



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	141800010005
School Name	Lackawanna Middle School
School Address	550 Martin Road, Lackawanna, New York 14218
District Name	Lackawanna Central School District
School Leader	Matthew McKenna
Dates of Review	October 21-22, 2014
School Accountability Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus School
Type of Review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet

School Configuration (2014-15 data)					
Grade Configuration	6-8	Total Enrollment	397	SIG Recipient	yes
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2014-15)					
# Transitional Bilingual	0	# Dual Language	0	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	1.2
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2014-15)					
# Special Classes	4	# SETSS	0	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	0
Types and Number of Special Classes (2014-15)					
# Visual Arts	0	# Music	0	# Drama	0
# Foreign Language	0	# Dance	0	# CTE	0
School Composition (most recent data)					
% Title I Population	79%	% Attendance Rate	92%		
% Free Lunch	71%	% Reduced Lunch	79%		
% Limited English Proficient	14%	% Students with Disabilities	22%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	% Black or African American	19%		
% Hispanic or Latino	13%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0%		
% White	68%	% Multi-Racial	0%		
Personnel (most recent data)					
Years Principal Assigned to School	3	# of Assistant Principals	0		
# of Deans	0	# of Counselors/Social Workers	2		
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0	% Teaching Out of Certification	0		
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	2	Average Teacher Absences	-		
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	14%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	3%		
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)		Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	67%		
Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	n/a	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	n/a		
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)					
% of 1st year students who earned 10+ credits	n/a	% of 2nd year students who earned 10+ credits	n/a		
% of 3rd year students who earned 10+ credits	n/a	4 Year Graduation Rate	n/a		
6 Year Graduation Rate	n/a				
Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2013-14)					
Reward		Recognition			
In Good Standing		Local Assistance Plan			
Focus District	X	Focus School Identified by a Focus District	X		
Priority School					

Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (2012-13)				
American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American		
Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander		
White		Multi-Racial		
Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient		
Economically Disadvantaged				
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (2012-13)				
American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American		
Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander		
White		Multi-Racial		
Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient		
Economically Disadvantaged				
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (2012-13)				
American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American		
Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander		
White		Multi-Racial		
Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient		
Economically Disadvantaged				

SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:

1. Increase student literacy
2. Improve student discipline
3. Safe and enjoyable learning environment

Information about the review

- The review was co-led by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from the New York State Education Department. The team also included a district representative, two district-selected Outside Educational Experts, a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SEIS) representative, and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The review team visited a total of 48 classrooms during the two-day review.
- Reviewers conducted focus groups with students, staff, and parents.
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including curriculum maps, lesson plans, school-wide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- The school provided results of a student survey that 212 (77 percent) completed.

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	H	E	D	I
2.2	The school leader ensures that the school community shares the Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) goals/mission, and long-term vision inclusive of core values that address the priorities outlined in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.4	The school leader has a fully functional system in place aligned to the district's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) to conduct targeted and frequent observation and track progress of teacher practices based on student data and feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.5	Leaders effectively use evidence-based systems and structures to examine and improve critical individual and school-wide practices as defined in the SCEP (student achievement, curriculum and teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 2:					I

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	H	E	D	I
3.2	The school leader ensures and supports the quality implementation of a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3.3	Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans used include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.4	The school leader and teachers have developed a comprehensive plan for teachers to partner within and across all grades and subjects to create interdisciplinary curricula targeting the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.5	Teachers implement a comprehensive system for using formative and summative assessments for strategic short and long-range curriculum planning that involves student reflection, tracking of, and ownership of learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 3:					I

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	H	E	D	I
4.2	School and teacher leaders ensure that instructional practices and strategies are organized around annual, unit, and daily lesson plans that address all student goals and needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.3	Teachers provide coherent, and appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.4	Teachers and students work together to implement a program/plan to create a learning environment that is responsive to students' varied experiences and tailored to the strengths and needs of all students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.5	Teachers inform planning and foster student participation in their own learning process by using a variety of summative and formative data sources (e.g., screening, interim measures, and progress monitoring).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 4:					I

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	H	E	D	I
5.2	The school leader establishes overarching systems and understandings of how to support and sustain student social and emotional developmental health and academic success.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3	The school articulates and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is aligned to a curriculum or program that provides learning experiences and a safe and healthy school environment for families, teachers, and students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.4	All school stakeholders work together to develop a common understanding of the importance of their contributions in creating a school community that is safe, conducive to learning, and fostering of a sense of ownership for providing social and emotional developmental health supports tied to the school's vision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.5	The school leader and student support staff work together with teachers to establish structures to support the use of data to respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:				I
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	H	E	D	I
6.2	The school leader ensures that regular communication with students and families fosters their high expectations for student academic achievement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.3	The school engages in effective planning and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders so that student strength and needs are identified and used to augment learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.4	The school community partners with families and community agencies to promote and provide training across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.5	The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:				I

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.	Tenet Rating	I
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The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* for Tenet 2 – School Leader Practices and Decisions.

- The school adopted a motto that is posted in all classrooms and common areas. Students can recite the motto, “Respect + Responsibility + Reading = Success.” However, the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) was reportedly developed during the summer months with only a few select teachers and school leaders and does not include SMART goals for improving the proficiency of students in both English language arts (ELA) and math. All stakeholder groups shared there are no known goals for school improvement, yet student academic achievement continues to decrease and is below the New York State average.
- Due to a lack of targeted focus on increasing student achievement, decisions for using the resources available to the school have not been effective. Although staff and capital reductions were made across the district, staffing arrangements within the school have not maximized the expertise and skills of those that remain in order to improve critical areas, such as academic and behavior interventions, extended learning time, enrichment, and specialized programming to meet student needs. The school leader does not set formal and explicit expectations for the use of professional time provided in the master schedule, and does not regularly provide targeted feedback for how teachers are using this time to address critical student achievement deficiencies. In addition, the review team found that teachers and staff are not held accountable for the implementation of the professional development (PD) provided by the school and district.
- Growth in teacher performance is not prioritized, articulated, or formally monitored to ensure that student needs are met. The formal Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) procedures are not always completed on a regular and timely schedule, especially pre- and post-conferencing. The checklist approach to formative class walkthroughs is not used to provide specific, targeted, and actionable feedback to each teacher. Feedback in the APPR and walkthrough reports reviewed was not precise and specific enough to support teachers in developing best practices to meet the immediate needs of all of their students, or for setting professional improvement objectives.
- Although the school collects data regularly, such as attendance, behavior, suspension, and language proficiency data, there is no evidence that the school leader has developed systems, structures, or protocols to use this information to target and improve critical school-wide outcomes. As a result, student performance is not tracked closely enough, which limits the school’s ability to focus on improving achievement.

Recommendation:

- The school leader should collaborate with the school leadership team (SLT) to adopt SMART goals for increasing student academic achievement, revise school improvement plans to target these SMART goals, and implement protocols for monitoring these goals. The goals and plans should be

communicated to all staff in order to focus their improvement efforts on critical school-wide priorities.

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.

Tenet Rating

I

The school has received a rating of *ineffective* for Tenet 3 – Curriculum Development and Support.

- Although various resources and materials are in use to support CCLS implementation, such as Engage NY math modules, Go! Math, and Wonders and Triumph Common Core Coach, teachers, staff, and school leaders report that comprehensive, interdisciplinary curricula aligned to the CCLS is not yet adopted across all grades and subjects. The review team reviewed 30 written unit and lesson plans using the Tri-State Quality Review Rubric and found that only ten percent were exemplars, while the remaining 90 percent all needed significant revisions to reflect the CCLS.
- Written plans generally do not include rigorous prompts, procedures, or scaffolds. In the few cases where inquiry prompts are included, they reflect only recall and low-level comprehension activities. There is little evidence that unit or lesson plans include student data or learner specific information used to tailor learning activities to the specific needs of students. Formative assessment and regular checks for understanding are not evident in written plans or classroom instruction.
- The review team found that in several classes there was no evidence of formal planning beyond an objective and agenda posted on the board. Staff reported that there is a lack of training for developing CCLS aligned curricula, which hinders student success. Although the master schedule provides for professional time for curricula development, alignment, and monitoring, the school leader has no systematic plan in place to ensure rigorous and coherent CCLS-aligned curricula is developed or used throughout the school.

Recommendation:

- The school leader should articulate non-negotiable curricula development, implementation, and monitoring expectations for all subjects and grade levels in order to align instructional planning and practices with the CCLS. In addition, the school leader should develop a clear plan with best practice protocols to monitor and reinforce these expectations on a regular basis.

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.

Tenet Rating

I

The school has received a rating of *ineffective* for Tenet 4 – Teacher Practices and Decisions.

- Teachers and the school leader reported that there is no consistent approach to instructional planning. Although the school used the assessment tool AimsWeb in the past, and now administers the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) three times a year, teachers shared that summary reports are sent to them in an email with no subsequent analysis expectations or processes. Although the staff stated

that they review data, the review team found little evidence of teachers using data to plan or deliver instruction. Further, there is no systematic procedure to identify and implement instructional supports, or monitor success, to ensure student achievement. Nearly all students are scheduled for mandatory Academic Intervention Services (AIS), as many are not proficient in ELA and math. However, teachers reported that AIS classes are overcrowded and that classroom and AIS teachers do not confer or use data to plan instruction to meet the needs of students.

- During classroom visits, the review team found that 25 percent of the instructional time in most classes was lost due to inefficient procedures, lack of explicit direction to students, outside interruptions, and off-task behavior. Instructional shifts of the CCLS for literacy and math were rarely observed. Teachers expected students to give text-based answers in only ten percent of the classes and the use of academic vocabulary was reflected in 40 percent of classrooms.
- The review team visited more than 48 classes and found that most instruction was teacher-centered, which included low rigor tasks and limited student engagement. Although several rooms had desks arranged for student groups, there were no data-driven basis for the groupings, and most students had the same tasks that required little interaction with the content or their peers. Reviewers observed some attempts by teachers to encourage students to use text-based evidence to answer questions, but low-complexity texts, low-level questioning, and unsuccessful instructional strategies limited student success.
- During student interviews, students reported that in some classrooms they feel intimidated by peers and adults, and receive little feedback from their teachers to help improve their work. Further, in the May 2014 school survey, nearly 40 percent of students indicated they were not comfortable talking to their teachers and adults about problems in class and 18 percent indicated they did not feel safe in classrooms.

Recommendation:

- The school leader should use a tiered phase-in approach to implement instructional planning expectations and visit classrooms weekly to monitor and provide actionable feedback for teachers on:
 - instructional strategies reflective of the CCLS pedagogical shifts;
 - data-driven procedures to attend to the diverse needs of all the students in the class;
 - high-order prompts, tasks, and opportunities for thinking and demonstrating analysis, synthesis, and evaluation skills;
 - processes for students to actively engage with the content and each other;
 - methods to regularly check for student understanding and to provide feedback to scaffold learning; and
 - opportunities for student and teacher reflection on the quality of their work.

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.

Tenet Rating

I

The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* for Tenet 5 – Student Social and Emotional Developmental

Health.

- Staff, students, and parents stated during interviews that there is no overall vision, plan, system, curricula, or strategies to support the social and emotional developmental health of students. Based on previous school reviews and recommendations, the school leader assembled a group of staff to review the behavior of students and the high number of incident referrals from 2013-14. To improve safety in the school, some strategies have been implemented, such as the re-launch of the Positive Behavior Supports and Interventions (PBIS) model to improve traffic flow in student transitions and articulate clear expectations for behavior in common area and classrooms. Due in part to these renewed efforts, incidents have decreased nearly 80 percent since the same time last year, even with an increased enrollment of more than 140 students. However, students, parents, and teachers all report that poor behavior persists and that many students do not receive consistent consequences for observed infractions, primarily in the areas of bullying and fighting. Suspension rates remain around 40 percent with no evident improvement plan. Staff and students state that “Steeler dollars” are used as reinforcement for positive behaviors.
- The student support staff shared processes and protocols for students with individualized education plans (IEPs), but did not provide evidence of protocols to meet the needs of all other students. It was reported during the school leader and student support staff interviews that the school held a meeting to consider the possible introduction of a child study team (CST), but this team does not yet have any procedures, systems, interventions in place to meet student needs. Further, the model proposed for the CST is reactive and not comprehensive in order to support student social and emotional developmental health.
- Students indicated in the May 2014 survey that 58 percent are uncomfortable talking to teachers and other adults in the school about their problems. Parents and staff reported that there has been no training or supports provided by the school to help them meet the social and emotional developmental health needs of students. Staff shared that they are not aware of any systemic approaches to collect student social-emotional data in order to implement interventions to support students.

Recommendation:

- The school leader should immediately assemble a specialized team that includes student support services staff, teachers, parents, and students to help develop of a vision, data-driven plan, and developmentally appropriate curricula to support the social and emotional developmental health of students. This plan should also include an expansion of the current positive behavior initiative, training for parents, teachers, and staff, and regular monitoring benchmarks.

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.

Tenet Rating

I

The school has received a rating of *ineffective* for Tenet 6 – Family and Community Engagement.

- The school uses multiple tools to communicate with parents, such as emails, parent conferences,

backpack letters, the school website, and phone calls. However, staff, teachers, and parents stated during interviews that high academic expectations are not prioritized or communicated and that not all information is translated into prevalent languages. Parents and students stated that they do not know the school's goals for success.

- The school leader stated that that parent attendance has increased due to outreach programs within the community, but specific data to support this was not provided. During parent interviews, parents shared that communication from the school does not support their understanding of school priorities, student needs, or the processes for advocacy. Student support staff and teachers reported that expectations, structures, or procedures for proactive and comprehensive communication with parents do not exist.
- Staff, parents, and the school leader stated that there are no formal opportunities to collaborate with each other related to school improvement initiative or procedures. Parents and teachers reported that there is no training or supports provided to them to increase their capacity to develop home-school partnerships.
- Progress reports are sent home regularly at five-week intervals, but parents report that these contain numerical grades, do not always address all subjects, and are not helpful in understanding the progress of their children. Students reported they only know how they are doing in class when a formal grade is provided to them on some assignments and tests. There was an internet-based parent portal tool for parents to access real-time classroom data and student information, but connection issues, login problems, and outdated content limited the effectiveness of this tool. Apart from progress reports and grades on student assignments and tests, the school does not share any other information about student progress with parents, which limits the ability of families to support student success.

Recommendation:

- The school leader should establish a representative team that includes student support staff, paraprofessionals, teachers, and parents to develop a home-school partnership improvement plan for the school. This team should meet at least bi-weekly to develop and implement a plan that includes key communication and partnership priorities, procedures for all constituents, activities, timelines, and monitoring protocols.