



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

**DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)**



<b>BEDS Code</b>	641301060000
<b>District</b>	Hudson Falls Central School District
<b>District Address</b>	1153 Burgoyne Avenue, Fort Edward, NY 12828
<b>Superintendent</b>	Mark Doody
<b>Date of Review</b>	May 3, 2013
<b>School Discussed in this Report</b>	Hudson Falls High School

District Information Sheet											
District Grade Configuration	K-12	Total Student Enrollment	2464	% Title 1 Population	16%	% Attendance Rate	94.63%				
% Free Lunch	39%	% Reduced Lunch	11%	% Student Sustainability	89%	% Limited English Proficient	.57%	% Students with Disabilities	16.72%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0.16%	% Black or African American	1.06%	% Hispanic or Latino	2.52%	% Asian, Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	.49%	% White	91.52%	% Multi-racial	2.69%
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/ Appointed to District	11	Number of Deputy Superintendents	1	Average Years Deputy Superintendents in Role in the District	2	# of Directors of Programs	1				
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate in District	0	% Teaching Out of Certification in District	0	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp. in District	3.8%	Average Teacher Absences in District	7.3				
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 Schools in Status	0		
						Number of SIG (g) Recipient Schools					
% ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	Gr.3-8 54%	% Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	Gr.3-8 58%	% Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	Gr. 4 & 8 88%	% 4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	72% 2006 Cohort	% 6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	5 yr 73%		

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 (E-M)	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
X (HS)	Economically Disadvantaged		
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics			
	American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American
	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
	White		Multi-racial
X (E-M)	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
X (HS)	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	
	<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 1:</b>			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><b>Tenet 1 - District Leadership and Capacity</b>          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><b>Overall Tenet Rating</b></p>	<p><b>D</b></p>
<p><b>Statement of Practice 1.1:</b> 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><b>SOP Rating</b></p>	<p><b>E</b></p>
<p><b>Debriefing Statement:</b> The District has a comprehensive structure for recruiting, hiring, evaluating and retaining high quality staff to afford the schools the ability to address the needs of their communities. The District has a system in place, the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR), for evaluating administrators and staff and providing frequent, relevant feedback and professional development (PD). The District approach to recruiting and sustaining highly qualified personnel provides schools with opportunities to address the needs of their communities.</p> <p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The District has recruitment strategies and a plan for supporting school leaders. Documents reviewed by the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) showed that the District had a Board of Education Policy outlining the criteria and protocol for the hiring of highly qualified staff. According to the documents, relationships had been established with local colleges and universities to support student teacher placements, student internships, PD opportunities and college open houses for students. Documents indicated that the District had established protocols for the selection of candidates and the interview process and that interview committee members are trained in how to conduct a fair and objective process for selection of the best individual for a position. As articulated in an interview with the school superintendent and evidenced in documents reviewed by the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT), the District had an approved Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan that was used to evaluate school leaders. According to documents reviewed by the IIT, the District has adopted the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching Rubric for teacher assessment and used the electronic Observation and Appraisal Management System (OASYS) to track all components of the teacher evaluation process. This evaluation process and the one used for the evaluation of school leaders call for frequent feedback. The evaluation rubrics provide a common language for professional conversation with a reflective component. These conversations also serve as PD for school leaders and teachers. It was also reported to the IIT that school leaders have established reciprocal communications with District leaders and communicate if there are any areas of concern related to personnel and their PD needs. Furthermore, the District reported that they refer identified PD needs to the District and School Decision Making Team (DSDMT). As reported by a District leader in an IIT interview, “It is important for candidates to understand the community and have the ability to work and connect with students.” According to documents presented, one hundred percent of the classes are taught by highly qualified teachers, three percent of the teachers have fewer than three years of</li> </ul>		

experience, and the teacher turnover rate for all teachers was eight percent. Because the District bases recruitment, hiring, and the provision of other supports on school needs, schools are better able to address school community needs. Because the District conducts rigorous teacher and school leader evaluation and provides relevant feedback and support, schools are positioned to retain highly qualified staff and sustain support of school improvement efforts that meet the needs of school constituents.

**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.

**SOP Rating**

**E**

**Debriefing Statement:** The District has structures in place for assessing and deploying resources that readily respond to the expressed needs of school communities (e.g., instructional technology, supports for instructional programs, supports for student physical and emotional health), and the District ensures the equitable allocation of resources throughout the District to meet student, staff and family needs. School leaders receive support on how to maximize benefits from available resources. Because the District allocates resources based on the needs of individual school communities, schools receive resources to support school improvement and success.

**Strengths:**

- The District has structures for assessing and deploying resources, has given support to school leaders on how to maximize benefits from resources, and has allocated resources to schools to ensure that school communities are able to address school improvement needs. In interviews, District leaders described to the IIT how individual school needs are used to inform the allocation of fiscal resources, “We [the District] review the needs of individual buildings and base support on the information provided on student needs. We do not merely allocate resources in a uniform manner without considering the different needs of students in buildings. We assess all of our resources by determining what will make the most impact for all students. We look at student and group data.” District leaders stated that when they receive requests for resources, they discuss these amongst the District Office staff and school leaders to make sure they include program considerations associated with these requests. Another District leader stated, “The District has made an increasing commitment to PD to ensure that buildings have the support they need.” The IIT also heard, observed and read that the District had instructional technology that adequately and equitably met the needs of students, staff, and parents in the school community. Because the District has based allocations on the needs of school communities, schools are able to promote school improvement and 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:** The District has an explicit theory of action about the school culture that focuses on high expectations for student success and ensuring that students are healthy and able to access high quality

instruction. The District leadership has communicated a set of high expectations for connecting professional practice to student outcomes. The District has a mission and goals that communicate high expectations, but the goals do not include specific, measurable targets. Although the District has informal targets for these goals, they were not explicitly shared with all constituents. Therefore, while constituents may be aware of the need to improve, the sense of urgency to improve is not promoted. In addition, without specific, measurable targets, constituents are not able to analyze data to track the progress toward achieving the mission and goals and use this data to inform next steps in addressing the needs of all constituents.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- The District had a set of high expectations that were included in its mission and communicated to school constituents. However, the District’s informal targets were not widely known throughout the District. The IIT learned, through interviews and document review, that, as stated by a member of the District staff, “the District has made higher expectations the major priority.” During District cabinet meetings with the IIT, a participant communicated higher expectations as including, “In three or four years, we hope to have consistent instructional practices and [that our] achievement in literacy will be improved. [Our] theory is to make changes based on what we know is best practice and use data to see if progress is being made. We are communicating through websites, daily conversations, and meetings.” The District has high expectations; however, the District has not communicated expectations for best practice and goals to all school stakeholders. Because District expectations have not been defined in terms of best practice and targeted goals, and because goals have not been communicated to all constituents, school links between professional practice and student outcomes, as well as a shared sense of urgency to meet the needs of the entire school community, are limited.

**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:** At the time of the IIT review, the District had a comprehensive plan to deliver PD in all pertinent areas identified by the District. The plan was based on triangulated data from teacher surveys, school data and data from the APPR teacher evaluation process. However, observations completed this year did not include a component on teachers’ use of student data to inform instructional decision-making. The lack of explicit monitoring of teachers’ of student data as a part of the formal observation process limits the District’s ability to identify needs for PD in this area for inclusion in the District PD plan.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- The District had a comprehensive plan for PD that targeted District-wide goals. This plan was based on triangulated data from teacher surveys, school data (interim, summative and State assessments) and data from the APPR teacher evaluation process completed through the web-based OASYS system. However, the IIT was informed, during an interview with District staff, that the observations completed this year did not include the teacher use of student data to inform instructional decision-making, including student grouping and instructional strategies. From a review of the District PD plan, the IIT

found that the District was promoting a District-wide focus on addressing the needs of specific subgroups of students, especially students with disabilities. During interviews, a member of the District staff stated, “PD will provide support for the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) within the buildings, specifically curriculum mapping, professional learning communities and differentiation of instruction to more actively engage students in their learning.” A staff member reported, “The District has a PD calendar that will be out in mid-May” and that “there are site-based teams that use their own funds [for PD] tied to District-wide goals.” However, the IIT did not find evidence that showed that the District was regularly monitoring PD in all pertinent areas in all the schools nor did it find that PD was differentiated to meet the specific needs of individual schools. The lack of differentiated PD and the absence of an analysis of the use of student data in instructional decision-making hinder the District’s efforts to improve instructional practices and increase student achievement.

**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 communicates expectations for the use of data and identifies best practices related to how teachers provide instruction based on student strengths and needs. The District is beginning to develop the skills of school leaders to analyze student data from multiple sources and identify the skills needed to lead teachers in understanding and applying data-driven instruction. The schools do not have explicit visions that are specifically aligned to the District mission nor do they have specific, targeted, rigorous and measurable goals. This has hindered the development of a shared sense of urgency in the accomplishment of school and District goals within individual schools and the accomplishment of District goals to promote student success.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- At the time of the IIT Review, the District was just beginning to develop best practices and strategies for school leaders to use to promote a data-driven instructional culture in the schools and in the District. District staff reported to the IIT that the District had undertaken the development and use of consistent formative and summative assessments for grade-levels, subject areas and departments throughout each school. District staff indicated to the IIT that during the 2012-13 school year, the District is implementing Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessments (kindergarten to grade six), 6-1 Writing Traits (kindergarten to grade five), AIMSweb benchmarks/special education (kindergarten to grade five), and student portfolios for literacy (kindergarten to grade five). District staff told the IIT that teachers had been given release time to develop Common Core State Standards-based assessments linking standards to instructional practices and to state assessments. Staff also indicated that staff, department, team, and grade level meetings were focusing on curriculum improvements through the implementation of consistent, school-wide teaching practices under the leadership of each school leader. Furthermore, the IIT read that a BOCES Data Analyst had provided PD at the school level to support school leaders and teachers’ understanding of what is included in a data-driven culture. It was explained to the IIT by a District staff member that departmental improvement plans are developed with the focus on increasing student achievement through shifting instructional practices

and that school leaders monitor progress within each school with the support of the Assistant Superintendent. During interviews, District staff indicated to the IIT that there is a range of data-driven instruction in the schools and that the District is working towards improvement in this area. District personnel spoke about the desire to have timely data. “We want data turned around in 24 hours and [then we] look at it” said one District staff member. District staff also asserted that the District is looking more at student data as a result of the APPR process.. The IIT also reviewed documentation that showed that student data was the basis for the redesign of special education in the District. Because the implementation of a data-driven culture is at the beginning stages, District and school leaders are in the developing stages of acquiring the skills and understandings to analyze student data from multiple sources and identify the skills needed to lead teachers in understanding and applying data-driven instruction. Although the District leadership has begun to implement strategies to build expectations for system-wide accountability, the lack of a clearly articulated set of expectations of strategies and best practices for the District-wide use of data has resulted in inconsistencies in the development and implementation of data-driven instruction in the schools.

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

<p><b>Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions</b>  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.</p>	<p><b>SOP Rating</b></p>	<p><b>D</b></p>
<p><b><u>Areas for Improvement:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The District provides some support to schools based on the needs of individual schools. As found by the IIT in interviews with District Office staff and from documents reviewed, the allocation of resources to schools is based on the needs of individual school communities. The District also provides opportunities for school-district relationship-building, engagement and support through on-going, reciprocal communications with the school and through supports that include monthly Administrative Cabinet meetings, frequent District leadership school visits, and from monthly District-led meetings with school leaders and Department Chairs to discuss the implementation of CCLS, DDI, instructional practice, APPR, and programming. Based on interviews with the school leader, the IIT found that the high school does not have a school-wide vision and that although staff report that increasing the graduation rate and student achievement are goals, there are no specific, measurable, ambitious, results oriented, timely (SMART) goals aligned to a school vision or the SCEP. The lack of a school vision that contains SMART goals inhibits the development of specific targets and hampers school-wide assessment of the progress toward goals. Without a focused vision to achieve school goals and the ability to assess progress toward those goals, the school and the district are not able to maximize resources aligned to the vision, identify needs to address gaps, and monitor progress and make revisions when necessary. As a result, the district and school are still developing their ability to ensure that supports and resources are effective</li> </ul>		

and are aligned with the goals and priorities of the school community.

### 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:

- Although the District is beginning to work with the school leaders on providing support for the development and implementation of CCLS-aligned curricula and instruction that are inclusive of technology, support for inclusion of the arts and other areas of enrichment as well as the establishment of a data-driven culture are not the top priorities. The District developed a PD plan and a PD calendar for the purposes of providing support to the schools on the implementation of CCLS and other priorities of the District (e.g. professional learning communities, differentiated instruction). One District staff member reported to the IIT that, “The implementation of CCLS is beginning to gain traction and the challenge is to ensure vertical alignment given the grade-level structure of the District buildings.” The IIT observed that although teachers in the high school were participating in department meetings, little collaboration took place across grades or subject areas. Although District staff reported that the Assistant Superintendent meets with department chairs, there was limited evidence of the District ensuring that departments are meeting across curricular areas or vertically. The IIT also learned that school leaders, with the support of District leadership, communicate direct expectations for the development of common formative and summative assessments and shifts in instructional practices, including lesson plan development to align with the CCLS. It was also noted that school leaders and teachers met during grade level and departmental meetings and focused on the implementation of the new CCLS and the development of formative assessments. The IIT learned, through interviews and observation, that since the District was only in the beginning stages of providing schools with support for the implementation of CCLS, teachers were not yet creating CCLS units during these meetings. There was also limited evidence to document that the District was consistently following up with schools on the development of assessments, CCLS shifts, and lesson plan development other than through the regular meeting times. As reported by a member of the high school staff, “The high school has not yet begun to work on aligning the CCLS.” The IIT found, through document review, that District leadership works directly with the school leaders to examine multiple sources of data, including school and state assessments (ELA, mathematics and Regents exams), and quarterly grades to monitor student achievement. District staff also mentioned in interviews that I-pads go home for some special education students along with communication to parents on how to use this technology. A member of the District staff stated, “The District has never said no to technology.” However, reviewers found that although technology was often present and sometimes used interactively with students to reinforce curricula, it was not implemented in a way that included elements of a data-driven culture and instruction was not tailored to address student-specific instructional needs. Because the District’s efforts to develop and implement CCLS-curricula in the high school is limited to the introductory stages, teachers are not collaboratively creating or implementing CCLS-aligned curricula or curricula that fully integrate the arts,

technology or other areas of enrichment. Because opportunities for high school staff to meet across grades and subject areas within the school and with the District are limited, collaboration in the implementation of comprehensive curricula aligned to the CCLS and inclusive of the arts, technology and other areas of enrichment is hampered. In addition, a District-wide data driven culture has not been established, which hinders efforts to ensure that curricula are responsive to individual and school needs is limited. As a result, the district is still developing its ability to strategically implement a comprehensive curriculum that will prepare students for college and career readiness.

**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:**

- The District has a plan for working with the schools to provide support for evidence-based teacher strategies and best practices in an effort to have schools plan for the use of student data, develop goals for student achievement and increase levels of student engagement. It was reported to the IIT that District leadership, in collaboration with the high school’s School Leadership Team, had developed a three-year plan utilizing the District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP) and SCEP and that the plan was in its first year of implementation. The IIT read that planning included the opportunity for PD directly related to best practices that ensure staff promote effective planning, identify and address student needs, establish student goals, and increase levels of student engagement. However, at the time of the IIT review, the school was just beginning to work toward setting formal measurable goals, creating a data-driven culture that promotes inquiry, and sharing these priorities with the school community at large. District personnel stated PD “will provide support for the implementation of the CCLS within the [schools], specifically curriculum mapping, professional learning communities and differentiation of instruction to more actively engage students in their learning,” and “the District is working with each [school] to develop specific, measureable, rigorous goals for student achievement.” However, at the high school, the IIT found that teachers were not using a variety of data sources to inform instruction. The IIT class visits showed that lessons were predominately whole-group lecture; instruction was not differentiated to meet individual or subgroup needs; student groups were self-selected; students were mostly completing the same activities; and lesson plans were not specific in regards to student performance targets or student needs. The lack of on-going District support for the establishment and monitoring of specific data targets for schools and students, the lack of school-level monitoring of classroom targets, and the lack of targeted PD and follow up support hamper the development and implementation of strategies and practices that lead to the establishment of a data-driven culture.

**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****Areas for Improvement:**

- Although there is no articulated policy in place, the District has a history of supporting the schools with resources needed for student social and emotional developmental health. According to documents reviewed by the IIT, these resources include support in the areas of health and wellness, tobacco education, physical activity, Dignity for All Students, and the Student Code of Conduct. The IIT also read that there is a District-wide School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC). The District told the IIT that the District conducts the Youth Risk Behavior Survey annually to establish goals for SHAC. The District reported the implementation of the following initiatives and partnerships to support and promote social and emotional development health: Capital District Psychiatric Center North Clinic, Washington County Public Health, Partnership Suicide Prevention Program, SHAC Roles for Actions for Tenets V and VI, Family Wellness Event Plans, Glens Falls Hospital Oral Prevention Program, Building Updates, and Employee Wellness. Furthermore, the District informed the IIT that there are PD opportunities for staff and numerous family nights annually related to social and emotional developmental health. The IIT reviewed documents that indicated long-standing relationships with community partners for mental health supports. During an IIT interview, a District staff member stated, "The District supports Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS)," and "A committed relationship with community partners brings supports to students and helps the District address the social and emotional needs of students." The IIT found, based on document review and interviews, that the District provided social workers at all schools in the District, and that there is a District-wide community outreach nurse that establishes economic, emotional and mental health connections for families in crisis with local resources and agencies. In addition, a Child Study Team (CST) at the high school coordinated social and emotional developmental health needs and the Student Support Team (SST) was working with teachers on developing their ability to use behavioral data to identify and address social and emotional developmental health needs and relate them to academic success. However, not all school constituents were able to express how the social and emotional supports in the school were conducive to learning. The IIT learned through interviews that the SST in the high school met regularly to address barriers to social, emotional and academic success. The SST reportedly used data and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey to identify areas of need and align community resources (e.g. Capital District Psychiatric Center [CDPC]). The SST also indicated to the IIT that they met with parents to resolve attendance issues. The IIT observed that the SST, and not the District, coordinated these initiatives in the school. Furthermore, parents could not articulate how supports connect to increased student outcomes, and the District did not offer any evidence of a District-wide Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health Policy or the education of all school constituents about supports related to academic success. Although the resources and supportive community partnerships implemented with District support have a positive impact on the high school, the lack of clear connections among the District, school, parents, and school community and the lack of clear delineations of the roles of all constituents in supporting student social and emotional health limit the potential for increased student 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

E

### Strengths:

- The District has a strategic plan that includes established relationships with family and community members, and engages families and community members, creates a welcoming District environment and establishes many community partnerships in the District that are supportive of family needs. As the IIT noted in District documentation, the District is “relentless in their approach with establishing partnerships with community organizations to support all aspects of family life.” The District reported offering services to support families and community members such as the District-purchased community pool that is open to the public and provides swim lessons at no cost to families, softball and little league fields available to local teams, and parenting classes. The District also provides network accessibility at home, which includes access to all educational resources; summer academic support for low achieving students, which includes transportation; a Universal Pre-K program with transportation; schools that are open to the public during the winter for walking; and a fitness center in the high school that is open to the public free of charge two nights a week. The IIT reviewed documents that showed the District conducted a Youth-at-Risk Survey, shared the results with the community, and then the District used the data to connect students and families to community supports (e.g. County Mental Health). The IIT also reviewed documents that showed the District had a Title I Parent Engagement Plan and user-friendly resources on the District website for parents and community members. The District had worked with the high school on creating a welcoming space, reciprocal communication with parents, and sharing data and resources with parents. The IIT learned through interviews that families had opportunities to engage with the school through parent/teacher meetings, the CST, newsletters, home visits, mental health services offered on-site (CDPC), progress reports, report cards, and other methods of engagement. As a result of the District plan and its many initiatives and activities for welcoming families and community constituents, the District and school are able to maintain reciprocal communications with the school community and engage parents, families, and community members in a variety of ways to support student and family success.

## **DISTRICT LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**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.

In order for the District's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Statement of Practice 1.3 the District should:

- Ensure District leadership establishes specific, targeted, measureable goals connected to its theory of action and the high expectations the District has for the school community. Communicate a set of high expectations for the alignment of professional practices to student outcomes to 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.

In order for the District's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Statement of Practice 1.4 the District should:

- Design a calendar of PD opportunities using factors such as the DCIP, SCEPs, school and student data that is inclusive of District-wide needs and meets the discrete PD needs of each school in the District, including the support of all subgroups. Ensure that the plan, calendar and PD provided to school staff are monitored regularly for implementation and effectiveness by District staff and that plans include follow-up support tailored to the needs of individual schools.

**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.

In order for the District's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Statement of Practice 1.5 the District should:

- Provide PD to the entire school community on data-driven instruction. Ensure that schools use specific practices and strategies for collecting and sharing student data. Monitor how these practices and strategies affect District and school success.