



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	270100010019
District	Greater Amsterdam City School District
District Address	9 Brice Street, Amsterdam, NY 12010
Superintendent	Thomas F Perillo
Date(s) of Review	June 2-3, 2015

District Information Sheet			
Grade Configuration	PreK-12	Total Enrollment	3702
		Number of Schools	6
District Composition (<i>most recent data</i>)			
% Title I Population	59%	% Attendance Rate	93%
% Free Lunch	100%ES + MS 44.9% HS	% Reduced Lunch	100%ES + MS 1.9% HS
% Limited English Proficient	4.1%	% Students with Disabilities	13.9%
Racial/Ethnic Origin (<i>most recent data</i>)			
% American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	% Black or African American	7.2%
% Hispanic or Latino	42.5%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1%
% White	88%	% Multi-Racial	3.6%
Personnel (<i>most recent data</i>)			
Years Superintendent Assigned to District	8	# of Deputy/Assistant Superintendents	0
# of Principals	6	# of Assistant Principals	5
# of Teachers	317	Avg. Class Size	18
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0	% Teaching Out of Certification	0
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	76	Average Teacher Absences	4.92%
Teacher Turnover Rate – Teachers < 5 years exp.	81	Teacher Turnover Rate – All Teachers	N/A
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (<i>2013-14</i>)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	14%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	13%
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	82%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	60%
Student Performance for High Schools (<i>2013-14</i>)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	69%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	72%
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (<i>2013-14</i>)			
4 Year Graduation Rate	68%	6 Year Graduation Rate	66%
% of earning Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Des.	18%		
Current NYSED Accountability Status			
# of Reward Schools	0	# of Priority Schools	1
# of Schools In Good Standing	1	# 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	N/A	Black or African American	N
Hispanic or Latino	N	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	N/A
White	N	Multi-Racial	N/A
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	N/A	Black or African American	N
Hispanic or Latino	N	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	N/A
White	N	Multi-Racial	N/A
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	N/A	Black or African American	N
Hispanic or Latino	N	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	N/A
White	N	Multi-Racial	N/A
Students with Disabilities	N	Limited English Proficient	N/A
Economically Disadvantaged	N		

DISTRICT PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE DISTRICT

Priority 1 - Improve instruction and student achievement in all Greater Amsterdam School District (GASD) schools.

Increase professional capacity of all staff as evidenced by:

- 10% increase in numbers of teachers/staff serving in leadership roles/functions
- 95% of teachers scoring at the "effective" or "highly effective" ranges in all components on Domains 2 & 3 on the District's APPR rubric
- 15% increase in staff members participating in professional development beyond the school day/year

Priority 2 - Improve district and school outreach to parents to increase parental engagement and involvement in their children's academic program

- Increase parent attendance at academic events by 10% over 2013-14 rates
- Increase teachers' contact to parents by 10% over 2013-14 rates

- Increase overall parent perception of schools by 10% over 2013-14 rate, based on parent survey data
- Priority 3** - Improve communication and engagement with community and business members.
- Improve community involvement with our schools by 20% through increased connections and partnerships with community groups and businesses.

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), and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RB-ERN). There was also a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (shadow) representative.
- 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 28 classrooms across the one school and IIT reviewers conducted focus group interviews with students, staff, and parents.
- District reviewers conducted interviews with district leadership, central office staff, and a focus group of school leaders.
- The district provided results of a student survey that 1403 (37 percent) completed.
- The district provided results of a staff survey that 335 (88 percent) completed.
- The district provided results of a parent survey that 130 (2 percent) 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3	The district is organized and allocates resources (financial, staff support, materials, etc.) in a way that aligns appropriate levels of support for schools based on the needs of the school community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4	The district has a comprehensive plan to create, deliver and monitor professional development in all pertinent areas that is adaptive and tailored to the needs of individual schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5	The district promotes a data-driven culture by providing strategies connected to best practices that all staff members and school communities are expected to be held accountable for implementing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 1:				X	

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

#	Statement of Practice	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
2.1	The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for the school leader to create, develop and nurture a school environment that is responsive to the needs of the entire school community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

#	Statement of Practice	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
3.1	The district works collaboratively with the school(s) to ensure CCLS curriculum that provide 21st Century and College and Career Readiness skills in all content areas and provides fiscal and human resources for	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	implementation.				
Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions: Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn, so that all students and pertinent subgroups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking, and achievement.					
#	Statement of Practice	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
4.1	The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for teachers to develop strategies and practices and addresses effective planning and account for student data, needs, goals, and levels of engagement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health: The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.					
#	Statement of Practice	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
5.1	The district creates policy and works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and resources that positively support students' social and emotional developmental health.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement: The school creates a culture of partnership where families, community members, and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being.					
#	Statement of Practice	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
6.1	The district has a comprehensive family and community engagement strategic plan that states the expectations around creating and sustaining a welcoming environment for families, reciprocal communication, and establishing partnerships with community organizations and families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

District Review – Findings, Evidence, Impact and Recommendations:

<p>Tenet 1 - District Leadership and Capacity: The district examines school systems and makes intentional decisions to identify and provide critical expectations, supports and structures in all areas of need so that schools are able to respond to their community and ensure that all students are successful.</p>	<p>Overall Tenet Rating</p>	<p>Stage 2</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 1.1: The district has a comprehensive approach for recruiting, evaluating, and sustaining high-quality personnel that affords schools the ability to ensure success by addressing the needs of their community.</p>	<p>Tenet Rating</p>	<p>Stage 2</p>
<p>Overall Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district has established systems for recruiting staff including through partnerships with local colleges and universities to broaden the use of interns to support students in classes. The district has hired some personnel from diverse backgrounds, but the composition of staffing still does not reflect the cultural make-up of its community. The district’s reliance on grants to attract high-quality personnel limits the district staff’s ability to plan strategically. The district uses the Danielson rubric to evaluate teacher performance, but 100 percent of teachers were rated as effective or highly effective, which is not consistent with the levels of low student achievement in schools. <p>Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district leadership team, which is comprised of district leaders and directors, reported in interviews that the district uses the On-line Application System (OLAS) to advertise position vacancies. In addition, the district utilizes internal postings, newspapers, colleges/universities, and a professional consultancy firm to attract a wide range of candidates with diverse skills and backgrounds. District leaders reported that the district hires interns from local colleges to supplement staffing. For example, social work Interns from the State University of New York and Union College were assigned to work alongside staff within classrooms to provide targeted support to students. The district leadership team shared data with the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that indicate the number of Spanish speaking and ethnically diverse personnel employed in the district increased from 20 in 2013 to 40 in 2015. The district leadership indicated that not all of these appointments were teachers, but some key appointments were made to the bilingual office staff and supervisory staff. However, the IIT found that the composition of the school’s staff does not yet reflect the diverse populations represented within the schools. Evidence from district leadership interviews indicated that grants are the main source of funding to supplement and sustain staffing levels and district initiatives. For example, the Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (STLE) grant finances additional school-based curriculum leaders and data coaches and funds the professional learning communities (PLCs) introduced by the district this academic year in all schools. District and school leaders reported that the coaches selected to lead the PLCs are respected and experienced staff in the district, which has helped to secure teachers’ support of the PLC meetings. The district leadership reported that in efforts to address the seven percent 		

teacher retention rate, the district staff used funds from the Teacher of Tomorrow grant to offer additional financial reward to new hires and to provide incentives for teachers to stay in the district. However, the on-going dependence upon grants that can cease on short notice as well as the lack of detail in plans on how the district staff intend to fund positions beyond the grant cycle limits the district's efforts to plan long-term for adequate staffing and program levels.

- The district leadership team shared that school leaders use the Danielson Rubric to evaluate the quality of classroom instruction. Through the process, 100 percent of teachers in the district were rated effective or highly effective, which does not align with persistent low student achievement across the district. The evaluations are not giving the district leaders a clear view of the standards of instruction across the district to identify strengths and to target professional development (PD), feedback, and support.

Impact Statement:

- The process for recruiting and evaluating staff is not yet resulting in personnel that reflects the cultural make-up of the district community or in high-quality instruction leading to high student achievement. State assessments show minimal improvements in student achievement across all district schools, particularly for subgroups.

Recommendation:

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

- Adopt a protocol that transparently drives the recruitment and selection of staff to reflect the student body represented in the district. In addition, review and modify the district's protocol for evaluating teachers to ensure that, through the process, feedback encourages teachers to focus on student learning to improve levels of student achievement. Provide support to teachers in adjusting their instructional practices to meet the needs of all subgroups of students.

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

Tenet Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- The district leadership team worked with external consultants to set specific, measurable, ambitious, results-oriented and timely (SMART) goals. The district directors, external consultants, and all school leaders collaborated to establish multiple layers of goals and priorities that form the district's theory of action. However, while there are overall measures to evaluate impact, there are no success criteria or benchmarks to monitor progress towards achieving all of the goals.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district leadership team reported in interviews that the district established three priorities or goals that focus on improvements in instruction and student achievement, district and school outreach to parents to increase parental engagement and involvement in their children’s academic program, and communication and engagement with the community and businesses. The goals form the district’s theory of action. District leaders reported that all schools have developed goals that are aligned with the district goals. Examples of school goals include improving graduation rates for all students and subgroups of students at the high school, increasing teacher ratings against specific domains in the Danielson rubric at the academy (middle) school, and improving reading using the Fountas and Pinnell grade-level tests in the elementary schools. However, the IIT did not find evidence of success criteria or milestone benchmarks set to aid staff in monitoring progress towards achieving the goals.
- District leaders reported that there is a protocol for sharing data about student achievement between schools and the district. The data coaches gather a range of assessment data from each school about student achievement, which coaches share during the PLC meetings. District leaders reported that school leaders attend PLC meetings and are fully informed about the work the PLCs undertake at a school level. The school leaders then share the work done and data with district directors during monthly formal meetings. In addition, district directors and school leaders informally communicate through regular texting, emailing, and discussions. District staff indicated that strategic monitoring and planning are discussed in regular meetings between the PLCs and school leaders, school leaders with district leaders, and district leaders with the Board of Education (BOE). The IIT did not find evidence of a process in place for sharing data about progress towards achieving the goals for increasing parental engagement and for improving communication and engagement with the community and businesses. In addition, while student attendance is also a priority for the district, there is no district-wide initiative to improve attendance levels.

Impact Statement:

- The lack of success criteria or a set of benchmarks to measure progress towards achievement of goals hinders ongoing school improvement efforts district-wide.

Recommendation:

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

- Review the existing goals/priorities to develop a theory of action that records success criteria and a timeline with benchmark milestones for monitoring each of the goals. Build in a calendar of monitoring and evaluation to review and measure the progress of the schools and the district against the success criteria and milestones, and inform the next steps to be taken, in the drive to raise the standard of student achievement, improve classroom instruction, and increase parental and community engagement. Develop a calendar of regular formal meetings to rigorously review the theory of action and share ideas pro-actively to achieve success.

Statement of Practice 1.3: The district is organized and allocates resources (financial, staff support, materials, etc.) in a way that aligns appropriate levels of support for schools based on the needs of the school community.

Tenet Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- The district has used grant funding to develop new programs, to support students with disabilities, to introduce PLCs and to appoint data coaches in all schools in its efforts to raise student achievement and improve instructional practice across the district. The district has used the PLCs as a vehicle for professional discussion and support around the use of data-driven instruction. The district's reliance on grants to support new initiatives impacts the district staff's ability to plan long-term to sustain these innovations.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- During discussions with the IIT, the fiscal manager described the process of prioritizing spending as a collaborative task undertaken with the district leadership. The fiscal manager reported that student numbers initially determine each school's allocations but discussions with each school leader also help to build a strategic view of how to balance available resources with needs at the building level. The district leadership reported that grants are a key financial resource that fund targeted areas. In addition, although grants to fund PLCs and data coaches have ceased, district leaders reported that district has reassured school leaders that the work of the PLCs and data coaches will continue for the coming year and that the district has adjusted funds to cover these expenditures.
- The district leadership reported in interviews that the district used the Contract for Excellence Aid to develop new programs and to increase staffing using a need-based formula. In addition, district staff reported using a formula to target resources for students with disabilities such as providing additional classes in schools and maintaining student/teacher ratios within those classes according to students' needs. District leaders reported that the financial manager and district directors met with the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBE-RN) representative to solicit advice on the English as a New Language (ENL) requirements. The district leadership reported that in response to a recommendation to appoint additional teachers, the BOE appointed four additional teachers for September. The district staff stated that the district developed the direct consultant teacher model in schools and secured School Improvement Grants (SIG) and Title 1 grants to cover the costs of PD for staff teaching students with special needs. However, the district leaders did not share evidence of impact of these strategies on student achievement with the review team. The fiscal manager explained that the budget is decreasing due to declining revenue, which impacts resource provision. The district leadership stated that the district staff struggles to secure additional resources to fund some positions and programs including special education curriculum leaders in the high school and academy (middle) school, a special education teacher at the alternate education program, appropriate levels of staff for academic instructional support (AIS) and before and after school and summer programs across district schools.
- The district and school leaders reported that the introduction of PLCs allows teachers to meet daily in some schools and weekly in others and provides additional opportunities for school leaders to monitor instruction outside of the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process. In addition, assessments of reading, language skills and math are gathered to map student achievement and

progress. The data from district schools showed some improvements to instruction and growth in student achievement; however, these gains are not consistent across all schools, and have not resulted in improvements in state assessments.

Impact Statement:

- The district’s use of funding to finance PLCs is resulting in some improvement to instruction and student growth as measured by school-based assessments. However, beyond the work of the PLCs, the district does not rigorously monitor the strategies in place to ensure that the strategies are having the planned effect on student achievement, particularly for students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs).

Recommendation:

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

- Build upon the systems that have been introduced to focus upon data through the work of the data coaches and the PLCs. Explore ways to sustain the PLCs and data coaches to continue to improve teachers’ understanding of data to guide instructional practice and curriculum resource provision. Secure long-term funding to maintain this work so that strategic long-term plans can be established to provide appropriate levels of support for students with disabilities, ELLs and other subgroups to help close the achievement gap and support the drive to raise 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
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Overall Finding:

- The district has a calendar of PD, which serves as the district staff’s PD plan. The district has hired consultants to support improvement efforts, and there is a PD committee comprised of teachers and school leaders, which meets monthly to discuss issues around PD. However, the PD plan does not include specific strategies to evaluate the impact of PD on instructional practice and student achievement.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district leadership reported in interviews that the district hired external consultants to provide research-based guidance to teachers and school leaders and to deliver PD on the use of data to guide instruction and to support the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). School curriculum leaders also provided PD in each school and the data coaches worked with teachers, over this past year, to sustain the focus upon data, curriculum, and instruction at a school level. District and school leaders confirmed that the PLCs and data coaches are having a positive impact upon the way teachers are being trained to use data to inform instruction. In addition, district and school leaders reported that evidence from school-based assessment outcomes and the school leaders monitoring

through the PLCs indicate that the focus upon data and the use of assessment to guide instruction are having a positive effect upon student achievement in some schools.

- The district leadership reported that the Danielson rubric is used as part of the teacher evaluation process and the recent data gathered from walk-throughs and observations indicated that staff need more training in domains two and three. The district leaders shared that while school leaders have conducted observations of classes, provisions within the current contract restrict the district from requiring teachers to provide written plans and limit the district directors’ direct involvement in the evaluation process. In addition, the mismatch between the 100 percent “effective” or “highly effective” teacher ratings and the low student achievement levels has not been resolved.
- The IIT found that the current PD plan, although detailed in recording the training offered, does not adequately address the key areas that teachers need to improve most to respond to students’ needs. For example, although the Danielson rubric has been used to identify key foci of instructional practice in need of improvement, a process to determine the planning of PD to meet students’ social and emotional health has not been established. Although members of the district leadership team reported to the IIT that they are aware of the rise school issues/concerns in different areas, pertinent training has not been planned to address rising concerns in areas such as students’ behavior and mental health issues. School leaders reported that support staff provide professional guidance at the building level, but described much of this work as providing “triage” response to ever increasing problems. Crisis intervention training has taken place at the school level and a behavior specialist has been employed to provide guidance in five of the six schools. However, school leaders reported and survey data confirmed that student behavior continues to negatively affect classroom environments.

Impact Statement:

- While the district has undertaken an analysis of data to highlight areas of weakness in instructional practice, the IIT found limited evidence to show the impact of the PD on improvements to instructional practice. Although the district staff has encouraged school staff to implement strategies within schools to respond to the rising needs of students from economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse backgrounds as well as students exhibiting disruptive behaviors and mental health concerns, there is no district-wide drive to target PD for staff to cohesively address these specific areas to respond to and support students’ changing needs.

Recommendation:

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

- Develop and implement a district-wide strategic plan that includes systems to gather information about changing needs district-wide, and target PD to address the identified needs.

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

- The district is using data coaches and the PLCs to focus discussions and planning on data and to build consistency in data-driven instruction. The district directors in collaboration with the school-based curriculum leaders and consultants drive the improvement of the curriculum maps, and standards-based instruction. However, the district leaders report inconsistencies across schools in how data is used to adapt planning and instructional practice.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district leadership reported in interviews that the data coaches work with teachers in PLC meetings to align the curriculum to school-based assessments of student achievement using Atlas or EdVista. District directors work with data coaches and teams of teachers to go through the process for aligning the curriculum with the CCLS at each grade level to support the focus on improving instructional practice, curriculum planning and the use of assessment to improve student achievement. However, the district directors reported that inconsistencies exist across schools in how staff use data to adapt planning and instructional practice. District staff reported that district is unable to request written curriculum maps from individual teachers or to engage in any way with the teacher evaluation process. As a result, district staff are unable to monitor directly whether teachers are using data to adapt the curriculum maps to meet the needs of all student subgroups, including students with disabilities and English language learners.
- The district staff reported hiring a part-time curriculum consultant to work with English as a second language (ESL) teachers across all grades and schools. In addition, elementary schools have common planning time and English language arts (ELA) re-teaching time built into the schedule. Teachers use this time to address the needs identified during PLC data analysis. The district staff reported that teachers were surveyed by the district staff about the PLCs, and 90 percent of the responses were positive, indicating that the PLCs have been beneficial in developing a common language around the use of data to improve instruction.
- Data from school-based assessments are shared by data coaches with the administrative cabinet at regular meetings to measure student growth. The district has not resolved why improving student achievement as indicated in school-based assessments is not reflected in student performance in state assessments. The IIT did not find evidence of an agreed protocol for gathering and sharing data about all of the district goals, particularly the goals relating to increasing parental and community engagement. The district responds to each school's needs to meet students' social and emotional developmental health; however the district has not gathered data to evaluate the impact of the current strategies and interventions in this area.

Impact Statement:

- The work of each PLC varies from school to school depending upon the teachers' response to the work

undertaken by the coaches. The data gathered by the coaches and the work of the PLCs show growth in student achievement in the on-going assessments at the building level. However, the same successes in student achievements are not yet reflected in state assessments.

Recommendation:

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

- Continue to review and refine the work of the PLCs and data coaches to build consistency in instructional practice across all schools. Work with teachers to encourage teachers to focus upon student learning and learning outcomes in instruction. Build clear and consistent understanding of the use of assessment to generate data that can be used to inform instruction and modify curriculum planning to meet the needs of all students, especially students with disabilities and English language learners.

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

<p>Statement of Practice 2.1 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for the school leader to create, develop and nurture a school environment that is responsive to the needs of the entire school community.</p>	<p>Tenet Rating</p>	<p>Stage 2</p>
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Overall Finding:

- The district and school leaders collaborate to establish school goals and priorities aligned to the district goals. In addition, school leaders use the established goals in making decisions about the PLCs at individual schools. However, the lack of success criteria and benchmark measures limits the district’s ability to monitor progress towards achieving district-wide goals.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- School leaders reported that the regular monthly meetings with the district staff provides opportunities for school leaders to share their vision, to give progress reports on the building level initiatives, and to consult and engage with the district staff on school issues. During discussions with the IIT, the school leaders reported that last year, the work of the PLCs and the data coaches was the main focus for discussion. In addition, the school leaders reported that PLCs have had a positive impact on individual schools because of the collaboration between staff and the encouragement by the district and coaches for staff to take risks to try new instructional approaches. The school leaders indicated that in this first year they focused on implementing the PLCs. School leaders shared that teachers have appreciated the time for collaboration. School leaders reported in interviews that the summer meetings between the district directors should be used to clarify the future purpose of the PLCs and to determine how staff will use the PLCs as a vehicle to encourage more discussions about student learning and develop greater consistency in practice district-wide. School leaders also shared

that while instruction is improving, teachers inconsistently use data to modify the curriculum to meet the needs of all students.

- The school leaders interviewed by the IIT expressed appreciation for the informal accessibility of the district directors through texting, emailing, and telephoning. School leaders said that the regular meetings provides opportunities for the district leaders to understand needs at the school level and for school leaders to secure school services and resources for the school community. For example, one school leader reported having filled a lunch room aide position after sharing this need at one of these meetings. The IIT did not find evidence about the specific structure of the meetings or about how staff use the meeting time to evaluate the progress made toward achieving district and school goals.

Impact Statement:

- The regular monthly meetings and more frequent informal meetings between school leaders and district directors are building relationships that help to support the work of the school; however, it is not clear what measures are used to determine how well each school is progressing to achieve its goals and how well each school is supporting progress towards achieving district-wide goals.

Recommendation:

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

- Continue to meet regularly with school leaders to encourage a common understanding of need relating to school and district goals. Establish challenging benchmark measures and success criteria, and structure monthly meetings to provide opportunities for staff to review progress against the agreed measures. Build district-wide consistency in practice and purpose about next steps to be taken at a building level to drive the pace of success.

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 provided school leaders with tools such as the Rubicon Atlas to support curricular planning and implementation as well as align with CCLS. Although teachers are provided opportunities to share plans across schools, grades and departments, teachers are not required to regularly generate written curriculum maps to inform their instruction to meet student need. The district leadership reported that this results in very general, long-term maps that do not give information about how the teachers are adapting curricula to meet student learning needs from day to day. As a result, some students are not challenged enough and others do not fully understand what is required of students.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- School and district leaders confirmed that the district purchased tools such as the Rubicon Atlas to

support curriculum mapping and curriculum planning aligned to the CCLS. The district leaders said they have generated a number of collaborative curriculum maps for teachers to access to support their curriculum choices. In addition, data coaches and consultants support teachers in their progress with Rubicon Atlas. The school leaders reported that they work with the district staff to monitor curriculum maps for content. However, school leaders confirmed that despite the investment in the Rubicon Atlas tool, some schools in the district have not progressed beyond the district collaborative maps because focused support, such as the PLCs was not in place until this year.

- School and district leaders confirmed that reviews of lesson observations and student work show that most teachers’ instruction is teacher-centered and text-book dependent. The Daily Café, a program promoted by the district, provides some opportunities for students to pursue their own interests and research. However, the choices from which students select are still teacher-directed. School leaders reported that the PLCs is beginning to influence teachers’ use of assessments when they are making decisions about the curriculum. In addition, teachers are starting to collaborate to share successful strategies and to develop their understanding of the link between the curriculum, assessment, and data. The school leaders stated that they appreciate the past support from the district and endorse the district’s decision to fund PLCs for the coming year.

Impact Statement:

- The work of the PLCs and data coaches is beginning to influence teachers’ instructional practices, levels of curriculum awareness, and use of assessments. However, teachers need more support to build their confidence and expertise in differentiating curricula and adjusting instruction to meet 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:

- Further develop the work of the PLCs to focus curriculum choices upon student learning. Use the collaboration time to discuss how student learning needs should guide curriculum planning and instructional practice so that students’ needs are met. Use the monitoring carried out by the school leaders and district directors to continue to embed curricular planning.

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

- The district has provided data coaches, consultants, and curriculum leaders as well as resourced the PLC process to support teachers in their use of student data gathered from assessments to plan instruction. Although structures are in place to support teachers in using data, more needs to be done to build teachers’ skills in analyzing data to inform and adapt instruction to meet the needs of all

students.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- School leaders reported that teachers are collaborating through the daily and sometimes weekly PLC meetings to interpret the data generated by end of unit assessments linked to the CCLS. An example of a very successful PLC this year has been the Algebra PLC organized at a secondary level to support the work of teachers in meeting the requirements of the CCLS. The main focus of PLC meetings is to encourage teachers to begin to understand differentiation and how to use data to inform instruction. Through the PLC meetings, the data coaches share strategies that are successful in grouping students and encourage teachers to consider student next steps in making their decisions about instructional practice. School and district leaders reported in interviews that teachers inconsistently implement the guidance from the PLC sessions regarding planning and delivering differentiated instruction that responds to the needs of all student subgroups. In addition, the quality of instruction varies within and across schools. Some school leaders reported that they would like the PLCs to focus more on student-centered learning and not teacher-led instruction district-wide.
- District leaders shared that district staff have been working with the school leaders and data coaches to improve the quality of assessments used by teachers. District staff reported that some teachers end of unit assessments linked to the CCLS lack challenge and do not evaluate how well the students have learned. The district leaders reported that improving the quality of assessments will be part of the district’s follow up support to PD for the coming year.

Impact Statement:

- Although the district has supported the schools’ work towards achieving the goal of improving classroom instruction and student achievement, this support has not led to teachers across the district consistently using accurate assessment data to plan instruction that meets students’ needs. One result is that not all teachers consistently provide student-centered learning that leads to increased student engagement and 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:

- Use the coaches within the classroom to increase the monitoring of staff’s implementation of district expectations to use data to inform instruction and student-centered learning at a classroom level, as well as in the PLC meetings to support teachers in their efforts to improve their instructional practices. In addition, use the PLCs to build stronger assessments in grades Kindergarten through-twelve to build rigor and continuity in practice district-wide.

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

Tenet Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- The district has started to plan programs and supports to respond to the growing numbers of students identified as having mental health concerns and exhibiting negative behaviors that effect instructional practice and disrupt the learning process of other students. Although district staff have provided a range of supports to schools, including personnel and training, district staff have not organized supports into a strategic program to proactively address students' social and emotional developmental health needs.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district leaders reported in interviews that they are aware of the growing numbers of classroom incidents and have provided individual support to schools. District leaders shared that support staff within the district and external behavioral consultant have provided trainings to help teachers deal with the issues that are arising at the school level. During discussions with the IIT, some school leaders reported that their schools are in need of additional specialist staff to support students varying needs. School leaders reported that the reductions in the budget over recent years have resulted in the loss of a guidance counselor at the elementary level. School leaders shared that some schools have developed a Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program and a Code of Conduct to guide how students and staff interact and engage with each other, but these initiatives have not yet resulted in a reduction in the number of behavior incidents. Although the district provides the Dignity for All Students guidance to encourage positive behavior and respect, the IIT did not find evidence of a district-wide vision, or a process for promoting a cohesive vision for students' social and emotional developmental health.
- District leaders shared that district's and school's goals focus on engaging students more successfully in response to classroom instruction. However, the IIT found that the general nature of the district and school goals such as to "improve instruction," without specific success criteria for raising student engagement, results in no clear understanding of what student engagement looks like and what staff need to do to increase student engagement. District leaders stated that schools across the district are struggling to meet the needs of students from economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse backgrounds and to address the growing number of students exhibiting behavioral issues. However, district staff did not present evidence of a plan of how the district staff plans to deal with the changing nature of student needs.
- The district leadership confirmed in interviews that district staff have not gathered data to clearly understand what is happening in each building to meet students' social and emotional developmental health. The district leaders shared that although district staff are aware of some initiatives school leaders are supporting such as work with the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI), which staff reported was successful in dissipating racial tension in one of the secondary schools, district staff do not directly support these initiatives. School leaders shared that the district staff launched the "Peaceful Buses" initiative in those schools where school buses were identified as one setting where behavior incidents occurred regularly. This initiative entailed staff assigning seats to students and bus

drivers writing up incidents quickly so that swift action could be taken. However, district staff have not gathered data to evaluate the impact of these strategies.

Impact Statement:

- The lack of a district-wide plan to address social and emotional developmental health needs results in reactive rather than proactive supports to respond to students’ need. In addition, the lack of data that are gathered at the district level on the nature of student incidents limit opportunities for targeted interventions that fully address students’ needs district-wide.

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 to address social and emotional developmental health needs. Appoint a person at the district level to be responsible for monitoring and analyzing data on building level incidents to look for patterns and to determine appropriate strategies to target intervention.

Statement of Practice 6.1 - Family and Community Engagement: The district has a comprehensive family and community engagement strategic plan that states the expectations around creating and sustaining a welcoming environment for families, reciprocal communication, and establishing partnerships with community organizations and families.

Tenet Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- The district has used data and feedback from school leaders about family engagement to set a goal to improve district and school outreach to parents to increase the levels of parental engagement and involvement in schools. However, while schools leaders have set goals aligned to the district goals and have developed strategies for improving parental engagement, there is no district-wide strategy for improving parental engagement or no clear process for publicizing what supports the district offers for families.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- School and district leaders confirmed in interviews that increasing parental engagement is a goal at both the district and school levels because of the overall low parent participation levels reported in schools across the district. School leaders confirmed that they use a range of strategies to increase community and parental involvement. One such example is the formation of the parent outreach group. Documentation and discussion with district leaders confirmed that this group uses texts, twitter, Facebook, and organized events to connect with parents. The district also created a Parent Liaison position to enhance communication between home and school by providing information about resources and options available on how parents can support their child. Information from the Parent Liaison on the webpage is in English and Spanish. However, school leaders reported that the parent liaison position is part-time and that most parents they spoke with were not familiar with the role of the parent liaison or the services provided by that office.

- The district leaders shared that the district staff leave the monitoring of the goal to increase parental engagement to individual schools. Some school leaders shared that they are tracking attendance at parent events. School leaders stated that attendance data show low parent turn-out to most events, with attendance varying by type of event. For example, choral concerts were very well attended. School leaders reported that they use the good turn-out at choral events as an opportunity to share information with parents by setting up a table with pamphlets and hand-outs. School leaders said they are also exploring other ways to reach parents and to develop parents' knowledge and understanding about their child's education.
- A review of documents showed that correspondence between the district and parents as well as between the schools and parents is translated in different languages. The district leadership reported that the district appointed a bi-lingual administrative clerk to communicate with parents when they phone the district office. The website offers a Google translation service, available in all pertinent languages, for parents to help support their understanding of the information offered. However, the IIT did not find evidence to show that the district does not monitors how many parents are accessing the website. According to district leaders, after one event at the district level, one parent suggested that more parental response would be achieved if the district and schools publicized that translation services would be available at meetings
- School leaders reported that they use the "Race to Improve" forums, which are district-organized meetings at in schools to work with parents to explain their child's special needs and the support the district intends to provide to support these needs. The Focused Behavior Assistance (FBA) team and the Child Study Team (CST) are also district services offered to support the parents of students with special needs. School leaders reported that these services are available to parents whether or not they attend the meetings. Parents are kept informed of the services and monitoring that takes place by letter.

Impact Statement:

- The lack of a district-wide strategic policy for monitoring and promoting family engagement limits the potential impact of the goals that have been set. Parents currently are not engaging with schools or the district in appropriate numbers.

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 strategic policy for engaging parents that includes the regular review and evaluation of the existing strategies the district and schools use to engage parents. Research other ways of engaging with parents that have been successful in other districts and settings. Publicize widely the use of translators and the other services that are available to parents to help them engage and support their children fully.