



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	022601060000
District	Wellsville CSD
District Address	126 West State Street, Wellsville, NY
Superintendent	Kimberly Mueller
Date(s) of Review	May 14-15, 2015

District Information Sheet					
Grade Configuration	PK-12	Total Enrollment	1312	Number of Schools	3
District Composition (<i>most recent data</i>)					
% Title I Population	53%	% Attendance Rate	95.13%		
% Free Lunch	7.3%	% Reduced Lunch	44.9%		
% Limited English Proficient	<1%	% Students with Disabilities	15.5%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin (<i>most recent data</i>)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0.4%	% Black or African American	1.6%		
% Hispanic or Latino	1.2%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1.7%		
% White	94.2%	% Multi-Racial	0.9%		
Personnel (<i>most recent data</i>)					
Years Superintendent Assigned to District	6	# of Deputy/Assistant Superintendents	3 coordinators		
# of Principals	3	# of Assistant Principals	2		
# of Teachers	112	Avg. Class Size	19		
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0%	% Teaching Out of Certification	0%		
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	12%	Average Teacher Absences	2.4% /day		
Teacher Turnover Rate – Teachers < 5 years exp.	4%	Teacher Turnover Rate – All Teachers	7%		
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	24.8%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	30.0%		
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	88%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	85%		
Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4 (Reg ELA and CC ELA)	78% & 70%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4 (Int Algebra then CC Algebra)	78% and 95%		
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)					
4 Year Graduation Rate	75%	6 Year Graduation Rate	79%		
% of earning Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Des.	35%				
Current NYSED Accountability Status					
# of Reward Schools		# of Priority Schools			
# of Schools In Good Standing	1	# of Focus Schools	2		
# of LAP Schools					

District Accountability Status

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

DISTRICT PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE DISTRICT

1. Growth in student achievement
2. Family and community engagement
3. Development of comprehensive PK-12 curriculum

Information about the review

- The review of the district was conducted by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE), a representative from the New York State Education Department, and a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SEIS) representative.
- The Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) review of one school in the district also informed the district review.
- During IIT school reviews in the district, reviewers visited 40 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 264 (44 percent) completed.
- The district provided results of a staff survey that 35 (85 percent) 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 1:			X	

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

sustainable school improvement.

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

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

#	Statement of Practice	Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 1
3.1	The district works collaboratively with the school(s) to ensure CCLS curriculum that provide 21st Century and College and Career 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------

District Review – Findings, Evidence, Impact and Recommendations:

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.	Overall Tenet Rating	Stage 2
Statement of Practice 1.1: The district has a comprehensive approach for recruiting, evaluating, and sustaining high-quality personnel that affords schools the ability to ensure success by addressing the needs of their community.	Tenet Rating	Stage 3
<p>Overall Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district uses systematic strategies to identify personnel needs, secure viable candidates, vet them through reference checks and the interview process, and to support their work. <p>Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district, in collaboration with school leaders, identifies current and future personnel needs. Current staff is often re-deployed or promoted to fill gaps or to further initiatives, such as moving a classroom teacher to the literacy coach position or expanding the role of the Director of Technology to focus more on instructional programs. When new staff is required, the district actively recruits candidates from area colleges, such as the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo as well as using Applicant Tracker, a database of available candidates housed at the Erie 1 Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). Candidates go through a multi-step process including interviews with committees that may include teachers, students, and families, depending on the position. Teacher candidates are required to demonstrate a lesson before being hired. School and district leaders, including the district leader and district coordinators, have received professional development (PD) on staff evaluation methods using the Danielson Framework. Formal classroom observations require pre- and post-observation conferences where the evaluator provides feedback to the teacher, although discussions with school leaders and a school review indicate that follow up to ensure that the teacher has implemented the feedback to increase student achievement is not consistent. School and district leaders told the review team that the information gathered during observations, conferences with teachers, and walk-throughs helps guide decisions on district PD, including embedded coaching for staff. Teachers told the review team that additional support provided by the district helps the district retain teachers. Other factors that increase retention include 		

reimbursement for college credit, mentoring, and participation in a Teachers of Tomorrow grant that provides stipends for new teachers.

Impact Statement:

- Strategic teacher recruitment and staff support results in staff being hired that is becoming increasingly familiar with best practices and better able to address student needs.

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 district has implemented initiatives aligned to high expectations, but does not communicate these expectations well enough to schools or make clear the importance of the alignment between professional practices and student outcomes.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district’s theory of action, as cited in its District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP), calls for “continuous improvement.” The district leader states the district has high expectations for students, but discussions with staff, parents, and students indicate that these expectations are not always communicated to stakeholders. In addition, the review team found that in the district’s DCIP, the district does not make a strong connection between staff professional practice and student outcomes or between goals that have quantifiable success criteria, timescales for completion, and clear designations of personnel responsibility and accountability for completion. Further, some teachers do not embrace new instructional strategies suggested by the district and continue their current practices without being held accountable for implementing changes to their instructional practice, which hinders student success. While school leaders repeatedly informed the review team that the schools in the district provide a safe and caring environment for students, the review team found limited evidence of accountability for improved student academic achievement.
- The district’s PD plan outlines particular topics, such as guiding teachers to construct rubrics, collecting data to enter into eDoctrina, and developing a better understanding of modules. There is less PD on raising academic standards and ensuring that all school staff holds students to higher standards that will prepare them for success. While school and district leaders meet regularly as an administrative cabinet, school leaders state that the district’s theory of action is not communicated by the district or internalized by all school leaders. A recommendation from the district review last year was to establish a robust plan to communicate the district’s vision of high expectations to all stakeholders. This plan has not been implemented across the district. School staff shared with the review team that they felt the district-wide goals are too broad and not communicated in ways to help direct their efforts. For example, the district has a goal of data-driven instruction, but teachers say that although they are collecting data, they are not skilled enough in its usage to improve student achievement.

Impact Statement:

- The incomplete implementation of a prior recommendation to establish a plan to communicate the vision of high expectations to all staff and students, results in not all individuals supporting and implementing the theory of continuous improvement.

Recommendation:

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

- revisit and implement the district plan to communicate high expectations for student progress and achievement to all district and school staff including identification of action steps, persons responsible, and ways to monitor progress. The plan should be rigorous and make clear the urgency expected in its implementation; and
- have a standing agenda item at administrative cabinet meetings during which staff can report progress linking professional practice with student outcomes.

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

Tenet Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- District staff has a vision for allocating resources to increase student achievement, but they have not implemented a formalized plan so that the needs of schools and students are met.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district leaders state that they collaborate with school leaders, department heads, and coordinators to review program and student needs to determine where to allocate resources. However, a formalized plan for how resources are allocated or systems to evaluate the impact of these resource decisions on student achievement, professional practices, or to hold schools accountable are not in place. School leaders indicated in interviews that the needs and demographics of individual schools are not consistently considered when resources are allocated. Similarly, the focus of PD centers on the teachers most likely to attend training, rather than teacher needs, so alignment between PD and student outcomes is limited.
- The district has put considerable investment into the use of coaches and consultants to improve student achievement and instructional and curricular practices. However, school leaders state that the deployment of these personnel has not been strategic or resulted in improved teacher practice and student achievement. Although coaches are frequently in schools, not all teachers are working with coaches, as teachers are not required to work with a coach, except by personal choice. While there is a district PD plan, the review team was not provided with evidence to demonstrate how coaches are being held accountable or how the district is monitoring data to determine the effectiveness of coaches in improving teacher practices and student achievement.

- The district has been identified for low performance of special education students and has allocated significant resources to improve the performance of these students. For example, at the direction of the district leaders, the elementary school has created an Integrated Co-teaching (ICT) classroom at each grade level along with planning time for the co-teachers. Despite this re-organization of resources, evidence from the school review indicates that teachers in co-teaching classrooms are not consistently meeting the needs of special education students to ensure that Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals are met and that students are successful. Without holding schools and staff accountable for successfully implementing best practices for co-teaching, there is limited evidence of how this resource is effectively impacting student outcomes.

Impact Statement:

- The district administers its resources in an effort to support continuous improvement. However, without a resource allocation plan that is communicated to district and school leaders and for which they are held accountable, student improvement is limited.

Recommendation:

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

- create and communicate a plan to all school and district leaders to outline the criteria by which all resources are to be allocated. The plan should hold the district and schools accountable for providing value for money and for demonstrating improvement in student achievement and professional practices; and
- develop and implement means to monitor the effectiveness of collaborative work with coaches and consultants, as measured by student progress.

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 district provides PD for staff, but is not able to demonstrate the impact of PD on student achievement, particularly in the performance of the sub-groups for which the district has been identified.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- While the PD plan is available on the district website for teachers, staff, and school leaders to access, the review team found limited evidence that the district and schools provide prioritized PD based on school or student data. Although all the logistics are in place to plan and deliver the PD that is needed in schools, there is disconnect between the PD and its impact in classrooms across the district. Evidence from school reviews and interviews with school leaders indicate that PD is not having a

significant impact on improving student outcomes or teacher practices. Classroom visits by the review team demonstrate that there are weaknesses in instruction, particularly in the consistent implementation of the CCLS, the use of data to drive instruction and curriculum planning, and the differentiation of instruction to meet the needs of different subgroups, such as students with disabilities. School leaders state that follow-up PD, where needed, is not always provided by the district.

- The district PD plan does not make clear the district’s expectations and quantifiable impact that PD and support provided is expected to have on improving student outcomes. School and district leaders do not conduct rigorous classroom observations that focus on how teachers are using what they learn in PD to improve student learning and implement the CCLS. School and district leaders state they have enlisted the services of coaches whose activities and supports have led to improvements in the quality of writing in schools and in the implementation of the CCLS. However, the review team found little evidence of robust student writing and limited evidence of CCLS aligned curriculum that meets student needs. Students state that teachers return their writing with a portion of the rubric circled, but no other information from their teachers. Further, special education teachers that have been included in CCLS training have not received specific training on modifying curriculum to include explicit instruction strategies.

Impact Statement:

- The lack of procedures to monitor the quality and impact of PD or to hold school leaders, coaches, and teachers accountable for improving school-wide and individual practices significantly hinders the district’s intended commitment to continuous 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 leaders should:

- collaborate with school leaders to make clear to all school communities the necessity and urgency for PD offerings to closely align with improved professional practices and student outcomes; and
- devise and implement a plan to work alongside school leaders to regularly and rigorously monitor the effectiveness of PD and adjust training where necessary.

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

Tenet Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- The district has an expectation that schools will utilize data to drive improvements, but these expectations are not realized in all classrooms and teachers state that they lack the skills necessary to use data to inform instruction and make curricula adjustments.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- District leaders state that there is an expectation that all schools and staff make best use of assessment data to drive instruction and track the progress of individual and groups of students. However, district leaders state that the approaches to collecting and using formative and summative assessment data vary by school. Further, school leaders and teachers state that the district does not make clear its expectations for the use of data, access to the district's data systems is not consistent, and PD to equip staff with the skills to analyze and use data are not forthcoming from the district. For example, in the elementary school, coaches attend grade level meetings where data is discussed, but teachers say they do not fully understand how to use data to inform their instruction or help them make decisions about instructional strategies. While teachers state they know how to conduct an item analysis, apart from re-teaching the same material the same way, they are not sure what next steps they should implement to improve student achievement.
- The district leader recognizes that more needs to be done to improve school and teacher access to the district's data systems. Plans are in progress, including eDoctrina and other data warehousing systems, to increase the availability of data, but to date there is no systematic communication process in place to allow teachers, school leaders, and all district leaders to access specific data to guide their work. With regard to students' social and emotional development health, data systems to monitor the effectiveness of provided services, such as after-school support, and to provide support for staff to address student referrals and interventions are new.

Impact Statement:

- The difficulties some schools and teachers face in accessing and using data adversely impacts the potential of data as a tool for improving teacher instructional practices and student achievement.

Recommendation:

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

- determine through surveys or teacher focus groups what areas are problematic for teachers when using data;
- create a strategic plan with school leaders, grade level leads, department heads, and consultants to develop PD opportunities targeted to address teacher deficiencies; and
- monitor ways in which teachers are using data to drive instructional decisions and the success of those decisions.

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

<p>Statement of Practice 2.1 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for the school leader to create, develop and nurture a school environment that is responsive to the needs of the entire school community.</p>	<p>Tenet Rating</p>	<p>Stage 2</p>
<p><u>Areas for Improvement:</u></p> <p>Overall Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district has introduced initiatives to support continuous school improvement, but student achievement in some schools is stagnant. While school leaders state that schools have made strides over the past few years, student scores overall remain low, with less than one-fourth of the students rating proficient on state assessments. <p>Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School leaders state that district leaders are committed to continuous school improvement. For example, they have convened a team of consultants to address issues, such as improving literacy, the use of differentiation, and leadership development for both teachers and leaders. Consultants, many of whom are coaches within the schools, have been working with teachers to understand the CCLS. However, student achievement has not improved as school leaders indicate that the effectiveness of coaching strategies have not been monitored and evaluated rigorously enough by district staff, adjustments have not been made, and follow up training has not been provided. School and district leaders state that the district uses grant funds to provide coaches in many content areas with plans to hire more for next year to address additional gaps. The district did not provide evidence to demonstrate how it evaluated the spending of grant funding for its impact on student achievement. School leaders indicate knowledge of the district’s theory of action as it articulated in the DCIP and state they welcome the support that the district provides them in helping to shape the vision and goals for their individual schools. However, school leaders state that alignment between the school and district visions is sometimes blurred as the theory of action is not always communicated clearly enough to all members of school communities. In addition, school leaders state that goals are not always clear or measurable, so progress towards completion is not consistently measured. School staff added that even when district goals are clear, the district does not consistently provide adequate support and training, such as in the use of data to drive instruction and curricular planning and implementation. School leaders report that the district leaders works to establish productive relationships with schools, but that at times regular and supportive communication between the district and schools is not always forthcoming. While there is an open door policy between the middle school, high school, and district office complex that expedites communication, school leaders state there is no process to share concerns, resolutions, and information across the district. 		

- School leaders state that district leaders have plans for a range of initiatives to begin in the summer of 2015, including curriculum mapping projects, increased attention to family and community engagement, and PD for co-teachers to strengthen the inclusion process for special education students. However, plans are not in place to introduce a more rigorous and evaluative approach to assessing the quality of PD or coaching and their subsequent impact on student outcomes, CCLS implementation, and instructional practices. School reviews demonstrate that PD has not played a significant role in school improvement. Without strategies to evaluate the success of new initiatives, the district will not be able to ensure practices are implemented to improve student success across the district.
- School leaders state that teachers and school leaders conduct parent teacher conferences each fall and some events throughout the school year, but these are not well attended. While school and district leaders say they welcome more parent participation, there are no exhaustive or creative outreach measures used by schools to increase parent involvement in school communities. School staff and parents share that the district and schools do not always work in unison to reach out to families.

Impact Statement:

- The district’s efforts to secure sustained improvements in student achievement are hampered by its goals and aspirations not being clearly communicated and its work to support schools not being rigorously evaluated to help guarantee effectiveness.

Recommendation:

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

- collaborate with school leaders to prioritize district and school initiatives;
- make sure the goals outlined in the DCIP align with identified school goals and are specific, measurable, ambitious, results-oriented, and timely (SMART) and identify individuals who will be responsible for their completion; and
- meet regularly, such as during the administrative cabinet meetings, to review progress toward the goals and share thoughts, concerns, and successes.

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:

- School leaders state that the district’s efforts to support curriculum development have not resulted in a curriculum that fully meets the needs of all students.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- The district has provided many consultants and coaches to support teachers in curriculum development. Several coaches target their support on helping teachers examine and interpret the CCLS in ELA and math. However, despite this support, teachers are only in the process of mapping their curricula by tracking which topics they are covering and for what length of time. School leaders and teachers state, and the review team found, that many teachers have not yet developed a vertically articulated curricula that identify goals, standards to be covered, essential questions, assessments, and strategies for differentiation. The review team found at the elementary school that most of the instructional time was spent on ELA and math. When asked, teachers said social studies is covered through reading and writing passages in the ELA modules. There were no science or social studies curricula shared with the review team. In addition, a lack of rigor from district and school leaders in evaluating the curriculum hinders student success.
- During interviews, school leaders stated that the district is supportive in terms of the quantity of resources it provides to support learning in classrooms. However, school leaders also stated that the district does not make clear its expectations that the use of resources support enhanced learning and improved student outcomes. To support the use of technology, the district has provided iPads for students in the elementary school, but no PD for teachers on how to use them effectively to further instruction. The district has also introduced a system, eDoctrina, for collecting, data but has not made clear to school leaders or teachers how this system should be used to make curricular adjustments and modifications, so that the learning opportunities are better matched to the diverse needs and abilities of all students.

Impact Statement:

- The lack of vertically articulated curricula results in limited accountability for teachers and leaders to ensure that all students will have the content and skills needed to for college- and career-readiness.

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 and implement a plan for curriculum development across all grades and schools. The plan should include:
 - PD for teachers on the curriculum development process;
 - a timeline to accomplish the project;
 - district support to help guide the development;
 - a method for making the kindergarten through grade twelve curricula accessible to staff district-wide; and
 - an accountability process to ensure that district and school leaders monitor the implementation across grades and content areas.

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 provides consultants, coaches, and PD opportunities to support teachers and school leaders. The work of the various consultants is not coordinated to reach the goals indicated in the PD plan. After nearly a year of intensive coaching efforts and continued PD there is little evidence of the positive impact coaching and PD is making on student progress.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- School leaders state that through the district, teachers across all grades are supported by a variety of consultants and coaches from BOCES, independent contractors, and in-school coaches who have been identified because of their areas of expertise. School leaders state that there have been some limited improvements in reading scores and in the graduation rates of students with disabilities, but there is limited evidence of sustained and widespread improvements across different content areas and different grades.
- School leaders explained that the coaching support and PD provided by the district does not always meet the needs of schools and teachers and that teacher and student data is not used to establish PD or follow-up activities. Further, while coaches work with teachers on strategies to better understand the CCLS, during classroom visits the review team found limited evidence of CCLS-aligned instructional strategies. School leaders state they do not regularly see the connection between PD and coaching, and teacher instructional practices. For example, while coaches worked with teachers to develop “I can...” statements for students, and these statements were displayed in many classrooms, during classroom visits the review team found teachers seldom referred to these statements or included them as part of their lessons.
- School leaders informed the review team that the district has focused on data collection with a goal that data is used to guide planning and instructional decisions. However, the review team found schools do not consistently use data to inform practice. Elementary teachers told state that although they collect and track data through benchmark assessments they are not always sure what to do with this data. Although the district provides in-house staff, coaches, and BOCES Regional Information Centers (RICs), school leaders state that they have not been successful in preparing all teachers to use data effectively.

Impact Statement:

- The lack of consistent PD tailored to the needs of schools restricts the district’s capacity to secure higher levels of student achievement across schools.

Recommendation:

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

leaders should:

- require school and district leaders to collaborate on providing PD that is based on school and teacher needs, takes account of school and student data, and is evaluated for how well it enables all groups of students to progress.

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

Tenet Rating

Stage 2

Overall Finding:

- The district provides student support staff, including counselors, school psychologists, and social workers to address student social and emotional developmental health. However, there is limited PD for these support staff and systems to support students are not interconnected.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- School and district leaders state that they provide a safe and caring environment for their students. At the elementary school, parents and teachers told the review team that teachers and staff know all the children by name and support them. On the district level, school leaders informed reviewers that the district has secured two grants to help support projects and staff to address student social and emotional developmental health needs. Two social workers are funded by the grant and the district has set aside funding to support at least one of these positions after the grant is finished. The social workers are part of the student support teams at the middle school and elementary school along with counselors and school psychologists. These individuals form the Problem Solving Team (PST) at the elementary school that administers the referral process to gather information and plan academic and behavior interventions as needed as part of the Response to Intervention (RtI) program. However, this team has just restarted its work after a lapse of service for several months due to a vacancy in the school psychologist position and school leaders confirmed it is just getting up to speed again.
- School leaders stated that neither the middle school nor the high school currently implement an RtI program resulting in limited academic and behavioral interventions for struggling students. The district has developed a code of conduct for each building and has posted all three on the district's website. Lists in the code outline the expectations for students, teachers, leaders, parents, and student support staff, but the statements are broad and there is no information about consequences for failing to meet the expectations. The three buildings have different initiatives or methods of addressing social and emotional development health, such as programs to address social problem solving and substance abuse. Discussions with school and district staff demonstrate that no systems are in place to evaluate the success of these programs or if they have resulted in a decrease in behavioral incidents. Discussions with school leaders and support staff also indicate that there is no coherent and coordinated district plan to ensure a systematic approach to training staff so that they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to identify and meet the social and emotional needs of students.

Impact Statement:

- The lack of consistency of programs, especially referral programs for academically and behaviorally at-risk students, limits social and emotional supports for students.

Recommendation:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Stage 3 rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district leaders, including the Coordinator of Student Support Services, should:

- meet with the school leaders and student support staff at each of the schools to review the social and emotional support programs currently in place;
- analyze data on referrals and interventions to determine which strategies are successful and why;
- establish a consistent process for student referral that is followed in each building; and
- communicate the protocols to all staff and monitor implementation.

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 district has established methods to share information with parents, but has not done enough to ensure parents have easy access to all information or to find out why parent participation at school events is low.

Evidence/Information that Led to this Finding:

- School leaders state that the district maintains a robust website with a wealth of information including links to the monthly newsletter, school and district policies, articles, and explanations of the CCLS and other statewide and national programs. The district also makes use of social media including Twitter and Facebook. Parents say that they can follow Twitter and Facebook and that they also communicate with teachers by email, texting, and phone calls. District leaders told the review team that grade six to twelve parents have received a unique password to access the parent portal where they can follow their children’s academic progress, including grades and assignments. However, a school leader informed the review team that the district does not make the parent portal available at the elementary school so parents cannot track their children’s progress in grades kindergarten to five. The school leaders did not have information about the number of parents that access the district website. School leaders shared with the review team that parent teacher conferences in the fall are attended by 98 percent of the elementary parents. Other activities are not well attended, with particularly low numbers at events where academics are discussed. Secondary school leaders say as students grow older parent participation numbers drop off, so the events they offer are not well attended. School leaders state that neither the school or district have done enough to ascertain why parent participation at events varies and without this information they are not able to put in place strategies to increase

parent participation and ensure families are informed on how they can support their children's learning. School leaders told the review team that the district requires each building to have a family engagement committee to develop a series of events throughout the school year. However, there was no evidence that there is a strategic plan developed by the district to inform the work of these committees, create partnerships with community agencies, or to help parents support their children's success in school.

Impact Statement:

- The district has an informative website, but without more active outreach to parents, the formation of partnerships between home and school that result in increased student success is limited.

Recommendation:

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

- establish processes, including goals, for the family engagement committees to ensure consistency in their work and articulation of their programs and events;
- schedule regular meetings of the family engagement committees to monitor success and support each other's work with ideas; and
- research and pursue partnerships with community agencies, organizations, and businesses to foster collaboration to increase success of all district students.