



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	130200010000
District	Beacon City School District
District Address	10 Education Drive, Beacon, NY
Superintendent	Barbara Walkley
Date(s) of Review	May 27-28, 2015

District Information Sheet for: Beacon City School District

District Information Sheet						
Grade Configuration	PreK-12	Total Enrollment	3190	Number of Schools	6	
District Composition (<i>most recent data</i>)						
% Title I Population	55%	% Attendance Rate	94%			
% Free Lunch	35.4%	% Reduced Lunch	10.4%			
% Limited English Proficient	2%	% Students with Disabilities	17%			
Racial/Ethnic Origin (<i>most recent data</i>)						
% American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	% Black or African American	18.5%			
% Hispanic or Latino	27%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2.6%			
% White	47%	% Multi-Racial	4.8%			
Personnel (<i>most recent data</i>)						
Years Superintendent Assigned to District	10 months	# of Deputy/Assistant Superintendents	2			
# of Principals	6	# of Assistant Principals	4			
# of Teachers	242	Avg. Class Size	23			
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	N/A	% Teaching Out of Certification	1%			
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	5%	Average Teacher Absences	7.6			
Teacher Turnover Rate – Teachers < 5 years exp.	22%	Teacher Turnover Rate – All Teachers	14%			
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)						
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	32.6%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	31.7%			
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	91.7%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	56.8%			
Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)						
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	57.2%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	36.9%			
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)						
4 Year Graduation Rate- 2010 Cohort – 4 Year Average	80.3%	6 Year Graduation Rate	75.1%			
% of earning Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Des.	29.5%					
Current NYSED Accountability Status						
# of Reward Schools	-	# of Priority Schools	-			
# of Schools In Good Standing	4	# of Focus Schools	1			
# of LAP Schools	1					
ELA OVERALL:	District Accountability Status					
Elem/Middle=Y Secondary=N Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (indicate Y / N / N-A)						
American Indian or Alaska Native	E/M -	HS -	Black or African American	Y	Y	
Hispanic or Latino	Y	Y	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	-	-	
White	Y	Y	Multi-Racial	Y	-	
Students with Disabilities	N	N	Limited English Proficient	-	-	
Economically Disadvantaged	Y	N				
MATH OVERALL Elem/Mid = Y Second = N Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (indicate Y / N / N-A)						
American Indian or Alaska Native	E/M -	HS -	Black or African American	Y	Y	
Hispanic or Latino	Y	Y	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	-	-	
White	Y	N	Multi-Racial	Y	-	
Students with Disabilities	N	N	Limited English Proficient	Y	-	
Economically Disadvantaged	Y	N				
SCIENCE OVERALL: E/M = N / SECOND Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (indicate Y / N / N-A)						
American Indian or Alaska Native	-	HS	Black or African American	Y	Y	
Hispanic or Latino	N	Y	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	-	-	
White	Y	N	Multi-Racial	-	-	
Students with Disabilities	N	N	Limited English Proficient	-	-	
Economically Disadvantaged	N	N				
DISTRICT PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE DISTRICT						
No priorities were provided by 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, a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SESIS) representative, and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) review of one school in the district also informed the district review.
- During the IIT school review in the district, the review team visited 50 classrooms and 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 a 2015 student survey, which 565 secondary students (34 percent) and 601 elementary students (85 percent) completed.
- The district provided results of a 2015 staff survey, which 196 (81 percent) of staff completed.
- The district did not provide results of a parent survey.
- Extraordinary circumstances reported by the district: The superintendent was appointed in March 2015 following eight months as interim superintendent. The assistant superintendent for instruction and personnel began on November 19, 2014. Over the recent eight years, the district has had seven superintendents, seven assistant superintendents for instruction and personnel, and five high school principals.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	The district leadership has a comprehensive and explicit theory of action about school culture that communicates high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4	The district has a comprehensive plan to create, deliver and monitor professional development in all pertinent areas that is adaptive and tailored to the needs of individual schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support: The school has rigorous and coherent curricula and assessments that are appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for all students and are modified for identified subgroups in order to maximize teacher instructional practices and student-learning outcomes.

#	Statement of Practice	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 3</p>
<p>Overall Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district has a systematic process for recruiting and developing personnel that addresses the needs of each school community. <p>Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> District leaders provided the SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT or Review Team) with the following description of the recruitment process. District leaders conduct a comprehensive process to recruit high-quality personnel through the recruiting services of the area Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and attendance at regional college fairs. District leaders review the applications, filtering for permanent licensure, successful teaching experience, and dual certification. The school leaders identify candidates in the filtered pool who match school needs and schedule interviews with staff representatives to ensure a match with the professional culture of the school. For recently opened central-office director positions, district leaders advertised regionally and statewide and evaluated applicants based on their demonstrated expertise in being able to meet the district’s goals, particularly strengthening the continuum of services and supports for all students, with a special focus on students with disabilities. District leaders hold school leaders accountable for monitoring teacher quality through the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process. To address the variability in school leaders’ APPR ratings noted by the district leader, the district conducted calibration workshops twice a month. Using videos and sample lesson plans, school leaders applied the rubric and reached agreement on the evidence of quality in the samples. District leaders reported that the calibration workshops produced greater consistency in school leaders’ evaluations of lesson plans and instructional practices. To strengthen school leaders’ oversight of curriculum and instruction, the district provides additional professional development (PD), including attendance at the Network Training Institutes on the EngageNY modules and summer training on creating Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) teams and enacting the Olweus bullying curriculum. School leaders praised these learning opportunities but credited one-on-one meetings with the external consultants with producing the strongest positive impact on their overall leadership capacity. 		

- In addition to the support provided to school leaders to help promote effective teaching, district leaders reported contracting with PD-providers to coach teachers and school leaders on core instructional and leadership skills in classrooms and in small groups. The district leader explained that district staff believes that professional learning embedded in daily practice will result in stronger usage of new skills, which in turn will sustain and extend achievement gains evident over the previous two years.

Impact Statement:

- District actions to select and sustain high quality staff with the skills and experience needed for each school community has contributed to improved achievement and graduation rates for many, although not all, accountability groups.

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’s theory of action strives to address the needs of students; however, it is not communicated in a way that enables school leaders and teachers to take action to increase achievement for all students.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district leader’s theory of action underlying district decisions states a simple and direct connection between teaching and learning: teachers’ decisions lead to student learning. The district leader explained that the theory describes the mechanism by which the district will sustain and improve student achievement; namely, by preparing teachers to make instructional decisions that meet the needs of each student. The district decision to expand funds for PD reflects the district’s theory by focusing on building teachers’ repertoire of curriculum knowledge and instructional strategies.
- The district leader reported using the opening convocation and the two PD days at the start of the school year to communicate the district’s theory to staff and to reinforce the critical influence of teachers’ decisions on student learning. The district leader consulted with school leaders and chose to focus on lesson planning as a visible expression of teachers’ decision-making. The district leader defined the expectations for lesson plan components, but allowed teachers to choose their preferred format. In the IIT interview, school leaders reported that teachers are providing lesson plans where they had previously been absent, allowing school leaders and teachers to document what they plan to teach and what strategies they intend to use during lessons. The next step, according to school and district leaders, is to link student learning to the specific strategies.
- School leaders reported being engaged in a variety of improvement initiatives and having enacted multiple strategies to implement best practices in curriculum planning and instructional delivery. Nonetheless, interviews with school leaders indicated that not all teachers understand that different instructional strategies will lead to different student outcomes. School leaders reported the successes

and challenges of the various programs and practices in place this year, but they did not express an understanding of the connection between teacher or leader decisions and student learning. The district has not clearly communicated how to demonstrate the theory of action. School leaders reported that staff members know they are expected to provide learning opportunities that lead to improved student outcomes, but they have yet to see clearly how their decisions affect student success.

Impact Statement:

- While district staff communicates the underlying principle linking teaching decisions to student learning, not all staff comprehend that how well they teach has a significant impact on what students learn. Without this comprehension, they are unable to bring their own activities within the unifying framework of school improvement. As a result, not all staff members are able to work in concert to bring all students to high levels of achievement.

Recommendation:

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

- In each PD activity and school or district staff meeting, state the direct connection between the activity or meeting and the theory of action. A typical statement might be, “We’re implementing the Olweus curriculum to model for students how positive decisions and actions can lead to good outcomes.” Or, “We’re meeting as a grade-level team with our consultant to figure out which instructional methods will be most helpful to our English language learners (ELLs).”
- Communicate the district theory of action to the Board of Education and the broader school community by showing how the district’s programs demonstrate the district’s theory.

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.

SOP Rating

Stage 3

Overall Finding:

- The district strategically allocates and manages resources and provides supports for schools that are leading to improved student achievement and school performance.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- District staff reported on the use of funding to improve student results. The district received additional State aid this year and used the funds to increase PD for school leaders and teachers and to fund additional summer programs for ELLs and students with disabilities. Stipends allow for the deployment of three Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSA), who provide training, coaching, and mentoring for teachers. One TOSA is assigned to conduct outreach to families and the community. The added funds also allowed eight of the nine special education teachers to become certified in the Wilson reading program, an intensive reading intervention for students with disabilities. The district has hired the Wilson-certified teachers to provide 20 hours of intervention for students with disabilities over the

summer to maintain skills. District leaders and program directors cited gains in classroom and screening data as early indicators that these strategies are yielding positive results.

- District leaders use frequent, regular meetings between the district staff and school leaders to monitor the use of funds and identify and address potential deficits or needs. School leaders and district staff maintained that the regularity and frequency of these meetings ensure that district leaders are fully informed of the ongoing or anticipated challenges in each school and program area. District and school leaders cited strong gains in student achievement as evidence that the district’s regular monitoring of the use of resources has resulted in improving outcomes. Student achievement rose from 27 percent to 31 percent proficient in English language arts (ELA) and from 23 percent to 29 percent proficient in math over the previous two years. Graduation rates have risen from 69 percent in 2012-13 to 77 percent last year and the rate has moved from 59 percent to 66 percent for the economically disadvantaged subgroup. Because the ELA and math performance and graduation rates of ELLs are far below that of other groups, the district leaders reported contracting for PD to strengthen teachers’ use of the Sheltered Immersion Operations Protocol (SIOP), which is designed to increase the achievement of ELLs.
- In building the budget, district leaders reported that they forecast staffing needs using enrollment data from school leaders and district staff and projections of open positions due to retirements or family leave. The district cabinet confers with school leaders to determine how staff departures will affect school operations and prepares a budget that includes allowances for unanticipated expenses, such as a jump in enrollment or the arrival of new students who need critical services.
- Despite frequent changes in senior district leadership, the district is in stable financial condition. The district is in its final year of a ten-year repayment plan and will have succeeded in repaying borrowed funds incurred when district budgets did not meet school needs.

Impact Statement:

- By engaging in frequent, regular communication with key personnel, district leaders are able to identify the needs of each school community and allocate staff and fund programs to address those needs. As a result, many students demonstrate improved achievement and graduation rates have risen.

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.

SOP Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- Although the district offers a variety of PD options and student achievement is showing progress, the district has not established systems to consistently monitor whether specific PD leads to sustainable improvement in teaching practices.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- District leaders defined a comprehensive PD plan based on input from school leaders and district staff and a review of teacher evaluations, student achievement, and graduation rates. Interviews with the district staff indicated that PD decisions and offerings have varied widely over the years, primarily because of frequent turnover of lead district administrators. The district leaders make decisions about PD in consultation with school leaders and district staff about teacher needs.
- District leaders reported using unanticipated resources to extend the services of consultants to provide PD, based on evidence from State assessments and evaluation of teaching practices. Recognizing the difficulty of pulling teachers from their classrooms, the district arranged for the consultants to work in schools so that the professional learning would be embedded in teachers' work and customized to the needs and capacities of individual leaders and staff. District staff, TOSA, and school leaders praised the design of the recent district-wide PD day, which offered a menu of PD options and allowed teachers of similar students in different buildings to work together on a common topic or area of concern.
- District leaders explained that, since many teachers have ELLs and students with disabilities in their classrooms, they instructed consultants to work with all teachers to integrate specialized instructional strategies into their practice, thereby strengthening instruction for diverse learners in every classroom. However, evidence of the impact of this decision is anecdotal, because the district does not have procedures to determine if PD is leading to improvements in student achievement.
- District leaders explained that they rely on conversations with school leaders and district staff and on reports from external consultants to determine whether instructional practices are improving. While school leaders observe instruction during informal class visits, they systematically document their observations only during formal evaluations. The district uses the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) to monitor student achievement, but this tool does not provide sufficient information to connect teaching practices to trends in student achievement. As a result, the district lacks reliable data to determine whether teachers bring their PD learning into the classroom and whether new practices are leading to improved learning.

Impact Statement:

- Without a structured system to gather evidence about the impact of PD on teacher effectiveness, the district is unable to determine whether PD activities are producing the desired gains in student achievement.

Recommendation:

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

- Collaborate with school leaders and teachers to select or develop strategies using standardized measures to document the impact of PD on teaching practices and on student learning. Teachers should examine the evidence in conversations with their peers and school leaders and compile a library of instructional strategies that have proved to increase achievement. School leaders should aggregate the findings to identify strengths and weaknesses across the school and use the evidence to inform requests for additional PD. District leaders should aggregate the findings from all the schools to find

patterns that merit attention and additional support.

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

SOP Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- Although the district collects data from multiple data systems, district staff, school leaders and teachers are not consistently using the data to monitor progress and adjust leadership and instructional practices to promote the achievement of all students.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- In interviews with district and school staff, the IIT learned that the district has some systems to monitor student achievement, such as DRA at the elementary level and classroom tests for secondary students. School leaders report that some grade-level teams use classroom data to inform instructional decisions, but these practices are uneven. The IIT report from the high school review indicated that general education teachers most often use data to track student readiness for Regents examinations, rather than to identify best instructional practices. District leaders praised the work of one school leader for building effective data-use practices in that school, but confirmed that data-informed decision-making is not well established across all buildings or at the district level.
- The district leader praised the value of data reports generated by district staff and credited the building-level “clean data” trainers for ensuring that information entered into the various data systems, such as Power School and Castle Learning, is accurate and complete. However, district leaders admitted that, because of their own skill limitations, both district and school leaders are overly reliant on the central office expert to retrieve detailed and timely reports.
- District leaders reported that data use is more evident, than in the past, among Response to Intervention (RtI) teams, who rely on classroom data to monitor student needs. Student support staff reported that they track data at the student level, but not usually at the school or district level. While they meet regularly with selected staff to review behavior data,

Impact Statement:

- The district has not developed and implemented protocols for data analysis and program evaluation. Therefore, staff has not developed the knowledge and skill to use information to make appropriate curricular decisions and to monitor whether instruction is leading to improved performance. The lack of structured practices and a common protocol for data use at the building and district levels hinders the development of a common language and understanding of ways data can inform program assessment and policy decisions.

Recommendation:

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

- Engage district data experts, school data trainers, school leaders, and district leaders in a process to develop appropriate data-analysis protocols to be implemented regularly at each levels of the organization – classroom, school, and district. Build on the best practices already in place in the district and use in-house expertise to provide training and support in the use of the selected protocol. Document the expected procedures and communicate them across the district community. Solicit regular feedback from staff about the impact of the use of the selected protocols. Monitor the impact of data use on teaching practice and student achievement by employing appropriate protocols at building- and district-level meetings.
- Model effective data use at the district level by including the examination of data on the agenda of each cabinet meeting. To build data-use capacity across the district, require that review of data be included on the meeting agenda of school leadership teams, curriculum teams, departments, school support personnel teams, and RtI and PBIS teams.

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

Statement of Practice 2.1 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for the school leader to create, develop and nurture a school environment that is responsive to the needs of the entire school community.	SOP Rating	Stage 3
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Overall Finding:

- District leaders have strategically implemented various support systems and student programs to promote and sustain collaborative efforts with the school community that establish nurturing environments that are responsive to all students.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- School leaders described a positive working relationship with the district. Their requests for support are considered and usually accepted or, if denied, district leaders provide a reasonable rationale for the decision. School leaders stated that they are consulted regularly and frequently about the needs of their students and staff. School leaders praised the district’s decision to promote teacher leadership through the hiring of TOSAs as peer coaches. School leaders indicated that the TOSAs reflect the district’s recognition that expertise exists within the teaching staff. This recognition has strengthened the positive relationship between staff and district leaders.
- School leaders stated that district leaders employ a variety of strategies for building instructional effectiveness and leadership capacity, primarily through professional learning led by district leaders or external consultants. The district leader revitalized PD, which had been significantly reduced in prior years. School leaders who participated in district-promoted learning activities, such as the BOCES

Principal Academy; the development of a literacy plan, facilitated by the external consultant; learning walks/instructional rounds with BOCES consultants, and calibration sessions with the district leader, reported deeper understanding of their role as instructional leaders.

- District leaders expressed a belief in the critical need to build capacity within the district to sustain positive change. To build local capacity, the district recruited a school leader with demonstrated expertise in PBIS to lead a district-wide PBIS Revitalization Team. To create a common understanding of each staff member’s role in ensuring student success, district leaders convened staff responsible for academic support services to develop a district-wide vision for RtI and Academic Intervention Services. School leaders explained that these activities have led to common language around the school environment and a sense of shared accountability for addressing student needs.
- To address an observation that students are mislabeling bullying, the district recently decided to adopt the Olweus Anti-Bullying curriculum. District leaders explained their intention to integrate the Olweus curriculum within the PBIS framework. The district has piloted a process at the high school to build “resiliency teams” of teachers, administrators, and student support staff to serve students facing significant challenges within or outside of school. The district is conferring with secondary teachers to establish an advisory structure similar to the resiliency-team approach, which demonstrated success for the individual involved. The advisory structure would provide each student with an adult who knows them well.

Impact Statement:

- As a result of the array of targeted district supports, school leaders are better able to provide instructional leadership that addresses teachers’ needs, particularly in the area of instructional practices for struggling students. By tapping into existing expertise and building on familiar practices, the district is setting a foundation to sustain programs to support academic as well as social emotional needs of all students.

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.

SOP Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- While the district offers multiple activities and provides some resources to help teachers adapt the EngageNY modules, the district does not have a structured system to monitor whether lesson plans supporting the CCLS provide the appropriate supports and challenges for all students.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- District leaders explained that teachers are in their third year of implementing the EngageNY modules and they have begun adapting the modules to address the needs of students. The district offered paid

positions last summer to continue adapting the curriculum. While the curriculum writing work was open to all staff, the district was not able to require that English as a Second Language (ESOL) or special educators participate. Consequently, some but not all of these teachers attended. School leaders and district staff reported that ongoing curriculum development occurs during grade-level team meetings at the elementary level and department meetings at the high school. They reported that, while consultant teachers, co-teachers, and other specialists serving student with disabilities are able to participate in grade-level meetings, the schedule does not allow teachers of ELLs to attend regularly. While a peer coach reported that teachers “find a way” to collaborate, the lack of a regularly scheduled meeting makes it difficult to monitor whether all teachers are collaborating to plan lessons that support the CCLS and that include appropriate adjustments to challenge and support all students.

- In the IIT review of the high school, planning and delivery of curricula supporting the CCLS was rated “developing.” The IIT noted that teachers’ plans omit essential elements and do not include differentiated strategies for students with varying abilities. This finding contrasts with the reports from school and district leaders during the district review that elementary and middle school teachers are preparing plans that include essential elements, such as modifications to serve diverse student needs.
- District and school leaders confirmed that the district does not have a structured process for checking lesson plans to ensure that all students experience the rigor and challenge defined in the CCLS. Calibration workshops led by the district leader address the identification of essential lesson elements. While school leaders review lesson plans during formal evaluations and informal walkthroughs, they confirmed that they do not document information gleaned from lesson plans in a way that allows school or district leaders to determine if instruction is meeting the needs of all students.

Impact Statement:

- Without a systematic process to assess and document whether lesson planning and delivery matches the rigor and challenge defined in the CCLS, neither the district nor the school leaders have adequate data to know where strengths and gaps exist in instruction, particularly in the instruction that supports the success of ELLs.

Recommendation:

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

- Adapt the calibration process used with school leaders to create a process wherein each teacher assesses the alignment of their lesson plans with the CCLS. Have TOSAs facilitate discussions about adapting lesson plans while retaining the high expectations cited in the CCLS.

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.

SOP Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- There is insufficient oversight and ongoing follow-up from district leaders to ensure consistent use of effective instructional practices that lead to the success of all students, particularly for ELLs.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- School leaders confirmed the reports of district leaders that the district has not established a structured process for identifying the strengths and gaps in instructional practices and selecting PD to address those needs. School leaders document instructional practices formally through the APPR process, which is limited to two observations per year. While school leaders reported that they visit classes regularly, contract terms limit the documentation of teaching during the walkthroughs or pop-ins. School leaders discuss their anecdotal walkthrough evidence with district leaders to identify instructional gaps in need of PD support.
- In the review of the high school, the IIT team rated instruction as "developing" in part because lessons were generally whole class and undifferentiated, with little scaffolding for students with language or learning challenges. School leaders confirmed that teachers are continuing to build their skill in using varied instructional methods and reported that many elementary and middle school teachers are adopting the ELL instructional practices being modeled and coached by a PD provider.
- School leaders hold the primary responsibility for following up on district-provided PD, sometimes through formal observations but more frequently through informal class visits. Despite limits on recording teacher-specific observation notes, school leaders said that they are confident they have an accurate understanding of which teachers need additional support to build their instructional skills. School leaders explained that they alert the TOSAs, about instructional needs. However, while school leaders indicated that TOSA support has been valuable, they stated that teachers are not required to work with the TOSAs, limiting their impact.
- School leaders reported inconsistent use of data teams in their schools. District leaders have recruited a school leader who has implemented an active data team to share her strategies with the other school leaders over the coming summer. While the school cannot directly link its use of data teams to its strong improvement in student achievement, the school leader cites it as one of the initiatives that teachers are adopting as common practice.

Impact Statement:

- Without a system in place to collect and analyze data about teaching practices and to link instruction to student achievement, neither district nor school leaders have sufficient evidence to target instructional supports where they are most needed. As a result, teacher ability to improve student achievement is limited.

Recommendation:

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

- Create a tool using existing tools and rubrics and a “critical friends” format that teachers in grade-level team meetings can use to assess their own instructional practices. Peer coaches and external consultants should provide feedback and guidance to help teachers implement instructional practices that meet the needs of all students, particularly ELLs.

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.

SOP Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- While the district provides psychologists, social workers, and counselors to serve the social and emotional needs of targeted students, the district has not developed a plan to provide support to all students.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- While the district directed school leaders to revitalize use of the PBIS framework, school leaders agreed with the assessment of district leaders that PBIS implementation varies from strong to weak across the six schools in the district. School leaders reported that not all students are responding to PBIS strategies. As a result, student behavior continues to present challenges to the establishment of a uniformly positive learning climate. District leaders rely on reports from school leaders, attendance and behavior data, and annual surveys of students and staff to assess whether the implementation of the PBIS framework is contributing to positive school cultures.
- School leaders explained that the district has begun to expand the RtI process to address concerns about student behavior in addition to academic concerns. Staff may refer those students who do not respond to the PBIS strategies to the RtI team. School leaders stated that the RtI team then develops a behavior intervention plan for targeted students in consultation with teachers, school counselors, the social worker, and psychologist. School leaders indicated that, while the RtI process provides support for selected students, it is not intended to meet the social and emotional developmental needs of all students and more district-led guidance and support is required to address this key area of school life.
- While student support staff – psychologists, social workers, guidance counselors, and nurse – play a critical role in providing intensive support to targeted students, they reported that their services remain separate from the larger initiatives in each building, such as PBIS. School leaders confirmed that the district provides few PD opportunities, beyond PBIS strategies, for teachers to identify and assist students facing social and emotional challenges. School leaders reported that the district provides only a few poorly attended workshops to help parents address their children’s social and emotional needs. The exceptions are parent workshops on the transitions between elementary and

middle school and middle and high school, which are well attended.

Impact Statement:

- Without a comprehensive plan to build the capacity of teachers and parents to support the social and emotional developmental health of all students, the district is unable to minimize social-emotional barriers to academic success.

Recommendation:

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

- Examine student and family survey data to identify social and emotional challenges across the student population. Analyze staff survey data and form focus groups of teachers to identify training needs. Develop a calendar of workshops for parents, teachers, and students to build skill and understanding in addressing student social and emotional developmental needs.

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.

SOP Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- While the district communicates with families and offers opportunities to participate in student events, these efforts have not generated broad participation that contributes to the success of all students.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district hosts community meetings on topics of interest to families and district leaders attend school-level parent teacher organization (PTO) meetings to learn the needs and interests of each school community. However, school and district leaders reported persistently low attendance at most information meetings and higher participation by families at student-focused activities, such as awards assemblies, concerts, and college fairs. Parents can access information about their child’s daily classroom work and course grades on Power School. School leaders stated, however, that the district does not regularly examine data on the use of Power School to determine if parents are using the tool regularly. District leaders reported that they have not systematically gauged whether home-school interactions are adequately meeting family’s needs.
- School leaders stated that the district communicates with families through a monthly newsletter, flyers about school and community events, and an automated phone call system. However, school leaders confirmed that only some of these items are translated for parents who are not English speakers. District and school leaders explained that the district posts a link to Google Translate on its website and used BOCES translators for in-person events, but they have not used the translation tools on the automated phone system regularly.
- District leaders attributed the rise in graduation rates over the past few years to the impact of a drop-

out task force that brought together parents, community members, and school and district staff to raise awareness and develop a strategy to support the success of all students. According to district leaders, the work of the task force has led to the graduation rate nearing or exceeding the State average for all accountability groups except the limited English proficient group. District documents showed that staff has convened similar task forces during 2014-15 to engage parents and community members in the work of the school, but the task forces have not completed their findings and recommended actions.

Impact Statement:

- Although the district uses multiple methods to engage with families, low attendance and the lack of translated materials indicate that the district has not been able to engage all families as partners in the education of their children. As a result, students do not benefit from the unified efforts of all the adults in their lives to support their success.

Recommendation:

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

- Assess the array of efforts underway at the district, school, and student levels to foster partnerships with parents. Gather input from parents to determine which efforts are most helpful and which family needs are not being met. Develop an action plan as part of the 2015-16 District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP) that includes measurable outcomes, which the designated Task Force monitors regularly. Include specific training on developing meaningful partnerships for teachers and parents in the plan.
- Translate all materials from the district and schools into the home languages of families. Ensure that task forces and work groups include representatives of families of ELLs and students with disabilities.