



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTDSE)



BEDS Code	12-16-01-06-0000
District	Sidney Central School District
District Address	95 West Main Street, Sidney, NY
Superintendent	Dr. William Christensen
Date(s) of Review	March 19 and 22, 2013
Schools Discussed in this Report	Sidney Middle School

District Information Sheet											
District Grade Configuration	PreK-12	Total Student Enrollment	1091	% Title 1 Population	6	3	% Attendance Rate	97%			
% Free Lunch	48%	% Reduced Lunch	15%	% Student Sustainability	1%	% Limited English Proficient	.7%	% Students with Disabilities	9.9%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	% Black or African American	.7%	% Hispanic or Latino	4.5%	% Asian, Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	1.3%	% White	90.1%	% Multi-racial	3.2%
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/ Appointed to District	2.5	Number of Deputy Superintendents	0	Average Years Deputy Superintendents in Role in the District	0	# of Directors of Programs	1				
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate in District		% Teaching Out of Certification in District	0%	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp. in District	11%	Average Teacher Absences in District	4.5				
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		Number of Schools in Status	1		
						Number of SIG (g) Recipient Schools	0				
% ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	215/466	% Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	251/467	% Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	134/164	% 4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	85.47	% 6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	79.82		

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
	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
	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
	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 PD 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.			D	

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.			D	

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.			D	

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.			D	
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.			D	

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 been able to hire experienced staff that were excessed from other districts. There is an evaluation system in place that provides for immediate feedback. However, support for sustaining high quality staff is not in place.</p> <p>Area for Improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district leader has a strategic recruitment process; however, the structures to support and sustain staff are not in place. The district leader reported that he is hiring high quality, experienced, and trained staff excessed from other districts. However, the district leader reported they are not conducting a mentoring program to support retention. The district and school leaders report that the leaders are trained to use a program (Ewalk) to conduct walkthroughs, and they discuss their experiences at monthly leadership meetings. While there is an evaluation system in place that provides immediate feedback, not all building leaders are conducting timely walkthroughs according to interviews with school leaders. Meeting records did not show that the district is monitoring the program’s implementation. Further, the district does not follow up walkthroughs with targeted job-embedded training for teachers other than at the elementary school. This limits opportunities for schools to address the needs of the school community to ensure student success. 		
<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 a system in place to allocate resources. The district provides support to school leaders on utilization of resources that takes the needs of students, staff and families into consideration, however, this has not resulted in school improvement and success</p> <p>Area for Improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district and building leadership reported and documents indicate that the district provides funding to schools in response to building leaders’ identified needs. The district provides financial support for professional development (PD) for administrators and staff, and for the expansion of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) programs, and technology to support instruction. Documents indicate the district provides each school leader autonomy to apply \$25,000 for school 		

improvement from Title I, Title II, and local funds to meet their building needs. The district supports the use of technology to provide remediation programs, investing over \$3million of its budget for that. However, some purchases made are not based on best practices. The district’s investments in technology-based remediation have not yet increased student achievement. Reviewers noted in some cases, software programs chosen were low-level, as rated by the United States Department of Education’s What Works Clearinghouse. The use of resources at the district level has not yet resulted in considerable gains in student achievement.

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
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Debriefing Statement: The district has a clear vision to improve State test scores based on a data-driven culture; however, the high expectations expressed by the district leadership are not aligned with instructional practices that support improved student outcomes.

Area for Improvement:

- The district leadership is working to creating a new culture of high expectations based on data within the school community. District leadership reported their goal was “to create a uniform grading policy and expectations of consistent learning experiences.” The district leader defined success as “being college and career ready.” His vision is to have a school where every student can learn and succeed. He has increased STEM opportunities across the schools. The district is providing students enrolled in three or more college-level courses continuous guidance support. The district leader articulated that his focus is on improving State test scores as measured by data. However, parents interviewed reported their children are stressed due to teachers continuously benchmarking student progress. The cabinet members reported that the district decided that future tests would continue to focus on multiple-choice questions rather than on assessments that measure higher-order thinking skills. Therefore, the district has made some decisions that do not align with the high expectations that support improved student outcomes.

Statement of Practice 1.4: The District has a comprehensive plan to create, deliver and monitor PD 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 does not have a current comprehensive professional plan. The professional development (PD) that is offered is based on the determination of district leadership without the input of building teaching staff, which results in limited staff ownership of their learning.

Area for Improvement:

- While the district PD plan was not current, cabinet members indicated that they determine PD from assessments that identify student learning gaps and from results of teacher observations. Documents provided for a PD plan dated back to 2010 and had not been updated, and not all principals were conducting observations and providing feedback in a timely fashion. The district is limiting training options to those they determined would prepare staff to meet district goals.

Documents show the district has chosen a PD vendor for Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), training; however, district leaders reported the vendor was not available in the current year. To address this gap in professional development of the teaching staff, according to interviews with building and district leaders, the district sent the elementary and middle school leaders to attend BOCES professional development (PD) on CCLS instructional shifts so they could turnkey the information to their respective staff. Interviews with district leadership indicate that the job-embedded PD that sometimes follows walkthroughs is only provided at the elementary level, and only by literacy coaches, since there are no math coaches. At this point, outside PD for teachers primarily consists of vendor-specific training on the programs and software packages purchased by the district. Teachers reported that their input is not sought in PD offered, which limits their ownership of their own learning. The district's lack of a current comprehensive PD plan and decisions around the delivery of current PD diminishes its ability to adequately support all schools' progress.

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: Data expectations are communicated by district leadership to the school community for the purpose of using data to set goals and drive instruction. However, teachers have not been provided with the type of PD that aligns to current State standards to support student learning.

Area for Improvement:

- The district leader communicates expectations for the school communities to use data to set goals and drive instruction. District leaders report that they share data in a variety of places, including on the schools' televisions, on the district website, and at school board meetings. The district leadership indicated that district leader trains administrators in the use of data to support instruction during administrative cabinet meetings, however this training does not appear to have included the entire school community. District leadership also reported they use data from student assessments to identify gaps and from the results of teacher observations to identify PD needs. However, not all principals are conducting observations and providing feedback in a timely fashion. The District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP) refers to improving staff knowledge of data-driven instruction by utilizing department and grade level meetings to begin small group training in DDI. However, reviewers did not have evidence the district was providing teachers with PD in the use of data to support student learning. Building leaders reported there is an emphasis on summative assessments in the district, and that teachers no longer wait extended amounts of time to administer tests. However, teachers report they are using students' overall scores on assessments for grouping students rather than grouping for based on specific instructional needs. The district has not provided teachers with support for understanding data so that they can make informed instructional decisions based on assessment results.

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

Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions Statement of Practice (SOP) 2.1: The District works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for the school leader to create, develop and nurture a school environment that is responsive to the needs of the entire school community.	SOP Rating	D
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Area for Improvement:

- The district and building leadership works collaboratively, however not all members of the school community share in decision making. Some building leaders report they “meet daily to support consistency and alignment from middle school to high school,” which they credit for helping their quarterly progress. They commented that with sharing of staff between the upper level schools, now there is “common language across disciplines” that supports CCLS. The members of the district cabinet reported the district encourages them to build their capacity through participating in PD opportunities and by attending pertinent conferences. While district administrators reported they collaboratively developed the district goals and a vision to improve student achievement, however community members and teachers reported that they were not included in that process. The lack of an inclusive shared decision-making process limits the opportunities for the district to create an environment that is responsive to 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
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Area for Improvement:

- The DCIP references providing staff opportunities for collaboration on CCLS implementation, however teachers reported that their request for time to develop CCLS-aligned instructional materials in the summer of 2012 was denied. District leaders reported PD for teachers to develop and implement curricula in core content areas that supports CCLS was delayed due to scheduling issues with the PD vendor they selected. Consequently, the district decided to send principals for BOCES CCLS trainings on instructional shifts, who would then turnkey to PD for their staff. This resulted in teachers receiving CCLS training primarily from the principals rather than from curriculum specialists. The district provides curricula enrichment subject such as science and technology (robotics, Project Lead the Way), and music and Physical Education that are rigorous, and the PD plan dated 2010 focused on providing computerized remediation. The DCIP indicates that schools would analyze student data to provide enrichment and interventions, however reviewers did not see evidence of this practice. Without the delivery of timely PD, the district is not providing supports to ensure that teachers are prepared to teach CCLS in the core areas and to incorporate the arts, technology and other enrichment areas, which limits student access to rigorous learning opportunities in all subjects.

<p>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.</p>	<p>SOP Rating</p>	<p>D</p>
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Area for Improvement:

- Opportunities that support teachers to effectively plan and account for student needs did not consistently result in student engagement or use of data to inform their instruction. District and building leaders reported that while in past years, teachers could take whatever PD they wanted, this year the district was limiting PD opportunities. The district decided to send some building leaders for PD on the CCLS instructional shifts so that they could provide turnkey training for their building staff. Teachers received vendor provided training for programs and software, including a new ELA textbook. School leaders reported there is no embedded PD for teachers to provide “support in developing instructional strategies,” except at the elementary school. The only job-embedded PD is ELA in the elementary school, and there are no math coaches. During classroom visits, reviewers noted that instructional practices that incorporated the CCLS shifts varied across content areas, and few provided supports for students with disabilities. Without targeted PD that prepares teachers to deliver instruction that is at the level of rigor required by the CCLS, student access to high levels of student engagement is limited.

<p>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.</p>	<p>SOP Rating</p>	<p>D</p>
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Area for Improvement:

- The district and building leaders report the district works collaboratively with school leaders to determine next steps in developing the school level social and emotional health programs. The district creates and supports structures such as school health centers to treat physical and mental health. The District reported they are moving toward more inclusive classroom models to better support students special learning needs. However, reviewers observed that the planning for these supports is not comprehensive. For example, school leaders indicated that when a key staff member was on leave, they stopped the Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) and shifted to another program. Instead of completing the implementation of PBIS, the district trained teachers in Olweus, an anti-bullying program, and focused on the implementation of the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA). This has resulted in a partial programming with limited capacity for district implementation, and therefore, does not fully support all students’ social and emotional health.

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 communicates with families; however, there is no formal structure for reciprocal communication. District leadership reported, “The School District has to be the nucleus of the community” and has established some effective community partnerships that bring services to schools. The district supports families with mental health, medical and dental services, and throughout the year with the summer food program and a comprehensive summer camp program. Communication is unidirectional, from the district to the community. There is a district Facebook page, and an automated calling system, however, neither provides opportunities for reciprocal communication. The district communicates information to families using an automated call system. The district is not creating opportunities to engage families in conversations about student data. While the district supports their families in several ways, there is no shared decision making committee, or family engagement plan, which limits opportunities for families and community members to be active participants in the learning process.

DISTRICT LEVEL 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: Create structures that support retaining high quality staff. Develop a mentoring program for new hires and invest in PD for staff to become expert in NYSED initiatives and to make connections between those initiatives and their classroom practice. Prioritize walkthroughs that provide teachers with timely feedback and ensure that evaluation criteria are consistent with CCLS and equip teachers to make instructional shifts.
- 1.2: Create structures that support retaining high quality staff. Develop a mentoring program for new hires and invest in PD for staff to become expert in NYSED initiatives and to make connections between those initiatives and their classroom practice. Prioritize walk-throughs that provide teachers with timely feedback and ensure that evaluation criteria are consistent with CCLS and equip teachers to make instructional shifts.
- 1.3: Prioritize vision of high expectations through developing systems and structures based on best practices that lead to student success. Expand efforts to develop and implement reciprocal communication strategies that address the needs and concerns of all constituents.
- 1.4: Develop in collaboration with staff, a PD plan that is comprehensive. Ensure that the plan addresses required priorities and identified needs based on assessment of school practices. Establish annual PD calendar and distribute calendar in advance throughout the district. Participate in regional resources that expand district leader's knowledge NYSED requirements and practices. Provide follow up support that meets the needs of staff.
- 1.5: Ensure that staff collects, analyzes, and uses data to inform instruction. Provide intensive PD support for staff in analyzing data collected from formative and summative assessments to evaluate student growth and to determine next steps.