



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	580513030000
District	Central Islip Union Free School District
District Address	50 Wheeler Road, Central Islip, NY 11722
Superintendent	Dr. Carr
Date(s) of Review	June 2 - 3, 2015

District Information Sheet			
Grade Configuration	K-12	Total Enrollment	7227
		Number of Schools	8
District Composition (most recent data)			
% Title I Population	13	% Attendance Rate	93
% Free Lunch	63	% Reduced Lunch	9
% Limited English Proficient	27	% Students with Disabilities	10
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)			
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0.01	% Black or African American	23
% Hispanic or Latino	69	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2
% White	6	% Multi-Racial	0.01
Personnel (most recent data)			
Years Superintendent Assigned to District	7	# of Deputy/Assistant Superintendents	3
# of Principals	8	# of Assistant Principals	8
# of Teachers	506	Avg. Class Size	27
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0	% Teaching Out of Certification	0
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	15	Average Teacher Absences	15
Teacher Turnover Rate – Teachers < 5 years exp.	20	Teacher Turnover Rate – All Teachers	22
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	13%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	1%
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	71%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	33%
Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	75%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	73%
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)			
4 Year Graduation Rate	69%	6 Year Graduation Rate	74%
% of earning Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Des.	10%		
Current NYSED Accountability Status			
# of Reward Schools	0	# of Priority Schools	1
# of Schools In Good Standing	3	# of Focus Schools	4
# of LAP Schools	0		
District Accountability Status			
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (indicate Y / N / N-A)			
American Indian or Alaska Native	NA	Black or African American	N
Hispanic or Latino	N	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	Y
White	N	Multi-Racial	NA
Students with Disabilities	N	Limited English Proficient	N
Economically Disadvantaged	N		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (indicate Y / N / N-A)			
American Indian or Alaska Native	NA	Black or African American	N
Hispanic or Latino	N	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	Y
White	N	Multi-Racial	NA
Students with Disabilities	N	Limited English Proficient	N
Economically Disadvantaged	N		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (indicate Y / N / N-A)			
American Indian or Alaska Native	NA	Black or African American	N
Hispanic or Latino	N	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	NA
White	Y	Multi-Racial	NA
Students with Disabilities	N	Limited English Proficient	N
Economically Disadvantaged	N		
<p>DISTRICT PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE DISTRICT:</p> <p>To provide all students with rigorous instruction aligned to CCLS.</p> <p>To increase State Assessment score by 10% District wide.</p> <p>To increase graduation rate by 10 percent.</p>			

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 (SEIS) representative and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) reviews of one school in the district also informed the district review.
- During IIT school reviews in the district, reviewers visited 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 the results of six student surveys.
- The district provided the results of six staff surveys.
- The district provided the results of six parent surveys.

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 1:					X

Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: Visionary leaders create a school community and culture that lead to success, well-being and high academic outcomes for all students via systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement.

#	Statement of Practice	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
2.1	The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for the school leader to create, develop and nurture a school environment that is responsive to the needs of the entire school community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 1</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 1.1: The district has a comprehensive approach for recruiting, evaluating, and sustaining high-quality personnel that affords schools the ability to ensure success by addressing the needs of their community.</p>	<p>Tenet Rating</p>	<p>Stage 1</p>

Overall Finding:

The district has some processes in place to recruit staff; however, the district staff reports that the hiring process as well as the potential pool of candidates is limited by the use of the preferred eligibility list (PEL) and the seniority rule.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- District staff stated in interviews that the legacy of the PEL list and the seniority rule creates staffing restrictions. District staff indicated that applicants on the PEL list with the most seniority have first priority in filling available positions, which sometimes limits the district staff capacity to appoint the candidate most qualified to meet student needs. District leadership indicated that the district staff can only recruit beyond the PEL list when candidates with seniority do not hold the needed certifications.
- The district leadership stated that district staff meets monthly with school leaders to review issues and provide some support for school leaders’ evaluation of their staff. The district plan of teacher evaluation is the annual professional performance review (APPR) plan. The plan includes two formal teacher observations and informal three-minute walkthroughs during which no written notes can be taken by the observer. District leaders reported that the assessment of over 95 percent of staff as effective or highly effective precludes the district staff from taking action to improve professional practice in these cases. Although some school leaders have established systematic and frequent walkthroughs to monitor specific aspects of professional practice, this good practice has not been adopted district-wide.
- The district leadership reported in interviews that district staff, in efforts to improve retention, established a mentoring program for all teachers entering into service with the district. District staff reported to the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT or review team) that the appointment of mentors, particularly for applicants new to the profession, is not always based on appointing the most effective staff member as mentor because of the seniority rule. District staff asserted that the program has helped improve retention; however, district staff did not provide data to substantiate this claim.

Impact Statement:

- Not all positions are filled by the most qualified personnel, which limits the impact of the district’s work on 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:

- Develop strategies to circumvent barriers to appointing the most qualified staff to positions to meet the needs of students.
- Develop a district-wide strategy for the accurate and consistent evaluation of teaching staff.

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 1

Overall Finding:

There is no clear articulation of a district theory of action that addresses the needs of all the constituents and that leads to high levels of student success.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district leadership does not consistently promote a theory of action, based on high expectations for student success, to address all students' needs regardless of starting point. The district staff reported interviews that staff has made progress in addressing the needs of the community. For example, translators are now provided at parent meetings and workshops, and the district is implementing a program for students with interrupted formal education (SIFE). However, the IIT found that the district leadership team does not have a consistent and unified approach to strategic planning based on well-communicated intentions articulated in a theory of action.
- District staff stated that late arriving migrant children and transient families within the district population presented a challenge for schools seeking to address the success measures of the State. The district leadership reported that district staff did not put forward a vision for success that encompassed these children and their families.
- District staff members report that they regularly meet with school leaders as a group, and some school leaders state that the dialogue with the district staff about overarching issues is helpful. However, the IIT found no evidence of established structures that the district staff uses to communicate a theory of action for student success to all staff, students, and families. During discussions with the IIT, district staff indicated that communication with families was best done at the school level.

Impact Statement:

The lack of a theory of action focused on high expectations for all students reflects a culture that is not unified by ideas of success for all, which impedes the district's ability to support all students to achieve at high levels. .

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 articulate a theory of action that focuses on high expectations for all students, whatever

their starting point.

- Communicate that theory of action so that it is understood, assimilated, and enacted by all district and school staff and constituents.

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 1

Overall Finding:

The district staff does not directly link resource provision to high levels of achievement for all students, particularly for identified subgroups.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district leadership reported that most budget management of schools is developed at the district level, and district staff allocates funding based on student numbers. District programs, such as the alternative high school, the summer school, and the after-after school programs are funded separately. Although school leaders confirmed that school leaders collaborate with the district staff in deciding how school staff is deployed, the district has control over strategic staffing issues. For example, the district staff decided not to have coaches in the high school, but instead to employ assistant principals who would also lead on instructional matters. The IIT found no evidence of established systems of accountability to measure the effectiveness of budgeted programs. In addition, the IIT did not find evidence of alignment between established programs, the effectiveness of those programs, and the continued funding of those programs. For example, district staff and school leaders were unable to explain why the district staff's continued high levels of spending on students with disabilities, which is nearly twice the State average, had not led to improved performance when compared to students with disabilities in other school districts. School leaders reported that there is a mismatch of existing services to the needs of students with disabilities, and the programs in current use leave gaps in key skills for students that school staff has not been able to address. One school leader stated the district staff did not provide needed additional personnel and as a result students' needs were not adequately addressed at this school.
- District staff stated in interviews that the district helps identify resources that would support the work of schools. For example, a BOCES alternative high school program was introduced to address the needs of students with particular social and emotional developmental health concerns. District staff stated that the district's overall control over the placement of school leaders, who are contracted to the district rather than to specific schools, has also helped the district staff relocate school leaders with particular skills to schools where those skill sets were most needed. One example was the re-allocation of middle school staff, with long-term knowledge of the students, to the high school to support behavior management.

Impact Statement:

The district staff lacks systems to measure and evaluate the impact of staffing and resource decisions, which limit the district staff's capacity to ensure resources are aligned to meet the needs of all students, particularly students with disabilities.

Recommendation:

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

- Allocate resources based on an analysis of student need with specific reference to the subgroups of students for which the district has been identified.
- Put in place the cycle of needs identification, resource provision, and the monitoring and evaluation of impact based on the analysis of student performance data, including the analysis of performance data for identified student subgroups.

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 1

Overall Finding:

Although the district staff plans professional development (PD) in response to schools' needs as they appear, there is no systematic approach to gauge the impact of PD in terms of teacher effectiveness or student achievement.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district leadership reported that the district staff establishes a long-term professional development (PD) calendar through the curriculum committee, made up of district leaders, teachers of various grade levels, and school department chairs across the district. Although the PD calendar accommodates general needs expressed by building principals, PD is not tailored to specific schools' needs.
- The district staff does not monitor the effectiveness of PD on raising student achievement systematically. During discussions with the IIT, the district leadership shared that although district staff visits schools and accompanies school leaders in classroom walkthroughs, these visits are informal and limited in scope partly because walkthroughs cannot exceed three minutes and no notes may be taken. While some school leaders reported that they sometimes have informal conversations with individual teachers, this practice is not a part of a uniform system of monitoring to determine the quality of follow-up needed. Coaches who deliver PD are not in a position to monitor whether it is being implemented by specific teachers or to communicate the situation to the school leader. As a result, any follow-up to PD is not targeted where it is most needed and is not making an impact on changing instructional practices to improve student success. District staff informed the IIT that the use of mind maps in lessons with CCLS-alignment declined from promising beginnings as follow-up to the initial PD did not target those teachers who were avoiding their use.

Impact Statement:

The district has not established a formal district-wide system that measures the impact of PD on instructional practices, which limits the level of follow-up provided to help teachers improve instructional practices to support increased 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:

- Create a formal district-wide system that enables district staff and school leaders to measure the impact of PD on teachers’ instructional practices, and determine whether further support is required.
- Use student performance data to analyze the effectiveness of PD on teachers’ instructional practice.

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

Tenet Rating

Stage 1

Overall Finding:

Teachers and school leaders are beginning to use data to monitor student growth. However, there is not a district-wide system for staff to analyze the performance data of all students and subgroups. The district does not coordinate multiple data resources effectively.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district has not established systems for the use of data by district personnel, school leaders, and teachers. Although the district leadership reports that school leaders and teachers have been informed of the district staff requirements to implement data-driven instruction (DDI), district leadership asserts that district-led reviews indicate only a small percentage of teachers are using DDI. The district leader confirmed that teachers’ inconsistently use data. Although the district leader shared plans for a district-wide approach at elementary and middle school level to require teachers to teach ELA using centers, which would necessitate DDI, this is not yet in place.
- School leaders stated that data collection and use are occurring in some classrooms and multiple data systems are in use. However, there are no specific district-wide expectations regarding how data is used. District personnel and school leaders stated that commercially-produced curricular schemes were used in schools and that these generated data. However, district personnel and school leaders were not able to confirm that data was systematically analyzed and acted upon, including that for student subgroups.
- Some school leaders stated that in district meetings there is a data review of on-track and not-on-track students. To illustrate what the analysis of data indicated, some school leaders reported that the data showed that it was not English language learners (ELL) who were off track, but the general population of economically disadvantaged students.
- Evidence from the school reviews indicates that the school staff uses a variety of data systems, which are not coordinated. A district data team provides data analyses to school leaders on request. The team’s remit is currently restricted and does not encompass the range of software employed by schools. The IIT found that most school leaders and district staff could not describe how they use real-time performance data to inform decision-making.

Impact Statement:

The use of multiple data systems has not resulted in the consistent use and analysis of data to drive instruction by district staff and school leaders to identify and respond to student need with the aim of increasing 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:

- Ensure that data teams consolidate the information from the multiple data systems in use in schools and make this information accessible for use by district and school leaders.
- Formalize a district-wide progress monitoring system that measures, analyzes, and responds to students' needs.

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

Statement of Practice 2.1 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for the school leader to create, develop and nurture a school environment that is responsive to the needs of the entire school community.	Tenet Rating	Stage 1
--	---------------------	----------------

Overall Finding:

Although the district holds regular meetings with school leaders, subsequent support is not developed based on needs of students identified through analysis of achievement data. As a result, school leaders are limited in their capacity to respond to the needs of the entire school community

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- All school leaders interviewed by the IIT reported that school leaders are supported by the district staff. School leaders indicated that the district staff convenes meetings with groups of school leaders monthly. One school leader stated that the district staff always offers a rationale for rejecting requests from the school. Although a positive relationship has been forged between school leaders and the district team, this has not led to an improvement in student achievement, particularly for identified subgroups.
- One school leader stated that the collective bargaining agreement impedes the work of the school leader in improving instructional practice to implement data-driven instruction (DDI), the common core learning standards (CCLS) curriculum, and the instructional shifts. There are severe restrictions on classroom walkthroughs, and the seniority rule for postings limits the range of staff included on school and district committees and does not reflect the appointment of the most qualified.
- The district leadership reported that district staff sets parameters for school structures within which the school leaders must develop their vision and strategies. In addition, the district leadership reported that staff focused on reassigning school leaders and further developing the academy model in the middle school grades this academic year. The vision for the schools is based on the district's drive to create smaller learning communities to enhance students' sense of belonging and sense of safety.

- During discussions with the IIT, school leaders were unclear on the district’s systems for accountability. For example, one school leader stated that district staff’s system for accountability was vague. During discussions with the IIT, neither the district personnel, nor school leaders were able to provide a clear picture of a district-wide accountability structure that linked school leader and teacher performance to student achievement levels. The IIT found that the district and school leaders’ planning is not based on rigorous data analysis. In addition, the unfocused visions and goals at the school level limit improvements in student achievement.

Impact Statement:

Although the district staff seeks to work closely with school leaders to implement the safe school agenda, and the school leaders operate within the parameters set by the district, there is no established accountability structure that links school leaders’ and staff’s performance to student achievement. As a result, the district staff’s agenda is not focused on high student 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:

- Implement a district-wide approach to supporting school leader’s visions for their schools that focuses on using analyses of student performance data for all subgroups to drive up levels of student achievement.

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 1

Overall Finding:

The district-wide development of a CCLS-aligned curriculum does not yet address the needs of all students and subgroups, through integrated instructional practices that include the use of formative and summative data to enable differentiation and student-centered teaching.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district is in year two of a five-year curriculum plan. School leaders report that the district collaborates with schools through the curriculum team, which has aligned the curriculum to EngageNY modules using Journeys and Gomath to prepare curriculum entry into Rubicon Atlas. However, district-led reviews show that not all teachers are implementing the CCLS. Similarly, a recent IIT review of one of the district’s schools reported that teachers do not ensure that planning and instruction are aligned to CCLS and that differentiated instruction was found in only eight out of the 79 lessons’ visited.
- The district leadership reported that the district staff has purchased materials in ELA and math, but has not monitored implementation to ensure teachers are utilizing material appropriately or to determine if the teachers’ instruction has had a positive impact on student achievement. Fiscal support is also given for summer schools to support students with disabilities and English language learners (ELL) after data showed a regression from June to September. School leaders report that the district has set up

bilingual programs in all schools where parents choose between the Bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. The school leaders reported that when data indicated that the advanced students were not progressing, the school staff organized beginner, intermediate, and advanced classes in each grade level. Accompanying the development of the academies is an instructional shift towards thematic learning to promote college and career readiness.

- The district staff reported that school leaders are responsible for the weekly review of lesson plans. However, a recent IIT school review found that the school leader’s classroom observations and review of classroom data are insufficiently rigorous to bring about sustained improvements in instruction. The district leaders reported that they ensured the elementary school leaders were re-trained in protocols for classroom walkthroughs to identify differentiation and center-based activities because teachers needed more training in this area, especially for students with disabilities.

Impact Statement:

There is no district-wide approach to providing differentiated learning through developments in instructional practice to meet the needs of all students, particularly for subgroups.

Recommendation:

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

- Target PD to embed differentiation in professional practice that meets the needs of subgroups and is driven by student-centered learning

Statement of Practice 4.1 - Teacher Practices and Decisions: The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for teachers to develop strategies and practices and addresses effective planning and account for student data, needs, goals, and levels of engagement.

Tenet Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

The district collaborates with schools to provide PD in response to schools’ expressed needs. The district staff lacks established monitoring protocols to determine the impact of PD on professional practice and on student achievement. Consequently, effective follow-up is not in place and student achievement remains low.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district leadership shared that district staff works with schools leaders, coaches, and teachers in the curriculum committee to develop a PD plan. Although district personnel report that they refer to some school data in drafting the plan, school leaders stated that many decisions are based on impressions of instructional practice gained through brief walkthroughs. The district uses a coaching model in all schools except the high school where assistant principals are assigned specific content areas. The coaching model provides teachers with 40 minutes planning and preparation time each day during which the coaches help teachers develop their planning. School leaders reported that PD is

repeated rather than enhanced by follow-up sessions.

- During discussions with the review team, district leaders reported that district staff relies mainly on information from school leaders' walkthroughs to help identify specific PD needs, along with visits by coaches and district staff. However, because there is no systematic follow-up to PD, implementation cannot be assured. The IIT noted during a school review that staff had received training on the use of data to improve instruction and student achievement, but noticed that few teachers were using data in a cohesive and concrete manner in their classes.
- School leaders reported that the coaching model does not have comprehensive accountability measures to address weaknesses in teacher practice. School leaders also reported that although they can ask coaches to adjust PD based on the school leaders' observations of teacher practices, individual teachers cannot be identified in discussions because of restrictions imposed by collective bargaining agreements. Additionally, school leaders cite as problematic that district leaders evaluate the coaches' work rather than school leaders.

Impact Statement:

The way that the coaching model is implemented lacks accountability for teacher practice and places the onus onto school leaders who, in turn, are restricted in what they can observe and report. This impedes the effectiveness of PD in improving individual teachers' instructional practices and thereby student outcomes.

Recommendation:

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

- Develop an accountability structure that connects PD to teacher practices and to student achievement. Include school leaders in monitoring the effectiveness of PD in improving instructional practice, based on an ongoing analysis of student data.
- Identify and implement follow-up to PD to confirm that instructional practices are developed, accordingly.
- Further develop grade level planning meetings in schools to focus teachers on their plans to implement the received PD strategies, ensuring that teachers identify and evaluate the changes in their instructional strategies to address received PD and to analyze the impact this has on student achievement.

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 staff has implemented a range of initiatives to address students' social and emotional development health; however, the district staff does not have a district-wide policy for providing PD to build the school staff's capacity to consistently support and meet the needs of all students.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district staff has implemented structures and programs to begin to address students' social and emotional developmental health. The district staff sponsors a Be a Mentor (BAM) program, where staff from all content areas offer mentoring support to assigned students. The district staff also provides free breakfast for all students. School leaders reported that provisions such as free breakfast helps to ensure students are ready to learn. The district leadership reported in interviews that district staff identified the creation of smaller and safer learning communities as a priority in addressing students' social and emotional health needs. Examples of such actions include retaining grade five in the elementary schools, creating science and arts academies in the middle schools to subdivide the populations, and providing an alternative high school to target the needs of older students. In addition, the district staff has implemented a program of peer mediation and conflict resolution. School leaders reported that the smaller learning communities as well as initiatives such as the anti-bullying and Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) programs have had a positive effect on school environments as evidence by the decrease in recorded and observed behavioral issues. However, some school leaders reported that responses to student social and emotional developmental health needs were the result of individual school initiatives rather than as part of a district-led agenda.
- District leadership and school leaders report that district staff implemented a range of programs and strategies to address student social and emotional developmental health, particularly for the population of migrant children from Central and South America who have recently entered the schools in the district. The district leadership reports that the district staff has placed a social worker, education psychologist, and full-time security staff in each school, and some staff speak both English and Spanish. In addition, the district runs a program called "Newcomer Group," where incoming students spend at least a week under the guidance of social workers as the students adjust to their new school environment. School leaders also shared that additional bilingual staff is needed to fully support students, especially bilingual social workers.
- The district staff reported in interviews that PD regarding students' social and emotional developmental health was provided at the two district leader's conference days. However, the IIT found no evidence of district-wide approach to develop and build staff's capacity to consistently respond to students' social and emotional developmental needs. In addition, the IIT found that the district staff does not have systems in place to use data to review and monitor current student social and emotional health programs for impact on student achievement. During discussions with the IIT, some school leaders discussed student behavioral concerns, but insufficiently addressed the relationship between student behaviors and student performance.

Impact Statement:

The district has not established a district-wide approach to meeting student social and developmental health needs by developing the skills of all staff and linking improvements in provision for student social and emotional developmental health to data to determine the impact on student academic 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:

- Establish a district-wide approach to supporting student social and emotional developmental health including targeted training to develop the skills of all staff in meeting students' needs.
- Develop a district-wide system of measurement to monitor the impact that programs to support student social and emotional developmental health have upon student achievement.
- Continue to increase the number of staff with bilingual skills.

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 1

Overall Finding:

- There is no district-wide strategic approach for developing home-school partnerships and measuring their effectiveness.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- District personnel stated in interviews that the school staff primarily communicates with parents and that the district staff does have a major role in this process. During school reviews, parents interviewed by the IIT reported that there is variability in how teachers convey the school's expectations to parents. Some parents shared that school staff has not provided programs to show parents how they can help their children at home. During discussions with the IIT, some school leaders reported that parents have expressed concerns to school leaders about the lack of specific information that school staff share with parents on how parents can support their children's success. The IIT found that did not find evidence of district-wide comprehensive approach to developing home-school partnerships and the district staff has not ensured that all schools have implemented a home-school partnership program.
- The district leadership reported that district staff has implemented some measures to support students from economically disadvantaged families. For example, the district has ensured that every student has access to a free breakfast and some students receive free book bags, classroom supplies, and clothing. District staff shared in interviews that the district has helped fund after-school and after-after school programs to allow students, whose family members work long hours, to stay longer at school. School leaders and district staff report that many students attend the after-school and after-after school programs. School leaders report that the district supports summer academies, but not all students have access to these academies as there are long waiting lists for entrance into the summer academies.
- The district leadership reported the that district staff supports bi-lingual communications with families

providing translators at parent-teacher organization meeting and parent workshops; sending district information to parents and families in both English and Spanish, and employing bilingual secretarial staff whenever possible.

- The district funds school initiatives with parents including after-school English classes; a district-wide health fair, which recently attracted 500 attendees; and a parent university, which offers a range of workshops. However, district leadership confirm that the district staff and school staff need to have a greater presence in the community, and parent surveys indicate that some schools lack effective partnerships with families.

Impact Statement:

The lack of a comprehensive family engagement plan hinders district staff from ensuring that all schools have strong home-school partnerships. One result is that not all parents can support their child's learning at optimal levels.

Recommendation:

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

- Agree with schools on clear criteria for schools' implementation of home-school partnership programs.
- Establish a commonly understood system to measure the implementation and effectiveness of programs to support parents.
- Monitor how schools are enabling parents to actively support their children's learning and helping parents to understand achievement data.
- Increase summer academies to accommodate the waiting list and expand the program to include other time periods.