



# 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>	110200010000
<b>District</b>	Cortland Enlarged City School District
<b>District Address</b>	1 Valley View Drive
<b>Superintendent</b>	Michael J Hoose
<b>Date(s) of Review</b>	May 20-21, 2015

District Information Sheet					
<b>Grade Configuration</b>	K-12	<b>Total Enrollment</b>	2,604	<b>Number of Schools</b>	6
<b>District Composition (most recent data)</b>					
<b>% Title I Population</b>	39	<b>% Attendance Rate</b>	95		
<b>% Free Lunch</b>	43	<b>% Reduced Lunch</b>	7		
<b>% Limited English Proficient</b>	0	<b>% Students with Disabilities</b>	10		
<b>Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)</b>					
<b>% American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	0	<b>% Black or African American</b>	4		
<b>% Hispanic or Latino</b>	4	<b>% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</b>	1		
<b>% White</b>	88	<b>% Multi-Racial</b>	3		
<b>Personnel (most recent data)</b>					
<b>Years Superintendent Assigned to District</b>	3	<b># of Deputy/Assistant Superintendents</b>	1		
<b># of Principals</b>	9	<b># of Assistant Principals</b>	0		
<b># of Teachers</b>	228	<b>Avg. Class Size</b>	20		
<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>	8	<b>Average Teacher Absences</b>	5%		
<b>Teacher Turnover Rate – Teachers &lt; 5 years exp.</b>	30	<b>Teacher Turnover Rate – All Teachers</b>	12 %		
<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>	26%		
<b>Science Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4 (4th Grade)</b>	87%	<b>Science Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4 (8th Grade)</b>	75%		
<b>Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)</b>					
<b>ELA Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	18%	<b>Mathematics Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	16%		
<b>Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)</b>					
<b>4 Year Graduation Rate</b>	75%	<b>6 Year Graduation Rate</b>			
<b>% of earning Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Des.</b>	27%				
<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>	4	<b># of Focus Schools</b>	2		
<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>	Y
<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>	Y
<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>	Y
<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
<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>	N	<b>Multi-Racial</b>	N-A
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	N	<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	N-A
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	Y		

The district's top priorities (no more than 5):

- Increase the 4-year graduation rate by four percent
- Increase the number of students demonstrating proficiency on NYS 3-8 Tests and Regents Exams by five percent.
- Increase the number of K-6 students reading at or above grade level by five percent.
- Reduce the number of course failures at the JSBS by ten percent.
- Reduce the number of students with greater than 15 absences by 20 percent.

### **Information about the review**

- The review of the district was conducted by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from the New York State Education Department.
- 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 20 classrooms across the 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 1484 (57 percent) completed.
- The district provided results of a staff survey that 275 completed.
- The district provided results of a parent survey that 233 completed.

**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 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 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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><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>

**Overall Finding:**

- The district staff uses a comprehensive recruitment and hiring process to secure quality candidates for teaching and leadership positions. The district staff does not yet have protocols to strategically assign staff based on student needs. School and district leaders all implement approved plans for evaluating other administrators and teachers. However, the district leadership has not ensured that all staff receives frequent, relevant, and actionable feedback that can be used to plan and implement professional development (PD) strategies.

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

- During the human resources (HR) interview, district staff reported that the district uses several partnerships with teacher preparation programs, such as SUNY Cortland to recruit candidates that align with the demographics of the district. The HR staff and school leaders reported that the district has formal protocols in place for recruiting staff that includes posting of positions, conducting a series of interviews, and negotiating contracts. District personnel and school staff shared that district staff implemented the recruitment process over 40 times each year for the last two years, and the process yielded high quality candidates. The HR leaders reported that although district staff has had conversations with some school leaders concerning staff and student needs, the district staff does not yet have adaptive procedures in place to reassign staff based on changing student demographics and emerging student needs.
- District leaders reported that all leaders in the district follow the contractual Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) procedures for teachers and administrators. In addition, school and district leaders share observation responsibilities for non-tenured teachers. When interviewed by the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT), district staff reported that evaluators do not implement common criteria or expectations, resulting in inconsistency and divergent assessment of teacher performance across the district. District and school leaders reported that there is little actionable feedback provided to teachers, school leaders, and district staff about the expected adjustments to their practice, beyond the formal events of the APPR. As a result, there is minimal integration of strategies gained in PD and limited growth in professional practices.
- School staff and district leaders reported that the district and school leaders support, encourage, and provide quality professional development through key-note speakers, conferences, embedded

coaching and partnerships with regional PD providers, such as Oneida Cayuga Madison Board of Cooperative Educational Services (OCM BOCES), New York University (NYU) Metro Center and Results First consultants. However, the district does not have established expectations or procedures to regularly hold staff accountable for the implementation of this PD, which limits the Impact of PD on improving instructional practices and student achievement.

**Impact Statement:**

- The district staff has established recruitment strategies to select quality staff; however, the district staff has not ensured that protocols are in place to provide ongoing feedback to staff or to hold staff accountable for integrating what is learned from PD into instruction, which hinders improvements in instructional practices and 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:

- immediately develop and enact explicit protocols for teacher, school, and district leaders to ensure that all staff is regularly implementing the PD they receive. Set clear expectations and criteria for teacher, school, and district leaders to provide regular actionable feedback to all staff about their professional performance in meeting student needs.

**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:**

- Although informational meetings are held for district and school leaders to exchange information, there is not an explicit set of expectations or a theory of action for how the adults across the district should align their professional practices to the district targets. The absence of clearly defined and communicated district expectations has resulted in misaligned PD, teacher-centered instruction, and a lack of urgency for continuous improvement.

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

- The district leader reported that after receiving guidance from external consultants, the district set five targets for improving student outcomes in the 2014-15 year. The review team found that these targets are not time-bound and do not provide specific directions to staff on how school staff practices should contribute to the targets, especially those that have assignments that are not directly related to the specific target, such as elementary staff tasked with improving the four year graduation rate and Regents exam performance. Although district leaders reported that district staff convene a quarterly meeting with school leaders to review progress toward the targets, during discussions with the IIT, school leaders reported that these meeting have not resulted in set district expectations for improvement or action plans for the school staff.
- District staff and school staff interviews indicated that a district-wide theory of action is not known and that district expectations for connecting personnel’s professional practice to student outcomes was not communicated. During the school reviews, parents interviewed by the IIT were unclear of the New

York state accountability status of the district and the proficiency levels of students. District and school leaders reported that various district level staff, such as the director of curriculum and instruction and the assistant superintendent for pupil personnel services, regularly work with the staff in the schools. However, school staff and leaders indicated that the priorities, feedback, and action planning directives relayed to school staff by district staff are inconsistent, and contribute to confusion and misunderstanding of district improvement plans and the strategies needed to improve student outcomes.

**Impact Statement:**

- In the absence of a clearly articulated theory of action and routines for communicating and implementing this theory of action, school and district staff does not align all of their practices to improvement targets, and therefore, most students are not achieving at high levels of proficiency.

**Recommendation:**

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

- convene a representative group of students, teachers, parents, leaders, support staff, and community partners to review school and district data to re-prioritize student needs, and articulate an explicit theory of action that attends to all students’ needs. Collaborate with school leaders to use this theory of action to revise the mandatory 2015-16 district comprehensive improvement plan (DCIP) and implement a robust communication plan to ensure all staff and families understand the district expectations.

**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:**

- Although the district has faced challenges in maintaining continuity in fiscal leadership, resources are organized in an equitable manner across the district based on per pupil expenditures. School leaders are responsible for advocating for the needs of their school, but inadequate data reports and lack of budget information for schools, has hindered school and district leaders in understanding and accurately prioritizing student needs.

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

- District financial leaders reported that there have been six fiscal managers in three years, which has led to discontinuity in procedures, inconsistent priorities in spending, and unbalanced distribution of resources relative to the district targets and school priorities. This has resulted in poor communication and limited understanding around the needs of the school community.
- The district leadership reported that district staff follows a traditional budget development cycle beginning each October after voters approve the budget. The district staff allocates money to schools based on student enrollment. The district leaders reported that a per pupil expenditure approach is their attempt to be equitable, but acknowledge that not all schools have the same needs.

- The fiscal staff reported in interviews that the district staff has approved some new requests from school leaders for additional resources, but has not used formal procedures to conduct systematic analysis of all new requests across the district to consider the unique needs of each school. School leaders reported in interviews that school leaders do not know in advance, the exact monies that are allocated to their school and do have authority or autonomy over their school resources of money, staff, and materials.

**Impact Statement:**

- Limited data analysis procedures at the district and school levels hinders district staff from accurately understanding the specific needs of all students, staff, and schools. As a result, resources are not consistently allocated to address student needs and to ensure that structures, supports, and materials are in place to promote 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:

- convene a workgroup comprised of school and district leaders, staff, and community members to establish procedures for prioritizing the allocation of all resources to explicitly and accurately meet defined students' needs. Include procedures for regularly monitoring the effectiveness of the alignment and the impact on improved student achievement.

**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 staff has a professional development plan (PDP) that was created in collaboration with representatives from schools based upon teacher and leader requests. Although the plan includes opportunities for quality professional learning, the district has not prioritized procedures for ensuring that PD is fully implemented by all staff. The district conducts surveys of participants to solicit opinions about the PD, but the district has not developed strategies or procedures for assessing the impact of the offerings for improving professional practices.

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

- The district leadership reported in interviews that district staff collaborated with school leaders and teachers to establish the PDP, and district staff has plans to revise the plan over the 2015-16 school year. Incorporated into the plan is a description of the needs assessment conducted by staff to determine the offerings. The district staff reported that this year the PD topics primarily focused on CCLS curricula and instruction. The district leadership and school leaders reported that this priority was established in response to teacher requests and to an overall lack of viable district-wide curricula. School leaders, staff, and some district staff reported that systemic review of student data and teacher performance data has not specifically influenced the schedule of PD events during the 2014-15 school

year.

- The district leadership reported that district staff uses a technology tool, My Learning Plan (MLP), to communicate the schedule of available PD and record participation data. A pilot procedure to send a three-question survey to attendees via MLP, was used to solicit opinions from staff about the quality of the PD offerings. Staff who served on the PD committee reported in interviews that the survey results indicated that PD meets the needs of some, but not others, which aligns with the 2015 district survey responses. Forty nine percent of all staff who completed the 2015 survey disagreed that the PD sessions they attend help to better meet the learning needs of students. Members of the PD committee and district leaders reported that there are no procedures or analysis protocols used to assess the effectiveness of the PD in raising academic standards.
- The district staff has provided limited follow-up support to school staff on some PD, such as the NYU Metrocenter instructional walkthroughs and the adoption of the new CCLS modules. However, the district lacks a systemic plan or district-wide procedures to provide follow-up when initial training has not proved successful in improving instructional practices.

**Impact Statement:**

- The lack of procedures to ensure that PD is implemented or to evaluate the impact PD brings to student learning, limits the district’s ability to assess the effectiveness of PD offered and hold staff accountable for improved instructional practices.

**Recommendation:**

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

- analyze all available staff performance data and relevant student performance data, such as benchmark item analysis patterns and social emotional indicators, to identify the training needs of all staff. Use the revised district theory of action and student outcome targets to prioritize the staff needs; and
- revise the PDP to address the prioritized staff needs in the 2015-16 school year, and include multiple modalities for follow-up support and to ensure implementation such as job-embedded coaching, peer-visitiation, formal personal reflection, and administrative feedback.

**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:**

- The district collects data from a number of sources, but the district has not established expectations, developed a plan, or identified roles and responsibilities of staff related to the use of data at the district, school, or teacher level.

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

- The district self-assessment indicates and district leaders report that the district staff has not

established a formal plan or made its expectations clear as to how district, school, teacher, and student data will be used across the district to drive improvements in student outcomes and professional practices.

- Although the district leadership indicated in interviews that district staff will purchase additional services from the OCM BOCES to support some data analysis and implementation procedures for 2015-16, presently, the district leadership has not assigned responsibilities to any district or school staff for the leadership, development, or coaching of formal data-driven procedures.
- District leaders reported that the district leadership expects that school leaders will use reports provided by the district to analyze school data, to give guidance to school staff, and to make decisions to improve student achievement and advocate for relevant resources. However, during discussion with the IIT, school leaders indicated that they are not aware of a formal district expectation concerning data and reported to the IIT that school leaders do not have enough relevant data to fully understand the needs of all students or to evaluate the effectiveness of school-wide efforts such as the newly implemented curricular materials and the Response to Intervention (RtI) program. Some leaders also indicated that they do not have adequate knowledge of protocols for analysis and implementation procedures to lead the school staff to improved practices for data-driven instruction.

**Impact Statement:**

- The lack of systemic plans to use data at all levels limits district and school staff in identifying the precise needs of students and match strategies to meet students’ need.

**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 district-wide plan that revises the district targets into SMART goals. Include in the plan detailed expectations, protocols, and procedures for the district, school, and teacher levels that define what data will be collected and reviewed, how it will be analyzed, and how it will explicitly drive improvements in the curriculum, teaching practices, social emotional developmental health efforts, and family engagement.

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

<p><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.</p>	<p><b>Tenet Rating</b></p>	<p><b>Stage 2</b></p>
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**Overall Finding:**

- The district interacts with schools as needed to provide resources and assist in resolving any issues that arise with students, staff, families, and facilities. However, the district has not proactively collaborated with each school community to create and nurture a learning environment that meets the specific

needs of all students.

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

- The district leadership recorded in the self-assessment and confirmed in interviews that the district staff has not yet developed and communicated an explicit theory of action or expectations for how the district, through the schools, will serve the needs of the school community. School leaders stated that district staff has not collaborated with school leaders to proactively facilitate a vision, mission, and goals for individual schools to meet the needs of all students and to improve student outcomes.
- School and district staff interviews indicated that the current staffing levels are not adequate to attend to the urgent needs of the schools. School leaders and district staff stated in interviews that unclear roles within the district office has resulted in limited communication, unclear job descriptions, misunderstood roles, duplication of efforts, and frequent shifts in responsibilities that leave the school staff with insufficient support for improving teaching and student achievement. The district leadership shared in interviews that the reductions in district level staff has hindered the district staff's capacity to consistently respond to the school leaders, parents, and community needs. Some school leaders and district staff reported that schools staff receive inconsistent support from the district in critical areas of need including data-driven instruction, instructional leadership, strategic use of resources, student support services and special education, PD of the staff, student social and emotional developmental health, and building partnerships with families.
- School leaders reported that the instructional district leaders are responsive to their requests and also visit the schools; however, the school leaders shared that school staff sometimes receive contradictory feedback and variable emphasis on school issues because of the lack of clarity around district procedures. The director of curriculum and instruction has been in place for approximately one and one half years and has initiated several curriculum development initiatives and tasks relevant to the needs of the schools, staff, and students. However, the school leaders reported that the district staff has not yet fully planned for the necessary revisions of the CCLS for all grades and subjects. Student support staff indicated in interviews that special education programming decisions are not made in an efficient, timely, or student-centered manner and reported that student services has been impacted by the vacancy in the special education administrator position for the past seven years.
- School and district leaders reported that the current teacher evaluation system produces inflated scores and ratings for several teachers across all grades and subjects. Due to the procedural and formulaic contractual agreements in the APPR plan, many teachers do not receive scores that accurately reflect weaknesses in teachers' instructional practices, and as a result teachers do not receive needed teacher improvement plans. The district leadership reported that the flaws in the teacher evaluation process has hindered district staff in promoting a sense of urgency for increased student achievement and overall school improvement.
- School leaders reported that the district staff has not provided school leaders with timely information about financial allocations, nor the restrictions and flexibilities they have to strategically re-align resources to match student needs. The district fiscal leaders indicated that because of excessive turnover in the financial management office, patterns of spending have remained static over several

years, and the district has not used a district-wide prioritization model to pay specific attention to explicit student needs.

**Impact Statement:**

- The district leadership does not provide consistent support to school leaders to enable school leaders to address the academic, social and emotional needs of all students, which has contributed to decreasing trends in student proficiency.

**Recommendation:**

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

- schedule collaborative planning sessions between each school and the district cabinet prior to the start of the 2015-16 school year to review and analyze critical school, leader, teacher, and student data. Use this analysis to align the school vision, mission, improvement outcomes, and school comprehensive education plan (SCEP) to the district targets and formally organize appropriate district level support for implementation.

**Statement of Practice 3.1 - Curriculum Development and Support:** The district works collaboratively with the school(s) to ensure CCLS curriculum that provide 21st Century and College and Career Readiness skills in all content areas and provides fiscal and human resources for implementation.

**Tenet Rating**

**Stage 2**

**Overall Finding:**

- The district facilitates and supports CCLS aligned curricular development in some content areas and subjects, but the district has not ensured that all students have access to curricula that supports students to become college- and career- ready.

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

- District and school leaders reported that the lack of aligned curricula in all schools continues to be an obstacle in ensuring that all students have opportunity to acquire college- and career- readiness skills. During the school review, school staff reported that the district director of curriculum and instruction convenes an elementary and secondary level curriculum council, monthly, to attend to scheduling, planning, and training for the curriculum needs of each school and department. Teacher leaders reported that the curriculum council has increased communication between the schools and district around curriculum, instruction, and PD, but the council does not yet address all curricular issues relating to the effective implementation of CCLS. District leadership indicated that the district staff joined the Teaching is the Core (TiTC) grant at the OCM BOCES and hosted an assessment review and design project early in the school year to prepare for implementation and alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The district leadership also reported that district, school, and teacher leaders, as well as OCM BOCES consultants conducted a phase one needs assessment and found that eighty percent of teachers across all grades and subjects gave more than 10 assessments that do not align with standards. District staff also reported that through BOCES district and school staff received PD on topics such as item writing and developing CCLS aligned assessments.

- District and school leaders reported that the district staff has provided materials for implementation of the CCLS modules in ELA and math. District leaders reported that they have adopted a cyclical evaluation schedule to ensure that vertical and horizontal alignment of curricula are reviewed at least every three years. However, this review timeline of every three years and the lack of coaching support provided by the district staff, impacts school staff ability to ensure aligned CCLS curricula in all grades and subjects.

**Impact Statement:**

- The resources and support provided by the district has enabled some teachers to provide CCLS aligned curricula for their students, but the supports do not address all the curricular needs of the school community.

**Recommendation:**

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

- expedite the timeline for the development of CCLS aligned curriculum in all grades and subjects to complete this work within the 2015-16 school year. Establish protocols and procedures for district, school, and teacher leaders to routinely monitor the implementation of CCLS aligned curricula.

**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 works collaboratively with schools through a PD team and regular meetings, but does not plan and provide PD based on data about students' needs.

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

- The district staff reported in the self-assessment that school staff members self-identify their own professional learning needs and the district attempts to support these needs, but the identified training needs of staff are not explicitly aligned to improve the district targets for improved student outcomes. School leaders and district leaders reported that district's PD team conducted a district-wide survey on PD attendance and its relevance to instruction but the responses have not provided information related to how the PD has helped teachers better meet the learning needs of students. The PD team and school leaders reported that student or school data reports are not used to specifically prioritize PD opportunities.
- A review of the PD plan and calendar as well as discussions with school leaders indicated that some of the PD provided to schools and teachers focuses on research-based best practice strategies. Examples of PD offered include the NYU Metrocenter equity education, Eric Jensen's *Teaching Students of Poverty*, and project- based learning. However, the IIT found minimal evidence to show that the district staff has follow-up support or accountability procedures in place for embedding PD strategies into teaching practices, especially at the secondary schools. District leaders indicated and school leaders confirmed that although the district employs highly qualified staff, most teachers need

additional support in developing their capacity to provide CCLS aligned curricula reflective of the instructional shifts in literacy and math, especially in the areas of higher-order thinking, rigorous inquiry, and student engagement.

**Impact Statement:**

- Although the district has a PD plan, the district does not closely align PD for teacher to students' explicit learning. As a result, not all students consistently receive rigorous learning opportunities to promote their college- and career-readiness skills.

**Recommendation:**

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

- immediately develop and implement a universal protocol with procedures for teachers, school leaders, and district staff to determine the degree of implementation of all PD opportunities. Collaborate with school leaders and the PD team to conduct classroom visits, regular analysis of student work samples, and review student data reports to evaluate the impact of PD on student outcomes and use the information to refine and focus the PD topics and modalities offered to staff for the 2015-16 school year.

**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 1**

**Overall Finding:**

- The district has not collaborated with school leaders and teachers to assess student and staff needs, and provide universal PD across the district to foster the social emotional developmental health of all students.

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

- The district leadership reported in interviews that in the phase one survey of the district needs assessment for curriculum, instruction, and assessment alignment, 47 percent of respondents indicated that they needed more information pertaining to the social, emotional, developmental health needs of students. A review of the district PD plan as well as district and school staff interviews confirmed that the district staff has not provided training and development opportunities for all staff in developing students' social and emotional developmental health in students. During the school review, student support services staff cited that poor communication between school and district leaders and absence of a unified vision with expectations has hindered staff in prioritizing student needs and services, and ensuring their social emotional developmental health. In the district survey of 2015, 40 percent of the staff who responded to the survey reported that the level of student misbehavior in the school interferes with teaching. Results from the student and parent surveys indicate that 77 percent of students and 45 percent of parents who responded to the survey disagreed

that students do not bully each other in school.

- The district provides PD opportunities to all elementary teachers and leaders to implement the responsive classroom program and apply Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) strategies. School leaders reported that these research-based best practice approaches empower the staff to foster a culture of caring in the classrooms and across the environments of each school. However, a review of the district survey 2015 indicated that not all school environments reflect a culture of caring as 51 percent of students responded that they disagreed that students treat each other respectfully and do not hurt each other, and 64 percent disagreed that students in school behave. Secondary leaders stated that the district staff does not provide any PD opportunities related to social emotional developmental health to secondary staff, and transition planning for the students moving from responsive schools to the junior-senior high school is not provided by the district, resulting in continued behavioral challenges and unmet social emotional developmental health needs.

**Impact Statement:**

- The district lacks a comprehensive and universal approach to support the staff in understanding and fostering social emotional developmental health, which limits school staff's capacity to provide appropriate supports to address the needs of all students.

**Recommendation:**

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

- immediately convene a team of district and school staff, as well as parents, community, and student representatives to identify and prioritize the social emotional developmental health needs of students. Collaborate with school staff to develop a comprehensive plan with short-term and long-term priorities and activities for professional development to build staff capacity to address student needs. Include specific implementation and monitoring procedures, and identify program resources to be embedded at all grade levels in the district.

**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:**

- The district has not established a family and community engagement plan to promote strong home and school partnership that address and support the needs of all students.

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

- During discussions with the IIT, district and school leaders reported that the district does not have a comprehensive strategic plan for setting expectations or procedures for school staff to create welcoming schools and foster reciprocal communication with families. Although the district staff indicated in the self-assessment that developing a strategic plan for family engagement and involvement is forthcoming, presently, the absence of such plans hinders families from working with

schools to provide supports needed to improve student achievement.

- Although the district Title I compact has provision for services to identified Title I schools for parent involvement, this is not universal across all schools. In the 2015 district survey, of the parent respondents, 53 percent disagreed that they feel welcome, 47 percent disagreed that leaders seek parent input on how to best meet student needs, and 33 percent disagreed that they are satisfied with how the school communicates with them. Similarly, of the staff respondents, 37 percent disagreed that the school has strong school-community partnerships, and 62 percent disagreed that they are satisfied with the level of parent/caregiver involvement in this school. The survey results align with school leaders' perceptions that schools do not have robust home-school partnerships to best support students' success.
- The district has some partnerships with community agencies to provide some direct support to students and families within the school environment. However, both district and school leaders reported that there is no quantifiable data to demonstrate the effectiveness of these programs.

**Impact Statement:**

- The district staff does not lead the school staff in building strong partnerships with families. As a result, not all students receive a full system of support to increase their learning, social well-being, and 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 and convene a standing committee consisting of parents, community partners, school staff and leaders, and district staff to develop district-wide priorities and strategies for building strong home-school partnerships. Establish set meeting times, structures, and agenda items for this committee; and
- hold all schools accountable for implementing the strategies and regularly monitor the effectiveness of the strategies through survey, focus groups, and analysis of student performance.