



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR DISTRICT AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS (DTDSE)



BEDS Code/DBN	081200050000
District	Norwich City School District
District Address	89 Midland Drive, Norwich, NY 13815
Superintendent	Gerard O’Sullivan
Date(s) of Review	June 7, 2013
Schools Discussed in this Report	Norwich Middle School

District Information Sheet											
District Grade Configuration	PK-12	Total Student Enrollment	1953	% Title 1 Population		4:30	93.6%				
% Free Lunch	49.41%	% Reduced Lunch	8.80%	% Student Sustainability		% Limited English Proficient	0%	% Students with Disabilities			
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0.05%	% Black or African American	2.66%	% Hispanic or Latino	0%	% Asian, Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	1.08%	% White	93.39%	% Multi-racial	0%
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/ Appointed to District	8 years	Number of Deputy Superintendents	1	Average Years Deputy Superintendents in Role in the District	3	# of Directors of Programs	2				
% 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	15%	Average Teacher Absences in District	9.9%				
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	0	Number of Schools in Status	1		
						Number of SIG (g) Recipient Schools	0				
% ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	Gr 3 -34% Gr 4 -51% Gr 5 - 44% Gr 6 - 46% Gr 7 - 39% Gr 8 - 40%	% Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	Gr 3 -45% Gr 4 - 62% Gr 5 - 64% Gr 6 - 51% Gr 7 - 50% Gr 8 - 45%	% Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	Grade 4- 90% Grade 8 -73%	% 4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	79%	% 6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	87%		

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
X	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		Black or African American
	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
X	White		Multi-racial
X	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
X	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
X	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
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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>D</p>
<p>Debriefing Statement: The district has a plan to recruit, evaluate, and hire high quality personnel and provide mentoring for new teachers. The district’s APPR Plan is being implemented with some loss of fidelity with regard to timely feedback to teachers. While the district has processes in place that support schools’ staffing concerns, including the implementation of the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan, the lack of timely and continuous feedback to teachers limits the school’s ability to ensure high quality personnel and adequately meet the needs of the school community.</p> <p>Area for Improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district uses various recruitment strategies to attract qualified and effective candidates. District leaders reported in interviews with the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that the district posts and advertises positions internally, locally in the surrounding areas, on websites, in professional organization postings and in college placement offices. The district negotiates salaries with the teacher’s bargaining unit and sets salaries to be comparable to similar districts. The district has a mentoring program for new teachers and teachers stated in interviews with the IIT that they participate in the mentoring program. The district has an approved APPR plan and trains teacher leaders in the evaluative process and APPR plan. Teachers reported that the APPR process is very lengthy and may be the reason they do not receive timely feedback. While the district employs strategies to recruit and sustain high quality personnel, the lack of timely teacher feedback associated with the teacher evaluation system limits the school’s ability to meet the needs of the school community. 		
<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>E</p>
<p>Debriefing Statement: The district allocates fiscal resources to schools based on the available resources and compliance with state mandates. In addition, the district has simplified the requisition process for teachers and principals. There are future plans to address staffing needs at the middle school to support discipline concerns there. As a result of fiscal resource allocation that is targeted to meet the needs of the school community, the district is promoting school improvement and success.</p> <p>Area for Improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district attempts to allocate resources in an equitable fashion. District leaders reported to the IIT 		

that the district has created a planning document, called “LINKS,” to place more focus and direction on key school initiatives. In order to determine budget allocations to schools, building leaders complete a needs assessment and meet with the district cabinet to advocate needs based on their impact on student learning. The district then schedules a series of meetings for building leadership to meet with district staff to discuss budget plans, using a zero based budgeting process. In interviews with the IIT, district leaders stated that the professional development plan supports major school initiatives, such as Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), data driven instruction, and effective teachers. School leaders reported in interviews with the IIT that they attend meetings at the district to discuss resources that are allocated to their buildings. Because the district organizes and allocates resources based on school and staff needs, the district helps promote and sustain school improvement efforts.

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 a mission and vision statement and has developed the LINKS planning document, a strategic plan that includes district goals. At this time, the LINKS plan focuses on the academic needs of students and does not address the behavior expectations or the social and emotional needs of students. Because the district’s plan does not address the needs of the “whole child,” to ensure that social-emotional needs as well as academic needs are address, the district is limited in its ability to address the needs of all constituents.

Area for Improvement:

- This school year the district has developed a new mission and vision, and has specified district goals in its strategic planning document, the LINKS plan. District leaders reported that their emphasis is on the communication of high expectations regarding the implementation of the CCLS, the use of data, and the development of effective teachers. The district has communicated the mission to staff and provided targeted support to achieve district goals. School leaders have also communicated the key initiatives to their school staff. The district has established regularly scheduled meetings with principals to build capacity to support new initiatives, including the CCLS, APPR and Data Driven Instruction (DDI), and to provide professional leadership to school leaders. Although school leaders have communicated the mission and goals to staff in schools, not all constituents have a clear understanding of them. In interviews with the IIT, school staff were unsure of the district mission and vision and were not aware of how the district goals were measured at the school level. In addition, staff were not sure how student social and emotional well-being and behavior were connected to district goals. As a result of the district’s inability to effectively communicate a comprehensive theory of action, the district’s ability to ensure that high expectations are realized is 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
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Debriefing Statement: The district has a comprehensive plan to create and deliver professional development (PD), which is focused primarily on aligning instruction to the CCLS and preparing for the implementation of the ELA and mathematics modules planned for roll-out in 2013-14. Each building in the district has its own comprehensive plan, LINKS, tailored to the individual needs of the school. However, due to the absence of common district expectations and monitoring systems across all schools, it is not possible to measure the plan’s implementation progress or effectiveness. As a result, the district is unable to ensure that the needs of individual schools are being met.

Area for Improvement:

- The district offers professional development (PD) to staff (teachers and leaders) throughout the school year but does not monitor its implementation or effectiveness and does not provide follow-up support based on need. District leaders reported to the IIT that they have a PD plan that will target and more closely allocate resources to specific district initiatives. The district has dedicated staff that plan, coordinate, and implement the district PD plan in coordination with teachers and administrators. Various school faculty members collaborated with teachers and administrators to develop the LINKS school plan during the summer. The school staff posts PD plans on the school’s website. In addition, school staff meets with the school leader to post work developed during PD sessions on the website. In interviews with the IIT, school leaders and teachers reported they participated in district provided PD related to CCLS, data driven dialogue and APPR. While the district has a PD plan that is created in collaboration with school staff, the lack of systems to monitor its implementation and effectiveness results in the inability to adapt the plan to optimally meet 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.	SOP Rating	D
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Debriefing Statement: Systems and structures for the district to collect and use data are unevenly developed across the district. Factors contributing to this include a lack of clear district expectations and consistent protocols for the use of data to promote student achievement. As a result, best practices are not consistently implemented across the district.

Area for Improvement:

- The district has the expectation that schools will use data to drive instruction and has provided PD for staff in data driven dialogue. District leaders stated they have encouraged schools to use data for many years. Currently district leaders expect schools to have data meetings in each building. At the middle school, there are grade level teams that discuss data weekly and teachers reported in interviews with the IIT that they attended data driven instruction (DDI) meetings at Norwich MS. The district stated that data-driven dialogues and the use of student achievement data to drive

instruction has become common in some schools, but not all schools. District leaders reported there is the expectation that all schools will engage in data-driven dialogue. While the district is providing some support to schools around best practices regarding data use, the lack of systems to hold schools accountable results in uneven application of these practices.

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:

- The district provides opportunities for school leaders to meet with district staff bi-weekly to support the needs of their schools. The school leader reported that there are bi-weekly administrative council meetings for building principals and include members of other district departments. These meetings are sometimes informational and sometimes have an instructional focus. There are also bi-weekly meetings for school leaders to discuss issues specific to the evaluation rubric (NYSUT) and the management of school buildings. The Norwich Middle School leader reported in interviews with the IIT that the district is very supportive, especially related to school transitions. However a school leader reported he is challenged by the demands of the APPR process and is unable to provide timely feedback to his teaching staff. While the district provides support to school leaders, it is still developing its ability to provide the support needed to develop capacity to effectively meet the needs of the entire 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

Area for Improvement:

- The district works collaboratively with schools to support the implementation of a curriculum that supports the CCLS and the use of data to drive instruction. School leaders stated that Norwich Professional Development Advisory Council and School Improvement staff maintain a focus on core practices and coordinate professional sessions for teachers. District leaders reported they have invested in the Network Team to promote and foster the transition to CCLS, use of data, and to improve instructional practices. All teaching staff have been trained in the CCLS, the NYSUT rubric, and data driven instruction. It is the expectation that all instructional staff members implement Traits of Writing in all content areas and every discipline is focused on writing literacy standards. The district has revised the curriculum for ELA and mathematics programs to support the CCLS. Teachers have begun to develop Common Core aligned instructional units and district leaders indicated they 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 in all content areas. However, there was no evidence that the district provides support to schools to help them integrate the arts, technology, and other enrichment areas into a rigorous CCLS curriculum. While the district collaborates with schools to develop a CCLS aligned curriculum and assessments and data use, the lack of support to integrate the arts, technology and other enrichment areas results in a less robust curriculum that limits opportunities for expressive engagement and exploration.

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:

- The district administration meets with teachers throughout the year to discuss teacher practices and intervention strategies. The school has faculty meetings, departmental meetings and after school PD sessions to discuss student needs. District leaders reported they hold monthly grade level meetings focused on goal setting, APPR, grouping students and discussing best practices. Teachers reported they have participated in DDI discussions and they are working on Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and the Gradual Release Process. District leaders are working collaboratively with schools to support teachers' practice; however, the district has not created PD opportunities that focus on using student achievement and teacher observation data to provide feedback to teachers so they can plan lessons that improve student performance. During classrooms visitations the IIT noted there were few instances of the use of higher order questioning, differentiation and specially designed instruction. While the district is working collaboratively with the schools to improve teacher practices in instruction, data use, and goal setting, the lack of monitoring and follow-up support has resulted in uneven implementation of these initiatives and limited levels 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

D

Area for Improvement:

- The district provides limited support to schools to meet the social and emotional developmental health of students. District leaders reported there is a Code of Conduct that is updated annually. The IIT noted The Norwich Middle School did not have formal structures in place to support the social and emotional developmental health of students. When interviewed by the IIT school constituents did not clearly understand the school vision and behavioral expectations. During classroom visitations the IIT observed that instructional time was lost due to issues related to student behavior. Because the district has not developed a long-range comprehensive plan that includes PD opportunities for

teachers in the areas of student social and emotional developmental health, the school is unable to meet the needs of all students.

Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement

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

SOP Rating

D

Area for Improvement:

- The district provides some supports that encourage family and community involvement. District leaders reported that they actively recruit outside organizations to work with the district and families. They also reported that they offer extra evening sessions for parents in each school. District and school leaders indicated that individual schools hold parent teacher conferences and community activities in their respective buildings. District leaders interviewed by the IIT indicated that each school is responsible for creating its own parent involvement plan. There was no evidence of a district-wide parent involvement policy. The IIT noted during the school review that Norwich Middle School did not have a parent organization. Parents interviewed by the IIT reported there are a limited number of parents participating and volunteering at school activities. The IIT also noted, through a review of the school’s SCEP, that increased parent involvement was identified as one of the school’s goals. While the district provides some limited support to schools to encourage family and community involvement, the lack of a district-wide policy that includes expectations and consistent follow-up support, has resulted in the schools not fully benefitting from partnerships with the community and families to help support student success, which is negatively impacting student outcomes.

Recommendations:

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.

In order for the District's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Statement of Practice 1.1, the District should:

- Develop a system to meet with building principals to discuss strategies for sustaining high quality staff.
- Ensure that there is an equitable distribution of resources to support teacher evaluation efforts at the district and school level. There should also be time set aside to provide feedback to teachers.

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:

- Create a plan to promote and continue support for the theory of action that prescribes high expectations for all students.
- Develop a plan that meets the social emotional and developmental needs of students.
- Continue Superintendent meeting with district and school staff to create action plans to support school leaders. Assign district staff to work with schools on specific initiatives (e.g., parent involvement).
- Meet with teachers, parents, students to communicate the theory of action, vision/goals and explain how these concepts are used to measure student and school success.

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:

- Develop a plan for the implementation of CCLS modules at the elementary and secondary level that aligns instructional practices with instructional shifts and CCLS.
- Create an evaluative tool (e.g., teacher survey) to monitor the impact of professional development on teacher practice. Determine whether instruction is adaptive and 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:

- Develop a professional development plan that provides job-embedded support to teachers' in their use of data in the classroom.
- Create more opportunities for teachers to participate in professional development that focuses on using data to inform instruction.