



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

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## DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



<b>BEDS Code</b>	190301040000
<b>District</b>	Cairo-Durham Central School District
<b>District Address</b>	424 Main Street, Cairo, NY 12413
<b>Superintendent</b>	Anthony Taibi
<b>Date(s) of Review</b>	June 10-11, 2015

District Information Sheet			
<b>Grade Configuration</b>	Pre K- 12	<b>Total Enrollment</b>	1229
		<b>Number of Schools</b>	3
<b>District Composition (most recent data)</b>			
<b>% Title I Population</b>	18	<b>% Attendance Rate</b>	94
<b>% Free Lunch</b>	41	<b>% Reduced Lunch</b>	9
<b>% Limited English Proficient</b>	1	<b>% Students with Disabilities</b>	16
<b>Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)</b>			
<b>% American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	1	<b>% Black or African American</b>	2
<b>% Hispanic or Latino</b>	8	<b>% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</b>	1
<b>% White</b>	85	<b>% Multi-Racial</b>	5
<b>Personnel (most recent data)</b>			
<b>Years Superintendent Assigned to District</b>	1	<b># of Deputy/Assistant Superintendents</b>	0
<b># of Principals</b>	3	<b># of Assistant Principals</b>	2
<b># of Teachers</b>	136	<b>Avg. Class Size</b>	21
<b>% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate</b>	0	<b>% Teaching Out of Certification</b>	0
<b>% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience</b>	3	<b>Average Teacher Absences</b>	11
<b>Teacher Turnover Rate – Teachers &lt; 5 years exp.</b>	33	<b>Teacher Turnover Rate – All Teachers</b>	29
<b>Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)</b>			
<b>ELA Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	21	<b>Mathematics Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	22
<b>Science Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4 (4th Grade)</b>	84	<b>Science Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4 (8th Grade)</b>	79
<b>Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)</b>			
<b>ELA Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	92	<b>Mathematics Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	22
<b>Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)</b>			
<b>4 Year Graduation Rate</b>	78	<b>6 Year Graduation Rate</b>	82
<b>% of earning Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Des.</b>	21		
<b>Current NYSED Accountability Status</b>			
<b># of Reward Schools</b>	0	<b># of Priority Schools</b>	0
<b># of Schools In Good Standing</b>	2	<b># of Focus Schools</b>	1
<b># of LAP Schools</b>	0		

### District Accountability Status

Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (indicate Y / N / N-A)			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	N-A	<b>Black or African American</b>	N-A
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	Y	<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	N-A
<b>White</b>	N	<b>Multi-Racial</b>	N-A
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	N	<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	N-A
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	N		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (indicate Y / N / N-A)			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	N-A	<b>Black or African American</b>	N-A
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	N	<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	N-A
<b>White</b>	N	<b>Multi-Racial</b>	N-A
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	N	<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	N-A
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	N		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (indicate Y / N / N-A)			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	N-A	<b>Black or African American</b>	N-A
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	N-A	<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	N-A
<b>White</b>	Y	<b>Multi-Racial</b>	N-A
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	N-A	<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	N-A
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	Y		

#### DISTRICT PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE DISTRICT

1. Increase overall student achievement in English language arts (ELA).
2. Increase overall student achievement in math.
3. Increase the graduation rate.
4. Increase the achievement rate of students who are economically disadvantaged.
5. Increase the achievement rate of students with disabilities.

## 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).
- 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, reviewers visited 29 classrooms across the one school 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 a student survey that 562 students (46 percent) completed.
- The district provided results of a staff survey that 134 staff members (99 percent) completed.
- The district appointed new administrative staff for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years. The district leader, serving in an interim capacity until accepting a permanent appointment in April 2015, had been the high school leader. The current high school leader was the high school assistant principal. The district hired a new high school leader for the 2015-16 school year, at which time the current high school leader will return to the assistant principal role. District leaders moved the former elementary school leader to a newly created curriculum director position in November 2014. The elementary school assistant principal, newly hired in September 2014, moved to the interim elementary school leader position. The district recently made this appointment permanent.

**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"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 1:</b>				<b>X</b>	

**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><b>Tenet 1 - District Leadership and Capacity:</b> 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><b>Overall Tenet Rating</b></p>	<p><b>Stage 2</b></p>
<p><b>Statement of Practice 1.1:</b> 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><b>Tenet Rating</b></p>	<p><b>Stage 2</b></p>
<p><b>Overall Finding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district has an established recruitment process and a classroom observation walkthrough procedure aimed at supporting all teachers. However, the feedback provided from the observation process is not consistently leading to improved instructional practices.</li> </ul> <p><b>Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District leaders told reviewers that they have formed a district-level shared decision making team with several subcommittees. One of the subcommittees developed written procedures and protocols that support the recruitment process. District leaders informed reviewers that when recruiting potential candidates the district capitalizes on its partnerships with area colleges, which includes vetting student teachers already familiar to the district. In addition, the district looks to its long-term substitutes and advertises through the Online Application System (OLAS) for potential candidates. The subcommittee developed a profile for the ideal district candidate, which interview committees use in conjunction with a consistent set of interview questions. According to the district leader, this process has resulted in ensuring hiring committees judge all candidates uniformly and make appropriate appointment decisions.</li> <li>Once hired, leaders designate a mentor for probationary teachers to guide them through early teacher challenges and provide insight into the workings of the district and their assigned school. There was no formal documentation provided for reviewers that outlined the roles and responsibilities of a mentor. When asked by reviewers, district personnel did not elaborate on specific plans or programs that ensure effective teachers remain in the district. However, they did share documentation that showed the number of resignations have steadily decreased from a high of ten in 2009-10 to only one in the 2014-15 school year.</li> <li>District leaders stated that the teachers’ collective bargaining agreement stipulates one announced and one unannounced observation for tenured teachers per year. The district has taken advantage of an option to replace the unannounced observation with six walkthroughs conducted throughout the year. Reviewers learned that district and school leaders collaborated on a walkthrough protocol and documents that include a checklist aligned with the domains of the Danielson Framework, as well as a series of reflection questions the teacher completes after the walkthrough. School or district leaders provide teachers with feedback following the walkthrough and teachers and leaders discuss reflections</li> </ul>		

in a post-observation meeting. However, school leaders said that not all feedback has led to improved teacher practices because some teachers prefer to continue using routine strategies, despite the move towards Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS); in addition, school and district leaders acknowledged that they are inconsistent in holding teachers accountable for acting on the provided feedback. In some cases, school and district leaders have instituted teacher improvement plans (TIPs) and designed a specific program to offer intensive support to struggling teachers. Although leaders reported that they use walkthrough findings to identify professional development (PD) topics, district leaders acknowledged that they do not monitor the impact of PD on classroom practices rigorously enough.

**Impact Statement:**

- District and school leaders implemented a robust walkthrough program to observe teacher practices. However, because district and school leaders do not consistently hold teachers accountable for implementing the feedback they receive, improvements to instruction are not as effective as they could be.

**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 procedures that hold teachers more accountable for implementing the feedback provided during formal observations and walkthroughs. Establish a program of incentives to ensure that teachers using effective practices resulting in student improvement remain in the district.

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

**Tenet Rating**

**Stage 2**

**Overall Finding:**

- The district developed a strategic plan from which they developed the district theory of action. District leaders are putting processes in place to address district goals, but these actions have not yet resulted in high levels of success for all students.

**Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:**

- The district leader explained that, upon appointment to the leadership position, the district had no agreed upon theory of action, so it was a priority to establish one. A committee consisting of teachers, administrators, parents, students, and community members developed “A Strategic Plan for Excellence,” which addresses district plans for the future, its mission, vision, and core beliefs, challenges faced, and strategic initiatives. From this extensive document, three areas were identified by the district shared decision making team as goals that underpin the district’s theory of action. The goals include increasing student and family engagement, developing a rigorous curriculum, and supporting continuous professional growth. However, current evidence from school and district leaders and Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) school review evidence showed parent attendance as

low as five parents at a range of meetings, weaknesses in curriculum implementation, and PD that is not leading to sustained improvements in instructional practices. District leaders stated they are in the process of planning actions to address these goals, but the district has not yet formalized or distributed plans to schools, families, or the wider community. In addition, although school leaders confirmed that the district has made clear its overarching drive for high expectations in relation to student achievement, this is not yet reflected in improvements in professional practice and student outcomes across the district, as school and district leaders reported that staff are still internalizing the theory of action and its translation into academic excellence.

- The district hired a communications specialist who disseminated the strategic plan and accompanying goals throughout the community via the district website, Facebook page, board of education meetings, press releases and articles, and community forums. Although district leaders believed that district goals are widespread and understood by parents and community members, reviewers found that with the exception of the budget process, there was no documentation or evidence to support this assumption. Reviewers learned that community members had the opportunity to participate in developing the 2015-16 district budget and learned more about district goals through the budgeting process.

**Impact Statement:**

- Although the district has identified a theory of action and goals for addressing the needs of constituents, efforts are at a very early stage and the impact on helping students reach high levels of success is currently limited.

**Recommendation:**

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

- focus district efforts to communicate and implement the theory of action with clearly defined goals guiding how the vision will translate from theory into action. Create stringent monitoring procedures to measure progress toward goals that hold schools and the district accountable for improvements in student achievement in all schools.

**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:**

- The district is developing a systematic budget development process that seeks to address student needs and district priorities; however, the process lacks rigor in determining if decisions promote student success.

**Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:**

- District leaders explained that the district used a newly conceived budget development process during the current budget cycle. Beginning in November 2014, school leaders compiled needs for the 2015-16

school year. As part of the process, the district required school leaders to provide a rationale for every requested addition and impact for any proposed eliminations on their lists. During administrative cabinet meetings, district and school leaders presented related budgetary information and made collaborative decisions on resource allocations. Reviewers learned that district officials used the goal of increased student achievement to drive allocation decisions. For example, a summer program was proposed to ensure more students were kindergarten ready with grade-level skills, a credit recovery program for the high school was proposed to help increase the graduation rate, and a curriculum coordinator position was proposed to oversee curriculum development across the district and support instructional improvements. However, discussions with school and district leaders revealed that the district has not seized opportunities to put procedures in place to assess the impact of these or other resource decisions on improving student learning and achievement. Reviewers found that the district has not yet initiated procedures to ensure that spending provides value for money and justifies the investments made.

- In addition to open budget meetings, reviewers learned that district leaders invited community members to a round-robin event where they circulated among school and district leaders to discuss proposed budget items. District leaders said they were aiming for a transparent system of budget development to ensure the community understood district goals and funding systems to achieve them. Sign-in sheets showed that approximately 50 members of the community participated and documentary evidence confirmed that the 2015-16 budget passed with the largest percentage of support shown, 66 percent, in the last 10 years.
- District leaders reduced the PD budget to zero several years ago, but have steadily increased allocations to the present level of \$40,000. While there is a PD plan in place that details how staff align PD to goals, reviewers found no documentation or evidence to demonstrate how the district is planning to show that the investment in PD is leading to improvements in student achievement or improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms.

**Impact Statement:**

- A lack of monitoring and evaluation procedures means that the district has little substantive evidence to indicate which, if any, of its spending decisions result in improvements to academic achievement in schools.

**Recommendation:**

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

- review district goals prior to developing and implementing action steps that ensure efforts and resources are aligned and complement each other to promote teacher effectiveness and student growth.

**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:**

- The district has developed a comprehensive walkthrough tool used by district and school leaders to identify areas for PD. However, the district does not adequately align PD with improving instructional strategies or monitor its implementation to ensure increased teacher effectiveness.

**Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:**

- The district developed a checklist walkthrough tool aligned with the Danielson Framework that school and district leaders use during teacher observations. Reviewers learned that leaders use the tool to identify areas of instruction warranting PD. In addition, school leaders use information from benchmark assessments to identify areas where students are struggling. For example, because of low student achievement in the following areas, elementary school teachers are receiving PD on increasing student reading levels and high school teachers have coaches in social studies and math. Leaders say through their walkthroughs that they have identified areas for targeted PD, such as establishing outcomes, designing assessments, and improving questioning techniques. District leaders have hired several consultants to provide PD in the identified areas and school leaders reported that school staff discuss teacher practices during faculty meetings. Despite targeting these areas, district and school leaders shared that, for example, many teachers continue to ask low-level questions and do not refer to expected outcomes during lessons. During the IIT school review, the review team documented the same shortcomings. Although the district has developed a PD plan that speaks to broad goals and outcomes, no specific offerings or timelines are included. School and district leaders confirmed that there is no focused strategy to align all PD with the identified needs of teachers and limited accountability to ensure that teachers are implementing what they have learned. School and district leaders acknowledged that leaders do not carry out enough monitoring to evaluate if PD and the services and support of consultants are leading to improved instructional practices, consistent implementation of a challenging and engaging curriculum, and higher academic standards.
- The district has provided some PD for teachers on using a lesson planning template aligned with Understanding by Design (UbD) principles. Reviewers learned that this training was preparatory to curriculum work planned for the Summer 2015. The district has also provided PD to some teachers on using the *Rubicon Atlas* software during the curriculum development process. However, according to information gained from focus groups, as well as teacher surveys, on teachers' understanding of the curriculum development process, not all teachers have a common or baseline understanding in the areas of outcomes, assessments, and practices to aid students in higher level thinking. While leaders have identified these areas for attention, reviewers found that they have not yet targeted or monitored for effectiveness the PD provided to date.

**Impact Statement:**

- Although the district has provided PD, district and school leaders do not know its impact because the district has not monitored its implementation in classrooms and, therefore, is unable to make strategic decisions on future PD that could potentially have more influence on addressing 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:

- develop a plan that aligns all PD offerings and includes expected outcomes, incorporates a calendar, and outlines the procedures to be launched to ensure that PD leads to improving school effectiveness and student academic performance.

**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 recognized the need to use data to make decisions, and in response, developed a districtwide data-driven instruction (DDI) plan; however, district and school staff have not yet firmly embedded the DDI plan into their practices to ensure the influence of consistent data use on school improvement. The district has purchased many assessment and data analysis tools, but these are not yet coordinated to help teachers improve instruction and increase student learning.

**Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:**

- Reviewers learned that district leaders recognized the need to develop a data-driven culture across schools to increase student achievement. In response, the leadership created a DDI plan that outlines district expectations for data use; however, both school and district leaders acknowledged that data usage is not yet effective across the district.
- Discussions with district and school leaders and IIT school review classroom observations showed that not all teachers possess the requisite skills to consistently use data to make instructional and curricular decisions that lead to work that matches the needs of students. The IIT confirmed this finding with IIT classroom observation reports and results from the district’s teacher survey, which showed that only half the teacher respondents agreed that there is an established data usage system across schools. In the elementary school, this number decreased to less than one-quarter of the teachers and fewer than half the teachers districtwide said there was any training on how to use data to adjust instruction to improve student achievement.
- IIT school review evidence showed, and district leaders confirmed, that school leaders do not always make best use of data to track the progress of different groups of students or to monitor the impact of school wide practices and use the information to set challenging goals and targets. The district has expended resources on a number of benchmarking assessment tools, such as Achieve3000, the Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE), and i-Ready. However, school and district leaders have not yet identified and shared best practice strategies for using these tools to improve instruction so that the district draws closer to practicing its commitment to a data-driven culture with the academic improvement of all students at its core.

**Impact Statement:**

- The district provides a variety of tools for teachers to use to monitor student progress; but while teachers have a large amount of data, they have not yet learned how to use the information to adapt their instruction to improve student achievement.

**Recommendation:**

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

- evaluate existing programs in use across the district to determine which programs provide actionable data for teachers and school leaders; and
- provide PD for teachers and leaders on ways in which teachers should use the data generated by the chosen programs to adjust their instruction to meet the needs of every student.

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

<b>Statement of Practice 2.1 - School Leader Practices and Decisions:</b> 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.	<b>Tenet Rating</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>
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**Overall Finding:**

- District leaders have spent the 2014-15 school year reviewing the state of the district and seeking to put in place improvements in the areas of collaboration and rigor to bring about a transformation in school and student achievement. However, systems, such as protocols for curriculum development, analyzing data, or developing interventions for at-risk students, are not yet running smoothly or consistently across all schools to ensure the intended improvements.

**Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:**

- The 2014-15 school year has been characterized by many changes in the district, including the formation of a new leadership team at the district level and new school leaders at two of the three schools. School leaders spoke positively about the district leader and plans for improvement at the district and school levels. School leaders told reviewers that district leaders are collaborative, cooperative, and that communication is open, honest, and helpful. They cited community involvement with the budget process as a working example of the transparency the district leader seeks. However, school leaders also recognized that district leaders still need to help schools eradicate existing low achievement through unified efforts, a cohesive theory of action, and monitoring and accountability strategies that shape the agenda of sustained improvements.
- School leaders stated that district leaders recognize the importance of a pre-K to grade twelve curriculum including interim benchmark examinations to help teachers and school leaders monitor

student progress. However, school leaders stated that there is a need for a great deal more district support to develop curricula to meet the needs of students. Although the district and schools have planned much work over the summer months, IIT school review evidence and school leader interviews confirmed that consistent implementation of a CCLS-aligned curriculum has not yet occurred.

- School leaders shared that the district is providing external consultants, PD, and coaches to support teachers in improving their teaching practices. However, reviewers found that there are limited district accountability expectations for school leaders to ensure that district provided PD or support personnel are positively influencing student achievement. While graduation rates have increased for all groups from 2013 to 2014, state assessment scores for English language arts (ELA) in grades three through eight have either remained the same or decreased over the same two years. School leaders stated they are collecting data on student achievement, but with limited district support, any analysis does not result in actionable next steps that teachers can use to improve student success. The district leaders’ intention is to establish a data-driven culture; however, survey results showed that teachers in all three schools agreed that the district has no districtwide, data-inquiry system in place to help guide their work.
- Student and family engagement is another district goal. Although each school has a child study team and an instructional support team, student support staff told reviewers they are not always sure of their roles and do not think other school staff know support staff roles either. The district supports Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) principles, but according to school leaders, school staff do not consistently support PBIS programs within or across schools.

**Impact Statement:**

- With many initiatives in flux or at early stages of implementation, there is little concrete evidence to demonstrate that the district’s intended outcomes for raising student achievement are consistently effective.

**Recommendation:**

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

- in collaboration with school leaders, prioritize district and school initiatives, develop benchmarks to monitor the progress of the implementation, and provide support to school leaders as they hold teachers and staff accountable for student growth.

**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:**

- District leaders recognize the importance of having articulated curricula. Although teachers have received PD on the *Rubicon Atlas* curriculum mapping tool, school leaders reported that its use is not

consistent districtwide and completed CCLS-aligned curricula do not yet exist in all schools.

**Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:**

- District leaders shared that they are committed to providing CCLS and content standards aligned curricula for all students in kindergarten through grade 12. To this end, school leaders explained that the district has provided consultants to help teachers understand and apply Engage NY CCLS modules in ELA and math, as well as the instructional shifts. In addition, district leaders have reconfigured the leadership team to include a districtwide curriculum coordinator. Reviewers found that the district has offered schools some curriculum development opportunities, as well as some PD on the use of Rubicon Atlas to warehouse curricula. However, school leaders stated that these opportunities are not consistent across all schools and many surveyed teachers, particularly elementary and high school teachers, responded that they do not have curricula that are scaffolded or adapted to meet the needs of all students. Additionally, the IIT school review and teacher survey showed little opportunity for special area teachers to collaborate with classroom teachers to ensure interdisciplinary curricula development.
- School leaders spoke about the variety of progress monitoring tools they have available to them, such as Fountas and Pinnell benchmarking assessments, Achieve3000, eDoctrina, and i-Ready, but reviewers learned that leaders and teachers do not consistently use these data to modify curricula. School and district leaders explained that some of the progress monitoring instruments do not provide helpful or actionable information. In addition, there is school and districtwide acknowledgement that until all teachers and school leaders are equipped with the requisite data handling skills, a disconnect will remain between available data and consistent data use to drive instruction and school wide improvements.

**Impact Statement:**

- Although there are plans to develop all curricula from kindergarten through grade 12, the existing curricula, which forms the basis for continued work, is not adapted to meet the needs of all students and does not incorporate content from special areas. Thus, curricula do not support a challenging opportunity for every student.

**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 and implement protocols and procedures to evaluate curricula, as they are developed, to ensure CCLS and content standard alignment, incorporation of instructional shifts, and adaptations to meet the needs of all students. This evaluation should be ongoing throughout the curriculum development process and completed prior to the development of benchmark assessments.

<b>Statement of Practice 4.1 - Teacher Practices and Decisions:</b> 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.	<b>Tenet Rating</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>
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**Overall Finding:**

- The district is providing PD opportunities for teachers to improve their teaching practices, but there is little monitoring of the PD’s effectiveness.

**Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:**

- The district is in the process of providing PD to teachers, especially in the areas of the CCLS and modules. However, school leaders reported during both district and school reviews that there is no system for providing teachers with follow-up support, such as deeper conversations with coaches, to ascertain whether they understand and are using the strategies learned during PD. The lack of follow-up support is particularly evident in the area of learning how to use data to strengthen instructional practices. When asked by the review team, district and school leaders agreed that the process for identifying students in need of interventions and then designing and monitoring those interventions is weak. School leaders explained that, especially for the elementary and middle schools, schools have formed Response to Intervention (RtI) design teams and are working on developing procedures to address a continuum of services. The district has created a position of RTI coordinator, but this post will not take effect until September 2015.
- District and school leaders told the reviewers that the district has also turned its attention to the needs of students with disabilities. Currently, district and school leaders are questioning how well schools are serving these students through both in-district and out-of-district placements. Some students, for example, have returned to the district to participate in a new program for autistic students. School leaders shared that the special education director does not chair Committee on Special Education (CSE) meetings, which results in a confusing process where not all teachers, leaders, or the director have knowledge of a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals, what accommodations are in place, or have built a collaborative relationship with the student’s parents.

**Impact Statement:**

- Without clearly defined processes to identify and address the needs of students who are not meeting proficiency levels, including students with disabilities, not all students are provided with opportunities for success.

**Recommendation:**

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

- identify a continuum of services based on student needs and driven by data. Processes and protocols should outline the referral process, provide student specific interventions and modifications, and include a variety of ways to monitor the impact of programs and services. Revise, as necessary, so that services consistently meet student needs.

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

**Tenet Rating**

**Stage 2**

**Overall Finding:**

- The district provides supports to address the social and emotional developmental health needs of students, but these supports are not consistent across all schools and district and school leaders do not routinely monitor programs to ensure implementation.

**Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:**

- The district is in the process of organizing staff, including student support staff and a new Rtl coordinator, and programs to address the social and emotional developmental health needs of students in all district buildings. Student support staff shared with reviewers that the district has provided mental health professionals, as well as space for clinicians from Greene County Mental Health Services to meet with students and families. However, school leaders stated that the district has not consistently monitored the impact of these services in meeting the needs of students and their families or collected data to ascertain the strategies and mechanisms within programs that are successful. School leaders stated that the district provides many opportunities for the student support staff to attend conferences and meetings addressing social, emotional, and behavioral issues students face. However, upon their return, district leaders expect them to turnkey information to the rest of the teachers and leaders; but school leaders believe that the district should develop a plan to rotate participation at important PD events so that all staff who stand to benefit from the information would receive it firsthand.
- School and district leaders shared that there is a districtwide commitment to PBIS. However, school leaders and student support staff agreed that district schools inconsistently support the principles of PBIS. For example, in the middle school, student support staff explained that staff regularly teach and review rules with students, but this practice is not consistent in other schools. School leaders added that there are few opportunities for teachers to have PD focused on PBIS. Likewise, school leaders and student support staff spoke about the challenges surrounding economically disadvantaged student; but there has been no direct PD in the area of poverty, with the exception of a book study a few years ago.

**Impact Statement:**

- The district is providing some supports, including student support staff, mental health professionals, and PD opportunities. However, the district has not consistently evaluated or aligned processes and procedures so that all students can benefit from experiences that promote academic, social, and emotional success.

**Recommendation:**

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

- review the PD offerings to ensure that they include sessions for all staff that address the social and emotional developmental health needs of students. School and district leaders should develop methods for schools to use to ensure that school staff consistently implement, across all schools,

information and strategies learned during PD sessions.

**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:**

- One of the district’s three goals is to increase student and family engagement. The district communicates with parents and families in a variety of ways; however, participation in school and district events is not high.

**Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:**

- District leaders explained that they recognize the strong connection between high levels of parent and family engagement and increased student achievement; therefore, they have developed a district-level parent engagement plan. However, school leaders stated that there are inconsistencies across the district in how schools are providing opportunities for parents and the community to become involved. For example, school leaders shared that the elementary school holds family engagement nights each month, and school data shows that attendance levels are increasing. The middle and high schools provide fewer opportunities and leaders reported that the participation is low. Focus groups including school and district leaders have accepted that parent participation drops off as students grow older. Student support staff shared that this often occurs at the request of the students themselves. Recognizing that increased family engagement is a district goal, school leaders stated that the district and schools should work more collaboratively and creatively to involve parents and families in the life of schools.
- The district has invested in a communications specialist whose function is to focus on community outreach. School leaders stated that the specialist has revamped the district website, uses social media to share information, and has developed a relationship with the local newspaper to highlight school news and student successes. The newly designed website is attractive and has current information, including schedule changes for events, for example. District and school leaders share information with the communications specialist and praised her contributions to keeping the community apprised of events at the schools. However, school and district leaders concurred that the district and schools need to do more to urge parents and families to access the website, as usage is relatively low.
- School leaders informed reviewers that district leaders were able to engage many more community members in the budget development process this year through a community forum where voters received presentations on the draft budget and were able to speak directly with district and school leaders about proposed programs and funding. District leaders told reviewers that many of the community members who participated expressed their appreciation for the transparency of the budget process.

**Impact Statement:**

- While district support in promoting engagement between families and schools is still emerging, efforts to achieve district goals in this key area remain unmet.

**Recommendation:**

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

- review the district-level parent engagement plan to ensure that each school has a robust plan to provide opportunities for parents to learn about school programs and ways they can support their children. The district leader should hold school leaders accountable for increasing participation through a collaborative effort to devise innovative ways of fully involving parents and families in sustained home-school partnerships that increase every child's chances of success.