



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	620600010000
District	Kingston City School District
District Address	61 Crown Street, Kingston, NY 12401
Superintendent	Paul J. Padalino
Date(s) of Review	June 2-3, 2015

District Information Sheet					
Grade Configuration	K-12	Total Enrollment	6174	Number of Schools	10
District Composition (most recent data)					
% Title I Population	12	% Attendance Rate	93		
% Free Lunch	51	% Reduced Lunch	6		
% Limited English Proficient	4	% Students with Disabilities	25		
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native	.5	% Black or African American	15.3		
% Hispanic or Latino	16	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2.3		
% White	74.9	% Multi-Racial	7		
Personnel (most recent data)					
Years Superintendent Assigned to District	3	# of Deputy/Assistant Superintendents	5		
# of Principals	10	# of Assistant Principals	7		
# of Teachers	505	Avg. Class Size	23		
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0	% Teaching Out of Certification	6		
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	2	Average Teacher Absences	8		
Teacher Turnover Rate – Teachers < 5 years exp.	26	Teacher Turnover Rate – All Teachers	18		
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	22	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	24		
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	88	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	59		
Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	79	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	82		
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)					
4 Year Graduation Rate	76	6 Year Graduation Rate	72.7		
% of earning Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Des.	38				
Current NYSED Accountability Status					
# of Reward Schools	0	# of Priority Schools	0		
# of Schools In Good Standing	2	# of Focus Schools	8		
# 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	Y
White	N	Multi-Racial	N
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	Y
White	N	Multi-Racial	N
Students with Disabilities	N	Limited English Proficient	Y
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	Y	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	N-A
White	N	Multi-Racial	Y
Students with Disabilities	N	Limited English Proficient	N-A
Economically Disadvantaged	N		

DISTRICT PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE DISTRICT:

1. Raise the bar
2. Close the gap
3. Student health safety & leadership
4. Developing community partners
5. Developing a learning community

Information about the review

- The review of the district was conducted by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from the New York State Education Department.
- The Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) reviews of one school in the district also informed the district review.
- During IIT school reviews in the district, reviewers visited 29 classrooms within one school and IIT reviewers conducted focus group interviews with students, staff, and parents.
- District reviewers conducted interviews with district leadership, central office staff, and a focus group of principals.
- The district's parent, teacher, and student surveys were not completed in time for the review.

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

	Readiness skills in all content areas and provides fiscal and human resources for 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement: The school creates a culture of partnership where families, community members, and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being.					
#	Statement of Practice	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
6.1	The district has a comprehensive family and community engagement strategic plan that states the expectations around creating and sustaining a welcoming environment for families, reciprocal communication, and establishing partnerships with community organizations and families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

District Review – Findings, Evidence, Impact and Recommendations:

<p>Tenet 1 - District Leadership and Capacity: The district examines school systems and makes intentional decisions to identify and provide critical expectations, supports and structures in all areas of need so that schools are able to respond to their community and ensure that all students are successful.</p>	<p>Overall Tenet Rating</p>	<p>Stage 1</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 1.1: The district has a comprehensive approach for recruiting, evaluating, and sustaining high-quality personnel that affords schools the ability to ensure success by addressing the needs of their community.</p>	<p>Tenet Rating</p>	<p>Stage 1</p>
<p>Overall Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> District leaders are beginning to refine the process of recruiting and selecting candidates to serve as high quality personnel by instituting a tiered interview process and defining criteria for selection. The Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process is not accurately reflecting levels of teacher effectiveness as 100 percent of teachers are rated effective or highly effective. The limited use of frequent and targeted walkthroughs and follow-up observations has restricted the ability of district and school leaders to adequately address teacher shortcomings. <p>Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district has developed a tiered system for screening and interviewing candidates. This process involves the setting of criteria, including a preference for general education and content area teachers also to have a special education certification. The district also engages with the special education director, curriculum and instruction directors, and school leaders who collaborate in deciding which candidates to recommend for final selection by the deputy superintendent and superintendent. This process is designed to ensure that the district employs teachers who understand the expectations for working with students with disabilities, as well as with district and school leaders. The district maintains communication with area colleges and universities who provide student-teacher placements for the district’s schools. However, the review team found the district is not clear in defining for those colleges and universities the skills and abilities needed by their student teachers to succeed. The APPR evaluation system is not producing reliable data or driving instructional improvement because of the dramatic discrepancy between teacher performance ratings that indicate 100 percent of teachers are effective and highly effective and low student progress. In addition, district leaders reported that building leaders are not targeting follow-up observations or walkthroughs to monitor how teachers have addressed areas found to be in need of improvement. Further, the district does not have a practice of mandating follow-up supports, including instructional coaching, re-training, or mentorship for teachers who, despite the high APPR ratings, are acknowledged by the district as not successfully implementing the professional development (PD) they have received or meeting district expectations for instructional practice. District leaders report that retention is not an issue for the district as teachers who work in the district 		

seldom leave except for retirement, and that with school closings there have been limited opportunities to recruit new staff familiar with new expectations for performance.

Impact Statement:

- The district does not ensure that school leaders accurately evaluate teacher performance, which hinders student achievement 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:

Strengthen the APPR process to accurately reflect the performance of teachers and to drive improvements in the delivery of instruction by:

- modifying the criteria for the Locally Selected Measurements (LSM) in the APPR calculations to increase the expectations for student growth;
- revising the weighting assigned to each segment of the Danielson Framework to place greater emphasis on teacher performance directly tied to improving student achievement;
- calibrating school leader assessments within the Danielson Framework to create consistency in evaluations; and
- setting expectations for follow-up targeted walkthroughs and observations to address perceived areas in need of improvement and to provide accountability for the faithful implementation of district initiatives.

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 currently have a theory of action aimed at setting high expectations for student achievement that has been approved by the Board of Education, is well known by all constituents, and drives decision-making for all school leaders and teachers.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district, recognizing that the theory of action of the prior administration had not driven instruction or established meaningful expectations for high levels of student achievement, has recently developed a comprehensive set of belief statements including a vision statement, a mission statement, and district goals. However, the components that comprise the district's theory of action aimed at setting high expectations for student achievement, have not yet been approved by the Board of Education, have yet to be shared with all constituents, and have not begun to drive decision-making for district and school staff.

- The previous lack of strong district leadership and lack of a comprehensive strategic plan and theory of action was a reflection of a belief in local autonomy and the leadership’s view that school leaders could best determine practices and policies that would address the needs of their students and communities. While the new district leadership has constructed a new, expanded district leadership team, solved the district’s financial problems, re-structured issues related to the housing of students, and developed a plan for renovating the high school building, the district has only just begun the process of developing a comprehensive strategic plan for improving student achievement in a systematic way.

Impact Statement:

- The lack of a comprehensive theory of action that explicitly drives commitment to high expectations connected to professional practices and student outcomes limits the ability of all the constituents of the district to increase 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:

Implement the new district theory of action by:

- communicating the district’s belief statement, mission, and vision to parents, school leaders, teachers, and students;
- using the theory of action to drive administrative and instructional decision-making;
- using the theory of action to define a strategic plan and to develop Specific, Measurable, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) goals with targeted actions;
- monitoring the impact of the theory of action; and
- revising and adjusting that theory of action based on a review of the impact data.

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 does not have a comprehensive and strategic plan for resource allocations that is tied to school-specific quantifiable assessment of needs to address the unique challenges each school faces.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district has recently expanded the number of district leaders following significant reorganization and downsizing to eliminate a \$12 million budget deficit. This has been done in order to strengthen its ability to play a greater leadership role in transforming instruction in its schools, particularly in meeting the needs of students with disabilities, homeless students, and English language learners (ELLs). During 2012-14, much of the district’s energy was expended in re-housing students, addressing restructuring

issues, building a district team by reassigning district personnel, creating new district leadership positions, and dealing with financial concerns. Now that those issues have been resolved, the district has positioned itself to address more directly the instructional needs of the district that had been neglected previously, along with student social and emotional developmental needs.

- The new district leadership is guiding staff in the process of adapting the EngageNY modules in English language arts (ELA) and math. However, a review by the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) of the materials currently being produced by coaches as part of their contractual work assignments demonstrated that while the new curriculum provided a streamlined or condensed version of the module lessons, it was unclear how this resource would successfully support teachers in adapting and differentiating the lessons described in the modules. In addition, documents were not available to the review team to substantiate the existence of pacing guides for most subject areas.
- The district has provided elementary and middle schools with a team of instructional and literacy coaches; however, teachers may choose not to accept their guidance because the district has not mandated their use to address identified professional performance shortfalls.
- The district has provided additional teaching staff to reduce the teacher-student ratio within a school with a large percentage of underachieving students, but it has not instituted a formal assessment process to monitor and evaluate the efficacy of that expenditure. In addition, the district has not conducted a full needs assessment to determine how those new teaching resources can directly improve student achievement or how the impact of those resources can be fully assessed.

Impact Statement:

- The district has been heavily engaged in the reorganization of resources and the restructuring of personnel over the last two years and has not yet developed formal structures for assessing and evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of its material and human resources in order to meet student needs.

Recommendation:

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

- Develop a strategic plan that links the allocation of teaching staff, materials, support staff, and training to improving teacher practices and 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 1

Overall Finding:

- The PD plan created by the prior district administration did not consistently increase teacher effectiveness and did not address the needs of its schools and their staff, and the current district

administration has not yet developed a formal plan for the 2015-16 school year that is based on a detailed and accurate needs assessment.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- District leaders reported that the PD plan that was developed by the previous administration did not result in consistent changes in practice or lead to improved student achievement. However, the new administration has not established a clear set of expectations for the participation of school leaders and teachers in district PD, and teachers and school leaders are not held accountable for the successful implementation of PD. Teachers are allowed to opt out of some of the training provided and school and district leaders do not monitor the impact of PD through frequent and targeted walkthroughs. Teachers who participate in PD but fail to successfully implement the training are not provided with re-training, mandated coaching support, or a mentor.
- The district has identified a team of teachers, school leaders, and district leaders charged with developing a new PD plan over the summer to address district priorities and define the way that PD is provided by introducing an embedded model of training, rather than periodic whole group presentations. This embedded model is intended to support PD initiatives by using recently hired instructional coaches to work collaboratively with teachers to plan and deliver individual lessons that incorporate district instructional priorities.
- Any planning to address weakness in teacher instructional practices is hampered by the unreliability of the APPR process and the discrepancies between the high performance ratings of teachers and the low academic performance of students. Those planning PD explained that this is because they continue to rely on the intuition of district leaders, instructional coaches, and school leaders, as well as teacher suggestions, instead of using accurate data to plan for PD and hold teachers accountable for improved practices.

Impact Statement:

- The lack of a PD plan based on an accurate needs assessment combined with follow-up support and monitoring of the PD provided limits the district's ability to adequately improve teaching and 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 PD plan that:

- is based on a formal needs assessment that includes a review of disaggregated teacher and student performance data linked to the expectations implicit in the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and to the social and emotional developmental health needs of students;
- supports whole-group training of staff with embedded coaches and mentors during the implementation phase; and
- provides targeted monitoring of teacher performance and support through mandated re-training,

coaching, co-teaching, and mentoring as needed.

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

Tenet Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- The district is establishing a data-driven culture, but does not yet consistently use data to make instructional, school, and district leadership decisions. The district is only just beginning to provide training and set some expectations for using data to drive instruction.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The director of data and testing, who was hired in the middle of the 2014-15 school year is creating a data dashboard to provide a single stop for teachers and school leaders to find data related to student performance, attendance, and discipline. The director reported that teachers are not using data to effectively plan differentiated lessons and that too often data has been provided to teachers too late in the school year to maximize its use.
- Common forms of assessment, such as STAR testing, and Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments are being introduced into the district's instructional program, but district leaders agreed that there are inconsistencies in the frequency, design, and analysis of testing data to draw conclusions about the relative effectiveness of schools, individual teachers, or groups of teachers in increasing student achievement. This is because the district bought testing programs but has not trained teachers in how to use the data, or established a system to monitor how well teachers are using data to improve student achievement.
- The district has initiated a Peaceful Bus Program for the 2014-15 school year to reduce student misbehavior on busses and the monitoring of the program demonstrated reduced disciplinary referrals. The data collection process that has provided concrete evidence of improvement is a model for employing data collection to monitor programmatic success throughout the district.

Impact Statement:

- The district is in the initial stages of communicating expectations for how data is to be used as teachers do not consistently use data to effectively differentiate instruction, which hinder 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:

Develop a strategic plan that incorporates:

- the creation of a data dashboard that will make accessible the wide array of available student data to school and district staff;

- a clarification of the expectations for the use of data to drive teacher and school leader decision-making;
- the provision of coaching to ensure that teachers are using available student performance data to differentiate instruction; and
- the expansion of the use of common forms of assessment to provide comparative data on teacher, grade level, content area, and school performance to better identify areas in need of improvement.

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>
<p>Overall Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district is beginning to provide school leaders with opportunities and supports on how to create, develop, and nurture an environment that positively affects student achievement. <p>Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District leaders report that they are preparing to address the inconsistencies in instruction and behavior across schools that are the result of the varying initiatives of school leaders by deploying resources and staff to help schools institute best practice based on school needs. • School leaders report that the district leadership maintains a positive relationship that encourages them to consult and engage with the district, although district leaders state this does not always lead to the level of cooperation that the district deems necessary. • District and school leaders reported that tier one interventions of the Response to Intervention (RtI) model of have not yet been fully implemented, as students with behavior issues are too often referred to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) for classification as students with disabilities. Currently 25 percent of all students in the district are classified as students with disabilities. • One school leader noted that because the district has handled its prior financial issues and does not want to return to having a deficit, sometimes the district is hesitant to respond to identified school needs, which leaves school leaders to determine priorities and manage resources to meet those needs. <p>Impact Statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district is beginning to address the inconsistencies in policies, practices, and expectations across schools in order to improve teacher practices and raise student achievement. 		

Recommendation:

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

- develop stringent procedures to identify issues that are common throughout the district regarding student behavior, character education, the CCLS, the instructional shifts, adaptations to the EngageNY modules, and data-driven instruction through a more authentic APPR process and a robust classification process for students with disabilities; and
- deploy district resources and staff to help institute best practices while allowing school leaders opportunities to tailor agreed practices in order to address issues particular to their school.

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 has recently added significant fiscal and human resources to support the implementation of CCLS-aligned curriculum, but does not maximize the resources it deploys to support leaders and teachers in raising student achievement. There is little evidence of differentiation to meet the needs of all learners.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district has added additional district leaders in the areas of curriculum and instruction, including professionals assigned to adapt the EngageNY math and ELA modules, literacy coaches, and instructional coaches to work directly with teachers. The district also added an assistant director of data and testing to assist school leaders and teachers in the management of student performance data and in planning how to differentiate lessons based on that data. However, district and building leaders reported that many teachers are resistant to these changes.
- District and school leaders stated that the slow pace of the full implementation of the CCLS is partially due to teacher resistance to direction from coaches. In addition, there is little evidence that the district has provided the training and support coaches need to be successful. For example, a review of the revised curricula provided by the coaches demonstrated inconsistencies in their curriculum development expertise. Further, as coaches were assigned the task of adapting ELA and math modules, this has limited their ability to consistently support changes in teacher instructional practices.
- While district leaders report having conversations with school and teacher leaders concerning how to best address district-wide writing instruction and literacy expectations in all grades, the district recognizes that it has been slow to develop detailed plan to improve students' writing skills. School leaders expressed a need to build clear expectations for the frequency, terminology, and outcomes associated with writing instruction at all levels. They also noted the importance of developing a common language for instruction of mathematics.

- School and district leaders reported that many teachers are experiencing difficulties differentiating lessons and providing students with multiple points of access aligned to the CCLS. District leaders reported that while they have informally identified with school leaders what is needed to support the successful implementation of the CCLS, they have not established a structured support program to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the CCLS or its impact on teaching and learning.

Impact Statement:

- The inconsistent implementation of CCLS-aligned curriculum across the district hinders 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:

Fully implement the CCLS and instructional shifts by:

- prioritizing areas in need of improvement for the successful implementation of the CCLS;
- assessing the levels of teacher needs, and providing mandated re-training, coaching, co-teaching, and mentoring for individuals as needed; and
- using the recently-introduced embedded coaching model to provide individualized support to teachers experiencing difficulty in adapting the EngageNY ELA and math modules and differentiating instruction

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

Tenet Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- The district is putting staff into place to provide supports, such as coaching, mentoring, and opportunities for co-teaching aimed at improving teacher performance; however, these initiatives were introduced without a formal needs assessment or a system for monitoring and evaluating levels of effectiveness over time.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- District and school leaders reported that they have informally determined through classroom observations that teachers need direction and support on using data to plan, deliver, scaffold, modify, and differentiate CCLS-aligned lessons.
- District and school leaders reported that teacher performance did not improve as anticipated following PD, as PD was often a one-time event that teachers self-selected and there were no coaching, mentoring, or co-teaching supports to follow up on ensuring improved practices.
- The district has not established a set of expectations for monitoring district PD initiatives or for holding

teachers accountable for successfully implementing those initiatives. In addition, the district has not directed school leaders to use walkthroughs to gather longitudinal performance data so that district leaders can know to what degree their expectations for performance are being met in each building.

- The district has established an expectation that schools use common forms of assessment; however, school and district leaders indicated that results of those assessments are not consistently analyzed in ways that drive instructional decisions.
- The district created a new district position for a director of data and testing in October 2014. This new district leader has begun to organize district data in ways intended to make it more accessible for teachers and has begun to provide guidance to school leaders and teachers on the type of information that should be collected and how to best use that data for making school and classroom decisions.
- The review team found that insufficient support is provided to teachers in the higher grades, as the district only provides instructional coaches to support instructional practices in elementary schools.

Impact Statement:

- The district’s support for teachers in implementing the CCLS is not strategic, responsive, or timely to ensure that teachers consistently provide students with challenging learning experiences.

Recommendation:

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

Expand the functions and availability of the embedded coaching model to drive instructional change by:

- providing instructional coaching at the high school level;
- mandating instructional coaching for teachers assessed to be in need of improvement under a reliable APPR system;
- defining a set of district best practices for coaches to implement; and
- monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the coaching in improving student achievement and improving the quality of instruction.

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

Tenet Rating

Stage 1

Overall Finding:

- The school district is beginning to provide supports for schools to address the social and emotional developmental health needs of all students; however, these supports are either still in the planning stages or have only recently been introduced.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district has not conducted a needs assessment to determine the nature of student social and emotional developmental health needs in order to develop a strategic plan to address those needs.
- There is no consistent character education program within the district. While individual schools have programs to improve student behavior and the learning environment, district and school leaders agree that schools require a district-supported program. As a result, the district is planning to develop a common Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program and is considering implementing a Responsive Classroom model.
- The district introduced RtI into schools late last year; however, school and district leaders reported that teachers have not faithfully implemented this program. District and school leaders shared with the review team that one of the reasons why the district has classified 25 percent of its school population as students with disabilities is that teachers have sought classification, rather than implementing tier one RtI strategies to meet student needs.
- In response to its assessment that racial minorities are disproportionately suspended, the district has instituted PD on strategies for the de-escalation of student conflicts and is preparing to institute a restorative justice model for responding to student misbehavior.

Impact Statement:

- The district is beginning to introduce a plan to meet student social and emotional developmental health needs across schools in order to improve 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:

Develop, implement, and monitor a strategic plan and policies linked to a theory of action to address:

- the lack of a district-promoted character education or PBIS program;
- alternatives to suspension;
- best practices for increasing student engagement and well-being; and
- the inadequacies of tier one RtI practices that have resulted in over 25 percent of the student body being classified as students with disabilities.

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:

- Efforts to increase family and community engagement have been limited and inconsistent across the

district. Activities are not linked to a theory of action or a strategic plan that grows out of a comprehensive needs assessment.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district has established as one of its goals the improvement and expansion of reciprocal communication with parents and increased parental involvement in recognition of current shortcomings. As a result, the district recently designated a social worker as the director for homeless students to provide support and assistance to homeless families in the district. Additionally, the director of special education reported that he has recently documented increased family attendance for presentations concerning students with disabilities by partnering with area agencies and community-based organizations. Further, the district has hired a communications director with the mandate to develop tools for communication, including an upgraded website and an e-school program to improve the means by which families can communicate with schools. The recently upgraded district website has computerized translation options. These initiatives are too recent to provide evidence of any discernible impact on improved communication with parents and productive partnerships.
- Schools have offered a range of school-based activities aimed at providing parents with guidance on how they can support student achievement, address student social and emotional developmental health issues, and better understand the changing academic challenges for students. Translation services are available at these events, but attendance has been poor.

Impact Statement:

- The district has not established a comprehensive and consistent approach to developing parent partnerships through a needs assessment and a strategic plan, which limits the home school partnership and 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:

Complete the strategic plan under development to address the district's goal for greater family and community involvement by exploring multiple and innovative approaches including:

- the use of software designed to facilitate reciprocal parent engagement with teachers, school leaders, and district staff;
- the setting of clear expectations for teacher and school leader communications with all families in the school community;
- the use of a range of social media; and
- the use of electronic grade books and appropriate software to provide families with formative data on student achievement.