



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	070600010000
District	Elmira City School District
District Address	951 Hoffman St., Elmira, NY 14905
Superintendent	Hillary Austin
Date(s) of Review	February 2014
Schools Discussed in this Report	Southside High school and Broadway Middle School

District Information Sheet											
District Grade Configuration	Pre-K ~ 12	Total Student Enrollment	6610	Title 1 Population	88.9%	Attendance Rate		92.2%			
Free Lunch	47.3%	Reduced Lunch	3.1%	Student Sustainability	24.6%	Limited English Proficient	.20%	Students with Disabilities	12%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
American Indian or Alaska Native	.18%	Black or African American	15.6%	Hispanic or Latino	2.3%	Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	.59%	White	74.9%	Multi-racial	6.4%
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/Appointed to District	10 months	Number of Deputy Superintendents	0	Average Years Dep. Superintendents in Role in the District	NA	# of Directors of Programs	5 (Directors and Supervisors)				
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate in District	0%	% Teaching Out of Certification in District	.5%	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp. in District	.005%	Average Teacher Absences in District	14.4				
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
District in Good Standing		Focus District	X	Number of Focus School Identified by District	4	Number of SIG Recipient Schools	4	Number of Schools in Status	12		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	16.85%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	15.07%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	68.81%	4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	72.%	6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	78.2%		

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
	White		Multi-racial
X	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
X	Economically Disadvantaged		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
	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
X	Economically Disadvantaged		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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 1:			E		

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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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
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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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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>E</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>E</p>
<p>Debriefing Statement: Due to budget cuts, there has not been the opportunity to hire many new staff during the past three years. However, the district has developed systematic criteria for how it plans to redeploy staff into newly merged schools later this year. The district has a generic plan for ensuring that school leaders understand the staff evaluation process and are equipped to give pertinent and actionable feedback on a regular basis. Additionally, the district supports leaders in offering teachers professional development (PD) based on individual needs and the overall needs of the school community.</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The superintendent and several other district leaders stated that due to budget cuts there had been little opportunity to hire staff during the past three years. The district has developed systematic criteria for redeploying staff into schools that will be merged later this year. All stakeholders have accepted the new criteria, which include teacher qualifications. The superintendent’s open-door strategy and frequent meetings regarding labor relations have helped with the introduction of the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). The district appointed a leader to manage all aspects of the APPR, which was an important factor in ensuring its successful introduction, and created a plan to support school leaders in evaluating staff and providing feedback on a regular basis. In order to support school leaders, the superintendent joins them once a month for APPR-related PD based on data, which school leaders can take back and turnkey in their buildings. The superintendent stated that school leaders keep her informed regarding classroom observations and that this helps the district meet the ongoing PD needs of teachers, which in turn helps support the school’s needs. The district is successful in developing strategies to sustain and support staff. This includes a four-hour block of time for PD each week. The district ensures that schools have personnel to meet the needs of students. 		
<p>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.</p>	<p>Tenet Rating</p>	<p>E</p>
<p>Debriefing Statement: The district leadership has developed and implemented a new strategic plan to communicate high expectations to ensure that effective professional practices lead to high student outcomes.</p>		

The district also devised a strategy to communicate this plan to all schools with the expectation that each building develop its own vision and mission aligned to the district plan. The district has a detailed outline of how it intends to evaluate the implementation of this strategy.

Strengths:

- The district leadership, in collaboration with a wide range of community stakeholders including politicians, district, business, and school leaders, recently completed a new strategic plan with a mission, core beliefs, parameters, objectives, and strategies to communicate high expectations to ensure that effective professional practices lead to high student outcomes. This team met over six months and constructed a comprehensive mission and vision for the district that has wide community acceptance. In addition, the district also created a strategy to communicate this plan to all schools with the expectation that each building develop its own vision and mission aligned to the district plan. The first stage of this strategy was to form three action teams that include members of the board of Education (BOE), community leaders, school leaders, teachers, students, and parents. The BOE gave approval in December 2013 for the action teams to promote three of the identified strategies in the plan. Additionally, they agreed that the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) would provide training for action team leaders who will begin to promote the vision and mission once the merge between the two schools is complete. Further, the district drafted a detailed outline of how it will evaluate the implementation of this strategy. This includes the action teams monitoring how schools are progressing with developing their school-specific vision and mission statements and the superintendent monitoring these statements during her scheduled meetings with school leaders. These strategies ensure that the district communicates its high expectations, which improves student success.

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

E

Debriefing Statement: The district organizes regular meetings with school leaders to assess resource needs on an ongoing basis and works with school leaders to determine budget priorities, taking into consideration the needs of each school. The district commits resources after analyzing data in order to help meet the district’s goals for student achievement.

Strengths:

- Prior to the finalization of the district budget, district and school leaders collaboratively determine priorities, which take into consideration the needs of each school, and allocate aligned fiscal resources. Additionally, the district organizes regular meetings with school leaders to assess resource needs on an ongoing basis. The superintendent meets monthly with school leaders, both in elementary and secondary groups and individually. Together the district and school leaders work

together to assess and deploy resources to meet the needs of schools based on data. School leaders stated that the superintendent is committed to being creative and innovative in aligning resources to meet the needs of their school communities. The superintendent shared that the elementary group requested additional support with reading resources, while middle and secondary schools requested more support for student social and emotional developmental health. The superintendent stated that shared decision-making based on data analysis was successful because everybody felt involved in the process and this helps everyone accept “tough decisions, because they had had input.” At the final stage, all proposals supported by data are presented to the district’s finance committee for a final decision. The impact is that resources are administered to promote school improvement and 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.

Tenet Rating

E

Debriefing Statement: The district has established multiple systems to support the development and implementation of its comprehensive PD plan. The district has established a PD committee, which designed and provided extensive work around unpacking the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and modules in both English language arts (ELA) and mathematics to prepare teachers for implementation in 2014-15. Additionally, there has been significant PD for district leaders in the areas of the Regents Reform Agenda, including the CCLS and APPR, to enable them to better understand and support the rigorous instructional implications of the CCLS within their respective buildings. District appointed trainers provide specific instruction on how to create scaffolds and supports for student access to CCLS aligned lessons. They also collect data to prioritize PD and to monitor the effect of its implementation. The district has made preliminary steps to promote cross-curricular collaboration.

Strengths:

- The district has established multiple systems to support the development and implementation of its comprehensive PD plan. PD is coordinated at the district level by the superintendent and two leaders who manage a team of instructional support teachers (ISTs). These ISTs are based in each school building where they deliver PD, advise, coach, and model lessons. Additionally they evaluate the impact of the PD and give feedback to the district. Further, ISTs run weekly PD in schools on Wednesday afternoons and provide individualized mandatory PD and support to teachers who are on teacher improvement plans (TIP). The district has also created systems for the ISTs to provide regular feedback on instructional practices, the curriculum, and the implementation of CCLS. The PD committee surveys teachers and teacher leaders to establish individual and school-wide priorities. Based on the survey and observation data, the district then creates a detailed calendar of PD opportunities, which includes summer courses. The district has created structures and provided time for teachers to collaborate and plan together. At the secondary level, this structure is called professional learning communities (PLCs) in which teachers work together to create unit and lesson

plans aligned to the CCLS. The district is working with school leaders to ensure that PD consistently matches the needs of schools, students, and teachers. Additionally, there has been PD for the district leaders in the areas of the Regents Reform Agenda, including the CCLS and APPR, to enable them to better understand and support the rigorous instructional implications of the CCLS within their respective buildings. Trainers provide specific instruction on how to create scaffolds and supports for student access to CCLS aligned lessons. They also collect data to prioritize PD and to monitor the effect of its implementation. The district has also made preliminary steps to promote cross-curricular collaboration. The result is that the targeted PD is leading to improved instructional practices and increased teacher effectiveness.

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

Debriefing Statement: The district has prioritized the use of data in the past year, but data is not consistently used effectively across schools to drive instruction and improvement. However, systems and structures for the collection and use of data are more established at the elementary level than at the middle and secondary levels. The lack of ISTs, whose primary focus is to establish data-driven instruction processes across the district, impedes student achievement.

Area for Improvement:

- A review of documents, and interviews with leaders and staff, demonstrated that the district prioritizes the use of data and communicates how it expects school leaders and teachers to use data. This includes information on student performance, resources, and parent engagement. However, systems and structures for the collection and use of data to drive instructional practices are not consistent across schools, as elementary schools have more effective data collection systems than secondary schools. While the superintendent stated that how secondary teachers use data is a district focus for improvement, ISTs reported that they are beginning to work with teachers in PLCs to use data to inform instruction. The inconsistent use of data across the district limits student academic achievement.

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	E
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Strengths:

- The school leaders reported that there is close cooperation and engagement between the district and schools, particularly in curriculum, teacher evaluation, PD, and instructional practices. School leaders shared the regular collaborative meetings that the superintendent holds with groups of primary, middle, and secondary school leaders and with individual school leaders. Additionally, school leaders shared that the superintendent and supervisor for school improvement regularly participate with them on walk-throughs in order to gain a hands-on view of school needs. Further, school leaders spoke positively about the district’s introduction of PLCs, which are playing a key role in helping teachers work collaboratively to implement the CCLS, as well as the high quality of the district’s PD program, which includes the ISTs. These ISTs work with the schools to improve instructional practices through PD, PLCs, coaching, and modelling lessons. Outside Educational Experts (OEE) meet with secondary school leaders once a month to monitor the effectiveness of building PLCs and offer monthly PD to school leaders and ISTs on topics, such as the instructional shifts, close reading, and text complexity. Further, OEEs meet monthly with secondary school leaders to conduct classroom walk-throughs. The superintendent stated that she involved a large number of key community stakeholders in the development of a comprehensive mission and vision for the district in order to ensure community acceptance. For example, the school leader of a high school stated that he was closely involved in the development of the district’s strategic plan. As a member of an action team, he disseminated the strategic plan so that schools could use it as a model to develop their own vision and mission statements. The impact is that the district is supporting school leaders in creating a vision to guide and sustain their work and respond to the needs of all stakeholders.

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	E
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Strengths:

- School leaders reported that the district provided a wide range of PD on CCLS strategies, including the instructional shifts, the use of NYSED modules, and the Tri-state rubric. In some cases, the PD was provided to school leaders to turnkey in their buildings. The leader at one school stated that the trainers and the PD were high quality and that he saw this PD as the key factor in improving standards. The superintendent shared that that the district offered teachers and school leaders differentiated PD for CCLS implementation through Greater Southern Tier (GST) BOCES, School Improvement Plan (SIP), and Model School PD including text complexity, instructional shifts,

scaffolding, flexible grouping, close reading, evidence-based writing, and instructional technology. All PD is advertised to teachers in PD catalogs that are distributed to schools three times a year. Additionally, GST BOCES uses distance learning to hold meetings. The superintendent, school improvement supervisors, OEEs, and ISTs routinely monitor and evaluate the CCLS curricula and programs. The curriculum created and used provides teachers with opportunities to deliver instruction aligned to the CCLS, which improves student learning.

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

E

Strengths:

- School leaders reported that they communicate regularly with the district around the specific PD needs of teachers based on school data. One school leader shared that he had been trained in Teachscape and that staff received PD on co-teaching, explicit instruction, differentiation, and providing multiple points of access for students. A high school leader reported that the district’s PD on data-driven instruction was effective and that PLCs are helping to effect change in instructional practices through collaborative practices. Additionally, the school leader stated that district ISTs provide teachers with learning opportunities to identify best instructional practices and strategies. The superintendent, district leaders, and ISTs stated that the district provided embedded PD for school leaders and staff on using data to differentiate classroom instruction and to increase student engagement, and that the grade level monthly data meetings promote differentiation and flexible groupings. Through the district’s PD, teachers and instructional staff provide students with rigorous learning opportunities.

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

Area for development:

- While the district creates policy and provides opportunities to support student social and emotional developmental health, the district does not consistently monitor the impact of the services it provides. School leaders reported that the district delivers PD to school staff on student social and emotional developmental health, but that this was an area that needed further development. One leader reported that the district provides free mental health screening, a district-hired parent partner, Response to Intervention (RtI) mental health counseling, and Kids Talk to identify students in need of support. The Student Support team (SST) received training for the CCLS, the Dignity for all students Act (DASA), and IEPs. A high school leader reported the district provides a parent partner to be a liaison to the community who supports students who are suspended by acting as an

advocate for the student and the school. The superintendent and other district leaders provided evidence of the PD and support offered to schools and families concerning student social and emotional developmental health including free youth emotional health screening to families, a referral process for mental health services, and PD opportunities for teachers to support student social-emotional health needs. However, the review team found limited evidence of how these services are evaluated to determine their impact on improving student success. The result is that schools and the district are not clear if the supports that are in place are meeting the needs of all students.

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

E

Strengths:

- School leaders shared that the district establishes a climate of belonging for families and community stakeholders and that this encourages school-wide adoption of the district policies. The district implemented the parent portal and posts information for parents on their website. Additionally, the district provided parent workshops, shared NWEA data with them, hired a parent partner to support engagement, and holds community forums on the district reorganization. Further, the district worked with representatives from community based organizations and key stakeholders to develop a vision. However, school leaders reported that the district did not consistently communicate key information in regard to the college application process. The district provides parent workshops and information sessions on data in order to assist parents in supporting the academic and social-emotional needs of students. Further, ISTs provided training for teachers on NWEA reports, which teachers in turn shared with parents during parent-teacher conferences. The district also provides PD for staff members on how to develop partnerships in the community to meet the needs of students and plans to establish a committee to develop a comprehensive family and parent engagement plan. The district works closely with families to provide supports to improve student achievement.

DISTRICT LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

Tenet 1: District Leadership and Capacity

1.5: Provide ISTs for secondary schools whose primary focus is to establish data-driven instruction processes that are consistent across the district.

Tenet 5: Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health

5.1: Evaluate the quality of services and PD provided and assess their impact on meeting the social and emotional needs of all students and increasing their academic success.