



# 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>	461300010000
<b>District</b>	Oswego City School District
<b>District Address</b>	120 East First Street, Oswego NY 13126
<b>Superintendent</b>	Benjamin Halsey
<b>Date(s) of Review</b>	May 27-28, 2015

District Information Sheet <b>BEDS 2014</b>			
<b>Grade Configuration</b>	PK-12	<b>Total Enrollment</b>	3,987
		<b>Number of Schools</b>	7
District Composition ( <i>most recent data</i> ) <b>October 2014 BEDS DATA</b>			
<b>% Title I Population</b>	51%	<b>% Attendance Rate</b>	93%
<b>% Free Lunch</b>		<b>% Reduced Lunch</b>	42
<b>% Limited English Proficient</b>	1%	<b>% Students with Disabilities</b>	16%
Racial/Ethnic Origin ( <i>most recent data</i> ) <b>October 2014 BEDS DATA</b>			
<b>% American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	0.1%	<b>% Black or African American</b>	1%
<b>% Hispanic or Latino</b>	5%	<b>% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</b>	1%
<b>% White</b>	90%	<b>% Multi-Racial</b>	2%
Personnel ( <i>most recent data</i> ) <b>2013-2014 School Report Card</b>			
<b>Years Superintendent Assigned to District</b>	1.5	<b># of Deputy/Assistant Superintendents</b>	1
<b># of Principals</b>	7	<b># of Assistant Principals</b>	4
<b># of Teachers</b>	329	<b>Avg. Class Size</b>	20
<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>	8%	<b>Average Teacher Absences</b>	9.3%
<b>Teacher Turnover Rate – Teachers &lt; 5 years exp.</b>	19%	<b>Teacher Turnover Rate – All Teachers</b>	11%
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools ( <b>2013-14</b> )			
<b>ELA Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	23%	<b>Mathematics Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	29%
<b>Science Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4 (4th Grade)</b>	85%	<b>Science Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4 (8th Grade)</b>	72%
Student Performance for High Schools ( <b>2013-14</b> )			
<b>ELA Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	49%	<b>Mathematics Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	40%
Credit Accumulation <b>High Schools Only (2013-14)</b>			
<b>4 Year Graduation Rate (August)</b>	75%	<b>6 Year Graduation Rate</b>	82.5%
<b>% of earning Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Des.</b>	38%		
Current NYSED Accountability Status			
<b># of Reward Schools</b>	0	<b># of Priority Schools</b>	0
<b># of Schools In Good Standing</b>	4	<b># of Focus Schools</b>	2
<b># of LAP Schools</b>	1		

### District Accountability Status

Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in <b>ELA</b> (indicate Y / N / N-A) Elementary/intermediate and Secondary			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	NA	<b>Black or African American</b>	NA
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	Y	<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	NA
<b>White</b>	N	<b>Multi-Racial</b>	NA
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	Y	<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	NA
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	N		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in <b>Mathematics</b> (indicate Y / N / N-A) Elementary/intermediate and Secondary			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	NA	<b>Black or African American</b>	NA
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	Y	<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	NA
<b>White</b>	Y	<b>Multi-Racial</b>	NA
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	Y	<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	NA
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	Y		
Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in <b>Science</b> (indicate Y / N / N-A)			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	NA	<b>Black or African American</b>	NA
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	NA	<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	NA
<b>White</b>	N	<b>Multi-Racial</b>	NA
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	N	<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	NA
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	N		

**DISTRICT PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE DISTRICT:**

- Improve graduation rate
- Increase attendance
- Implement common core learning standards

### **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 46 classrooms across 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 provided results of a student survey that 2095 (53 percent) completed.
- The district provided results of a staff survey that 298 (INSERT PERCENT HERE %) completed.
- The district provided results of a parent survey that 213 (INSERT PERCENT HERE %) 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 implementation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

#	Statement of Practice	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
4.1	The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for teachers to develop strategies and practices and addresses effective planning and account for student data, needs, goals, and levels of engagement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health:** The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.

#	Statement of Practice	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
5.1	The district creates policy and works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and resources that positively support students' social and emotional developmental health.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement:** The school creates a culture of partnership where families, community members, and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being.

#	Statement of Practice	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
6.1	The district has a comprehensive family and community engagement strategic plan that states the expectations around creating and sustaining a welcoming environment for families, reciprocal communication, and establishing partnerships with community organizations and families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

<p><b>Tenet 1 - District Leadership and Capacity:</b> The district examines school systems and makes intentional decisions to identify and provide critical expectations, supports and structures in all areas of need so that schools are able to respond to their community and ensure that all students are successful.</p>	<p><b>Overall Tenet Rating</b></p>	<p><b>Stage 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>SOP Rating</b></p>	<p><b>Stage 2</b></p>
<p><b>Overall Finding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district uses structures for hiring and recruiting qualified staff for all schools. Although school and district leaders implement an approved annual professional performance review (APPR) plan to evaluate teachers and support staff, they have not developed or implemented formal procedures for providing frequent actionable feedback to teachers and school leaders. The district has used professional development (PD) as the primary strategy for retaining and sustaining high-quality staff, but there are few procedures to ensure that PD is fully implemented.</li> </ul> <p><b>Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district uses recruiting tools, such as college preparation programs, hiring fairs, and human resources (HR) professional networks to seek out certified and qualified candidates for all vacancies. District leaders for HR reported that routine procedures are used to post vacancies, vet candidates, and make hiring recommendations to the district leader. The district leader reported that he makes final candidate selections based on the best alignment of candidate characteristics with the priorities of the district and the needs of the students. HR and school leaders stated that all recruitment selections in the past two years have been successfully appointed by the Board of Education and stated that most have performed well in their teaching and administrative assignments, although they do not have quantifiable evidence to support this assertion.</li> <li>District leaders reported that due to the desirability of employment in the school district, such as salaries, benefits, and the physical attractiveness of the locality, formal retention strategies have not been necessary and not formally used. The district sustainability strategy is to prioritize and financially support PD that continuously builds the capacity of the staff to meet evolving needs of students. Documents provided evidence that the district provides a robust PD program with participation incentives, such as per session payments, release time, and in-service credit. However, district and school leaders reported that the district has not yet formalized protocols and procedures to ensure that this PD is consistently delivered, implemented, and monitored. Evidence from classroom observations by reviewers and discussions with school leaders indicate that there remain weaknesses in instruction and student learning and engagement.</li> <li>District and school leaders reported that they have fully implemented the APPR for teachers, but that school leaders inconsistently provide ongoing feedback to teachers in support of improved practice. This confirms the staff report in the 2015 district survey, where only 47 percent of the staff agreed that</li> </ul>		

school leaders frequently visit classrooms, and only 57 percent agreed that they receive helpful instructional feedback and guidance from school leaders. District and school leaders confirm regular collaboration around all aspects of the leaders practice, but the district leaders stated that they have not yet fully implemented formal APPR procedures for all the school leaders and have not provided frequent formal written feedback to improve their practice.

**Impact Statement:**

- Although the district has routine processes for selecting and evaluating quality staff, procedures and accountability mechanisms are insufficient for ensuring that staff use best practice strategies to meet the specific needs of students.

**Recommendation:**

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

- implement formal procedures to frequently monitor the implementation of strategies provided in PD. Monitoring tools should include targeted measurable criteria aligned with the objectives from the PD, as well as written, actionable feedback for teachers and staff to adjust their practice.

**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.

**SOP Rating**

**Stage 2**

**Overall Finding:**

- Although the district does not have an explicit theory of action or strategic, measurable, ambitious, results-oriented, and timely (SMART) targets for improved student outcomes, district leaders do communicate expectations for improving attendance, increasing graduation rate, and implementing the common core learning standards (CCLS) regularly with the district and school staff.

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

- District leaders stated and a review of documents confirmed that the district does not have or use an explicit written theory of action to communicate their high expectations. School leaders and staff stated that they were not aware of specific targeted goals held by the district, and do not have district-established goals for their schools for increased graduation and proficiency rates. However, the district leader stated that he was hired by the Board of Education with the explicit charge to increase the graduation rate of students. All staff in the district interviews confirmed that the priority of the district is to improve the graduation rate and most staff is clearly aware that the current graduation rate of 72 percent is unacceptable, and that the low student proficiency in English Language Arts (ELA) and math needs to improve rapidly. Support staff and members of the district’s PD team further indicated that building partnerships with families and supporting the social emotional developmental health of students is also communicated by district and school leaders as areas of priority and growth in the district, but are currently unaware of any district plans or expectations for addressing them.

- District and school staff reported in interviews that the district leader makes improvement priorities and high expectations known to the school community through opening day presentations, regular personal communication in the schools, district-wide committee meetings, and frequent community interactions. Additional district leaders of curriculum and instruction, data management, and PD staff regularly meet with school staff, send newsletters, and lead PD, using these opportunities to communicate the district focus of increasing the graduation rate, attendance, and achievement in ELA and math. However, the lack of a specific theory of action with explicit goals hinders efforts for the whole school community to work together and know their roles in increasing student success.

**Impact Statement:**

- Although many staff members know district expectations, an explicit theory of action is not in place, which limits the ability of staff to understand their roles in improving student success.

**Recommendation:**

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

- develop and communicate an explicit theory of action that will enable all staff to fully understand the priorities and expectations for improved student outcomes. Use the Theory of Action to guide the objectives and activities of the 2015-16 district comprehensive education plan (DCIP), PD plan, and data-driven inquiry (DDI) plan.

**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.

**SOP Rating**

**Stage 3**

**Overall Finding:**

- The district has structures to collaborate with school leaders to assess student and staff needs. Needs are considered and prioritized based on their impact on improving the graduation rate. Based on the prioritization, decisions to deploy adequate fiscal and human resources to address student needs has begun to result in increased student growth and school improvement.

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

- Although new to the district, the experienced chief fiscal leader stated that she has created structures for regular meetings in the schools with the leaders and district staff, as well as non-instructional staff, to regularly assess student and staff needs. In addition, the chief fiscal leader uses these regular meetings to provide schools with PD about how they can use the district's financial and resource systems. The district leader reported that these structured series of meetings have enabled the district to negotiate staffing and resource cuts and modifications, such as revisions to staffing ratios, reducing position duplications, eliminating non-mandated expenses and conferences, and streamlining supplies and materials, all within a balanced voter-approved budget.
- With the resources made available through cuts and budget modifications, budget documents indicate that the district used a seven-point budget strategy aligned to the district's mission to re-prioritize all allocations to meet the areas of greatest student need. Priorities, such as increased access to

graduation through credit recovery options, staffing for intervention and reading programs, as well as school safety and resource officers have been added to the school programs. District resources enable school staff and leaders to provide flexible programming, scheduling, and transportation options that reduce obstacles to increased student achievement, as reported by school leaders and support staff.

- All school leaders and staff stated during interviews that the district approved solutions for identified school needs based on student data, which have resulted in some improved outcomes for students, as evidenced by results in STAR assessments and Lexile reading scores. In the 2015 district survey, 92 percent of staff agreed that leaders make certain they have the resources and materials required for instruction. District leaders confirmed that they are seeking to put in place rigorous procedures to provide statistical, quantifiable data to demonstrate an ongoing alignment between spending decisions and improvements to student outcomes.

**Impact Statement:**

- Due to skilled fiscal leadership in managing budgetary cuts and modifications, and strategically deploying all resources, the district allocates resources that adequately address student needs and support school improvement.

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

**SOP Rating**

**Stage 2**

**Overall Finding:**

- The district has a comprehensive PD plan driven by student data and teacher requests. The plan is communicated to all staff and updated three times each year. Limited structures for follow-up are in place and few protocols and procedures are used to ensure that the PD is integrated into teaching practices. The district does not formally assess the effectiveness of the PD plan for improving student achievement.

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

- A collaborative team of school and district staff develops the district PD plan. Staff reported that they consider data, such as student performance, discipline, attendance, and school leader reports about teacher needs, but do not use formal teacher effectiveness data to specifically target PD. District leaders stated that the calendar of PD offerings is reviewed and revised three times each year to adapt to the evolving needs of the students and staff, such as reading, implementation of the CCLS, and differentiating instruction. Well-established procedures are in place via an electronic tool for staff to view, register, and log their PD participation on a regular basis. Through review of the PD calendar and registration data, the IIT found that many staff across all grade levels participate in volunteer PD and conference day activities multiple times each year.
- The district has some structures for providing some follow-up to PD, primarily through the deployment of academic instructional coaches at the elementary level, as reported by the staff. The secondary level staff receives limited follow-up supports, such as job-embedded coaching in explicit direct instruction and consultation with the departmental chairperson. However, district and school leaders stated that the district does not make clear to teachers their expectations or hold teachers accountable

for implementing the strategies learned in PD into classroom instructional practices. School and district staff stated that they have not yet developed procedures or instruments to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of PD on driving improvements to instructional practices and student achievement.

**Impact Statement:**

- While the district maintains a strong commitment to providing PD, it has not fully achieved the intended result of improved practice for all staff due to a lack of consistent and rigorous follow-up support and monitoring procedures.

**Recommendation:**

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

- expand the PD plan to include a full evaluation process with timelines, procedures, and instruments. The evaluation of the PD plan should include protocols for analyzing the monitoring routines in recommendation 1.1, student performance data, and participant feedback. The PD committee should use the findings from the evaluation to adjust the district PD plan for 2015-16 and revise offerings, instructors, topics, and implementation monitoring protocols.

**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.

**SOP Rating**

**Stage 2**

**Overall Finding:**

- For the elementary schools, district leaders have set expectations, provided PD, and implemented protocols for data analysis with targeted staff. However, the district has not fully established explicit expectations for the secondary schools or district departments. Not all staff understand student and school data, use formal protocols, or modify their practices to fully address the needs of all students.

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

- During interviews with district staff, participants confirmed that the district does not yet have a comprehensive Data Driven Instruction (DDI) plan or formal expectations for the use of data by district and school staff. District leaders stated that they do not regularly review specific data sets or use formal analysis protocols to make strategic district decisions and adjust improvement action plans. In addition, district leaders stated that they do not collect or organize examples of school or instructional practices on the use of data that could be the benchmarks for all schools and teachers to aspire to.
- In the 2015 district survey, only 54 percent of staff agreed that leaders provide clear and specific guidance around the understanding and application of data systems to inform instruction, and only 48 percent reported that they have received training in DDI. District and school leaders confirmed in several interviews that elementary teachers have received training in DDI from the district data leaders and consultants, and that elementary grade level and school-wide teams have regular meetings to analyze student data using protocols and adjust their instructional plans. As the result of Response to Intervention (RtI) programming, revisions to instructional practices, and revised curricula materials,

there is some improvement in math performance on the STAR math assessments and improved lexile reading scores for many students. Although, secondary teams have begun some informal use of data, the district has not yet established or communicated formal expectations, processes, or protocols to these schools. Therefore school leader interviews and IIT classroom reviews indicate that these schools do not systemically collect and analyze student progress data, which hinders student achievement.

**Impact Statement:**

- The district has not yet identified and communicated expectations, strategies, and practices for how data should be used by all staff across the schools and departments to adjust professional practices, which hinders the ability of staff to accurately understand and meet the academic needs of students.

**Recommendation:**

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

- prioritize the development of a district-wide DDI plan. Convene a representative team of teachers, staff, and leaders to develop expectations, procedures, and protocols for what types of data will be used in specific ways, at every level of the organization. A rollout plan should be vetted and launched at the beginning of the 2015-16 school year for use by all district and school staff, and monitored for implementation fidelity by all school and district leaders.

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

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

- The district staff has supportive relationships with all school leaders and is responsive to the needs of school communities. However, the lack of explicit SMART goals, and limited procedures and protocols in assorted areas, such as data analysis, curriculum development, and family and community engagement, hinder school leaders in accomplishing the district priorities of increased graduation rate, attendance, and student achievement.

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

- School leaders confirmed that district leaders are highly accessible, visible in schools, and support school leaders in solving challenges that leaders and school staff present. However, school leaders stated that because the district has not yet undertaken explicit vision and goal setting activities, many school leaders do not have targeted goals or clearly articulated outcomes for improvement aligned to district goals. Some school leaders stated that without district-wide procedures and protocols for

ensuring quality instructional planning, analyzing and using data, monitoring the implementation of PD, and providing frequent feedback to teachers on their instruction, the practices that leaders use are inconsistent, yield variable results, and result in low urgency for improving student achievement.

- School leaders state that the district has sought to better allocate and align curricular materials, assessments, data analysis protocols, and resource allocations across the five elementary schools so that the schools can better meet the needs of students and staff. Elementary school leaders report that although they are given individual autonomy and responsibility, the district still works with school leaders collaboratively to try to help build school capacity to better support all students. However, according to some school leaders, the same sort of cohesion is not evident in secondary schools. Further, school leaders and student services staff state the district does not consistently support schools and students as students move up through the grades due to the limited vertical alignment of expectations, design of the curriculum, instructional techniques, behavioral expectations, operating procedures, and communication methods with families.

**Impact Statement:**

- Although district leaders have fostered strong, supportive collaboration between district and school leaders, inconsistencies in setting goals and expectations, in using formalized procedures and protocols, and in analyzing data in regard to the effectiveness of professional practices, have limited the implementation of a clear vision and impeded high levels of student achievement.

**Recommendation:**

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

- establish regular planning meetings with each school leader and the district cabinet to explicitly define the expectations of the district for each school, and monitor the degree of implementation of the expectations. District and school leaders should collaboratively implement formal protocols and procedures for planning and monitoring PD, providing frequent feedback to school leaders and all staff consistently, and using data analysis protocols to drive curricular and instructional planning.

**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.

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

- Although district and school staff members have collaboratively aligned curricular materials and processes with the CCLS at the elementary grades, a comprehensive plan to ensure secondary alignment in all content areas is not fully developed.

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

- School leaders state that the district leaders for curricula host regular meetings for a district-wide curriculum council to build comprehensive approaches to CCLS alignment and curricular development. This group prioritized the development and implementation of ELA materials at all grade levels, and

the adaptation of Engage NY math modules for 2014-15 implementation at the elementary level. In the absence of well-developed curriculum maps, school leaders state that the new district leaders for curriculum, instruction, and PD, along with academic coaches, have initiated development of pacing guides and curricular units in ELA and math at the elementary levels and with select secondary staff, and provided embedded PD. School leaders at the elementary level indicated that this is helpful in supporting the CCLS implementation at their schools, but school leaders at the high school level stated that the curricula is still misaligned with the CCLS and does not provide opportunities for all students to become college and career ready.

- Elementary school leaders stated that teachers work together in common planning time provided by the district, during and after school hours. The district has also extended the role of the academic coaches beyond the limited grant-funded initiative that was used to pay their salaries, in order to provide continuity of service and intensive job embedded PD for the elementary staff in implementing the CCLS. Due to these efforts, district leaders, school leaders, and academic coaches stated that teachers are more aware of the pedagogical shifts of the CCLS and provide more frequent rigorous learning prompts for students, than during the 2013-14 school year. The PD and curricular development efforts have yielded increases in student proficiency on the longitudinal performance on the STAR math assessments, at several elementary grade levels. The IIT team at the high school reported that not all curricular areas have comprehensive maps, and that most are not fully aligned to the CCLS. School leaders at the high school reported that although the district leader for curriculum is attentive and responsive to the challenges presented by curricular misalignment, there is not yet a coherent plan to align all middle and high school courses with the CCLS, particularly in math and science

**Impact Statement:**

- Curricular alignment and PD efforts provided by the district have led to increased understanding of the CCLS by select staff, and increased access to CCLS learning opportunities for some students in ELA and elementary programs, but do not yet support the needs of many secondary students.

**Recommendation:**

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

- expand the district-wide curricular development plans and expedite the implementation timelines to include all core content areas, across all grade levels for the 2015-16 school year.

**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 has used the PD program to provide staff with increased access to best practice strategies for improving rigor and implementing the CCLS instructional shifts, but limited follow-up and monitoring procedures have not ensured that PD translates into improved teaching practices.

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

- School leaders state that the district collaborates with them and teacher representatives to regularly review and revise opportunities for professional learning. Feedback from session evaluations, school leader analysis, and requests from teachers and staff drive revisions to PD, but formal data about teacher effectiveness is not disaggregated and analyzed to specifically match appropriate PD opportunities.
- District and school leaders stated that the district demands high quality presentations and delivery from PD providers and staff interviewed agreed that these expectations are often met. A review of the PD calendar, attendance lists, and school leader reports show that PD offerings included differentiated instruction, unpacking the CCLS standards, and content-based engagement strategies. The district also offered a district wide initiative for embedded coaching on explicit direct instruction for several staff at different grade levels emphasized the importance of student engagement in the learning process and the necessity of relevant scaffolds for all learners. However, despite these efforts, district and school leaders stated that teachers do not consistently provide high quality, engaging lessons across all schools in the district. School leaders stated that although there has been PD for implementing best practice co-teaching strategies, there is a need for embedded monitoring, feedback, and follow-up supports.
- School leaders state that inconsistent and inadequate follow-up for PD hinders teachers from mastering techniques and fully implementing the strategies learned. Elementary schools have literacy coaches to support improved practices, but the high school does not have these coaches. Some school leaders stated that the secondary departments have teacher leaders and an assistant principal assigned to coordinate activities and mentor staff as requested, but do not offer frequent PD to ensure that all staff are correctly implementing the pedagogical shifts of the CCLS. School leaders state that there are no district or school wide expectations regarding the necessity for all teachers to implement strategies learned in PD. Further, school leaders state that there are no systems in place to evaluate the impact of PD on teacher practices and student outcomes.

**Impact Statement:**

- Student access to learning opportunities that demand high cognitive engagement continues to be low across the district due to limited district follow up support, frequent feedback, and monitoring of PD implementation.

**Recommendation:**

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

- identify the data sets that will be used to assess teacher effectiveness in the districts' priority areas and determine the degree of implementation and success of previous PD offerings on improving student achievement;
- prioritize PD offerings and initiatives that provide on-going support and follow-up strategies to ensure that teachers and staff fully develop their skills in improving rigorous learning opportunities for

students at all grade levels; and

- rigorously monitor the effectiveness of PD in improving instruction and achievement.

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

**Tenet Rating**

**Stage 2**

**Overall Finding:**

- Although the district has provided resources to respond to some targeted student needs, the district has not established priorities, overarching plans, or explicit expectations for how the district and schools will proactively support the social emotional developmental health of all students.

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

- District and school leaders stated in interviews that the district has not established a vision, policy, or comprehensive plan for supporting the social emotional developmental health needs of all students. Some school and district leaders stated that a renewed district emphasis on restorative practices for managing student behaviors has contributed to some decreases in suspension rates, but this does not reflect a comprehensive plan or an organized approach by the district. Student support services staff stated that individual staff have provided multiple activities and efforts to address crisis and targeted student needs, such as counseling, behavior intervention planning, character education lessons, and an anti-bullying week, but these have not been coordinated across the district or connected to a district vision and targets.
- School leaders and counselors reported that each of the schools has their own action plan and priorities related to social emotional developmental health and when they request resources for student intervention, the district is responsive and supportive. The district leader also reported that he collaboratively designed a regional program to support students with intensive academic and social emotional developmental health needs, as well as providing transportation for students in crisis to access outside programming. However, the district leader shared that both were responses to specific requests for district support rather than part of a well-organized and coordinated plan to systematically meet the needs of all students.
- A review of the PD calendar indicates that courses are offered, such as anger management, de-escalation, positive behavior support strategies, and practicing safe stress, but school and district staff stated that these are optional and have only served small numbers of the staff. School leaders also stated that the district does not have systems or data to indicate the effectiveness of these courses. In the district 2015 survey, only 33 percent of the staff agreed that student behavior does not impact instruction, indicating that staff capacity is inadequate in meeting the social emotional demands presented by students. School leaders reported that when requested, the district provides access to conferences to support staff needs, as well as interventions to address specific student needs, but a proactive PD plan to support staff in addressing social and emotional developmental health of students at all ages and levels is not yet developed.

**Impact Statement:**

- The district leaders have provided reactive solutions to individual crises, but a lack of comprehensive plans, programming, and systemic collaboration between the school and district has contributed to disruptions in the instructional environment, and unmet social-emotional student needs.

**Recommendation:**

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

- prioritize the creation of a district vision and plan for the social and emotional developmental health of all students at each grade level. With a representative team, develop and communicate a comprehensive plan for implementing activities and supports to proactively realize the vision for all students in every school.

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

**Tenet Rating**

**Stage 1**

**Overall Finding:**

- The district has not established data-driven priorities or a comprehensive strategy to lead the schools in establishing and sustaining close partnerships with families that support improved student achievement.

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

- District and school leaders stated in interviews that the district has not yet established priorities or a strategic plan for engaging the families in the district in strong partnerships with the staff or schools. Only 37 percent of the district staff agreed in the 2015 district survey that the district conducts needs assessments with families to understand their interests and concerns, while only 44 percent of responding families agreed that the school actively engages families in conversations around needs and progress. While the district does maintain a website, school leaders reported that it is not always current and relevant to the needs and concerns of parents. A district calendar is made available to all families and includes essential district information, but IIT reviewers found that it does little to support the individual needs of families or welcome them into partnerships with school or district staff. School leaders from Title I schools have compliant parent involvement plans and conduct assorted activities at the school level, which are well attended at the elementary level, but have limited attendance at the high school. In the 2015 survey, less than half of all families across the district agreed that leaders help families to become partners in the education of their children.
- The district leader stated that he is very visible in the community and regularly hosts several forums to engage parents in open dialogue, assess family needs, and develop partnerships with community groups. These forums have included the home and school committee, the district level PTA, common core night, and six open house nights at the schools, but school leaders state that these forums have not yet translated into increased home and school partnerships in all schools. School leaders reported that the district expects them to attend school events and interact with the community and parents,

but that specific strategies and outcomes for engaging families and developing partnerships are not communicated by the district. The district has recently secured the services of a local public relations firm, but is still planning the priorities and activities that the district will employ to support the needs of the families and community.

**Impact Statement:**

- Communication between home and school has largely depended on the efforts of individuals across the district. Lack of district-wide comprehensive priorities, strategies, and activities have resulted in divergent efforts of school and district staff and unmet student and family needs persist.

**Recommendation:**

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

- convene a work group of representatives of the school community including parents, teachers, staff, leaders, community agencies, and partners. In this work group, use relevant student, staff, and family data to identify priorities for family and community engagement, and develop a plan for accomplishing those priorities to foster a welcoming environment for families and establish strong reciprocal working partnerships between home and schools. Include provisions for regularly monitoring and communicating the effectiveness of the plan to all members of the schools community, and make adjustments as appropriate.