Union Free School District (UFSD)
District Address	2368 Route 22, Dover Plains, NY 12522
Superintendent	Michael Tierney
Date(s) of Review	May 13, 2013
Schools Discussed in this Report	Dover Middle School

District Information Sheet											
District Grade Configuration	K-12	Total Student Enrollment	1449	% Title 1 Population	10.4	% Attendance Rate	93.8				
% Free Lunch	37.2	% Reduced Lunch	12.6	% Student Sustainability	98.2	% Limited English Proficient	2.8	% Students with Disabilities	12.6		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0.1	% Black or African American	6.5	% Hispanic or Latino	14.6	% Asian, Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	2.3	% White	76.6	% Multi-racial	1.4
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/ Appointed to District	3	Number of Deputy Superintendents	2	Average Years Deputy Superintendents in Role in the District	7	# of Directors of Programs	1				
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate in District	0	% Teaching Out of Certification in District	.01	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. Of Exp. In District	11	Average Teacher Absences in District	6.17				
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
District in Good Standing		Focus District	X	Number of Focus Schools Identified by District	1	Number of SIG (a) Recipient Schools	1	Number of SIG (g) Recipient Schools	Number of Schools in Status		1
% ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	49.6 (Gr 3-8)	% Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	53.6 (Gr 3-8)	% Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	80 (Gr 4, 8)	% 4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	76	% 6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	NA		

Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA			
	American Indian or Alaska Native		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		
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics			
	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		
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science			
	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		
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective			
	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:

<p>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.</p>	<p>Overall Tenet Rating</p>	<p>D</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>SOP Rating</p>	<p>E</p>
<p>Debriefing Statement: The district has established relationships for the recruitment of staff and there is a mentor program available to new teachers. Traditionally, the district enjoys high levels of staff retention but recent declines in student enrollment have resulted in open positions remaining unfilled.</p>		
<p>Strength:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district has a comprehensive approach for the recruitment of qualified personnel. The district leader reported that the recruitment system for the Dutchess County Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) includes job fairs at colleges and universities, and training program partnerships. Through this system of recruitment, the district creates a diverse pool of qualified teaching candidates to fill vacancies in schools. However, due to declining student enrollment some existing positions remain unfilled, at the time of the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) visit. Further, the district, now in the ninth year of the Teachers of Tomorrow grant, provides training for math and science teachers. The district incorporates a mentoring program, which pairs new teachers with experienced instructors. During the visit, staff reported that the mentoring program was beneficial. Review of the self-assessment document found that all instructors have valid teaching certificates and are teaching within their areas of certification. The district adopted the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan, which embeds the elements of the Danielson Framework, as the teacher evaluation tool. Each school leader received training as the lead evaluators of their teachers. In addition, the district has developed a culture of recruiting, training, and retaining qualified personnel. The district support in recruiting staff for the schools provides a comprehensive approach to address the needs of the community school district. 		
<p>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.</p>	<p>SOP Rating</p>	<p>D</p>
<p>Debriefing Statement: The previous year’s budget determines the base district allocation of resources and generic support to the schools. This procedure does not incorporate data analysis to consider the needs of students, staff, and families, so the allocation is not always needs based. Without fully considering data to inform decisions, particularly in the allocation of financial and staff support, the district impedes school improvement and student success.</p>		

Area for Improvement:

- The district has a structure for providing resources to schools based on the school’s previous budget and input from school leaders. All district leaders reported that the structure includes requesting budgetary recommendations from school leaders for the following school year. School leaders complete preliminary supplemental request forms to indicate school specific needs including new staff, programs, or technology. The district leader and members of the Board of Education (BOE) prioritize the supplemental requests and determine the financial impact of each request. A review of district documents found that there is an expectation that school leaders in their respective professional learning communities (PLCs) review and analyze data to determine the needs of students, staff, and families. The district leader reported that schools throughout the district are beginning to collect data using data management systems, and that some data is shared at grade-level PLC meetings. The IIT did not find any documentation to indicate that the district’s response to individual school requests were based on school specific needs. The district leader reported reviewing the school leaders’ supplemental requests within the context of district action plans and goals when considering the funding of school budgets. For example, the district leader reported prioritizing the purchase of additional technology in preparation for computer-based assessments, which may take priority over supplemental requests for other technology resources, regardless of the potential benefit of the supplemental technology to the respective school and its students. In addition, there is no indication that the district structure for resource allocation to schools considers the varying needs of students, staff, and families when determining budget allocations for individual schools. Further, there was no evidence to indicate the extent to which the district considers the individual school data relative to school leader requests. Regardless of how schools are organized, the district allocates two hundred and fifty dollars to each teacher for supplies and materials. The absence of district support for fiscal resources based on school-specific data, to address the unique school needs, limits school and district improvement.

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.

SOP Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: District leadership has outlined and communicated a set of action steps in multiple areas of practice. However, a comprehensive explicit theory of action supporting the development of a school culture of high expectations for all constituents does not exist. Until school community members express high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents, no alignment remains in regards to professional practices and student outcomes.

Area for Improvement:

- The district leader reported implementing the PLC process as the primary communication system among staff within the district, and sharing written action plans with school leaders, as well as other staff members with responsibility for the completion of tasks. A review of the District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP) showed activities related to the development of district goals and a district

action plan. The review of district action plans found that the district leader had outlined a series of actions and tasks, some of which have measurable outcomes. While the PLC process and action plans communicated high expectations for completion of specific tasks, there were no explicit expectations for improving professional practices to increase student outcomes. Interviews with district staff found that there is an implicit assumption that completion of action plan tasks will result in improved professional practices, and that if particular practices improve, increased student outcomes will follow; however, there is no system of measurement and accountability embedded in the district action plans. For example, at the time of the visit, there was no explicit district theory of action to develop a culture that addresses the varied needs of all constituents in an equitable manner. In addition, the action plans did not communicate methods for improving outcomes for the lowest performing students. The lack of a comprehensive approach to ensure that professional practices focus on the needs of all constituents impedes progress and limits positive student outcomes.

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.

SOP Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: The district has an outdated professional development (PD) plan that does not reflect the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and does not address the needs of individual schools. As a result, the instructional needs of individual schools are not met.

Area for Improvement:

- A review of the district PD plan found references made to the New York State (NYS) standards, and included no information related to a CCLS curriculum and instructional shifts. The district leader stated that the development of a new PD plan was “put on hold for a year.” Recent PD opportunities provided a focus on required initiatives, and the district did not provide embedded supports to increase the occurrence of the CCLS shifts in instructional practices and strategies. The district leader also reported that district sponsored PD did not focus specifically on the instructional methodologies and strategies required to improve outcomes for the lowest performing students. Based on staff interviews, the IIT found that district leaders and school leaders select the PD events attended by each staff member. Neither school and student data, nor the assessment of teacher practices, informed the selection of the PD staff members attend. The district leader stated that school and district leaders follow up on implementation of PD, and contracted consultants to provide follow-up supports to some school staff; however, school staff members interviewed reported that there is no formal system for providing follow-up supports after the delivery of PD. Current PD opportunities do not focus on concentrated areas of school needs. In the absence of a comprehensive PD plan based on data, the district limits schools’ abilities to provide rigorous CCLS-aligned curriculum and instruction for all students.

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.	SOP Rating	D
---	-------------------	----------

Debriefing Statement: The district has structures in place for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating ongoing achievement data. However, there is no explicit vision or system in place to hold all staff members accountable for using data to influence, inform, and support programmatic decision-making and student goal setting. Therefore, students continue to underperform and school goals are consistently unmet.

Area for Improvement:

- District leaders communicate expectations for all staff to use data to set clear goals for student learning. School leaders support the use of data to drive instruction and assessment practices as outlined in the district expectations for best instructional practices. A review of district action plans found school specific short- and long-term tasks identified for completion through the PLCs. The district leader expressed the expectation that teachers are reviewing state assessment, summative, and formative data to develop interventions. However, the district leader explained that not all teachers know how to interpret and use data. In addition, only a few teachers use data to inform lesson planning during their PLCs and department meetings. Additionally, all school and district staff reported that there is no formalized Response to Intervention (RTI) program in place to review student data and analyze trends in behavior. The district leader reported that teachers use common writing rubrics and facilitate peer editing to promote norming assessments to look at student work. The absence of professional learning experiences at the district and school levels to develop adult capacity to effectively use data to inform instructional practices and increase student academic achievement hinders school improvement.

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:

- Although the district leader meets regularly with all school leaders and creates action plans to communicate expectations and guide the work of each leader, actual individual school implementation and follow through are not consistently occurring. School and district leaders reported the district cabinet meets twice monthly and the school leadership PLC meets twice a month interchangeably. The district leader reported that he presents district action plans to school leaders, and expects them to set goals for themselves and their schools, based on the tasks outlined in the plans. The district leader reported that although classroom instruction at the school was good, the curriculum was “not up to standards.” However, the district did not have a system to monitor or evaluate the school’s completion of district-assigned tasks or the fostering of effective relationships

with members of the school community. There are conflicting reports of the district support provided to address the specific needs of students. For example, the district leader reported that there is an initiative to implement a systematic approach to provide prescriptive interventions in the middle school. The school leader reported there is a plan in place to address the needs of students at risk. However, school staff and parents reported that class schedules and staff availability determine whether students in need of academic support and interventions receive the instruction and services needed. The district leader reported that there is a district mission statement and different goals for the district, each school, and the BOE. Although the district plan determines each school improvement plan, the district leader creates the district plans without the analysis and review of school and student data. The lack of district analysis to ascertain the necessary school supports to create a school environment responsive to unique school community needs, the district impedes the schools' ability to improve academic performance.

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

Area for Improvement:

- Although district and school leaders are in frequent contact, a comprehensive, appropriately aligned CCLS K-12 curriculum does not exist. The district leader stated the schools' curricula do not fully support the CCLS, and are "not up to standards." However, although the district action plan communicates the expectation to incorporate reading and writing instruction in all classes, there is no specific instruction or focus on the incorporation of the arts, technology, and other enrichment subjects across all content areas. The district leader stated that the district provides outside consultants during PD conference days and after-school trainings to help instructors learn implementation strategies that support CCLS teaching practices. However, there is little staff to follow up, monitoring, or evaluation of the implementation of teacher practices specific to CCLS instruction in the classroom. The district leader reported that schools throughout the district are beginning to collect data using data management systems, and that some data was shared at grade-level PLC meetings. Training was provided so that teachers know how to use the data management system. The district leader stated that additional training would be provided, so that teachers know how to analyze data to identify skill gaps and improve achievement levels. However, the implementation of such plans had not occurred at the time of the visit, so school staff did not have the capacity to use data to inform instruction to affect immediate positive changes. The lack of CCLS aligned curricula and data based instruction limits rigorous instruction and student achievement.

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
---	-------------------	----------

Area for Improvement:

- School and district leaders reported that PD opportunities provided for teachers did not lead to effective planning for the implementation of CCLS instruction. Based on interviews with school staff, at the time of the visit, the IIT found that the district PD plan did not provide alignment for the CCLS. Based on district and school staff interviews, the IIT found that PD topics were generated by state initiatives, the implementation of CCLS, and a survey of teacher requests. However, school staff reported that there was no system for providing follow-up support after the delivery of PD. Teachers reported that PLCs discuss data in some meetings but this was not usually the primary focus. Additionally, district level programs did not build teacher capacity related to improving instructional strategies aligned to CCLS, and did not include methods to monitor student progress for the lowest achieving students. The district leader stated that teachers need additional help in areas such as using data, differentiating instruction, and identifying instructional strategies to address student needs. Although the school leader required that teachers develop lesson plans, there was no template provided, and a review of lesson plans found inconsistencies in the level of planning based on student data. As a result, the lack of planning, using data for student needs or goals limits progress to increase the level of student engagement.

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	I
--	-------------------	----------

Area for Improvement:

- While the district leader stated that required policies are in place, such as the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA), there is no specific district plan outlining a district commitment, with allocated resources, to consistently support student social and emotional developmental health. While document reviews and district leader interviews found that segments of the PD opportunities offered to school staff pertained to social and emotional health issues, such as bullying, there was no PD offered that focused comprehensively and specifically on the characteristics of healthy students that lead to academic success. In addition, there was no PD on understanding the role of instructional staff providing positive support to students’ social and emotional health. There was no system in place to monitor or evaluate the provision of follow-up support connected to district-level PD in general. In addition, there was no formalized Response to Intervention (RTI) process in the district. District and school staff reported that, at the time of the visit, PD follow-up support in social and emotional

developmental health was non-existent. Therefore, the lack of trained staff to support the social and emotional health of students, limits the ability to meet student academic and social needs.

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:

- The district and school leaders reported that there is no district-wide family engagement policy or strategic plan in place, although staff members try to make the district and schools a welcoming place for parents and community members. According to the district leader, the district’s close proximity to another district that recently experienced a tragic shooting incident led to the enhancement of security throughout the district. Part of the enhanced security system includes building entrance restrictions of any individual without state-issued photo identification. The district DTSDE self-assessment document described some of the electronic and print mediums used to communicate with families and community members, including the SchoolTool Parent Portal and SchoolReach messages in English and Spanish. In addition, the district reportedly provides translators as needed, and the district website has a mechanism for translating its content into various languages. However, IIT members found that some of the information posted on the district website was outdated, such as teacher listings, team events, and recognition programs. The district leader reported that family members receive district communications during open houses, curriculum nights, parent meetings, by electronic means, which include “phone blasts,” and BOE meetings. District and school leaders reported that ten to fifteen percent of parent and family member attend such school-sponsored events. Parents interviewed at the school reported feeling welcomed and safe in the buildings but shared that the district has a gap in making connections with community supports and resources. Without the creation and implementation of a strategic plan to establish active partnerships with community organizations and families, the district impedes reciprocal communication to support student engagement and achievement, and slows overall school improvement.

Recommendations:

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

- 1.2: Reorganize the system of district resource allocation to consider the needs of individual school communities, subgroups of students, and families, as determined by data. Develop a system of ongoing assessment of school, family, and student needs so that the deployment of district resources is responsive to identified needs toward promoting school improvement and student success.
- 1.3: When creating district action plans, include specific, measurable, ambitious, results-oriented, and timely (SMART) goals. Develop an ongoing, monitoring system to measure outcomes and use progress data to evaluate goal completion on a regular basis. Increase district expectations to include assessing and addressing the needs of all school community constituents.
- 1.4: Analyze school and student data to create and implement PD plans that address the needs of each school. Incorporate the assessment of school leader and teacher practices into a calendar of targeted PD opportunities. Provide follow-up support to PD, and monitor the effects of PD on instructional practices, student learning, and engagement. Incorporate PD opportunities into the district-wide plan that specifically teaches staff members how to positively support student social and emotional developmental health and effectively engage family members in relationships based on reciprocal communication.
- 1.5: Develop specific, high expectations for staff to use data to inform instruction, and to establish school and student improvement goals. Evaluate staff members' application of data to address school and student achievement goals, and identify best practices that result in measurable success.