



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	030200010000
District	Binghamton City School District
District Address	164 Hawley Street, Binghamton, New York 13905
Superintendent	Dr. Marion H. Martinez
Date(s) of Review	June 17-18, 2014
Schools Discussed in this Report	East Middle School

District Information Sheet											
District Grade Configuration	PreK-12	Total Student Enrollment	5,651	Title 1 Population	66%	Attendance Rate	91%				
Free Lunch	58%	Reduced Lunch	8%	Student Sustainability	76	Limited English Proficient	4%	Students with Disabilities	14%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	Black or African American	24%	Hispanic or Latino	13%	Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	3%	White	52%	Multi-racial	8%
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/Appointed to District	1	Number of Deputy Superintendents	2	Average Years Dep. Superintendents in Role in the District	2	# of Directors of Programs	8				
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate in District	1	% Teaching Out of Certification in District	2	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp. in District	3	Average Teacher Absences in District	9.8/teacher				
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
District in Good Standing		Focus District	X	Number of Focus School Identified by District	10	Number of SIG Recipient Schools	10	Number of Schools in Status	10		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	3 rd -15% 4 th -12% 5 th -12% 6 th -21% 7 th -21% 8 th -19%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	3 rd - 13% 4 th - 12% 5 ^h - 11% 6 th - 11% 7 th - 14% 8 th - 14%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	4 th - 80% 8 th - 68%	4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	68%	6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	89.2%		

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

#	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 leadership has a comprehensive and explicit theory of action about school culture that communicates high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents.			X	
1.3	The district is organized and allocates resources (financial, staff support, materials, etc.) in a way that aligns appropriate levels of support for schools based on the needs of the school community.			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: DEVELOPING			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(s) to ensure CCLS curriculum that provide 21st Century and College and Career Readiness skills in all content areas and provides fiscal and human resources for implementation.			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 and addresses 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 – Findings, Evidence, Impact and Recommendations:

<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>Tenet Rating</p>	<p>D</p>

Debriefing Statement: The district has a long-standing recruitment process that generates large numbers of highly qualified applicants for vacant positions. Recently, the interview process has been revised to include candidates demonstrating classroom instruction for interviewer review. An orientation process and active mentor program provides support that aids in retaining staff. All leaders are trained in evaluation rubrics in order to implement the APPR and provide actionable feedback. However, there remains in gaps in the district’s ability to ensure that those identified meet the districts’ needs and that the recruitment and retainment practices support the goals of both the district and the school board.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The school district lacks systems to recruit and hire high quality staff.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding: *(Note: the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) gathered evidence from a review of documents and interviews with district leaders, principals, staff, parents and students.)*

- The district leader expressed concerns about the recruitment and hiring process. She commissioned an audit to evaluate the current effectiveness of the department practices. The district leader stated that the recruitment of minority candidates in the district lagged, explaining that the district needed to improve recruitment efforts to all potential candidates. Because of her concerns, she hired a new school leader, with the assistance of a consultant. Staff interviewed stated that the district has an effective recruitment strategy, which has generated 350 qualified applicants for the six open elementary school teacher positions in the district. The district leader spoke of a new process that provided the teacher candidate finalists with the opportunity to do a practice lesson with students, while the hiring team observed the lesson to gauge its effectiveness.
- The district leader cited several issues she had with existing recruitment and hiring practices, including the accuracy of information. She also stated that the current system has no cohesive process because there were no connections between the interview questions and the board goals, and that no exit interviews were conducted for staff members who were leaving the district, so the district is unable to identify the gaps that cause it to lose quality staff. The lack of accurate information limits the district’s

ability to evaluate their human resource processes in order to maximize effectiveness.

Impact Statement:

The lack of an inclusive system for recruiting and hiring high quality staff limits the district’s ability to address the needs of its students effectively.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Develop an inclusive system for recruiting and hiring staff, which promotes diversity in the workplace and ensures that the district hires and retains high quality staff to address the needs of the community.

Statement of Practice 1.2.: The district leadership has a comprehensive and explicit theory of action about school culture that communicates high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents.

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: The district continues to develop and implement a theory of action that includes communicating high expectations for school and student improvement. The District Leader uses various forms of media and face-to-face communication to articulate her theory of action as well as to elicit feedback and comments from various constituent groups; however, at the moment, these efforts have yet to be internalized by all stakeholders, and these efforts have not had the desired impact on school improvement and student achievement.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district is beginning to develop ways to improve school practice, although stakeholder understanding and ownership of these processes is still being cultivated.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding: (Note: the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) gathered evidence from a review of documents and interviews with district leaders, principals, staff, parents and students.)

- Though the district has put forth efforts to include data-driven instruction (DDI) as a systematic means to modify curriculum and instruction, staff interviewed reported that this has not yet been fully realized by all staff. They went on to say that although school staff can use the assessment data to see the gaps in knowledge and skills, all have not been able to identify changes in instruction that realize increased student achievement. Staff interviewed stated that as a system, “We are not there” because school staff still asks, “Why are we doing this?” Staff interviewed reported that recently reviewed teachers’ action plans based on this year’s experiences found that in some departments, many plans just re-emphasized what has already been taught. The lack of understanding among its stakeholders as to why the district was endeavoring to implement best practices hampers the effectiveness of school improvement initiatives.

- District leaders interviewed stated that decisions were made by schools and faculty that are not aligned with the district’s theory of action. Some staff made adaptations to the DDI template and processes, which the district had implemented. One district staff member shared that there is an interest in allowing staff to have the freedom to make professional decisions, but the district first wants to ensure that staff implement a practice with fidelity before making modifications.) She shared that this was a shift from the district’s long held culture of each school having its own identity and culture. Because there was little understanding of district processes and practice, it limits the district’s ability to implement best practices consistently and with fidelity in its schools.
- In order to create a culture focusing on the best practices in its schools, the district has implemented nine “Focus Reviews” during the school year, one in each school, using the DTSDE rubric as well as their self-developed “Look For” classroom visitation tool. An assistant superintendent stated that this was done to engage the school district’s 24 school leaders in determining what the district best practices were, as well, as how the district theory of practice was being applied across the district. She described this as a very effective process, and will continue it next school year, utilizing teacher leaders as well. The district use of Focus Reviews allows both district and school leaders to observe the district’s practices applied in other venues, allowing them to reflect objectively on practices in their own building.

Impact Statement:

The lack of standardized and well-understood systems directly linked to student outcomes limits the district’s ability to systematize many of its processes in order to gain complete fidelity and consistency of its desired practices.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Make known the district processes, desired student outcomes, and how implementing initiatives with fidelity corresponds to increased student achievement.

Statement of Practice 1.3: The district is organized and allocates resources (financial, staff support, materials, etc.) in a way that aligns appropriate levels of support for schools based on the needs of the school community.

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: Each school’s base allocation of district fiscal resources is determined by student enrollment. Following the base allocation, school leaders work with district leaders to review the previous year’s budget as well as school data to request additional fiscal, staff, and material supports. Grants are used to provide support for the implementation of new initiatives such as increased student support staff at the middle school and high school in response to data indicating high levels of mental health issues leading to discipline referrals and suspensions. Although the district is currently developing processes to allocate resources to its schools based on building need, and is also developing systems to monitor, assess, and maximize these supports, it is in the early stages of development, so evidence of positive impact on school

improvement, and student success is not available.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district is developing ways to improve the allocation of resources to improve student achievement and school improvement.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- District Leaders stated that a baseline of resources were allocated equitably through a per pupil amount. One district staff member stated that they were looking more closely at individual school needs to make these decisions. Additionally, the staff member shared that she wants to link resources to data that indicates a need for additional support. The lack of a budget process that takes into consideration each school's specific needs, limits the district's ability to meet the needs of all of its stakeholders.
- The school district is beginning the process of developing structures for assessing and deploying resources. Based on teacher observations and student data, one assistant superintendent stated that there were several needs in the district in order to move the instructional program forward. She defined them as increasing the professional capacity of staff, leadership development, and improving curriculum and instruction to ensure equal access by all students. District leaders said that the building leaders and other district curriculum leaders have not been provided enough guidance on how to maximize and utilize both the general fund and grand fund dollars allocated to the buildings. District staff stated that there was a new process in place, in which all grant funds must be tied directly in with the intention of the grant, or else the allocation will not be approved.
- District staff stated that the success of the school budget is measured by the achievement of the students. This was difficult to ascertain during the past year since there were few specific or measurable targets established at the start of the school year. This (was confirmed through a document review, as well as through interviews with other district leaders.

Impact Statement:

There is a lack of formalized structures and systems to ensure that resources are allocated in a way that consistently promotes student achievement and school improvement.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Develop a formalized system for assessing certain pieces of data and evidence to determine school and department allocations, which best meet the needs of all schools and stakeholders.
- Include in the district comprehensive improvement plan (DCIP) and strategic plan (SP) specific goals

and corresponding quantity measures, which can be used to determine the allocation of resources across the district and its schools and to evaluate the impact on student achievement.

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.

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: District and school leaders collaborate throughout the school year to review data that identifies targeted PD needs of teachers and leaders based on self-assessment and patterns of recommended practice improvement. Calendars of PD opportunities, including summer courses and training, are produced and distributed. District leaders, school leaders, BOCES staff, and faculty from area colleges and universities frequently facilitate various PD opportunities. Follow-up support PD is regularly provided during staff meetings by instructional coaches, district, and school leaders. However, the desired impact on teacher effectiveness and student achievement is not yet discernible.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The PD provided by the district was targeted and focused on the CCLS implementation, though its impact on student achievement is not fully substantiated.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school district has a targeted, robust PD program. According to the HR director, the school district has a formal teacher induction process for new staff members, before the start of the school year. During this time, new teachers are trained in several areas of school/district operations as well as assigned to their mentor, whose time together is monitored and checked against certain specific district expectations. The PD offered throughout the year was based on several critical district-wide initiatives such as the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), data-driven instruction (DDI), the district Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR), and the four elements of effective teaching, objectives, assessments, questioning, and engagement/climate-culture. Steps have been taken to train staff in some or all of the aforementioned areas; however, there was not enough funds nor time to ensure that each of the nearly 600 faculty members were able to attend training during the first summer of implementation. Therefore, some initiatives, such as the training offered in classroom management, were rolled out over a three-year period and a plan for measuring the impact of the professional development on changes in student performance has not yet been realized. The school district lacks evidence to show that the PD provided to its staff has a positive impact on student achievement. According to one assistant superintendent, there were multiple processes taking place during the school year, all introduced to improve student achievement. This made it difficult to determine what PD may have had an impact on any particular pieces of student performance data. She noted two ways in which PD was assessed: fidelity of implementation and through staff surveys. Implementation was determined through classroom observations as well as through the curriculum coaches and the assistant superintendent believed that the implementation of school initiatives was

high, based on her conversations with school leaders and the review of observation data. In the last PD survey provided, 60 percent of teachers stated that they believe that the PD they have received has had a positive impact on their classroom practice. Evidence was provided in the form of observation data collected that indicated across the district improved classroom practices were being used; however, reviewers did not see evidence of a direct correlation between teachers who participated in PD, used what was learned in their classroom and an increase in student performance.

Impact Statement:

The school district’s lack of corresponding data to demonstrate the effectiveness of its PD plan limits its ability to make modifications, which may benefit their instructional program and further improve teacher effectiveness.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Create systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its PD program in order to determine if it is having a positive impact on teacher effectiveness and 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.

Tenet Rating	D
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Debriefing Statement: The district promotes the use of data by establishing data inquiry teams in each school building and improving district-wide data collection systems. Over the past year, data collection and analysis has been promoted district-wide, although the use of data to establish monitoring and evaluation systems is not yet fully developed.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district does not systematically use data to develop goals or measure program effectiveness.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district leader shared that the goal for the development of the DCIP and SCEP’s was for leaders to be invested in the development and implementation of a plan that was then monitored. She also shared that with the delay in obtaining student performance data on state assessments that was meaningful and there were few data systems in place that link student performance K through 12. As a result, there are no specific, measurable, ambitious, results-orientated, and timely (SMART) goals included in plans, and consequently no goals tied to data. The absence of SMART goals limits the district’s ability to track progress towards goals against quantifiable measures.
- There was a lack of participation in the development of both plans by the community stakeholders. The district leader acknowledged that she did not include community members in the teams that

developed the DCIP and SCEP. This lack of community input in the development of the DCIP and SCEP limits the district's ability to gain feedback representative from all of their stakeholders.

- The district leader stated that she has not put a limited number of systems in place to evaluate whether the district initiatives are working. This included the tracking of implementation of each school plan by the building principal and the annual reports by school leaders to the BOE. The lack of robust systems to track the district initiatives and programs limit the district's ability to assess properly if they were having the desired impact on the district improvement process.
- One assistant superintendent said that the previous way in which they obtain data through regional informational center limits their ability to track progress. She shared that getting student performance data on state assessment in to the hands of teachers was challenging. She stated now that she has baseline data from the newly developed APPR assessments, the teams would be able to attach SMART Goals to the data and improvement plans. She also said that based on each elementary school's assessment of students independent reading level, approximately 20 percent should be proficient the NYS English language arts (ELA) assessment, though she cited 25 percent proficiency as a reasonable goal for this year. The use of regular and ongoing assessment data allows the district to determine if it was on track to meet its goals.

Impact Statement:

The lack of systematic use of data to set goals or to measure progress limits stakeholders understanding of how students are performing and how they can adjust their practices to promote student achievement.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Develop the DCIP and SP with full stakeholder input, include SMART goals and corresponding activities, and communicate these plans throughout its community.
- Ensure that progress towards each of the SMART goals is monitored and evaluated rigorously.

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

Statement of Practice 2.1 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: 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.	Tenet Rating	D
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Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district’s support mechanisms for schools are not yet fully supporting the drive for improvements in student outcomes.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding: *(Note: the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) gathered evidence from a review of documents and interviews with district leaders, principals, staff, parents and students.)*

- A newly appointed interim school leader stated that the district provided her with support in the work she does, and described a good working relationship with several of the district staff. She also stated that the district leader has provided her with additional meeting time and there were regular administrative meetings between school and district leaders. However, the district support was not yet been realized as having an increase in the academic standards for students. While a school leader shared with the review team that the school has identified SMART goals, interviews with school stakeholders indicated that not all constituencies were aware of what the goals were, nor did they participate in their development. Parents stated that they have little understanding of what the school was focusing on regarding school improvement and students stated that they were unsure of what was being done to improve the school. Additionally, the review team did not find evidence that the school leaders monitor and evaluate data related to SMART goals to measure progress. The school leaders stated that she would welcome more district support to drive forward school improvements at a faster pace.
- The school leader told the school review team that the school was currently behind schedule in conducting teacher observations aligned to the district APPR plan and a review of records indicated that not all teachers have received formal and informal visits. The school leaders stated that they are behind schedule because this system has only just started. She sought and received support from the district to remedy this situation.
- Discussions with a new school leader and review of school documentation by the review team provided evidence that although some teachers are receiving feedback aligned to established criteria; feedback was not always specific enough to help bring about improvements. The review team also found that there were teachers who have not yet received any formal feedback. In addition, evidence from discussions with the school leaders and staff indicated that school leaders do not connect observations with student data and performance.
- Interviews with a school leader indicated that the school did not have evidence-based systems and

structures in place to monitor progress or lack thereof. The school leader stated that she was aware of this, and was working on a plan, with district support, to improve the school use of data. Further, the review team found that procedures for monitoring and revising practices are inconsistent in relation to improvement areas in the SCEP. Consequently, both the school and district leaders recognize that support strategies need to be strategic and structured to ensure that the needs of all students and staff were met.

Impact Statement:

The lack of systematic district support limits the schools’ ability to effectively communicate and implement a fully effective plan for school improvement and increased student achievement.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Ensure that the schools adhere to the district APPR schedule and process, which aligns teacher expectations to regular formative feedback.
- Provide support, oversight, and training to school leaders so that they understand the SCEP development process as well as the development of SMART goals, which correspond to both district and school objectives.
- Provide schools with methods to link their activities with specific measurable goals to determine program effectiveness.

Statement of Practice 3.1 - Curriculum Development and Support: The district works collaboratively with the school(s) to ensure CCLS curriculum that provide 21st Century and College and Career Readiness skills in all content areas and provides fiscal and human resources for implementation.

Tenet Rating

D

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

Though the district is developing processes to provide the schools with the support necessary to implement the CCLS and corresponding shifts, implementation is uneven.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding: *(Note: the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) gathered evidence from a review of documents and interviews with district leaders, principals, staff, parents and students.)*

- A school leader reported that although the district has provided PD for teachers to support the implementation of the CCLS, there was currently not enough focus on tailoring and planning the curricula to meet the needs of individuals and student subgroups. In the classrooms visited by the review team, students generally completed the same tasks because teachers did not consistently implement curricula that met the needs of all students. Additionally, there was limited understanding of the quality of curriculum planning and its implementation. The school leader indicated that further

PD was planned to better support teachers.

- The school review team found that there was no consistent format for writing lesson plans and that while some teachers use lesson plans, others do not plan at all. A review of documents demonstrated that lesson plans do not consistently align with the CCLS. Again, the school leader recognized this weakness and she planned to work with the district to provide additional PD to address the issue.
- The school leader and teachers shared with the school review team that they were in the early stages of developing a plan to address interdisciplinary curricula, as there was currently little formal interdisciplinary learning across the school, limiting students' opportunities to connect various content areas. The review team saw evidence that some teachers use assessment data to identify student progress, but there was limited evidence of teachers using this data to adjust instruction. As a result, some students appeared to be disengaged in the lesson. Additional PD, with district support, was planned to address the concerns.

Impact Statement:

Although the situation was improving, a lack of systematic and strategic support over time has hindered the school capacity to implement CCLS effectively or to address gaps in student learning in a challenging and engaging manner.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Focus on the implementation of the CCLS and shifts, and how this is accomplished through DDI, rigorous questioning, high student engagement, interdisciplinary planning, and the modification of lesson plans to meet the needs of all learners.

Statement of Practice 4.1 - Teacher Practices and Decisions: The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for teachers to develop strategies and practices and addresses effective planning and account for student data, needs, goals, and levels of engagement.

Tenet Rating

D

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district was developing processes to support teachers in the implementation of the CCLS and their shifts.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding: *(Note: the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) gathered evidence from a review of documents and interviews with district leaders, principals, staff, parents and students.)*

- An assistant superintendent stated that, though she believed that all teachers were using data in their classroom preparation, all are not yet. In many classrooms, the review team noted that teachers were not monitoring progress or using assessments to develop lesson plans that were adaptive and responsive to student strengths and needs. Additionally, the review team found that only a small

number of teachers were using data to plan for struggling students. During a teacher meeting, teachers discussed assessment results, though there was no indication of how teachers planned to adjust their instruction based on these conversations or assess during instruction to gauge as to whether the instructional change was affective. Additionally, the review team found that school leaders were not supporting teachers in learning how to adapt their instruction to meet student needs based on available data.

- The review team noted that teacher leaders were beginning to work with teachers on establishing goals for individual students, and for different groups of students. However, goal setting across the school was inconsistent. Teachers shared with the review team that while assessment data lets them know how students were progressing, they do not use this information to create goals matched to individual learners.
- Despite the district providing monthly meeting time for teams of teachers to meet to discuss data, the review team found, and the school leader agreed, that an inconsistent approach to the way teachers use data to plan instruction in order to meet the needs of individual students or subgroups. Teacher interviews and classroom visits provided the review team with evidence that ELA and mathematics teachers use assessments to gain information on how individual students were learning. However, reviewers and the school leader agreed that only a few teachers used this information to adjust their plans for individual students or subgroups. Instead, teachers taught to the center, while some students in the classrooms visited found the work too easy and lacking challenge, others found the work too difficult.

Impact Statement:

The absence of a data-driven culture results in the compromise of student academic achievement.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Ensure that all schools and teachers establish a culture where data is used to guide and drive improvements in the overall performance of the school and to instruction and student achievement in individual classes.

Statement of Practice 5.1 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health: The district creates policy and works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and resources that positively support students’ social and emotional developmental health.

Tenet Rating

D

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The school district lacks systematic processes to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the identification and referral process for students with social and emotional developmental health needs. Additionally, data is not

used regularly to track or analyze school or student needs.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding: *(Note: the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) gathered evidence from a review of documents and interviews with district leaders, principals, staff, parents and students.)*

- The new school leader stated that she was unaware of a district policy that created opportunities and resources that positively support students' social and emotional developmental health. She believed that there was a "skeletal level of support staff" in the building, given the number of students with social and emotional developmental health needs and she further cited that there was no social worker or resource officer.
- The review team found that, though there was a system for referring students; teachers do not consistently use this system across classrooms. Students shared that some teachers make many referrals, while others make few.
- The school review team did not find evidence that the school was using data related to student social and emotional developmental health effectively. While visits to classrooms, and interviews with school leaders, staff, and students demonstrated that behavior was adversely influencing the learning environment, there were no structures in place to examine school practices regarding behavior based on data to improve staff practices in creating a safe environment. The school leader shared that she recognized the need to develop teacher capacity in this area and was developing plans to support improvement.
- While some staff shared with the review team that they collect data informally to track student attendance and suspension, members of the support staff were unsure about the data, and did not know how many students the school had suspended. The review team found no evidence of how the school was monitoring these students or using this information to change practices in order to meet the needs of students. The district student support team stated that they believe that school leaders have collected disciplinary data as a result of district work with NYU Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development and that all schools were held responsible for understanding and reporting out to the BOE discipline data. The school support staff stated that they have no plans to provide support to teachers based on the analysis of data. The review team found that the support staff and teachers do not collaborate in order to meet student needs. However, the school leader shared that she was developing a plan to provide PD to build adult capacity in the support of student social and emotional well-being.
- Review team interviews with school stakeholders, as well as a review of documents, revealed that the school did not have a vision for social and emotional developmental health aligned to a curriculum or program. Teachers stated that there was no program in place to support the teaching of social and emotional developmental health. Additionally, the review team found limited evidence to demonstrate that teacher received PD to help them develop their capacity to support student social and emotional developmental health as the district is in year of it implantation of Guided Discipline. In the district student support team interview, it was learned that the district did not provide any PD on

how to identify students with social or emotional developmental health needs, limiting the roles of stakeholders in contributing to the social and emotional health needs of all students.

- Because of disciplinary issues interfering with student engagement and instruction in the classrooms, an assistant superintendent described the process that the district was using to implement responsive classrooms and guided discipline as behavioral management programs, which she believed would complement the district PBIS program. She described reviewing the district disciplinary data, and believed in some circumstances that a lack of engagement in classrooms was leading to disciplinary issues. As a result, she implemented the aforementioned programs, in the elementary and secondary schools, with about one third of the teachers being trained over three summers. When asked if there was data to show this was PD has been effective, she responded that, “We are not there yet as we are planning how the professional development utilization will be assessed by administrators in the classroom.

Impact Statement:

The lack of a systematic approach to the identification, and referral process for students who may have social or emotional needs, as well as the lack of well-known data systems to track school and student needs, limits the district’s ability to meet the social and emotional developmental health needs of all of its students.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Develop a social and emotional support plan for students where each of the stakeholders’ roles are clearly defined in the context of the school’s overall plan and systems, and provide corresponding training so that each person may effectively carry out their role and responsibilities.
- Develop an understanding among all of the school stakeholders on how to use data to identify students who need additional supports, and create a data system to correspond with this vision and application.
- Provide regular PD opportunities for school stakeholders to understand how to use data to trigger referrals, social and emotional, and to identify students who may need additional assistance.

Statement of Practice 6.1 - Family and Community Engagement: 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.

Tenet Rating

D

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district lacks a systematic process to ensure regular and ongoing reciprocal communication between the district, schools, and homes.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding: *(Note: the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) gathered evidence from a review of documents and interviews with district leaders, principals, staff, parents and students.)*

- A new school leader stated that she was unaware of the district policies regarding the cultivation of a welcoming school climate to provide families with a sense of belonging, though she “certainly intends to nurture a welcoming environment” for all stakeholders.
- Parents interviewed stated that they were not clear about what their children were learning because they do not feel that all teachers reach out to them to share in their children’s education and that the school did not consistently communicate with families to help them understand and be more involved in their children’s academic achievement. Additionally, they stated that they would welcome more tips and tools from the school on how to engage their children at home. The review team found limited evidence of staff regularly reviewing and adjusting communication with families in order to build relationships that foster high expectations for student achievement.
- The district student support team stated that there was an expectation that district and school documents were sent to homes “in their own language”; however, it was their understanding that parents or their advocate need to ask the district for this service.
- Though the district leader believed that there was an expectation that staff reach out with parents, she stated that parents have expressed a concern that they are not meaningfully engaged frequently enough. Though she received feedback that shows her that parental communication was improving, she conceded that all of the feedback she received was anecdotal, and not data driven.
- The review team found evidence that the school was beginning to ensure that teachers and staff develop their understanding of how to develop and sustain family engagement. A review of the school’s PD plan demonstrated that the school has offered PD activities to develop staff capacity in this area. For example, PD included speakers talking about cultural diversity and sensitivity.
- A new school leader shared she recognized that the schools need to improve its data collection and communication methods to identify family needs. While the review team found evidence that some staff members were using data to respond to student and family needs, this work was inconsistent across the school.
- The review team found that the school did not consistently share student data to enable all parents to understand how well their children were doing. As a result, during the parent meeting, parents stated that they were unclear about how their children were achieving. Additionally, there was limited evidence that parents knew where to go for extra support for their children.

Impact Statement:

The district’s lack of systems to support a strong home-school connection limits the families’ ability to work with the district and the school as a partner in order to provide the support necessary to improve student achievement.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Develop a long-term district and school plan for family and community engagement, including and collaborating with members of the community, in order to foster high levels of stakeholder engagement and reciprocal communication.
- Incorporate SMART goals, with specific actions and quantitative indicators of success against to which measure success.