



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



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| BEDS Code/DBN | 070600010000 |
| District | Elmira City School District |
| District Address | 951 Hoffman Street, Elmira NY 14905 |
| Superintendent | Joseph Hochreiter |
| Date(s) of Review | March 15, 2013 |
| Schools Discussed in this Report | Ernie Davis Middle School and Elmira Free Academy |

| District Information Sheet | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|---|-------------|--|------------|--|-----|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|----|
| District Grade Configuration | PK-12 | Total Student Enrollment | 6882 | % Title 1 Population | 8 | 5 | % | % Attendance Rate | 91.8% | | |
| % Free Lunch | 54% | % Reduced Lunch | 7% | % Student Sustainability | 72.8% | % Limited English Proficient | .2% | % Students with Disabilities | 12% | | |
| Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population | | | | | | | | | | | |
| % American Indian or Alaska Native | .2% | % Black or African American | 16% | % Hispanic or Latino | 2% | % Asian, Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander | .6% | % White | 76% | % Multi-racial | 2% |
| Personnel | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number Years Superintendent Assigned/ Appointed to District | 4 | Number of Deputy Superintendents | 0 | Average Years Deputy Superintendents in Role in the District | n/a | # of Directors of Programs | 2 | | | | |
| % of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate in District | 0 | % Teaching Out of Certification in District | 1% | % Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp. in District | .02 | Average Teacher Absences in District | 7.4 | | | | |
| Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| District in Good Standing | | Focus District | X | Number of Focus Schools Identified by District | 4 | Number of SIG (a) Recipient Schools | 4 | Number of SIG (g) Recipient Schools | Number of Schools in Status | | 12 |
| % ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4 | 1563 45% | % Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4 | 1517 44% | % Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 | 672 71% | % 4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only) | 66% | % 6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only) | 72.6% | | |

| Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|---|---|
| | American Indian or Alaska Native | X | Black or African American |
| X | Hispanic or Latino | | Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander |
| | White | | Multi-racial |
| X | Students with Disabilities | | Limited English Proficient |
| X | 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 |
| | 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:

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|--|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <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>I</p> |
| <p>Debriefing Statement: The district has a plan to recruit and support school leaders and uses the APPR process to evaluate staff and provide frequent feedback. This has enabled the district to maintain a strong central leadership team to provide support to schools. Although the district has a plan to recruit, evaluate and hire high quality personnel, the plan is inconsistently implemented across the district. The district does not provide effective monitoring of the evaluation process. These factors inhibit the district’s ability to ensure that hiring and evaluation lead to the retention and sustainability of high-quality personnel district-wide.</p> | | |
| <p>Areas for Improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> District leadership informed the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that inconsistent hiring practices are used throughout the district. Although some schools use criterion-based hiring practices, these practices have not been standardized throughout the district and hiring practices do not include standard criteria or a performance component allowing the district or schools to assess how candidates apply skills in a practical setting. The IIT found that there is no district-wide system in place for staff to meet with school leaders to promote consistency of practice or to provide support to school leaders in the implementation of new initiatives. The IIT was informed that district evaluation systems are not fully aligned with New York State (NYS) requirements. The lack of consistent use of standardized hiring practices and a lack of systems to ensure implementation of an effective evaluation system that is aligned with NYS requirements impede the district’s ability to ensure that all schools hire and maintain high-quality personnel who address the needs of school communities. | | |
| <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 district has developed structures for assessing and allocating fiscal resources to schools based on available funding. District staff reported to the IIT that it uses a zero-based budgeting process and despite a significant reduction of funding, the district has been able maintain priority programs. However, the district has lost positions in some critical areas such as Student Support Services. Although fiscal resources</p> | | |

are allocated to schools based on available funds and to maintain compliance with state mandates, the IIT found no evidence of strategic planning that is driven by educational priorities to meet individual school needs and address identified achievement gaps. The lack of a strategic plan to organize resources in support of school-based needs impedes progress toward school-improvement.

Areas for Improvement:

- District leadership informed the IIT, that the district budget has been cut for three years in a row. Although, the district has been able to maintain priority programs, the reduced funding has necessitated the elimination of positions at the district and school levels. For example, the district informed the IIT that the number of instructional coaches has been reduced from seventeen to eleven and the district has also cut positions in Student Support Services. The district reported to the IIT that cuts in program reduce elective offerings in art, music and areas of enrichment at all levels. A series of meetings are scheduled for school and district leadership to create budget priorities and to implement a centralized supply process to bring greater efficiency to the budgeting process. From documents reviewed and interviews with staff, the IIT found that the district allocates fiscal resources to schools based on available resources; however, the district does not have a strategic plan, that is primarily driven by educational priorities, to meet individual school needs and address identified achievement gaps. District leaders reported to the IIT that the planning of professional development (PD) and provision of resources are not data-driven and do not provide sufficient support to ensure the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in all areas. However, the district provides support for the implementation of CCLS-aligned curriculum models for kindergarten through grade five and uses the services of consultants to begin implementation of CCLS-aligned curricula on the secondary level. The lack of a strategic plan to organize resources in support of school-based needs and the lack of provision of sufficient PD to support the implementation of the CCLS in all areas impede progress to school-wide goals, school improvement and student success.

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: Although the district has developed and communicated a comprehensive and explicit theory of action about school culture and high expectations for all constituents, there is no strategic plan to ensure the implementation of the district vision or mission. The lack of clear goals and a strategic plan for actualizing the district mission and vision leaves school leaders uncertain about district priorities.

Areas for Improvement:

- Although the district has developed a theory of action about school culture and high expectations for all constituents, from interviews and documents reviewed, the IIT found a lack of systems and

structures in place to connect professional practices to student outcomes or to promote and communicate a culture of high expectations. The district has not established a regular schedule of meetings with school leadership during the year to build capacity to support the district theory of action or new initiatives such as the implementation of the CCLS and the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). Additionally, the district does not provide PD on how to connect research-based best practices to outcomes aligned with the CCLS. The lack of district-wide systems, structures and supports to promote the district vision for high expectations hinders the establishment of school cultures that promote the district theory of action and foster high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents.

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 a plan, based on the district’s goals and objectives, that is designed to offer PD opportunities for staff to gain the skills and knowledge necessary to address district priorities. However, follow-up support adapted to meet the needs of individual schools is not provided on a consistent basis. The district has a PD plan to create and deliver PD aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), state mandates and other district-identified needs. However, the plan does not supply sufficient PD to meet the rigorous expectations of CCLS. In addition, data is not being used to identify PD needs or monitor implementation of PD for fidelity and effectiveness. The lack of data-driven PD planning hinders the district’s capacity to tailor PD to the needs of individual schools. Implementation of CCLS across all grades and subjects is hampered by a lack of sufficient PD, tailored to the needs of individual schools, to meet the rigorous requirements for the implementation of the CCLS.

Areas for Improvement:

- During interviews with the IIT, district leadership reported that although there is a plan for the implementation of some CCLS-aligned curriculum at the secondary and elementary levels, the plan is not comprehensive or sufficient to promote instructional practices that are aligned with the Instructional Shifts and the CCLS (particularly at the secondary level). A plan to implement two CCLS-aligned curriculum modules is in place at the elementary level. Consultants are being used at the secondary level to address the need to align instructional practices in ELA and mathematics with the CCLS. District leadership also indicated to the IIT that data is not used to inform PD planning that addresses the PD needs of individual schools. The IIT was informed that the district does not have mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of the implementation of PD or the impact of PD on instruction and school improvement. The district indicated that it does not have mechanisms to identify or provide necessary follow-up to promote effective implementation of new skills and knowledge. The lack of comprehensive PD on how to implement CCLS-aligned curricula using CCLS-based instruction hinders the district-wide implementation of the CCLS. The lack of data-based planning of PD inhibits the district’s ability to provide PD opportunities that are tailored to meet the needs of individual school communities. The lack of mechanisms to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of PD and identify follow-up support hinders the district’s ability to ensure that PD is tailored to effectively meet the needs of individual schools.

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| 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 |
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Debriefing Statement: Although the district has a system in place to collect data and offers supports to schools to analyze data, instructional and program decisions are not always based on a thorough analysis of all pertinent data. The district has not developed or communicated a clear set of district expectations and consistent protocols for the use of data to promote student achievement. This lack of clarity has hindered the establishment of a data-driven culture and has led to the uneven development and implementation of systems and structures for the collection and use of data.

Areas for Improvement:

- The district administration reported to the IIT that the elementary schools use a data-driven process to create individual student profiles and action plans. Data is derived from short fluency assessments used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills and progress monitoring data in other subjects. Limited PD and limited use of data to inform instruction and create action plans for supporting students inhibit the establishment of a data-driven culture that promotes strategies connected to best practices.

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| 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 | I |
|--|-------------------|----------|

Areas for Improvement:

- Although the district administration reported that there are monthly meetings with the school leaders to discuss districtwide initiatives, how to improve instruction, use of data, improving parent involvement and implementation of the district vision a school leader informed the IIT that the prior two meetings had been cancelled by the district administration. The school leaders indicated to the IIT that they would like to see improved communication between central office and school administrators regarding district programming and new initiatives. School leaders would like to have additional support so they can develop and nurture schools that are responsive to the needs of the school community. The inconsistency in communications between the district and school leadership and the lack of sufficient opportunities and supports for school leaders impede the school leadership from developing and nurturing school environments that are responsive to the needs of their school communities.

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****Areas for Improvement:**

- During the 2011-12 school year, the district held CCLS-related PD for every teacher in the district. Each teacher attended two or more district-led sessions over the year. Topics included an introduction to Race to the Top, The CCLS, The Instructional Shifts, Text Complexity, Writing Text-Based Questions. Each teacher was responsible for the development of two CCLS- aligned instructional units. In addition, school leaders stated that schools held additional CCLS sessions for teachers after school on Wednesdays twice a month. School leaders reported to the IIT that staff developed PD with assistance from district staff. From the DTSDE District Self-Assessment (District Self-Assessment), the IIT learned that building level Instructional Support Teachers (IST) have attended three sessions of the Network Team Institute focused on CCLS and as a result have turn-keyed their training and are adopting and implementing CCLS units in schools. The District Self-Assessment also indicated that the district has created pre-assessments for Regents courses to measure student learning. District administrators reported to the IIT that they have created pre- and post-assessments for Art, Music, Languages other than English (LOTE), Career and Technical Education (CTE), Physical Education, non-Regents courses, Grade 7 and 8 Social Studies, and Grade 7 Science and Health to assess student learning in each of these areas. The district has implemented a 90-minute literacy block and a 60-minute mathematics block in the elementary school. District staff has also revised the curriculum to support CCLS. High school English teachers have developed Common Core Unity based on the Tri-State Rubric. Teachers indicated to the IIT that using the rubric to evaluate CCLS-aligned units has helped them to identify areas of improvement for all units. District leaders indicated they will continue to provide support to schools by completing development and implementation of CCLS units, creating interim assessments to support already designed pre/post assessments, and completion of the CCLS curriculum for K-12 for ELA and Mathematics. Due to the limited offerings of courses that integrate the arts, technology and enrichment and the lack of access to rigorous CCLS-curricula and instructional planning, some students are not receiving instruction that is aligned to the CCLS or engages them in their learning.

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****Areas for Improvement:**

- District leadership informed the IIT that the current teacher contract provides time to conduct

professional development twice a month after school and each of these sessions lasts 1.5 hours. They also indicated that the Supervisor for School Improvement and Accountability works with principals and Instructional Support Teachers to identify areas of need as well as to create workshops. District staff reported that they assist schools in the development and implementation of School Comprehensive Education Plans. Although the district provides support to schools by providing some activities that lead to improved opportunities for students, school leadership indicated to the IIT that the district has not created sufficient PD opportunities to ensure effective implementation of district and school priorities. These priorities include the implementation of data-driven instruction (DDI) using student achievement and teacher observation data to drive instruction and develop lesson and unit plans, implementation of the CCLS and implementation of the APPR process. The lack of sufficient district-wide and school-wide PD and identification of best strategies and practices impede school-wide planning to optimize the implementation of new initiatives and address student needs.

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

Areas for Improvement:

- The district has created policies and procedures to work collaboratively with schools in support of students' social and emotional developmental health. However, from interviews and document reviews, the IIT learned that the district has not developed a long-range comprehensive plan that addresses students with mental health needs and has not implemented a referral process or a systemic approach to provide resources and a to meet the social and emotional developmental needs of all students. The Director of Pupil Personnel Services reported to the IIT that there are monthly Counselor meetings to review attendance, graduation, discipline and course loads. The district has developed a Dignity for All Students Plan and each building has a Safety Plan (that requires schools to conduct annual safety drills). The district has PBIS Plans for most secondary and elementary buildings. There is a progressive discipline code of conduct to maintain a safe school culture. The Director of Personnel Services meets monthly with school-based mental health providers and other community agencies to evaluate the efficacy of counseling programs and to make program modifications as needed. School leaders reported the district has hired four Behavioral Specialists to support the implementation of PBIS in the secondary Schools. The lack of a district policy that provides a systemic approach to ensure collaboration by district, school and community organizations to deliver professional development to school staff inhibits schools and district from meeting the social and emotional developmental health needs of all students to promote academic success.

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****Areas for Improvement:**

- The IIT found that, although the district has expectations for the schools related to providing students and families with supports and fostering community engagement, the district has not developed an explicit strategic plan that incorporates district policies to foster a welcoming environment for families, support reciprocal communications or to establish and maintain partnerships with community organizations and families. District leadership informed the IIT of the expectation that each school has a parent organization, and that the organization meets monthly to share information with parents and to discuss parent concerns. District leaders maintain a calendar that provides parents with information on yearly events scheduled at each school and parents are provided with a CCLS Handbook to help them understand this initiative. The district has an on-line portal and auto-dialer to provide parents with important information on upcoming events, however communications are only provided in English. At the time of the IIT review, an anticipated Parent Portal had not been activated. District leaders reported to the IIT that most school buildings have a Parent Partner who serves as the liaison between their school and parents. District staff indicated that the relationship between each of the high schools and law enforcement varies depending on where the school is geographically located and that this has had a negative impact on school communities. Staff from one high school reported to the IIT that the police officer in the building is reluctant to arrest students so the school's only option is suspension. District staff reported that one high school has a county sheriff in the building and that the response from the county is different from that of the city police force, in that county law enforcement is much more likely to arrest students when an offense may warrant it. From interviews, the IIT learned that the district has limited referral resources due to budget cuts and that the district has not established partnerships with community organizations. School leaders indicated that the district relies on guidance staff from the schools to connect families to community resources. The lack of district-wide policies, systems and structures that foster a climate of belonging for all families and school communities and the lack of communications in all pertinent languages inhibit the implementation of district-wide strategies to foster a welcoming environment for all families and support reciprocal communications. Limited district partnerships with community organizations and a lack of district-identified resources and supports limit the district's ability to respond to the needs of students and families.

Recommendations:

Tenet 1: District Leadership and Capacity

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:

- 1.1: Develop a comprehensive plan to recruit, evaluate and sustain high quality staff and standardize districtwide. Develop a system to meet with building principals to promote the implementation of consistent practices and new initiatives. Ensure that there is an equitable distribution of resources to support school improvement efforts at the district and school level.
- 1.2: Provide adequate school and district support to ensure the full implementation of CCLS, DDI and APPR. Ensure the provision of resources and follow-up support to enable staff to complete alignment of curricula and instruction in all areas. Ensure the integration of art, music and areas of enrichment in all subjects and grades.
- 1.3: Create and implement a plan to promote high expectations for all students. Ensure that regular meetings with school leaders to help them support new initiatives are held as scheduled. Provide opportunities for district staff to create action plans to support school leaders.
- 1.4: Develop and implement a plan to ensure the implementation of CCLS at the elementary and secondary level that aligns instructional practices with instructional shifts and CCLS at all levels. Create and implement a plan to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of PD.
- 1.5: Create more opportunities for teachers to participate in PD that focuses on using data to inform instruction. Ensure the development and implementation of PD Plans that provide on-going support to teachers in their use of data in the classroom.