



# 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>	161501060000
<b>District</b>	Malone Central School District
<b>District Address</b>	42 Huskie Lane, Malone, NY 12953
<b>Superintendent</b>	Jerry Griffin
<b>Date(s) of Review</b>	June 3-4, 2015

District Information Sheet			
<b>Grade Configuration</b>	PK – 12	<b>Total Enrollment</b>	2606
		<b>Number of Schools</b>	5
District Composition ( <i>most recent data</i> )			
<b>% Title I Population</b>	50	<b>% Attendance Rate</b>	95.7
<b>% Free Lunch</b>	39	<b>% Reduced Lunch</b>	10
<b>% Limited English Proficient</b>	0	<b>% Students with Disabilities</b>	18
Racial/Ethnic Origin ( <i>most recent data</i> )			
<b>% American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	1	<b>% Black or African American</b>	<1
<b>% Hispanic or Latino</b>	0	<b>% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific</b>	1
<b>% White</b>	97	<b>% Multi-Racial</b>	<1
Personnel ( <i>most recent data</i> )			
<b>Years Superintendent Assigned to District</b>	2	<b># of Deputy/Assistant Superintendents</b>	0
<b># of Principals</b>	5	<b># of Assistant Principals</b>	3
<b># of Teachers</b>	241	<b>Avg. Class Size</b>	21
<b>% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate</b>	0	<b>% Teaching Out of Certification</b>	<1
<b>% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience</b>	2	<b>Average Teacher Absences</b>	8
<b>Teacher Turnover Rate – Teachers &lt; 5 years exp.</b>	0	<b>Teacher Turnover Rate – All Teachers</b>	5
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)			
<b>ELA Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	17.2	<b>Mathematics Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	18.5
<b>Science Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4 (4th Grade)</b>	91	<b>Science Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4 (8th Grade)</b>	63
Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)			
<b>ELA Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	68.9	<b>Mathematics Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	81.3
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)			
<b>4 Year Graduation Rate</b>	78	<b>6 Year Graduation Rate</b>	81
<b>% of earning Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Des.</b>	34		
Current NYSED Accountability Status			
<b># of Reward Schools</b>	0	<b># of Priority Schools</b>	0
<b># of Schools In Good Standing</b>	3	<b># of Focus Schools</b>	1
<b># of LAP Schools</b>	1		
District Accountability Status			
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (indicate Y / N / N-A)			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	N-A	<b>Black or African American</b>	N-A
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	N-A	<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific</b>	N-A
<b>White</b>	No	<b>Multi-Racial</b>	N-A
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	No	<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	N-A
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	No		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (indicate Y / N / N-A)			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	N-A	<b>Black or African American</b>	N-A
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	N-A	<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific</b>	N-A
<b>White</b>	No	<b>Multi-Racial</b>	N-A
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	No	<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	N-A
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	No		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (indicate Y / N / N-A)			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	N-A	<b>Black or African American</b>	N-A
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	N-A	<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific</b>	N-A
<b>White</b>	No	<b>Multi-Racial</b>	N-A
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	No	<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	N-A
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	No		
DISTRICT PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE DISTRICT			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop curriculum maps for each grade level and subject area.</li> <li>• Use data to drive instruction and inform decision making.</li> <li>• Improve the social and emotional learning environment for students.</li> </ul>			

## **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 (NYSED).
- The Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) review of one school in the district also informed the district review.
- During the IIT school review in the district, reviewers visited 49 classrooms across the school and IIT reviewers conducted focus group interviews with students, staff, and parents.
- District reviewers conducted interviews with district leadership, central office staff, and a focus group of principals.
- The district provided results of a student survey that 1145 students (44%) completed.
- The district provided results of a staff survey that 158 staff members (62%) completed.
- The district provided results of a parent survey that 25 parents (1%) completed.

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

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

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

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

	implementation.				
<b>Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions:</b> 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"/>
<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	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"/>
<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	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
6.1	The district has a comprehensive family and community engagement strategic plan that states the expectations around creating and sustaining a welcoming environment for families, reciprocal communication, and establishing partnerships with community organizations and families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**District Review – Findings, Evidence, Impact and Recommendations:**

<p><b>Tenet 1 - District Leadership and Capacity:</b> The district examines school systems and makes intentional decisions to identify and provide critical expectations, supports and structures in all areas of need so that schools are able to respond to their community and ensure that all students are successful.</p>	<p><b>Overall Tenet Rating</b></p>	<p><b>Stage 2</b></p>
<p><b>Statement of Practice 1.1:</b> The district has a comprehensive approach for recruiting, evaluating, and sustaining high-quality personnel that affords schools the ability to ensure success by addressing the needs of their community.</p>	<p><b>Tenet Rating</b></p>	<p><b>Stage 2</b></p>
<p><b>Overall Finding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school district does not ensure that feedback provided to teachers through the observation process is regular and actionable and leads to improvements in teacher practices.</li> </ul> <p><b>Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although the school district complies with New York State (NYS) Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) regulations, the school district has yet to show that its evaluation system is having a positive impact on student achievement. NYS testing results for grades three through eight have shown little or no growth in student proficiency in English language arts (ELA) or math over the 2012-13 to 2014-15 school years, although 99 percent or more of the district’s teachers were rated effective or highly effective in the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years. Additionally, documentary evidence revealed that the vast majority of feedback provided to teachers by school leadership through the APPR and informal walkthrough protocol is descriptive, but not actionable or formative to help improve the practices of either new or tenured teachers.</li> <li>The school district uses an interview process that involves district and school leaders, as well as teachers, in hiring decisions. According to the district leader and a school leader representative on the human resources team, the district has a process in place that identifies open positions in the district and then advertises them using several newspapers and websites. The district reportedly generates between twenty and fifty resumes from this process. District staff stated that they are seeking to develop partnerships with local universities and colleges to extend the recruitment pool. In addition to designing a candidate profile to help interview teams identify appropriate candidates during the interview and final selection process, the school leader and members of his staff also observe candidates conduct a mock lesson, during which they look for engagement, rigor, and content area expertise. Finalists are advanced to meet with the district leader, who also authorizes background checks. After a candidate is hired, the district sponsors a formal induction process at the district and school levels that covers both operational and pedagogical issues, such as the use of student performance data, student engagement, differentiated instruction, and content knowledge updates. Although the district leader believes that this professional development (PD) has allowed teachers new to the district to start off on the right track and make a positive impact quickly, review findings showed that district systems are not in place to evaluate the impact that PD brings to improving instruction. New hires meet regularly with an assigned mentor over the course of their first year to cover specific</li> </ul>		

items determined by both district and school leaders. The district self-assessment document showed that 100 percent of the teachers hired over the past five years are still with the school district. Reviewers learned that teacher retention is a district priority given greater teacher turnover in the past. The district leader attributes the decreased turnover rate to the aforementioned new teacher induction and mentoring programs, facilitation of a positive working relationship with the teachers' union, positively recognizing teachers for their work, and district efforts to strengthen communication strategies.

**Impact Statement:**

- The lack of a systematic means to provide regular, actionable feedback to teachers following classroom observations and walkthroughs limits district efforts to meet the needs of all learners.

**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 process for classroom observations and walkthroughs in which actionable, formative feedback is regularly provided to teachers by school and district leadership and further monitoring checks are made to ensure that the feedback is implemented and leading to improvements in instructional practices and student learning.

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

**Tenet Rating**

**Stage 2**

**Overall Finding:**

- The school district is currently developing a theory of action, as well as a means to communicate it to all constituents.

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

- The district leader stated that the district is in the process of developing a theory of action; currently the District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP) serves as the vehicle for identifying the district's pathway to improvement. However, district leaders stated that there is no strategic plan to communicate the DCIP to schools and the wider community so that all stakeholders can understand and support the initiatives and goals that the school district has deemed most important. The district leader stated that during the DCIP development process, only parents who were also employees of the school district were invited to contribute to the DCIP formulation alongside district and school leaders and teachers. The DCIP clearly outlines district goals that include developing and implementing curriculum maps for each grade level and subject area, using data to drive instruction and inform decision making, and improving the social and emotional learning environment for students. However, the plan does not clearly define success criteria for achieving the goals or establish expectations tying improvements in student outcomes with improvements in professional practices.
- The district leader reported that staff across the school district does not have a common understanding of academic rigor or what it looks like in classrooms. As a result, district leaders reported that lessons

being planned and implemented in many classrooms are not challenging all learners and are, therefore, not common core aligned. District leaders acknowledged that the strand of the DCIP alluding to curriculum mapping is not known or implemented by a majority of teachers, so these improvement efforts fail to make all students college- and career- ready. School review findings also showed that in the vast majority of classrooms visited by reviewers, low levels of instructional rigor were observed.

- The district leader and curriculum and instruction staff reported that there is limited understanding across schools of how data should be used to drive instruction and make curricular adjustments, which evidence from school reviews confirmed. This lack of knowledge on the use of data is in opposition to the DCIP goals of using data to drive instruction and inform decision making. The district leader reported implementation of a new process for Academic Intervention Services (AIS) in which data is to be used consistently to identify and meet the needs of targeted students. The district leader stated that the new process is based on clear expectations and guidelines and is intended to shape practices around data usage in line with district goals. However, the new process has yet to become an embedded part of district practice; therefore, it has not yet been demonstrated that this district priority has produced a positive impact on raising student achievement.

**Impact Statement:**

- With no formal plan to communicate the DCIP to all school constituents and an explicit theory of action that is only at the developing stage, the district has been prevented from uniting the whole school community in a concerted drive toward accelerated and sustained district and school improvement.

**Recommendation:**

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

- convene a collaborative group of district and school leaders, school staff, and parents to develop and rigorously implement an explicit theory of action that supplements the DCIP and makes clear the district's high expectations for aligning professional practices to improved student outcomes; and
- develop and communicate a definition of instructional rigor to all schools and staff with the expectation that it is enacted in all classrooms to improve student learning.

<p><b>Statement of Practice 1.3:</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>Tenet Rating</b></p>	<p><b>Stage 2</b></p>
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**Overall Finding:**

- Though the school district seeks to allocate resources based on school need, there are no systems in place to evaluate if resource and spending decisions lead to school improvement and increased levels of student achievement.

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

- According to the district's business manager and the district leader, the budget development process begins in November of each school year, and includes regular and ongoing communication between

the district leader, business manager, and school leaders. During this time, school leaders are asked to prioritize resource requests for the upcoming school year. For example, elementary school leaders requested and gained approval for two newly created intervention teacher positions to provide “push in” instructional services for AIS programs. In another example, district leaders stated that grant funds were used to provide schools with additional PD and guidance to strengthen supports for economically disadvantaged students achieving low test scores. However, in both these examples the district leader stated that the district did not create any expectations or goals for use in evaluating the impact or cost effectiveness of the additional positions and support. Without this information, the district lacks insight into how these decisions contribute to the intended outcome of improved student achievement.

- District and school leaders stated that monetary distributions for each school are generally based on the district’s per student rate, which was approximately \$9800 per student in the 2014-15 school year. However, school leaders confirmed that the district also takes into account other demographic factors, such as populations of English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, when making budget decisions. Reviewers learned through discussions with the business manager and district leader that there is no system in place to determine the effectiveness of the budget or allocation process. Although district staff stated that a resource allocation system is in place that provides resources in areas most critical to student success, the district has no means to determine if budgeting decisions and resource allocations have had the intended impact on student achievement, as student achievement data is not linked to decisions related to resource allocation. Further discussions showed that the district provides limited support to school leaders to help them make effective use of available resources, and school leaders reported that they are not required to demonstrate that increases in resources or monies in specific areas are subsequently aligned with improvements in professional practices or student outcomes. Without this information, the district has limited knowledge on which to judge resource investments that have produced the best return and where future modifications may be needed.
- According to the district leader and business manager, the district has no formal process in place to gather needs-based information from families and community members to include in the budget development and resource allocation process. Aside from district leader conversations about the budget process taking place in venues such as the Rotary Club and district board meetings, little community outreach takes place. Though the school district administered a family survey during the 2014-15 school year, according to the district leader, it was done too late for the feedback to influence the budget development process. This limits families and community members from engaging in activities to determine the school priorities needed to meet the needs of all learners.

**Impact Statement:**

- The school district lacks a mechanism to determine if resource allocation has had a positive impact on student success, which limits the district’s ability to determine if current budget and resource allocation decisions are successful.

**Recommendation:**

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

- link student achievement data to budgetary decisions to determine if district resource allocation decisions are having the desired impact on student achievement; and
- develop a formal communication plan that provides multiple opportunities for families and community members to contribute input and feedback to the school district's budget development process.

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

**Tenet Rating**

**Stage 2**

**Overall Finding:**

- The school district does not have formalized systems or established goals to determine if the current PD plan is positively influencing student achievement.

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

- Reviewers found that the district PD plan is comprised of a two-page sheet listing districtwide PD offerings for the school year; school leaders and teachers confirmed that the PD schedule is distributed to all schools and staff. The district leader stated that the PD plan is determined at the district level and is intended to reflect the goals and priorities outlined in the DCIP. School and district leaders confirmed that teacher feedback on the quality of prior PD is considered in the process. However, the district leader stated that the district does not account for school and student test and assessment data when determining PD priorities or tailoring PD offerings to the needs of individual schools. For example, although no students with disabilities in grades three to eight scored higher than a level two on the NYS assessments in math and ELA, the PD team reported that no training offering instructional strategies for teaching students with disabilities was provided. In addition, school and district leaders stated that information gained from teacher evaluations is not a determining factor in identifying teacher training and support needs. Reviewers found that these weaknesses are further compounded by acknowledgements from district and school leaders that the classroom observation process is not used to determine if PD improves instructional practices and student achievement or that all teachers implement, with fidelity, the skills and knowledge acquired during PD sessions.
- District staff confirmed that there are no specific goals affixed to the PD plan to judge if it is successful in meeting the priorities outlined in the DCIP. Though the district leader has reportedly made clear that major initiatives in the DCIP include data-driven instruction, curriculum mapping, and social and emotional student health, no goals have been developed to measure success toward these initiatives.

**Impact Statement:**

- The district's lack of strategies for using test and assessment data to set PD priorities and the lack of a process to use the teacher evaluation system to better align PD to improved classroom practices and student achievement limits the effectiveness of provided PD.

**Recommendation:**

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

- use student performance data, as well as teacher evaluation data, to develop the district PD plan; and
- develop systems to monitor the effectiveness of provided PD by tying it to improvements in teacher practices and student achievement.

**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:**

- Though the school district is currently developing common expectations concerning the use of data to make pedagogical decisions, it does not yet have systems in place that ensure the consistent implementation of data-driven instruction.

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

- The district leader stated that schools are in the initial stages of analyzing and using data to make instructional and curricular decisions. Although the district leader believes that the district's DCIP clearly describes how teachers and schools are expected to use data, school leaders stated that expectations are not explicit enough; this limitation was reflected in school review findings showing that schools do not set challenging enough academic goals by school, grade, or content area level. During the district cabinet meeting, which was primarily comprised of the district's elementary school leaders, participants reported that different schools and teachers have varying understandings of how to use data to make pedagogical decisions. These school leaders cited a lack of high quality, regular PD and too little scheduled time for grade-level teams to gather and analyze data to make pedagogical decisions. For example, in the high school, there is only one day each month set aside for teams to meet and discuss test and assessment data.
- Members of the district cabinet stated that different school and teacher expectations, confidence levels, and skill in data handling lie at the core of the acknowledged weaknesses in the use of data to drive school and student improvement. In addition, district cabinet members stated that the district does not identify specific protocols for data collection and analysis, nor does it isolate examples of best practices in classrooms or schools that could be disseminated across the district. The district leader acknowledged that there has not been a systematic and rigorous approach to providing district and school staff with PD to equip them with the requisite skills to confidently use data in their professional practices. Reviewers found that these combined shortcomings have prevented the establishment of a data-driven culture embedded across all schools in the district.

**Impact Statement:**

- The lack of common districtwide expectations for the use of data to make academic decisions limits the district's and the schools' ability to consistently meet the needs of all learners.

**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 districtwide written protocol for using student achievement data to make pedagogical decisions related to curriculum and instruction; and
- develop a means to monitor the implementation of this protocol to ensure its impact on improving student achievement.

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

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

- Although the district provides schools with some direction and resources, there are areas in which schools do not receive the support and guidance necessary to fully support district goals and the needs of all learners.

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

- Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) school review evidence showed that none of the interviewed groups of parents, teachers, or students was able to describe school or district visions, missions, or initiatives. Although these groups could speak to the safety of the school environment and the delivery of academic challenge to learners as district priorities, none could cite explicit goals the district was aiming for or how these goals would be achieved. School leaders reported limited parental input in the development of the DCIP, and no formal plan to communicate goals contained in the DCIP or individual School Comprehensive Education Plans (SCEPs). Reviewers found that this has prevented families and community members from fully understanding school goals and their alignment with district goals or how they can support these goals as members of the school community. Additionally, school leaders reported that most schools typically adopt district goals as their individual school goals, which prevents schools from identifying specific and unique goals to meet the needs of its own school community.
- School staff reported a lack of district support for systems that track the effectiveness of professional practices in schools or collect and analyze data from academic and other sources, such as attendance, suspensions, and referrals, to make informed decisions and target priorities in instruction, the curriculum, and student social and emotional needs. This was echoed by school leaders interviewed during the district review who stated that the district does not expect schools to set challenging and measurable goals that act as benchmarks for significant and sustained school improvement. School leaders stated that while the district leader collects and discusses their respective school improvement plans with them, they are not required to inform the district as to whether their plans are working as

intended. As a result, schools are often unable to make strategic decisions based on data analysis.

- Reviewers learned that the district does not have a formal walkthrough protocol or a process for data collection related to teacher practice that would inform school and district leaders about the impact of PD in classrooms. School leaders reported that this limits school and district capacity to have a more comprehensive view of classroom practices, particularly in relation to PD, and the impact these practices have on student achievement.

**Impact Statement:**

- The lack of clear district expectations for school improvement and goal setting has resulted in indistinct pathways for success in schools that are not always responsive to the needs of the school community.

**Recommendation:**

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

- develop district and school visions and associated goals with the collaboration and input of all stakeholders;
- develop a communication plan to share district and school goals and initiatives with stakeholders and explain how each stakeholder can support the achievement of the stated goals; and
- develop a classroom walkthrough protocol to evaluate teacher practice. Use the results to inform PD decisions and district and school initiatives and to track how classroom practices impact student outcomes.

**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:**

- Schools do not have fully developed curricula and instructional levels do not meet the criteria of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) or the needs of all learners.

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

- District curriculum and instruction staff reported that the district does not provide schools with full curricula that include scopes and sequences for instruction, as well as assessments, rubrics, resources, and data systems to ensure that all students understand and apply subject area content at a rigorous standard across all subjects and grades; this was confirmed by school leaders and teachers. District staff stated that the development of curriculum maps across the four core subject areas was a major district initiative during the 2014-15 school year. However, district staff and school leaders noted that different subjects are on pace to be completed at varying times and that the mapping process is still being developed. School leaders reported, and the district leader confirmed, that the state of curriculum mapping is more developed at the elementary school level than in the middle or high school. Reviewers found that as the development of curriculum mapping was not linked to specific,

measurable, and timely goals in the DCIP, district staff were unable to quantify progress toward completion. In addition, school and district leaders concurred that the absence of systems to regularly monitor the implementation of curricula through observations and walkthroughs means that neither the district nor the schools have an accurate picture of how effective curricula is in meeting the needs of all students.

- Evidence from the 49 classrooms visited during the IIT school review process showed only a small fraction of planning and instruction demonstrating high levels of rigor that included application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, and reviewers found that data was seldom used to differentiate instruction based on student need. School leaders offered different opinions on districtwide expectations concerning rigor; while some believed that most staff members shared a common understanding of rigor and its use in classrooms, others did not. One school leader believed that developing a district definition of rigor, with corresponding PD, would provide a more consistent framework for all teachers and school leaders to aspire to. Additionally, district and school leaders stated that the district has not defined ways in which data should be used by schools to drive improvement, which has caused practices to differ from school to school. Participants in the district cabinet meeting, which contained mostly elementary school leaders, stated that the district has not provided a formalized template for using data to track the achievement and progress of students; and there is also no suggested methodology for using data to modify curricula and drive instruction that improves student achievement.

**Impact Statement:**

- In addition to the lack of complete and formalized curricula, schools lack systems to measure both the effectiveness of the current curriculum mapping process and their instructional delivery systems; this limits the ability of the district and schools to ensure that all students are being prepared for college and careers.

**Recommendation:**

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

- ensure that curriculum mapping is completed for every core subject in every grade;
- develop a means to monitor the implementation of curriculum mapping across every core subject area and grade; and
- develop a means by which student data is used in a uniform fashion across the district to inform curriculum and 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 school district does not effectively support schools in ensuring that instructional strategies advance

the use of rigor, differentiation, and data to meet the needs of all learners.

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

- School leaders stated that the school district does not have specific or high expectations linking the district PD program to generating and sustaining improvements in professional practices and student achievement. School leaders also stated that on the few occasions that checks to ensure teacher implementation of PD are performed, they are only used as part of an anecdotal observation, rather than a formal recording protocol linking PD to school improvement. Additionally, school leaders reported that there is no formal classroom walkthrough protocol in which data linked to teacher practice is tracked, analyzed, and acted upon in a formal manner to inform future PD priorities. School leaders added that data related to teacher practices is not discussed at monthly cabinet meetings with the district leader. As a result, it is difficult for leaders to determine the effectiveness of school and district PD offerings to ensure that they are having a positive impact on student learning.
- District leaders stated that the district has moved to standards-based grading, in which skills are rated rather than the subject as whole. However, teachers and school leaders reported that training to support these changes has not been forthcoming, and as a result, school leaders have noted a disconnect between the feedback that teachers provide and the standards-based grading process that has been implemented. School and district leaders reported that many teachers still provide student feedback that is not skill specific, or consistently formative and actionable, which they believe stems from a districtwide misunderstanding of what student feedback should look like in support of standards-based grading. Furthermore, school and district leaders agreed that few families understand the standards-based grading process or why it was implemented. This limits parents’ ability to understand and support their child’s academic program.

**Impact Statement:**

- The lack of a process to assess PD and provide actionable feedback for students combines to slow academic progress in schools.

**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 process to regularly monitor the effectiveness of district PD and use the information to identify best practices to replicate and weaknesses to abandon; and
- improve the feedback students receive by clearly identifying the skills students need to improve upon and the precise steps they need to take to acquire the identified skills.

**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 does not provide school staff with written policies, guidelines, or training to ensure that the social-emotional developmental health needs of its students are met.

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

- School leaders and support staff reported that the district does not provide schools with written protocols or policies related to meeting students’ social-emotional developmental health needs or describing expectations for the roles different stakeholders play in ensuring that student needs are met. School and district leaders agreed that the district does not provide schools with data systems to regularly track student behavior or identify trends and patterns that could become a focus for improvement or PD. In addition, school leaders and support staff stated that PD to meet the social and emotional needs of students is limited. During the IIT school review, student support staff reported that there were no policies guiding staff understanding and implementation of interventions for students who need Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions to meet their social and emotional needs. This was echoed by other school leaders, and district staff agreed that more guidance is needed to elicit a consistent response across all schools. The district’s student support team stated that the district and schools do not currently use data on attendance, referrals, behavioral incidents, or suspensions to evaluate patterns or trends and align them with the academic performance of individual students or different groups of students. Reviewers and district staff concurred that social and emotional goals identified in the DCIP do not have quantifiable interim or final success criteria; and, therefore, the district is unable to determine if improvement efforts for students and schools are successful or creating no impact.

**Impact Statement:**

- The lack of district guidelines, policies, and PD specific to social-emotional developmental health limits the ability of schools to meet student needs in a consistent manner.

**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 districtwide expectations, guidelines, and policies explaining how the social and emotional needs of all students are to be met. Include a clear outline of the roles and responsibilities all school stakeholders play in helping to meet identified student needs;
- provide PD for school stakeholders, including all staff, families, and community members, to build adult capacity to meet student needs; and
- establish quantifiable goals to evaluate district and school progress in meeting student needs. Align academic and social data to identify and address barriers to student success.

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

**Tenet Rating**

**Stage 2**

**Overall Finding:**

- The school district and schools do not have a formal family or community plan used to communicate school or district visions and engage all stakeholders in areas related to the support of students' social, emotional, or academic needs.

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

- The district leader stated that the district and its schools do not have a formal family or community communication plan in which to engage all of its stakeholders. Although school leaders stated that the district leader has shared expectations for regular school leader and teacher communication with families, there is no specific expectation for the quantity, quality, or focus of these communications. As a result, school leaders stated that they have not consistently communicated with families about district or school goals. School and district leaders agreed that a greater focus is needed to ensure that district, schools, and families work together to best support student learning. School and district leaders stated that a plan is currently being formalized to identify a more strategic approach to providing guidance to parents on how they can support their child's learning at home. A plan to provide PD for school staff to build and sustain home-school partnerships that improve students' chances of academic success is under development, as well. According to the district leader, there are currently few afterschool events held in the district with an objective of educating families on some of the school's and district's major pedagogical initiatives, such as data-driven instruction, curriculum mapping, and meeting the social and emotional needs of all students.
- The district leader acknowledged school leader and support staff views that more district-level work is needed to meet the social and emotional developmental health needs of students. A lack of clear district documentation to explain both the district vision in this key area and the roles that different stakeholders play results in families not being able to advocate for services on behalf of their children or support school efforts to meet student needs.

**Impact Statement:**

- The lack of a formal, written communication plan for the district and its schools limits the district's ability to fully engage families and the community in ways that allow them to fully advocate for students, as well as support school and district goals.

**Recommendation:**

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

- develop a formal communication plan for the district and schools that sets expectations related to family and community communication.