



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	411800010000
District	Rome City School District
District Address	409 Bell Road, Rome NY
Superintendent	Jeffrey P. Simons
Date(s) of Review	June 16-17, 2014
Schools Discussed in this Report	Strough Middle School

District Information Sheet

District Grade Configuration	K-12	Total Student Enrollment	5209	Title 1 Population	95.6%	Attendance Rate	94.2%				
Free Lunch	60.6%	Reduced Lunch	11.3%	Student Sustainability	%	Limited English Proficient	1.2%	Students with Disabilities	16.5%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.4%	Black or African American	9.3%	Hispanic or Latino	4.9%	Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	1.4%	White	83.6%	Multi-racial	0.4%
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/Appointed to District		Number of Deputy Superintendents	0	Average Years Dep. Superintendents in Role in the District	0	# of Directors of Programs					
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate in District	0	% Teaching Out of Certification in District	0	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp. in District	9.2	Average Teacher Absences in District	7.1				
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
District in Good Standing	No	Focus District	Yes	Number of Focus School Identified by District	9	Number of SIG Recipient Schools		Number of Schools in Status			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	20.6	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	23.3	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	77.7	4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	72.9	6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	75		

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		All Students
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics			
	American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American
X	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
X	White		Multi-racial
X	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		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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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:				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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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>
<p><u>Debriefing Statement:</u> While the district has effective strategies for recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff, it is working to enhance instructional leadership to develop staff capacity to address all student needs.</p> <p><u>Areas for Improvement:</u></p> <p>Overall Finding: The district has strategies in place for recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff, but it is working to develop the capacity of school leaders to evaluate and develop staff.</p> <p>Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district leader stated that the district has taken steps to develop its recruitment and hiring process to ensure they hire quality staff and increase diversity. District staff members attend Utica College and SUNY Cortland job fairs and district leaders reported that the candidate pool expanded through the use of media. According to its self-assessment, the district works closely with all area higher education institutions to provide student teaching experiences to potential applicants. In addition, a recruitment brochure was developed that is available on the district website. Further, the district consulted with the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and increased the diversity of staff. • The district has a mentoring program in place for new teachers, which has a dedicated staff person to coordinate the program. This mentoring program includes a weeklong summer orientation, classroom inter-visitations, observations, and feedback. New teachers are required to participate in specific trainings to acclimate them to district programs and strategies. The mentor coordinator also works closely with instructional coaches to support new teachers. However, budget constraints have limited the use of subject-specific mentor teachers to support new teachers. • The district leaders reported that the district has restructured its organizational chart last year to add three assistant superintendents, each of whom is responsible for a specific grade band. The priority for these assistant superintendents this year is to work with school leaders and staff to implement the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process. District leaders noted the need for enhancing instructional leadership in the schools, school leader capacity around the new teacher evaluation procedures, and the implementation of the CCLS. 		

While training for professional development (PD) for school leaders has taken place, district staff acknowledged that additional ongoing training was required to improve evaluation and support practices. Assistant superintendents shared that they spend considerable time in school buildings, with one assistant superintendent working closely with a school to ensure effective implementation of district priorities. Further, the assistant superintendents shared that school leaders are beginning to develop an understanding of the new standards and expectations for teaching and are beginning to make stronger connections between instruction and student performance.

- Due to budget cuts, the district leader stated the district is planning to cut a number of key leadership positions, including the director of student services/curriculum and instructional support, the director of grants and federal compliance, the district parent coordinator and the behavior specialist. While the assistant superintendents will take on many of these responsibilities, clear roles and responsibilities have not been delineated. For example, a team participated in Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) training with the intention of implementing it at the high school, but the planned elimination of the behavior specialist position has slowed this implementation. In addition, the number of responsibilities that assistant superintendents will likely take on has raised concerns about their capacity to continue to develop instructional leadership skills in the schools.

Impact Statement: Schools do not consistently have personnel who are able to effectively address all student needs.

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

- Build instructional leadership capacity at the school level to support rigorous teacher evaluation and hold school leaders accountable for providing teachers with clear direction, actionable feedback, and support.
- Continue to develop school leader use of the APPR process, particularly using measurable growth targets to leverage the improvement of instruction.
- Maintain a comprehensive mentoring program for new teachers including subject-specific feedback and support.
- Ensure consistent participation in programs and training for district initiatives by both school leadership and teachers, and provide follow-up training and support to ensure this training translates into effective practice that is consistent across schools.

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: While the district has created a strategic plan with goals in key areas that are beginning to be implemented, students are not yet achieving at levels aligned to these goals.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding: The district has established clear and measurable goals that are beginning to be implemented for student academic performance, but not for social-emotional development and parent and community engagement.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district and schools have developed District Comprehensive Improvement (DCIP) and School Comprehensive Education Plans (SCEP) that have been communicated to the school community. The district makes use of its website to disseminate information to the community and a district leadership team that includes parents and community members was formed to solicit input. In addition, the district created a strategic plan aligned to its DCIP. Assistant superintendents shared that they use the SCEPs to leverage change at the school level and many of the strategies contained in the DCIP were noted during interviews with district staff, such as PD and the use of data.
- The district leader stated that a strategic plan has been created that includes clear, measurable, and ambitious goals for student achievement and growth measures based on state tests. In addition, the plan includes goals specifically targeting high performing students, such as increasing the percentage of students achieving level four on state tests and increasing Advanced Placement (AP) pass rates. However, while the review team found that the plan includes qualitative goals for developing a safe and inviting learning environment, and for expanding parent and community involvement in decision-making, the column for the measurable indicators states that these are to be determined, which limits the school's ability to monitor progress.
- Interviews with district staff and a review of documents indicated that the district has prioritized aligning its curriculum to the CCLS, enhancing the use of data-driven decision-making, and implementing the APPR process. While initially driven by compliance concerns, district staff reported a growing understanding among themselves and school staff of the educational value of these activities and the opportunity to use them to improve student achievement. However, district plans and expectations for social-emotional health and parent and community engagement are less specific and defined. While many schools are conducting activities in these areas, they are generally school initiated and not aligned to a clear district vision or plan.
- The district is beginning to implement some critical improvement strategies such as a Response to

Intervention (RtI) plan for Pre-K through grade four. In addition, some training has been conducted on the use of assessments and analysis tools for progress monitoring. However, while buildings have RTI teams, full implementation of the RTI process will not begin until next year. Similarly, the curriculum was described as a work in progress. The district is further ahead in aligning English language arts (ELA) to the CCLS, but acknowledged that further work remains to be done, specifically in math. For example, a curriculum committee recommended adoption of the state modules, which schools have been adapting this year. Recognizing deficiencies, the district is implementing the Lucy Caulkins writing program next year to supplement its literacy program and the district is planning a curriculum committee for math to review and select curriculum for next year.

Impact Statement: The district is developing high expectations for student achievement, but the inconsistent implementation and monitoring of goals, programs, and plans limit 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 and communicate measurable goals in all areas, including social-emotional development and parent engagement.
- Establish systems for monitoring implementation and measuring impact of strategies. Identify clear data sources and analysis tools for evaluating strategies. Ensure that data is disaggregated to monitor impact on all sub-groups, particularly at-risk students.

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: The organization of district resources promotes school improvement, but the ongoing changes in organizational structures have not produced clear roles and responsibilities to ensure progress. As a result, resources are not consistently used to promote school improvement and success.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding: The district is organizing limited financial resources to promote school improvement and has made significant changes to its organizational structure to support its strategies. However, the ongoing shifts in personnel have not yet established clear roles and responsibilities to ensure continued progress.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- District leaders reported that the district has made class size a priority in its budget decisions, with an effort to maintain staffing levels in the schools. As a result, the district is cutting a number of administrative positions that support programming, curriculum, and instruction. The district has also been adding budget line items to support CCLS and APPR implementation, such as PD and consultants. Funds have been allocated to support summer curriculum camps and curriculum planning. The district is beginning to seek school leader input in its budget process and is focused on equitable distribution of funds across schools as enrollment patterns change and the district capital projects come to fruition.
- The district has created positions and organized its administrative staff to support priorities, such as the implementation of CCLS aligned curriculum and instruction, the use of data, improved school culture, and teacher development and evaluation. The establishment of three new assistant superintendent positions has been used to focus targeted attention on instructional leadership. The district has also invested in a number of instructional coaches this year to provide direct support to teachers on the curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Most coaches focus on ELA, but this year a math coach was added. In addition, an assessment specialist position was made full-time to support school leaders and teachers in administering assessments and collecting data. Further, an inclusion coach supports co-teaching teams and intervention teachers. Additionally, the district added a behavior specialist to work with staff on developing and implementing behavior intervention plans (BIPs) and helping teachers address culture and discipline issues. Further, a district parent coordinator works with schools on parent engagement. Despite this comprehensive range of positions to support its initiatives, district leadership decided to eliminate a number of positions due to budget constraints and changing priorities. However, the roles and responsibilities for these positions have not yet been allocated to ensure continuity of the work. For example, the director of student services, curriculum, and instruction position is being eliminated, but the duties for this position have not been reallocated.

Impact Statement: The resources in the district are beginning to promote school improvement and success.

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

- Continue to allocate resources to further key district priorities, including the implementation of CCLS aligned curricula and instruction and the APPR process.
- Create a plan to ensure that all staff members have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Ensure that key programs, such as RTI have clear oversight and direction. Continue to involve school leaders and program staff in discussions of resource needs and allocation.
- Ensure that the allocation of resources to specific programs and staff positions is monitored and evaluated, in terms of both implementation and results.

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: The district is providing PD opportunities, which are not consistently coordinated and targeted to meet identified needs. Consequently, PD does not consistently lead to effective instruction.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding: The district has invested significant resources in PD; however, the effects of this effort are limited by inconsistent participation and follow-up.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district has a PD committee and a detailed PD plan that addresses key elements of the district’s strategic plan. This committee has reviewed school plans to identify common areas of need, which include implementation of CCLS aligned curricula, the instructional shifts, the writing process, reading comprehension and vocabulary, RTI, and the use of data. While the district has prioritized literacy development across disciplines, there is limited PD focused on other subjects and social-emotional development. While the district offers PD, schools are allowed to pursue their own interests; however, district staff raised concerns about this resulting in a fragmented approach toward staff development, and that there is a lack of monitoring of the implementation and impact of PD.
- The district leader stated that the district invested in instructional coaches to support teachers, but the review team found that there is only one coach to support mathematics. A number of teachers participate in the Common Core ambassadors program to turnkey training. Further, three new assistant superintendents develop instructional leadership in the schools on implementation of the district’s APPR process and tools. However, this work is developing and they will be taking on new focus areas with the redistribution of duties from terminated district positions.
- A review of documents and staff interviews indicated a wide range of PD opportunities, including workshops, coaching, and mentoring. While there is some evidence of PD and support being targeted based on need, only some staff members are required to participate in PD to create common understanding of district priorities and expected practices. For example, new teachers and special education teachers are expected to participate in specific trainings. However, school leaders have opted out of key training in data-driven decision-making and intervention programs and the coaches work with teachers based on individual interest rather than identified needs. The district leader confirmed that while coaches are assisting with planning, modeling lessons, observing classroom instruction, and providing feedback, they are not targeting teachers with the greatest need. In addition, the coaching model and focus has changed each year. District leaders acknowledged that they are in the process of building capacity to provide follow-up support and monitor implementation to ensure that PD translates into effective practice in the classroom.

- The district has developed an RTI plan, however, detailed procedures and tools are not established and staff members are in the process of developing data tools necessary to support an effective RTI process. Further, the review team found that not all schools have the resources described in the RTI plan and district leaders acknowledged the need for ongoing training in the use of data to support RTI.

Impact Statement: PD does not lead to consistently improved teacher practice.

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

- Continue to focus PD on district priorities, particularly CCLS aligned curricula and instruction, while considering other needs, such as social-emotional development.
- Create and communicate clear expectations for participation in training and the use of programs and strategies in which the district has invested.
- Continue to develop staff skills in analyzing and using data to develop actionable plans for instruction and intervention.
- Continue to develop school leader capacity in observing instruction, reviewing curricula and instructional planning, and providing actionable feedback to ensure that PD translates into effective practice.

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: School communities are beginning to use data and to be held accountable for modifying instructional practices to improve student achievement. However, while stakeholders are developing their understanding of student performance data, they have not yet effectively adjusted instruction to meet all student needs.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding: The district is providing PD to develop data-driven decision-making practices; however, staff members are not yet accountable for using data to drive instruction.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district leader shared that the district is implementing data-driven decision-making practices by using a range of assessments, including NWEA and AimsWeb. While some there has been some PD, and an assessment specialist has been working with school leaders and staff on data, the review team found that the use of data to drive instruction and increase student achievement is in the beginning phases. The district's RTI plan is beginning for kindergarten through grade four; however, protocols for

using data for progress monitoring and targeting interventions are not yet in place. Similarly, Academic Intervention Services (AIS) is beginning to be aligned to classroom instruction and data.

- The district is working to increase accountability for both school leaders and teachers, but this is not consistent. While tenure rules have changed and the district establishes teacher improvement plans for some low performing staff, only three teacher improvement plans were implemented over the last year and a half.
- The district leader confirmed that the district is using the new APPR process as an opportunity to address weaknesses in leadership and instruction, and the new assistant superintendents are focusing on raising the level of instructional leadership and accountability in the schools by providing training to school leaders on the APPR process and evaluation. However, district staff noted that school leaders are not held accountable for implementing programs and tools related to data analysis and social and emotional developmental health, and a review of teacher evaluations demonstrated that despite school leader concerns about consistent instruction across classrooms and use of time for collaboration, almost all domains were rated effective.

Impact Statement: Stakeholders do not consistently have a deep understanding of how students are performing and are adjusting their practices accordingly, which limits 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:

- Continue to train and hold school leaders accountable for the use of evaluation rubrics and for improved teacher instruction.
- Enhance training for teachers and administrators on how to use data to inform instruction and intervention.
- Ensure that data is disaggregated and that instruction is modified based on this data to meet the needs of all students. Develop and monitor interim benchmark indicators to determine whether plans are on track for implementation and the achievement of goals.

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

<p>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.</p>	<p>Tenet Rating</p>	<p>D</p>
<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <p>Overall Finding: The district works collaboratively in some areas to provide opportunities and support for school leaders to address the needs of the community, but has provided directives without clear guidance and support in other areas.</p> <p>Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school leader stated that the district has worked with school leaders in a number of areas, such as guidance in the development of SCEPs. Additionally, district staff reported that school leader input was sought as part of the budget process this year and that school leaders collaborated with the district on hiring. A district PD committee, including staff from schools, developed a PD plan designed to reflect district and school priorities. Furthermore, school staff noted that the district has provided a range of PD opportunities, including outside educational experts, consultants, and coaches, and provided targeted trainings to school leaders. However, district staff and school leaders acknowledged that additional PD and support is needed to achieve both district and school goals. • The district assigned assistant superintendents to work with schools to improve communication between district and school staff. These district leaders have prioritized curriculum development and APPR implementation. The high school assistant superintendent is located in the high school building to facilitate frequent communication with the school leader. However, the school leader shared that this has created some confusion about who is the instructional leader in the school. • The district has left implementation decisions to the discretion of school leaders, which according to school leaders has limited the consistency of implementation across schools. For example, the district introduced the Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) program to elementary schools, but not all schools chose to participate in the training. In addition, the district does not have a clear plan, or provide direction, for social-emotional development or parent and community engagement. While the district provides some support, such as a district parent coordinator, schools are taking their own initiative to address these issues. Similarly, the district has played a limited role in leveraging community resources, so schools cultivate their own partnerships and community connections. <p>Impact Statement: District policies and practices do not consistently support the school community, which limits student achievement.</p>		

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

- Continue to support schools in developing SCEPs with measurable goals and strategies aligned to district priorities and school needs.
- Provide clear direction and targeted support regarding expectations for implementation of district priorities and programs.

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: The district is beginning to collaborate with schools to ensure that instruction aligns to the CCLS and challenges all students.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school leader reported that the district has provided resources for curriculum development, such as planning time and stipends, but school leaders and teachers stated they are just beginning the process of aligning the curriculum to the CCLS. The district coordinated a curriculum camp for teachers last year to evaluate ELA curriculum options, which resulted in the adoption of the state’s Common Core modules. Teacher stated that they have begun to use these modules and have been provided with ongoing PD and coaching, but that they are still learning how to adapt instruction to meet student needs. For example, after teachers determined that the modules did not address student-writing needs, teachers participated in Lucy Caulkins training and the district purchased materials and planned summer training for full implementation of the program for next year. The school leaders confirmed that the district is further ahead in CCLS implementation in ELA, rather than mathematics. While a new math curriculum was implemented last year, the district is developing a math curriculum camp this summer to recommend a new curriculum that is better aligned to CCLS using the Tri-State rubric to assess CCLS alignment. However, district and school staff noted that the district does not have a coherent plan to address CCLS alignment in other areas, such as social studies and science.

Impact Statement: The curriculum is not consistently aligned to the CCLS across all content areas.

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

- Continue to provide training and resources to ensure that the curriculum aligns to the CCLS and meets the needs of all students.

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 does not consistently ensure that teachers develop strategies and practices that address effective planning and the use of student data.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- According to school staff, the district offers a range of PD opportunities, and teacher surveys indicated that 60 percent of teachers responded that they are given the instructional support they need to teach students. However, PD activities are mainly voluntary and a document review demonstrated that few staff members take advantage of them. Similarly, while the district provides instructional coaches, teachers must choose to work with them, which limits the impact of coaching as teachers with the greatest need for improvement are not always involved in PD and coaching activities.
- District and school leaders shared that the use of data to drive instruction is a work in progress. While there has been some training on using data, explicit protocols and procedures for collecting, analyzing, and using data to modify instruction have not been put in place. Further, while a plan for RTI has been adopted, it will not be implemented until next year.

Impact Statement: Teachers and instructional staff are not providing students with consistently rigorous learning opportunities.

Recommendation:

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

- Continue to provide training on the CCLS instructional shifts by targeting coaching to staff with the greatest need based on student performance.
- Continue to assess teacher PD needs and to leverage resources to meet those needs.

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 district does not consistently create policy and collaborate with schools to support student social and emotional developmental health.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- School leaders shared that the district has provided some training and resources to schools related to student social and emotional developmental health. For example, district-wide PD on the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) has been conducted and schools have identified DASA coordinators. Further, a DASA committee composed of students and teachers organized an awareness week. However, the district does not have a coherent plan or vision for social-emotional development to guide schools. Therefore, schools do not consistently implement plans to support student social and emotional developmental health. While some schools implemented poverty simulation and the Freedom Writers Program, and the district invested in PBIS training, implementation was put on hold as the position for the person coordinating PBIS was eliminated.
- The district is in the process of finding alternative ways to address issues of violence with younger students and evaluating character education programs.
- While the district behavior specialist targets support to secondary schools based on needs identified by data, school and district leaders shared that the district has not established a clear approach for using data to address social-emotional issues. For example, data is used primarily for literacy development and is not designed to identify and target interventions to meet the social-emotional needs of students.

Impact Statement: Students do not consistently receive support that appropriately addresses their needs.

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

- Establish clear and measurable goals for student social and emotional developmental health and articulate clear district policies and priorities in this area; continue to support school efforts to address social-emotional issues and explore district-wide strategies in this area.
- Expand or create systems to use data to identify student social-emotional needs, target interventions,

progress monitor, and evaluate programs.

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 supports some strategies to facilitate partnerships between families and schools, but does not have a systematic approach to ensure that the needs of all stakeholders are met.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district communicates with families and the community using multiple methods, such as the website, the parent portal, and a robo-call system to disseminate information. A district leadership team was established to involve parent and community members and solicit their input in district decision-making. In addition, the leaders of school-based parent organizations meet regularly in district-wide meetings. The district parent coordinator worked with schools to organize the One School, One Book program, which includes families. While a family academy was organized last year to provide resources to parents, it was not replicated this year. However, interviews with school leaders and staff demonstrated that many parent engagement activities are initiated at the school level and are not systematically coordinated or supported by the district. District leaders acknowledged that parent engagement is an area for growth and that the district is working with parent leaders to address this issue.

Impact Statement: The district does not consistently work with families in close partnership to support 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:

- Establish clear and measurable goals for parent and community engagement and articulate clear district policies and priorities in this area.
- Continue to use and enhance systems and structures that involve parents and community members in key decision-making.
- Develop systems for identifying the needs of all families, including those that do not regularly participate in school activities.