



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	050100010000
District	Auburn Enlarged City School District
District Address	78 Thornton Avenue, Auburn, NY 13021
Superintendent	Constance D. Evelyn
Date(s) of Review	May 13-14, 2015

District Information Sheet			
Grade Configuration	K-12	Total Enrollment	4431
		Number of Schools	7
District Composition (<i>most recent data</i>)			
% Title I Population	50%	% Attendance Rate	93.3
% Free Lunch	45.1	% Reduced Lunch	5.7
% Limited English Proficient	.5	% Students with Disabilities	12.3
Racial/Ethnic Origin (<i>most recent data</i>)			
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0.1	% Black or African American	7.2
% Hispanic or Latino	3.5	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1.0
% White	80.9	% Multi-Racial	7.2
Personnel (<i>most recent data</i>)			
Years Superintendent Assigned to District	3	# of Deputy/Assistant Superintendents	5
# of Principals	8	# of Assistant Principals	4
# of Teachers	348	Avg. Class Size	21
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0	% Teaching Out of Certification	1.0
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	4	Average Teacher Absences	13
Teacher Turnover Rate – Teachers < 5 years exp.		Teacher Turnover Rate – All Teachers	
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	22.9%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	30.2%
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	87%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	70.9%
Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	71.4%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	51.6%
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)			
4 Year Graduation Rate	74%	6 Year Graduation Rate	76%
% of earning Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Des.	28%		
Current NYSED Accountability Status			
# of Reward Schools	0	# of Priority Schools	0
# of Schools In Good Standing	0	# of Focus Schools	7
# of LAP Schools	0		
District Accountability Status			
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (indicate Y / N / N-A)			
American Indian or Alaska Native	N-A	Black or African American	N
Hispanic or Latino	N	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	N-A
White	N	Multi-Racial	N
Students with Disabilities	N	Limited English Proficient	NA
Economically Disadvantaged	N		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (indicate Y / N / N-A)			
American Indian or Alaska Native	N-A	Black or African American	N
Hispanic or Latino	N	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	N-A
White	Y	Multi-Racial	Y
Students with Disabilities	N	Limited English Proficient	N-A
Economically Disadvantaged	Y		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (indicate Y / N / N-A)			
American Indian or Alaska Native	N-A	Black or African American	N
Hispanic or Latino	N-A	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	N-A
White	N	Multi-Racial	Y
Students with Disabilities	N	Limited English Proficient	N-A
Economically Disadvantaged	N		
DISTRICT PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE DISTRICT:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Develop district-wide capacity for data-driven decision making practices. Build structures that support inclusive practices and access to curricula for all students. Develop and sustain teacher leadership in the district. Examine research and explore the idea of restorative practice in the district. 			

Information about the review

- The review of the district was conducted by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE), a representative from the New York State Education Department (NYSED), and a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SEIS) representative.
- The Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) reviews of two schools in the district also informed the district review.
- During IIT school reviews in the district, reviewers visited 97 classrooms across the two schools and IIT reviewers conducted focus group interviews with students, staff, and parents.
- District reviewers conducted interviews with district leadership, central office staff, and a focus group of principals.
- The district provided results of student surveys from two schools that 570 students (35 percent and 78 percent) completed.
- The district provided results of a staff survey from two schools that 86 staff members (64 percent and 73 percent) completed.
- Results of the parental survey carried out by the district were not made available to reviewers.

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	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
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:				X	

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	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
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	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
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	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
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	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
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	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
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>Stage 2</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 1.1: The district has a comprehensive approach for recruiting, evaluating, and sustaining high-quality personnel that affords schools the ability to ensure success by addressing the needs of their community.</p>	<p>SOP Rating</p>	<p>Stage 2</p>
<p>Overall Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district has a comprehensive written plan for recruiting and evaluating personnel, but a lack of precision in accurately identifying staffing requirements to meet specific student needs and providing frequent and targeted formative feedback to staff, limits the district’s ability to develop high quality personnel for all students. <p>Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the district leader, the district has historically experienced patterns of narrow hiring practices, and the demographics of the workforce do not fully align with those of students and families. In reaction to this, a robust recruitment and retention plan was developed and is now in the second year of implementation. The success of this plan has not yet been fully realized, as human resources staff reported that residual patterns of hiring from within continue for some positions. The recruitment plan includes approaches that involve community partners, teacher preparatory programs, and widespread dissemination of vacancy notices. Human resources staff described specific hiring efficiencies for ensuring qualified staff, such as prioritizing a preference for dual certifications, especially special education extensions. However, the 2013-14 New York State (NYS) School Report Card showed that two percent of classes district-wide were taught by staff without the appropriate certification. Once hired, the district uses an approved annual professional performance review (APPR) process to formally evaluate teachers and administrators. However, school leaders and teachers stated that not all staff, such as student support staff, are evaluated, and some teachers reported that observation feedback from school leaders is not regular, formative, or actionable, which limits its potential to bring improvement to instructional practices. Information gained from Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) school reviews confirmed this finding. In addition, school leaders stated that the principal evaluation process does not always provide clear and specific guidance about how to improve leadership skills. The district provides a full calendar of professional development (PD) that includes a mentoring program for untenured teachers and school leaders, but district and school staff reported limited staff accountability for implementing concepts learned in PD. Reviewers found little evidence showing the implementation and impact of district provided PD on improving student achievement. For example, a review of class visit reports from IIT school visits and administrative leadership team reports did not show a consistent use of data analysis to improve instruction or pedagogical shifts in math across 		

district classrooms.

- Procedures are not in place for the district to analyze data to ascertain why personnel leave the district. Without this information, the district is unable to put in place strategies or incentives that may better enable the district to retain staff, particularly higher performing staff.

Impact Statement:

- With some best practice strategies underway, the district has secured and retained highly qualified staff to fill open positions. However, district and school leaders have not provided feedback and targeted ongoing support that consistently improves teaching and addresses specific student needs.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Stage 3 rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Convene a workgroup of representative leaders from each of the personnel categories in the district, such as cabinet leaders, directors, school leaders, teachers, and support staff, to assess the effectiveness of the existing recruitment and retention plan. The workgroup should revise the plan to include provision for:
 - collecting and analyzing specific data reports relevant to all student academic and social-emotional developmental health needs and demographic indicators;
 - using the collected student data to set Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) targets for recruitment, regular formative feedback, and sustaining staff at all grade levels, subjects, and schools ; and
 - action planning that includes rigorous monitoring criteria to evaluate the impact of professional practices on student outcomes and procedures to drive regular revision and adjustment of professional practices.

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.

SOP Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- The district theory of action identifies three themes to guide district planning and improvement plans, which include equitable access to high quality curriculum and instruction, systems thinking, and leadership and innovation. Although these themes guide actions that have resulted in some improvements in professional practices, they do not fully define measurable expectations for meeting specific student achievement targets that are widely known and understood by all school and district staff.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district leader and cabinet described three overarching themes as the underpinning principles of the district's theory of action; they are equitable access to high quality curriculum and instruction, systems thinking, and leadership and innovation. District staff stated that the theory of action guides the planning and work of the district office and schools. Reviewers found, however, that these themes do not describe specific expectations, actions, or measurable outcomes related to raising student achievement and linking professional practices to improvement. The district leader stated that district cabinet members are expected to develop annual goals, aligned with district goals, which are submitted for regular review. However, reviewers found that these also do not define targets or measurable expectations for how all personnel should connect practices and actions to explicit student performance outcomes. The district comprehensive improvement plan (DCIP) outlines district goals and activities, but interviews with parents, teachers, students, and school leaders revealed that the goals in the DCIP are not known and understood by all stakeholders because it is not communicated or disseminated well enough by the district. In addition, some school leaders stated that the DCIP has limited effect on raising student achievement across the district because efforts are not measured or monitored by district staff on a regular basis. Most district staff interviewed during the IIT visit could not share specific district targets for student achievement increases or explain how their individual plans and practices align with explicit expectations and measurable outcomes for district improvement. Consequently, district staff was unable to make any projections, based on data, about student performance outcomes for the 2014-15 school year.
- As designated focus schools, each school in the district completes a school comprehensive education plan (SCEP) under the direction of the school leader and cabinet supervisor. Plans reviewed by the IIT contained goals and activities related to specific school improvement efforts. However, reviewers found that not all activities were explicitly linked to district expectations for improved measurable student outcomes, and lacked provisions for the monitoring, evaluating, and tracking of improvement strategies for impact.

Impact Statement:

- Without a fully developed theory of action that is known to all members of the school community, not all staff understands how to meet district expectations and connect their professional practices to improved student outcomes.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Stage 3 rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Convene a group of representatives, including leaders, teachers, support staff, parents, students and community partners, prior to the 2015-16 school year to:
 - review school and district data related to the academic, social-emotional developmental health, and demographic needs of the school community;
 - use this data to identify and prioritize explicit district-wide student outcomes in academic and social-emotional areas; and
 - expand the district’s existing guiding themes to include district expectations and actions for how all district and school personnel will connect professional practices to student outcomes. Use these expectations and outcomes to develop the 2015-16 DCIP and SCEPs.

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

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- As part of the budgeting cycle, the district staff meets with each school leader to discuss school community needs and requests for additional resources. However, district staff do not collaboratively prioritize all student needs across the district, nor fully align all requests with specific student achievement improvement targets. The district does not use relevant data, procedures, or analysis protocols to formally assess the impact of spending decisions on student achievement.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- In interviews, district staff reported that little student and staff data are explicitly used to set district-wide spending and resource allocation patterns. District leaders confirmed that there is not a consistent alignment between resource allocation and specific student achievement targets or professional practices most in need of improvement. Instead, allocations are of a more generic nature, with school needs broadly described in terms such as “improve English language arts (ELA) performance” or “high numbers of economically disadvantaged students.” Consequently, initiatives are selected and funded without a strategic plan to ensure that monies and resources are targeted to the cause of low achievement or ineffective practices occurring in individual schools or district-wide.
- The cabinet and fiscal personnel reported that a zero-based budgeting approach, in which schools have designated allocations equivalent to the prior year, is used each December at the beginning of the budget cycle. Enrollment drives the allocation of supply monies in each school, and schools with Title 1 status receive additional funding and resources to address student needs. Reviewers learned that school leaders request and justify additional allocations they deem necessary to meet their schools’ needs through meetings with district leaders. However, several school leaders reported that gaining additional resources is sometimes dependent on school leader advocacy, rather than the urgency and merit of the stated school need. Fiscal staff confirmed that, on occasion, urgent reactive requests are

approved by individual cabinet members, which consequently, negatively affects reserves in other areas of the district budget.

- District cabinet staff reported that anecdotal conversations and a review of some generalized district data are often used to inform decisions related to resource allocation. In addition, there are no explicit criteria, formal procedures, or protocols for analyzing and reporting the impact of spending across the district in terms of driving school improvement. Instead, district staff acknowledged that they often have only anecdotal impressions regarding the degree to which their decisions have had a positive impact on raising student achievement.

Impact Statement:

- Without a formal and explicit overarching prioritization schema aligned to targeted district and school outcomes, district staff do not ensure that allocations of all district resources are specifically dispersed to address the needs of the entire school community.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Stage 3 rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Develop a procedure for collaborative decision making, for use by the district cabinet, to explicitly and formally prioritize all resource requests. Prioritization criteria should be collaboratively established based on the degree of alignment between the request and the revised theory of action and district improvement targets. Prioritization results should be implemented with fidelity by all district staff, made transparent to all school community members, and regularly monitored for effectiveness in accomplishing the improvement targets.

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

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- While the district responds positively to staff and school PD requests, formal procedures and protocols for ensuring that PD is effectively delivered, implemented, monitored, and followed up are limited. Consequently, the district does not hold schools accountable for ensuring a strong alignment between PD and improvements in student achievement and staff professional practices.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- District and school leaders stated that, historically, PD has been scheduled by district and school staff without the use of relevant data, and is sometimes unrepresentative of the unique needs of individual schools. This trend was supported by 2014-15 school surveys in which 46 to 66 percent of teachers responded that they had either no or only a minor influence in determining the types of PD offered. Reviewers learned that the district has now convened a representative collaboration of teachers, leaders, and staff, who meet regularly to design PD corresponding to requests from departments and school leaders. However, district expectations that clearly outline that the provision of PD should

result in improvements to student achievement have not yet been set.

- School leaders, teachers, and district staff reported that the district has a PD plan and calendar used to coordinate professional learning for staff. The district self-assessment and an interview with PD committee members showed that the PD plan and offerings tend to center around major initiatives, such as the adoption of a new textbook series or implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), rather than goals more closely related to improvement, such as particular instructional strategies. Although the Director of Early Learning reported visits to program sites to look for patterns and trends in student and teacher performance to identify PD needs, reviewers learned that this practice is not a universal, district-wide procedure. In addition, evidence from school reviews showed that PD has not made a significant impact on improving district-wide instructional practices or curricular implementation.
- There are no formal monitoring procedures and protocols embedded in the PD plan that ensure the quality of offerings or the effectiveness of the PD plan in building staff capacity. School and district leaders reported that the formal APPR process is the tool used to assess the degree to which teachers are implementing PD in teaching practices; anecdotal summaries from school and district leaders are considered, as well. However, the limited number of formal and informal APPR activities and the anecdotal nature of the feedback produced discourage a frequent, formative assessment of PD and its impact on student achievement.

Impact Statement:

- Collaborative efforts to design relevant PD have not yet translated to a data-driven, fully developed, and targeted PD plan that attends to the needs of all staff.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Stage 3 rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Use the existing PD team to revise and monitor the PD plan by:
 - reviewing school and district data related to student academic and social-emotional developmental health, the demographic needs of the school community, and teacher performance data;
 - using this data to set PD targets aligned to the revised theory of action that will improve staff capacity to address specific student needs at all grade levels, subjects, and schools;
 - prioritizing and focusing all PD offerings and delivery methods for 2015-16, so that each will explicitly pursue the PD targets, while addressing the theory of action; and
 - including protocols and procedures for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of PD for all staff in all schools.

Statement of Practice 1.5: The district promotes a data-driven culture by providing strategies connected to best practices that all staff members and school communities are expected to be held accountable for implementing.

Tenet Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- The district collects data from multiple sources and implements some structures for targeted staff, such as coaches and the director of instruction, to review and present student test data to teachers and school leaders. These data include attendance rates, discipline referral trends, and some benchmark assessment reports. However, district efforts have not resulted in a data-driven culture across all schools.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- District and school leaders reported that the district is data rich, has a Chief Information Officer to oversee the collection of different data sources, and has access to robust electronic tools, such as SchoolTool and the Right Reason Technologies suite for managing data. However, staff at all levels, including teachers, leaders, and district team members, reported that specific timely reports of current student, teacher, and school progress are not routinely provided to inform district and school practices, such as daily and weekly adjustments to instructional practice, for example.
- Review of the PD plan confirmed that the district prioritized PD to increase staff awareness and proficiency in using RightPath and SchoolTool technologies during the 2014-15 school year, but did not establish explicit expectations for how they would be embedded in regular data analysis activities and subsequent revision practices. Two district-wide literacy coaches host bi-monthly grade-level meetings to review benchmark data with staff and brainstorm grouping and intervention strategies for students. Teachers and leaders reported that these meetings are beneficial, but have little impact on improving student proficiency due to their irregularity and intermittent follow-up support. Reviewers learned that teachers and leaders are not regularly held accountable by district staff for providing a rigorous analysis of student and school level data to support the decision-making process in areas such as resource allocation, intervention planning, and PD. School reviews also showed that a data-driven culture is not established in all classrooms, and that schools and teachers do not consistently use data to drive instruction or make curricular adjustments.

Impact Statement:

- Without regular, timely data reports, and explicit formal protocols for analysis, the district and schools lack precision in identifying specific student and staff needs. This hinders the efforts of district leaders and school staff in matching student needs with best practice strategies.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Stage 3 rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Convene a workgroup of representative leaders from each of the personnel categories in the district, such as cabinet leaders, directors, school leaders, teachers, and support staff, to:
 - revise and formalize the district's data-driven instruction (DDI) plan to include:
 - targeted goals for student achievement; and
 - detailed expectations, protocols, and procedures for district-level, school-level, and

teacher use that define what data will be collected and reviewed, how it will be analyzed, and how it will drive improvements in curricula, teaching practices, social-emotional developmental health efforts, and family engagement.

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>Stage 2</p>
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Overall Finding:

- Although school leaders stated that district office personnel are responsive to school leader requests for support, the level and quality of support provided does not consistently and fully attend to the needs of schools and increase student proficiency.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- School and district leaders reported that they collaborate in multiple informational forums monthly, such as elementary and secondary principal meetings and administrative leadership team meetings. All interviewed school leaders reported that district staff are approachable and responsive to requests for support, but also reported that district directors and assistant superintendents are not always visible in their schools. School leaders present their own budgets to the district office and advocate with rationale for any requests above prior year allocations. However, some leaders reported that, at times, school leader advocacy was a determining factor in the granting of additional supports by the district office.
- The administrator evaluation process is collectively negotiated and used for all school leaders, but some leaders reported that the process provides little in terms of formative feedback on professional practice, coaching to improve practice, or information about district expectations. School and district leaders confirmed that although there is no formal internal mentoring program for administrators, the district offers a professional mentor program with external consultants for non-tenured school leaders. School leaders reported inconsistencies in the value of this program, however, due to the infrequency of contact between mentors and mentees and the lack of expertise of some mentors in helping mentees attend to the challenges facing leaders in their schools.
- A lack of district targets in the areas of student achievement, instructional focus, DDI strategies, and curricular interventions prevents school leaders from setting expectations for non-negotiable targets and building procedures that drive continuous improvement. School leaders reported that they juggle too many competing demands and sometimes struggle to prioritize school and staff efforts, resulting in incomplete tasks, unaddressed issues, and unmet student needs. In some schools, leaders and staff reported that school leaders do not receive adequate district support to provide formative feedback and hold staff accountable for curricular implementation, instructional improvement, or implementation of professional learning.

- Several school leaders reported that because not all curricula are fully organized and aligned to the CCLS, some efforts to ensure that students receive challenging opportunities to master the CCLS standards are slowed. Some school leaders also stated that the district has provided inadequate resources for staff to meet, align, and revise curricula during the school year and has delivered no formal data protocols to decipher what is not working in the curricula, especially in math. In addition, because the district has organized Committee on Special Education (CSE) decisions using a decentralized model, student meetings are led by chairpersons who also serve as school administrators and interns; some leaders stated that these chairs lack deep knowledge or experience of special education program and regulations.

Impact Statement:

- The district has not yet established a comprehensive data-driven plan, tailored for each school, to strategically support the curricular, instructional, and social-emotional developmental health needs of students and staff, resulting in few improvements in student proficiency.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Stage 3 rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Convene a series of meetings between each school and the district leadership to:
 - analyze critical school, leader, teacher, and student data;
 - set individual school targets that align with the district targets; and
 - devise a strategic school plan inclusive of short- and long-term priorities, activities, resources, and monitoring protocols to ensure the needs of the entire school community are met. This strategic plan should drive the development of the SCEP in each school.

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

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- The district has a formal plan for developing and revising some curricula to align with the CCLS and 21st century expectations. However, the district plan does not fully address all subject areas and grade levels, nor has it been fully implemented, due to limitations in resources, district facilitators, and purchases of materials and resources.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district self-assessment and interview transcripts showed that the February 2014 district report recommendation to “require all school leaders to monitor and evaluate the implementation of curricula” is still a next step for the district.
- District, school, and teacher leaders all reported that a district-wide curriculum council of teachers, school and district leaders meets monthly. A subset of this group developed the district PD plan and

selected commercial programs for some subject areas, such as elementary ELA and math, for the 2014-15 school year. However, some school staff responded in the 2014-15 school survey that they have had little to no influence in selecting content, topics, and skills to be taught or in selecting textbooks and instructional materials. During interviews, this group also stated that little teacher or student performance data is used to plan curricula development, revisions, or PD processes.

- The district self-assessment lists a curriculum revision cycle spanning over the next five years. During interviews, district staff explained there is a schedule for major purchasing decisions; but teachers and school leaders reported that they have had to share, supplement, and duplicate materials and resources to prepare to teach CCLS topics between revision cycles. District leaders meet with departments to review benchmark data and have preliminary conversations about curricular elements, sequence pacing, and instructional strategies; however, school leaders stated that the district does not ensure that this process is performed in all core content areas on a timely basis. In addition, data analysis protocols are not used to regularly adjust all curricula. Reviewers noted that benchmark assessments showed some improvements in math indicators in kindergarten to grade six, as well as increases in some indicators of basic early literacy skills in kindergarten to grade four; however, teachers and leaders reported that some benchmarks used at assorted grade levels need significant revisions to align with the CCLS and adequately measure student progress with fidelity.

Impact Statement:

- Due to the slow pace of improvement actions and limited resources allocated to efforts to address the February 2014 IIT district report recommendation to *“complete the process of curricula planning and implementation across all grades and content areas and require all school leaders to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the curricula for alignment and fidelity through the classroom observation process,”* the current curricula provided in all schools is not fully CCLS-aligned and does not fully challenge students in all grades and subjects. This hinders students in demonstrating college and career readiness and mastering 21st century skills.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Stage 3 rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Prior to the start of the 2015-16 school year, conduct a thorough inventory of all curricular maps for each grade and subject. Use the information from this inventory to:
 - establish SMART targets that ensure all core subject areas at each grade level have fully aligned CCLS curricular units and materials by the end of the 2015-16 school year;
 - revise the five year curriculum revision cycle and reprioritize district and school supports to deploy all available human and fiscal curricular resources to the areas for curricular development and revision outlined in the SMART targets; and

- identify procedures and protocols for regularly monitoring the implementation of the district curricular plan and reporting the results to the entire school community.

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

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- Classes across the district have low levels of student engagement, and cognitive rigor PD is reactive and not targeted to improve the capacity of staff to engage students using the pedagogical shifts. The district has not implemented monitoring protocols to ensure provided PD is applied, and therefore has not ensured that all student needs are met.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- Several district and school leaders observe instruction at scheduled intervals in each school. School leaders reported that district and school staff collaborate in assorted forums to discuss teacher practice and brainstorm staff PD needs, but use anecdotal notes rather than hard, observational data or trend analysis to identify future PD priorities for teachers. The district self-assessment claimed that teacher practices are demonstrating more alignment to the CCLS; however, interviews with school and district leaders provided only anecdotal evidence not supported by any formative trends or analysis data. School reviews also revealed that teaching was didactic, teacher-led, and demonstrated little evidence of the instructional shifts in ELA and math.
- The district leader reported that the district allocates money for teacher-lead projects called innovation zones, common planning time, and department meetings. As reported by school leaders, PD providers, and district staff, these efforts are not implemented to align with explicit student performance targets and are not formally assessed to determine their impact in improving teacher or student performance. School leaders and staff reported that the district provides some support with curricular implementation, but added that the demands of the pedagogical shifts and the needs of the staff exceed the capacity of the support provided; therefore, improvements in teaching practices are limited.
- School and district leaders reported that teachers are not required, nor held accountable, to prepare daily and weekly planning beyond the formal observation cycle of the contractual APPR process. Although the district provides some time for teachers to meet at monthly and bi-monthly intervals, the meeting focus, agenda, and outcomes are not formally monitored by school or district leaders for alignment with improvement priorities.

Impact Statement:

- Although the district has some structures and mechanisms to increase and monitor teacher effectiveness, they are not targeted to individual teacher need, nor intensive, outcome-driven, or formatively monitored for continuous improvement. Due to the limited connection between student needs and teacher performance, not all students are provided with rigorous learning opportunities.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Stage 3 rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- The district should use available teacher and student data to establish a district-wide instructional focus and corresponding SMART targets for improvement. To assess the degree of implementation of that focus on a monthly basis, district, school, and teacher leaders should use an explicit monitoring protocol and formal procedures for visiting every instructional setting in the district. District staff should then use the assessment data within the existing structures of the curriculum council, administrative leadership team, and PD plan committees to refine the instructional focus and SMART targets, plan differentiated professional learning activities for all instructional staff, and allocate adequate resources to facilitate the planned PD activities.

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

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- The district has not yet created a comprehensive policy for supporting students' social and emotional developmental health.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- School leaders reported that the district has not clearly identified systemic social and emotional developmental health priorities to meet student needs. IIT school visits revealed early-stage implementation of programs to teach and support student social and emotional developmental health. Support staff and school leaders reported that little data to specifically identify student social-emotional development needs or assess indicators of health and wellness is collected or analyzed across the schools or at the district level.
- Through recent grant opportunities and community partnerships at the district level, proactive programs such as Second Step and a positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) program are in the early phases of implementation. Currently the elementary and junior high schools are at various stages of increasing adult awareness, building school and adult capacity, and goal setting to meet the diverse needs of students. All school leaders reported that the district special education and student services offices are responsive to requests from school leaders for crisis intervention, legal resolutions, and procedural advice in resolving student issues; however, reported issues are not always adequately resolved.
- School leaders and some support staff reported that not all schools have intervention resources and staff, such as CSE chairpersons, social workers, counselors, and psychologists that match the level and intensity of specific student needs. According to staff, this has resulted in some chronic and persistent student needs and disruptions to the learning environment, such as repeated behavioral outbursts, mental health issues, and chronic tardiness, not being addressed.

Impact Statement:

- Without clear district policies and plans with measurable outcomes for student social-emotional developmental health, not all staff are focused on common goals. This results in unmet student needs and some chronic and persistent disruptions to the learning environment.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Stage 3 rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Collect and analyze student data relevant to student social-emotional developmental health to identify district priorities, set improvement goals, and monitor the effectiveness of the planned activities for reducing obstacles to learning for 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

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- Although the district does not have a formal comprehensive priorities or a plan for supporting schools and families in fostering reciprocal relationships, parents and families receive regular operational information from the district, and several district-community partnerships have resulted in some interventions and resources that support targeted student and family needs.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- School leaders reported that they do not know of any comprehensive district goals, plans, systemic initiatives, or clear expectations related to fostering relationships with families. District-wide communication tools, such as the district website, calendar, newsletter, and school messenger automated notification system are regularly used to share district information, as verified in document reviews and reported by school and district staff. The Board of Education conducts meetings in different buildings to increase visibility and convenience for parents; however, little participation by families and community members limits this activity in building home-school partnerships. The district supports the use of the parent portal accessible through the district's student management system, SchoolTool, so parents can communicate with staff and access student grades. School staff reported that the district does not share usage analytics and, therefore, did not know the degree of implementation or effectiveness of this tool in reaching families.
- A district-wide parent council is available, but reviewers learned that it has low parent attendance and little visibility district-wide. School leaders and some staff reported that the district conducted a parent survey; however, school staff reported receiving no information about the survey results or their potential influence on work at the school level.
- District staff have secured and fostered partnerships with several community organizations and agencies to provide supports and services to students in district schools. Assorted Cayuga County

providers, grant-based partners, such as Partnership for Results and the Youth Prevention and Intervention Council, school-based mental health professionals, and mobile dental services have established structures in the schools and regularly attend to many targeted academic, social, emotional, and physical student needs. However, school leaders stated that the district does not formally evaluate the impact of these programs or produce statistical data to identify best practices and demonstrate program success.

Impact Statement:

- The lack of an overall strategic plan and coordinated activities for building the capacity of all staff and parents to create partnerships, results in missed opportunities to strengthen connections between the district, schools, and families.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Stage 3 rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Convene a group of representative leaders, teachers, support staff, parents, students, and community members to analyze district and school survey data from the 2014-15 school year. Use this data to identify specific, targeted priorities for improving home-school partnerships, and produce SMART goals. District staff should then lead policy development and create multi-year action plans at the district and school levels. Research-based best practices for parent engagement should be used to accomplish the SMART goals.