



# 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>	280201030000
<b>District</b>	Hempstead UFSD
<b>District Address</b>	187 Peninsular Boulevard, Hempstead NY
<b>Superintendent</b>	Ms. Susan Johnson
<b>Date(s) of Review</b>	May 27-28, 2015

District Information Sheet			
<b>Grade Configuration</b>	PreK-12	<b>Total Enrollment</b>	8202
		<b>Number of Schools</b>	10
<b>District Composition (most recent data)</b>			
<b>% Title I Population</b>	68%	<b>% Attendance Rate</b>	89%
<b>% Free Lunch</b>	64%	<b>% Reduced Lunch</b>	4%
<b>% Limited English Proficient</b>	30%	<b>% Students with Disabilities</b>	17%
<b>Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)</b>			
<b>% American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	0%	<b>% Black or African American</b>	35%
<b>% Hispanic or Latino</b>	61%	<b>% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</b>	-
<b>% White</b>	3%	<b>% Multi-Racial</b>	-
<b>Personnel (most recent data)</b>			
<b>Years Superintendent Assigned to District</b>	3	<b># of Deputy/Assistant Superintendents</b>	6
<b># of Principals</b>	10	<b># of Assistant Principals</b>	18
<b># of Teachers</b>	524	<b>Avg. Class Size</b>	24
<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>	17	<b>Average Teacher Absences</b>	-
<b>Teacher Turnover Rate – Teachers &lt; 5 years exp.</b>	33%	<b>Teacher Turnover Rate – All Teachers</b>	25%
<b>Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)</b>			
<b>ELA Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	7%	<b>Mathematics Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	8%
<b>Science Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4 (4th Grade)</b>	72%	<b>Science Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4 (8th Grade)</b>	19%
<b>Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)</b>			
<b>ELA Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	53%	<b>Mathematics Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	58%
<b>Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)</b>			
<b>4 Year Graduation Rate</b>	41%	<b>6 Year Graduation Rate</b>	47%
<b>% of earning Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Des.</b>	6%		
<b>Current NYSED Accountability Status</b>			
<b># of Reward Schools</b>	0	<b># of Priority Schools</b>	2
<b># of Schools In Good Standing</b>	3	<b># of Focus Schools</b>	5
<b># of LAP Schools</b>	0		
<b>District Accountability Status</b>			
<b>Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (indicate Y / N / N-A)</b>			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	N-A	<b>Black or African American</b>	N
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	N	<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	N-A
<b>White</b>	N	<b>Multi-Racial</b>	N-A
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	N	<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	N
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	N		
<b>Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (indicate Y / N / N-A)</b>			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	N-A	<b>Black or African American</b>	N
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	N	<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	N-A
<b>White</b>	N	<b>Multi-Racial</b>	N-A
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	N	<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	N
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	N		
<b>Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (indicate Y / N / N-A)</b>			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	N-A	<b>Black or African American</b>	N
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	N	<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	N-A
<b>White</b>	N	<b>Multi-Racial</b>	N-A
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	N	<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	N
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	N		
<b>DISTRICT PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE DISTRICT:</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase the percentage of students at proficiency in math and ELA by 5 percentage points (total students and sub-groups)</li> <li>Increase the high school graduation rate by at least 5 percentage points</li> <li>To develop and implement a professional development plan to ensure that all instructional and student support staff are prepared to implement Common Core Learning Standards</li> <li>To develop and implement Common Core Learning Standards curriculum in all grade levels and subjects</li> <li>To develop and implement a curriculum monitoring process that will ensure consistency and fidelity of implementation</li> </ol>			

## Information about the review

- The review of the district was conducted by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE), a representative from the New York State Education Department, a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SEIS) representative, and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) reviews of two schools in the district also informed the district review.
- During IIT school reviews in the district, reviewers visited classrooms in two schools 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 student surveys from two schools that an unknown number of grade three, four, and five students completed, totaling 33.5 percent of the total number of students in those grades.
- The district provided results of staff surveys from nine schools that 500 staff (95%) completed.
- The district did not provide the results of a parent survey.
- The district had recently been investigated by the NYS Comptroller's office and also by the Office of the Attorney General. Recommendations for improvement of practice had been issued.

**Tenet 1 - District Leadership and Capacity:** The district examines school systems and makes intentional decisions to identify and provide critical expectations, supports and structures in all areas of need so that schools are able to respond to their community and ensure that all students are successful.

#	Statement of Practice	Stage 4	stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
1.1	The district has a comprehensive approach for recruiting, evaluating, and sustaining high-quality personnel that affords schools the ability to ensure success by addressing the needs of their community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.2	The district leadership has a comprehensive and explicit theory of action about school culture that communicates high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.3	The district is organized and allocates resources (financial, staff support, materials, etc.) in a way that aligns appropriate levels of support for schools based on the needs of the school community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.4	The district has a comprehensive plan to create, deliver and monitor professional development in all pertinent areas that is adaptive and tailored to the needs of individual schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.5	The district promotes a data-driven culture by providing strategies connected to best practices that all staff members and school communities are expected to be held accountable for implementing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 1:</b>					X

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

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

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

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

**Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions:** Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn, so that all students and pertinent subgroups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking, and achievement.

#	Statement of Practice	Stage 4	state 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health:</b> 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	state 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"/>
<b>Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement:</b> 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	state 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 1</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 1</b></p>
<p><b>Overall Finding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district recruitment program does not consistently place staff in schools that meet the needs of the school or student sub-groups. School leaders and district staff state that the strongest candidates are not always appointed. In addition, school leaders have not been supported to evaluate the effectiveness of their staff.</li> </ul> <p><b>Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While the district has just begun to address staffing issues in relation to the increasing number of English language learners (ELLs) enrolled in the district’s schools, district leaders state that there has been little focus on recruiting teachers to meet this specific need over the prior few years. District leaders state that staff is now encouraged to study for bi-lingual certification at a local college. An associate superintendent for human resources (HR) informed the integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that they had so far funded 17 staff to obtain their Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) certification at a local college.</li> <li>District leaders acknowledge that school leaders have little opportunity to articulate the individual needs of schools when seeking to match prospective new teachers, which hinders the alignment between teacher skills and school and student needs. In addition, reviewers found that there are no specific guidelines or criteria to support the recruitment process in terms of who is to be involved in the initial recruitment, selection, and interview processes or criteria to govern final appointments. Without these criteria and guidelines, the district’s process lacks transparency and cannot guarantee consistency in its quest for appointing the best personnel for the jobs it offers. School leaders select a candidate from a district decided short list, but district leaders state that this is often over-ruled by the district or the Board of Education (BOE), who make their own choices. Consequently, the most appropriate candidate is not always appointed. This inconsistency in hiring the strongest candidates was further corroborated by the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL) who found that when hiring the district’s enrollment ombudsman and monitor, the original choices of the district were not approved by the Attorney General’s office.</li> <li>The district leaders concede that the district has not implemented an effective teacher evaluation model that is linked to student progress. District leaders state that the evaluation model in place produces overinflated teacher ratings that are not a true reflection of teacher skills and do not align to student achievement and growth data across the district. In addition, district and school leaders indicate that feedback provided by evaluators to teachers through this evaluation model is not</li> </ul>		

actionable or developmental and contributes little to the improvement of teacher practices

**Impact Statement:**

- The district does not have a strategic approach to recruiting, retaining, and evaluating staff, which limits 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:

- focus hiring decisions on the needs of schools and the priorities of school leaders, especially Priority and Focus Schools and the sub-groups for which they are identified;
- develop a common understanding of how hiring decisions are made, with standard criteria for who is represented on hiring committees and clear guidelines for the hiring process;
- use data drawn from student results to identify needs;
- recruit high quality staff using partnerships with colleges and teacher recruitment programs; and
- introduce an accountability model for teachers and leaders linked to data on student performance.

**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:**

- The district does not clearly communicate a theory of action for high expectations for all students to stakeholders, which limits improved student success across schools.

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

- The review team found that district staff and school leaders do not consistently understand the district's theory of action, as articulated by the district leader. Although the district leader articulates the vision and mission to school leaders and district personnel at the summer institute, school leaders confirm that the vision is not communicated uniformly to all school staff, who consequently have little grasp of the district's aspirations or the role that each stakeholder is expected to play in the achievement of the district goals. Further, school leaders stated that the district's reliance on a top down model, where the message is relayed through administrative tiers has not worked. The district leader indicated that high expectations for student success were shared at various cabinet and administrative meetings. District and school leaders stated that the district's goals for success lack a clear pathway in regards to how success is to be achieved and that there is a lack of interim benchmarks for measuring and quantifying progress towards the intended outcomes. Some school leaders stated that they sought to align their individual goals with those of the district but received little guidance and support from the district in doing this. District leaders stated they communicate the district goals to parents and the community through print media, the district website, and translated documents. However, the district acknowledged that it had made no efforts to evaluate the success of these methods of communication.
- The district leader stated that not all school staff implements the district's vision for high

expectations. For example, some district and school leaders stated that many teachers demonstrate low expectations for students and do not always respond effectively to student needs. Additionally, district leaders stated that there is no district-wide approach to improve teacher expectations for student success. Further, staff members who are low performing are not released or provided with relevant PD to improve their practice and student outcomes.

**Impact Statement:**

- The lack of a consistent and well-communicated theory of action impedes the district’s efforts to generate a climate of success in schools that encompasses high student expectations reinforced by high levels of staff professionalism.

**Recommendation:**

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

- collaboratively develop a theory of action focusing on high expectations for all students;
- promote this theory so that it is shared, understood, and implemented by all stakeholders in relation to their specific roles and responsibilities;
- set expectations district-wide for each school to communicate and reinforce a consistent message regarding high expectations; and
- put in place arrangements to monitor that these expectations are enacted appropriately by all constituents and that it leads to improvements to instructional practices and student achievement.

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

**Tenet Rating**

**Stage 1**

**Overall Finding:**

- The district centrally controls school budgets. There is no district-wide system for assessing the needs of the schools or measuring the impact of fiscal decisions on raising student achievement.

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

- Discussions with district leaders indicate that effective procedures are not in place to ensure that the allocation of resources meets the needs of all students and schools in the district. Systems are not in place that enable consultation between district and school leaders about budgets that result in available resources being allocated either equitably or adequately. District leaders report that no protocols exist to link spending and resource decisions to expected improvements in student outcomes or professional practices, and both school and district leaders state that school leaders are not held accountable for the use of allocated resources. Further, school leaders state they do not receive support from the district on how to maximize the use of resources to achieve best outcomes.
- District staff stated that the district uses supplementary funding to support areas other than their intended purposes. For example, supplementary funds have been used to support curricular initiatives that should be accounted for in school-based budgets. Further, allegations have also surfaced regarding misuse of Title III ELL funds, and use of ELL-specific funds and programs for the

general population. District staff also shared that the inadequate accounting has resulted in a funding loss for students with disabilities. The State Comptroller’s office reported that the district had not billed Medicaid as it should have and State aid had not been requested adequately for special education services.

- The district’s structures to deploy and access the impact of resources do not consistently reflect the diverse needs of the different schools. School leaders state that the district-wide approach to the allocation of resources takes little or no account of individual school needs or demographics, but instead requires a consensus among school leaders to centrally purchase resources. Within its centralized model, the district has not built capacity over time to evaluate which resource decisions have proven successful and which have not. District staff and school leaders shared that a legacy of poor strategic planning and investment in school buildings has resulted in poor building conditions in some schools and portable classrooms in other schools. School staff surveys revealed that overcrowding is exacerbating problems in some schools, with over 40 students reported in some classes. Conversely, a district leader shared that they had recorded and observed classes with as few as six students.

**Impact Statement:**

- The allocation of resources does not adequately meet the specific needs of all schools and all students, which hinders student success.

**Recommendation:**

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

- conduct a needs assessment with input from stakeholders in order to make targeted budgeting decisions, which meet the needs of schools and all students, particularly the needs of identified sub-groups;
- direct funding to meet the needs of students and schools by using grant funding for intended purposes, ensuring Medicaid is billed regarding special education services and that State aid is requested for all reimbursable special education costs, and monitoring the allocation and deployment of staff across the district to mitigate the disparities between schools and classes; and
- review the investment in school construction and refurbishment to put in place a long-term plan for improvement

**Statement of Practice 1.4:** The district has a comprehensive plan to create, deliver and monitor professional development in all pertinent areas that is adaptive and tailored to the needs of individual schools.

**Tenet Rating**

**Stage 1**

**Overall Finding:**

- The district does not have a clear, well-articulated comprehensive professional development (PD) plan in place. The district’s approach to PD has not increased teacher effectiveness so that it significantly impacts student achievement.

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

- District leaders stated that the district does not have a comprehensive PD plan in place that is distributed to all schools and teachers and that clearly articulates the PD that is offered. Further, until OBEWL’s Part 154 Corrective Action Plan was imposed this year, the district provided little or no-ELL-specific PD. However, district leaders stated that as PD opportunities arise, they are communicated to schools and some ELL-specific PD is now being provided under the Corrective Action Plan. School and district leaders confirm that PD is usually based on needs articulated by school leaders after they have carried out walkthroughs or other observations. However, both school and district leaders confirm that school and student achievement data, teacher feedback, and school and district improvement priorities are not considered when PD is determined. District leaders recognize that this approach results in PD offerings that are generic and not tailored to the needs of schools, students, or teachers and that this model is limited as a tool for driving school improvement. The district has provided opportunities for PD for all staff through its program of extended Wednesdays. However, this weekly event is not part of a comprehensive and strategic approach to improve academic standards.
- District staff and school leaders confirm that the district is beginning to train some school leaders on how to monitor the impact of PD on staff practices; however, this is at a very early stage.

**Impact Statement:**

- The lack of a clear PD plan, and the inconsistent use of school and student performance data to identify PD needs, hinders the district in moving toward its aim of an effective workforce.

**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 clear and comprehensive PD plan that takes account of student achievement data; and
- analyze the effectiveness of PD and provide follow-up support targeting the needs of individual teachers to help them fully implement PD to the benefit of their students.

**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 has begun to collect data; however, the district has yet to train school leaders and staff uniformly on analyzing data and using it effectively to measure performance and raise student achievement.

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

- The district presented no evidence that it has communicated expectations for how data is to be used by teachers in planning instruction for their students. School leaders confirmed that although the district has started to put a greater emphasis on the importance of data, these expectations are not clearly communicated to schools and school leaders themselves are unclear as to the role the district

expects them to play in analyzing and using data. Discussions with both school leaders and school staff reveal a lack of overall confidence and skill in using data as a tool for driving improvement. As a result, school staff do not use data rigorously to track the progress of students, either individually, by content area, by grade level, or by subgroups. School and district leaders also confirm that the district has not identified best data use practices that could be used universally across the district. Further, there has been evidence of multiple discrepancies in the district's records. For example, student and parent names were inconsistently spelled in different records, data reports provided to SED contained various errors and inconsistencies, and the Executive Director of Technology stated to OBEWL in an interview that the district's initial numbers on the influx of new students in the 2014-15 school year were inflated due to double counting of reentry students and the inclusion of kindergarten admittees.

- The district has started to use data systems, such as Data Warehouse, that district staff and school leaders have access to, but school leaders state that they do not receive timely data from the district, and when data is received it is often too late to be used to set academic priorities. Both school and district leaders confirm that the use of data is at very early stages at both the district and school levels and district leaders state that there has been no comprehensive PD to embed a data-driven culture into the district. Data teams who look at school level data have been established in the district, but school leaders report that these are not yet functioning in all schools. The district leader stated that because of the work of district staff in establishing quarterly assessments and gaining the Board of Education approval for them to count toward summative assessment data, schools are now gathering student performance data more regularly. However, district staff reports that school leaders and staff are not yet knowledgeable in analyzing and using data to improve student performance. The district has recently appointed a staff member to lead district staff on the analysis of student performance data, but this appointment is too early in its tenure to impact performance.

**Impact Statement:**

- The overall inability of staff to analyze and use student performance data to inform teaching impedes the teachers' capacity to target learning for students and improve student success across the district.

**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 approach to the collection and analysis of data to support teachers' capacity to provide targeted learning for students in order to improve student achievement; and
- provide PD for district staff, school leaders, and teachers to gain a better understanding of the collection and analysis of data and how to use the data to have a positive impact on student achievement.

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 1</b></p>

**Overall Finding:**

- School leaders state that the district does not support school leaders as individuals with their own visions for their schools, but has a generic approach to school support. This approach impedes school leaders' capacity to address the specific needs of their school.

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

- School leaders state that the district monitors their work through monthly reports they submit and district leaders respond in a format derived from the tenets listed in the New York State Education Department's (NYSED) Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE). However, school leaders indicate that this feedback does not provide them with specific guidance and support in helping them to fulfil their roles as instructional leaders. School leaders report that the district provides no mentoring program for new school leaders. In addition, school leaders state that the monthly meetings between groups of school leaders and the district serve as an ad hoc mentoring arrangement as do site visits by district staff, but overall they state that this is insufficient to meet the daily challenges they face in their schools and a more systematic mentoring program for school leaders is urgently needed.
- District staff stated that the allocation of school staff to meet the needs of schools is directly controlled by the district and that the district oversees the decisions on material resources by requiring consensus between either the elementary or secondary school leaders, depending on for where the resources are intended. This leads to resource decisions not always meeting individual school needs. School leaders told the IIT that the specific needs of their schools were not being addressed, as there was a need to have supplemental resources to help teachers address the significant skill gaps of students arriving from different countries who have not had prior exposure to the learning model embedded in Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) aligned curriculum. School leaders expressed their dissatisfaction with the allocation of staffing to meet their individual needs. For example, one school leader stated that there is a need in their school for more bilingual support staff. This was echoed by other school leaders who felt there were insufficient English as a Second Language (ESL) and bilingual teachers and that this was adversely impacting the achievement of students. More than one school leader stated that some classes have over 30 students.
- The district leader stated the district does not seek to manage the day-to-day business of schools from the central office; however, school leaders stated that they need more district support in dealing with issues, such as implementing the CCLS, Data Driven Instruction (DDI), and changes to instructional practices with resistant staff.

**Impact Statement:**

- The district does not consistently support school leaders in meeting the specific needs of their schools and 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:

- develop a systematic district-wide approach to supporting school leaders that helps them establish

their vision for their schools to meet the specific needs of their students; and

- give school leaders more choice and control over the staffing and resources that they deem most appropriate to meet the needs of all their students.

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

**Tenet Rating**

**Stage 1**

**Overall Finding:**

- The district does not consistently collaborate with school leaders to implement the CCLS in all areas and to make decisions on CCLS curriculum purchases that meet school needs.

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

- The district does not consistently provide schools with support to ensure that all students benefit from an engaging and challenging curriculum. Most school leaders stated that the district does not collaborate with school leaders and teachers to help them deliver a curriculum that is CCLS aligned. Evidence from school reviews, as well as the continuing low achievement in the district, indicates that the district has not provided targeted and sustained support to enable schools to provide a curriculum that meets student needs, including subgroups, such as ELLs and students with disabilities. The resources provided by the district are not always adequate and appropriate, and school and district leaders acknowledge that there has not been rigorous monitoring of curriculum implementation to ensure the needs of students are consistently met.
- The district leaders stated that the district has purchased CCLS aligned commercial materials for subject areas such as math. Additionally, district leaders stated that the district allocates curriculum funds to each school’s budget and provides an approved list of resources. However, school leaders stated that purchased curriculum packages need to be supplemented because many students arrive in school with a skill gaps that need to be addressed, and the district does not provide additional resources. School leaders stated that the district has not provided a science curriculum at the elementary level below grade four. Two school leaders reported that teacher feedback from literacy and math institutes is positive, and the strategies are beginning to be implemented. However, the quality of monitoring and feedback of the curriculum by school and district leaders is not well developed, and school leaders stated that they would welcome more support from the district in enabling them to carry out this important task. School leaders stated that the district has not provided assessment and accountability systems to enable them to monitor and evaluate progress toward ensuring the effective implementation CCLS curriculum. School leaders confirm that the district provides no specific formal guidelines or helpful strategies for teachers to work together to establish a CCLS aligned curriculum.

**Impact Statement:**

- The district support for schools in implementing the CCLS is not strategic, purposeful, or helpful and as a result, the curriculum all students experience does not meet their needs or enable them to be college and career ready.

**Recommendation:**

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

- support teachers with the selection of the most appropriate approaches and resources to implement the CCLS curriculum, including resources and PD for teachers of ELLs and students with disabilities; and
- support school leaders to lead staff on CCLS curriculum implementation and establish a district-wide system to monitor that implementation.

<b>Statement of Practice 4.1 - Teacher Practices and Decisions:</b> The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for teachers to develop strategies and practices and addresses effective planning and account for student data, needs, goals, and levels of engagement.	<b>Tenet Rating</b>	<b>Stage 1</b>
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**Overall Finding**

- The PD provided by the district is not part of an overall strategic plan that takes student achievement data into account. The effectiveness of PD in improving instruction is not monitored by the district or rigorously followed up on to ensure implementation.

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

- Data demonstrates the district has consistently low levels of student achievement. The lack of high expectations for students as demonstrated in lessons observed by the review team and a lack of systems, as reported by district and school leaders, to hold teachers accountable for the progress of the students they teach, limit student achievement. The lack of teacher and school leader confidence in analyzing and using data results in little strategic use of data to plot improvements at the classroom, school, or district levels.
- School leaders state that the district has had problems with data collection and distribution. School leaders reported numerous technological difficulties that impeded the timely sharing of student achievement data, with only one school leader saying that data was returned in a timely manner. District staff stated that they are currently accessing a commercial data banking system. However, this has yet to be utilized comprehensively to analyze student performance and develop rigorous assessment or learning opportunities. The district has set up data teams in schools, but school leaders report that these are not yet functioning in all schools.
- The impact of PD on driving improvements to student achievement and instructional practices is minimal as evidenced by the lack of follow up by the district to ensure teachers implement the skills learned in PD. The review team found that district priorities for PD are not based on student assessment data or teacher evaluations. District staff stated that the district provides some follow up on PD through instructional coaches; however, school leaders report that this is not consistent. District and school leaders confirm that the monitoring of teacher practices and the impact of PD in the classroom is weak and that greater collaboration is needed between district staff and school leaders as to how the implementation of PD is monitored.

**Impact Statement:**

- The lack of a comprehensive strategic PD plan that includes monitoring in partnership with schools and

includes targeted follow-up to help embed developments in instructional practice hinders student achievement in the district.

**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 PD plan in collaboration with schools that includes systems to monitor how effectively instructional practices are improved;
- identify a system to collect data across schools that will assist in determining teacher PD; and
- provide a district-wide structure that school leaders follow in monitoring the effectiveness of PD.

**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 delivers limited PD to school leaders and teachers that address some issues related to student social and emotional developmental health needs, but this is neither extensive enough nor followed up with support to teachers regarding implementation in schools.

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

- School leaders and evidence from school reviews demonstrate that the support provided for student social and emotional developmental health is inconsistent. Although school leaders and support staff stated that some PD that has been provided for special education teachers, school leaders state that there is no district systematic and developmental approach to ensure that all staff is equipped with the skills to support student needs. Most school leaders stated that the district does not provide appropriate supports to allow the schools to address the social and emotional developmental needs of students. Further, they stated the district does not have a vision or a PD plan for student social-emotional health.
- School leaders report that currently there is an uncoordinated approach to providing support to schools regarding students with disabilities, and that although data shows a disproportionate number of suspensions of African-American students with disabilities in the middle school, there are no efforts or plans to analyze the causes of this or to seek solutions. Though the district leaders stated that the district has a code of conduct for behavior and seeks to involve parents, it acknowledges that there is no overall behavior system. Staff surveys reflect serious concerns with student behavior and some state that overcrowding in classrooms exacerbates the problem.

**Impact Statement:**

- The lack of a coordinated approach to help all teachers address student social and emotional development health needs and to improve behavior in the district's schools impacts negatively on teacher effectiveness and student learning.

**Recommendation:**

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

- plan for social workers and educational psychologists to turnkey to all staff strategies to address student social and emotional developmental needs that improve student engagement and success; and
- identify district PD days for teachers that focus on addressing student social and emotional developmental health.

**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 relies heavily on schools to communicate and develop partnerships with families.

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

- School leaders report that the district’s plan for family engagement relies almost entirely on the schools themselves rather than a collaborative approach between the district and its schools. The district’s plan includes a mandate that four Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings take place per year and that schools survey parents on how the school is supporting them. Further, the district policy requires each school to offer parent universities that consist of workshops covering a range of topics. While school leaders report that these have been successful and that parent attendance has improved, school leaders state that the district expects schools to organize and deliver these universities completely on their own with no district involvement. Additionally, school leaders state that communication with parents comes from the schools themselves and that the district does very little to support their efforts to develop partnerships between school and home. District personnel acknowledge that they need to do more to develop partnerships with parents and to provide district led workshops on how parents can support their children’s learning.
- District staff stated that the district is working to improve communication with parents and families by sending newsletters in English and Spanish and conducting phone blasts to boost parent attendance at meetings. The district stated that it provides translators for parent meetings to speak to non-English speaking parents about their needs. However, the review team found that translation for the emerging Haitian Creole population is not consistent. However, school leaders stated they would like the district to focus on funding school-based bilingual clerical staff or a bilingual parent liaison, social workers, and educational psychologists in each school who could more frequently engage with the parents and the community.
- District staff stated that the district provides funding, resources, and personnel to schools for work with parents. However, school leaders stated that the district’s focus appears to be more on administrative activities rather than developing quality home-school partnerships. For example, the district has not provided information to ELLs and their parents about their educational rights and

programming until recently.

**Impact Statement:**

- The lack of well-developed home-school partnerships impedes parent's ability to support their children's learning.

**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 approach to building home-school partnerships;
- survey parents to determine what workshops they want and include these in a district workshop program; and
- investigate the efficacy of appointing key bilingual staff in each school to support home-school relationships.