



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	081200050003
School Name	Norwich Middle School
School Address	89 Midland Drive, Norwich, NY 13815
District Name	Norwich City School District
School Leader	Scott Ryan
Dates of Review	May 12-13, 2015
School Accountability Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus School
Type of Review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet for

School Configuration (2014-15 data) - given

Grade Configuration	6-8	Total Enrollment	424	SIG Recipient	Yes
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2014-15)					
# Transitional Bilingual	0	# Dual Language	0	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	0
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2014-15)					
# Special Classes	1	# SETSS		# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	0
Types and Number of Special Classes (2014-15)					
# Visual Arts	3	# Music	3	# Drama	0
# Foreign Language	4	# Dance	0	# CTE	0
School Composition (most recent data)					
% Title I Population	52%		% Attendance Rate	97%	
% Free Lunch	45%		% Reduced Lunch	10%	
% Limited English Proficient	0%		% Students with Disabilities	14%	
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0%		% Black or African American	3%	
% Hispanic or Latino	3%		% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2%	
% White	92%		% Multi-Racial	0%	
Personnel (most recent data)					
Years Principal Assigned to School	4		# of Assistant Principals	0	
# of Deans	1		# of Counselors/Social Workers	2	
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0%		% Teaching Out of Certification	0	
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	9%		Average Teacher Absences	3	
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	23%		Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	14%	
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	-		Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	78%	
Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	-		Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	-	
Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)					
% of 1st year students who earned 10+ credits	-		% of 2nd year students who earned 10+ credits	-	
% of 3rd year students who earned 10+ credits	-		4 Year Graduation Rate	-	
6 Year Graduation Rate	-				
Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2013-14)					
Reward			Recognition		
In Good Standing			Local Assistance Plan		
Focus District			Focus School Identified by a Focus District	x	
Priority School					

Accountability Status – Elementary and Middle Schools

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

SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:

- Increase student achievement.
- Provide focused professional development to increase teacher performance.

Information about the review

- The review was co-led by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from the New York State Education Department. The team also included a district representative, a district-selected Outside Educational Expert, and a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SESIS) representative.
- The review team visited a total of 57 classrooms during the two-day review.
- Reviewers conducted focus groups with students, staff, and parents
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including curriculum maps, lesson plans, school wide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- The school did not provide up to date survey results.

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

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

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
3.2	The school leader ensures and supports the quality implementation of a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3	Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans used include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.4	The school leader and teachers have developed a comprehensive plan for teachers to partner within and across all grades and subjects to create interdisciplinary curricula targeting the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.5	Teachers implement a comprehensive system for using formative and summative assessments for strategic short and long-range curriculum planning that involves student reflection, tracking of, and ownership of learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 3:				D	

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

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

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
5.2	The school leader establishes overarching systems and understandings of how to support and sustain student social and emotional developmental health and academic success.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3	The school articulates and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is aligned to a curriculum or program that provides learning experiences and a safe and healthy school environment for families, teachers, and students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.4	All school stakeholders work together to develop a common understanding of the importance of their contributions in creating a school community that is safe, conducive to learning, and fostering of a sense of ownership for providing social and emotional developmental health supports tied to the school's vision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.5	The school leader and student support staff work together with teachers to establish structures to support the use of data to respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:				D	

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

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

Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: Visionary leaders create a school community and culture that lead to success, well-being, and high academic outcomes for all students via systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement.	Tenet Rating	D
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The school has received a rating of ***Developing*** for Tenet 2 – School Leader Practices and Decisions.

- The school leader has articulated a clear vision for school improvement found in the school’s LINKS plan based on a district led initiative. This plan focuses on improvement and raising student achievement through fusing literacy in all content areas, offering challenging and engaging curriculum, differentiating teaching, and building the character of students. Discussions with students and staff indicate that they were involved in drawing up this plan and evidence of the plan was observed throughout the school in documents, classrooms, and hallways. However, discussions indicate that staff was not involved in drawing up the school’s goals needed to achieve the plan’s intended outcomes. Evaluation of the school’s goals by the review team demonstrates that the school leader has not established Specific, Measureable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) goals to focus stakeholder’s efforts or to use quantifiable data by which to measure progress toward these goals.
- The school leader made some use of academic data and the school’s priorities to identify the need to create a literacy specialist position and to increase student-learning time in literacy and math by extending teaching time blocks. The school leader also implemented the Fast & Furious program this year to replace remediation-focused Academic Intervention Services (AIS) classes with a foundational program designed to prepare students to participate in grade level work in their English language arts (ELA) and math classes. However, the school leader confirmed that he has not put in place rigorous procedures to evaluate the impact of these changes on student achievement and without this evaluative information, he is not able to assess which of these initiatives are successful and which are in need of adjustment.
- Discussions with the school leader and a review of documents indicate that the school leader carries out observations in compliance with the district’s Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). The school leader stated that he is limited in the number of targeted observations he can carry out because of the district-union contract, but recognizes he does not provide sufficient constructive and actionable feedback for teachers to help them improve their instructional practices. The school leader stated that he has used the literacy specialist to provide teachers with regular support through collaborative planning, sharing, observation, and feedback, but teachers stated that they would welcome more guidance on how to improve their planning and instructional practices.
- Discussions with the school leader and teachers indicate that the school does not have a strong focus on using data to identify and track student academic progress or to set class, grade, or school goals to achieve intended improvements in student outcomes. Although, based on test data, many students are not proficient in ELA and math, and the school has not used and analyzed data to establish and communicate clear and measurable goals for raising student achievement. In addition, staff noted an increased emphasis on the collection of data about student performance, but none described clear class, grade, or school-wide performance targets against which to measure progress.

Recommendation:

- Initiate a process to establish SMART academic performance goals for each grade level and subject by the start of the next school year that put all students and subgroups on a trajectory toward college- and career-readiness by the end of grade eight. Include training regarding goal development, protocols, and facilitation for grade teams, and steps for widely communicating the goals to the school community.
- By the end of the school year, develop a protocol for sustained non-evaluative peer observation of instruction and feedback, using techniques, such as videotaping, lesson study, or critical friends' protocols that focuses on specific school-wide strategies, such as universal language, close reading, or Teach Like a Champion.

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

Tenet Rating

D

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

- Discussions with the school leader and teachers indicate that the school leader has facilitated PD to help support teacher implementation of the Common Core learning Standards (CCLS) and has purchased appropriate learning materials and resources to support implementation of the curriculum. Evidence from planning and discussions with teachers demonstrate that teachers are at the early stages of customizing materials to meet student needs. The school leader stated that not all teachers completed the modules last year, but reported that this year teachers were held accountable for completing the modules at the expected pace to cover the content necessary for the state assessments. Although the school leader makes planning time available for teachers, curriculum planning is primarily at the discretion of individual teachers, some of whom regularly plan together, sharing resources and ideas. Others plan independently, resulting in inconsistent lessons and limited benefit from collaboration, particularly between veteran and more novice teachers. As a result, the school has not maximized opportunities to build a coherent curriculum aligned to the CCLS that meets all student needs.
- A review of lesson plans by the review team demonstrated that most lesson plans do not reference student data, except in special education lesson plans, in which teachers are consistently using data to adjust student assignments. The review team also noted that most teacher lesson plans do not include higher-order questions designed to challenge student thinking. Some teachers adjust pacing or sequencing of curriculum and select alternative texts to better engage students, but most planning and instruction is not differentiated to meet the needs of students.
- The school leader and teachers state that a priority this year is to infuse literacy across all content areas. While the review team found some evidence of language skills and literacy being used in social studies and science classrooms, this was not consistent across the school. Teachers state that they do not collaborate on a regular basis to ensure that they create interdisciplinary curriculum.

- Teachers shared that they do not consistently analyze and use data to make curricular adjustments and decisions. Minutes from teacher planning meetings demonstrate that teachers have conversations about data, but the review team found limited evidence of these conversations translating into curricular and instructional adjustments. Teachers have access to state test and assessment data and carry out some formative assessments during instruction. However, the review team found teachers do not consistently use this information to ensure alignment between the curriculum and assessment. Classroom visits and discussions with teachers and students demonstrate that teachers do not consistently use data to provide feedback to students on their academic performance in order to improve student achievement.

Recommendation:

- Conduct department meetings at the end of the year to review all available data regarding student mastery of grade level standards, identify specific skill and knowledge gaps, and use this information to customize curriculum for the coming school year to address all student strengths and deficits.

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

Tenet Rating

D

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

- Discussions with teachers and the school leader demonstrated that the school is at an early stage of using data to drive instruction and to meet student needs. The school leader hired a literacy specialist this year to work with teachers to analyze data from formative assessments and customize instruction, but this is not yet reflected in practice as the review team found limited evidence of teachers using data to plan and deliver instruction to meet student needs. Discussions have just begun between school leaders, coaches, and teachers on how to use data to set challenging goals for different groups of students.
- In the majority of classroom visits, instruction was not consistently rigorous, engaging, or deliberately planned to meet the needs of all students. While there are exceptions, most teachers did not consistently employ rigorous questioning techniques or challenge students with tasks to develop critical thinking skills. During classroom visits, most instruction was whole class. While in some classrooms, teachers paired students, but they did so without reference to specific identified skill deficits. In addition, teachers did not consistently monitor groups to ensure engagement and learning by all students, as some students were bored and off task while others struggled to access the material during classroom visits. The school provides self-contained and resource classes for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), but does not offer direct support for students with disabilities within general education classes. In addition, while the Fast & Furious program focuses on accelerating learning, the need for additional remediation strategies was evident.

- Staff, students, and parents stated that the school is generally safe and the review team found little evidence of disruptive behavior during the review. However, during classroom visits, classroom management and engaging instruction was not consistent, including in honors classes. Further, the review team found few opportunities for group and class discussion and students stated that they are not often offered the chance to share their views and opinions. While the learning environment is safe, students pointed out class work is not always challenging.
- The school leader and teachers shared that using and analyzing data is a work in progress. Evidence indicates that teachers have access to state test results, formative and summative module assessments, and teacher created assessments in non-module subjects, such as exit protocols in the Fast & Furious classes. However, this information is not consistently used to adjust instruction or to inform instructional decision-making and future planning. Discussions with students and an evaluation of their work indicate that feedback is not consistently provided that gives students the precise steps they need to improve their work and academic performance.

Recommendation:

- Expand the continuum of services for special education students to support the use of direct consultant teachers and/or co-teaching and provide training and support for general education teachers focused on collaborative planning and teaching practices.

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

Tenet Rating

D

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

- The school leader is working with staff to improve and formalize the school’s system of referral and support in order to better meet the social and emotional needs of students. The school has a Student Achievement Team (SAT) that brings teachers, support staff, and school leaders together to review data and information regarding specific students of concern and implement cycles of intervention to meet their needs. The SAT has well-developed protocols for data collection and action planning, but only addresses three or four students per month. Teachers and support staff noted that the community has been changing with increased social emotional needs among the student population, which the SAT does not have capacity to meet. The school leader stated that the school does not have a formalized system for enabling each student to be known by a designated adult, but students state they can go to their teacher or a member of the support staff if they have any academic or emotional concerns.
- The school leader confirmed that the school does not have an overarching program to support the teaching of social and emotional developmental health. However, the school does have some disparate education initiatives related to social emotional development, such as a common focus on

respect and anti-bullying initiatives. However, the school leader stated that there is a need for a more formal character building education program and a team of school leaders and teachers have been researching programs. Discussions with staff indicate that there has been little PD over the last two years focused on building the skill capacity of staff to identify and address the social and emotional needs of students.

- The school leader shared with the review team that the school is developing a specific element of its vision focused on the social and emotional needs of students and goals to achieve this vision. The school leader recognizes that a key component of this will be identifying the roles and responsibilities that staff, parents, and students will need to play to make the vision a reality. Discussions with staff, students, and parents indicate that they feel that the school has a commitment to student social and emotional welfare, but are not aware of how they can contribute to creating a school community that is consistently safe, conducive to learning, and committed to social and academic success.
- Interviews with school staff indicated that the school collects a variety of data related to social emotional development, such as attendance and behavior/discipline data, but this data is not systematically and proactively collected and analyzed to drive school improvement. While teachers and support staff described frequent informal communication about students, the school leader described programs and staff operating in silos, which he is working to break down. As a result, the school is not maximizing the collaborative use of data to plan for and meet the social emotional needs of all students.

Recommendation:

- By the end of the school year adapt the SAT model, process and protocols for each grade team, including counselors and other support staff, to collaboratively identify 3-5 students with social-emotional needs, review comprehensive academic and social-emotional data, and develop a concrete two-week action plan for teachers and support staff to implement together.

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

Tenet Rating

D

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

- While the school provides regular communication to students and their families about the school’s academic expectations, it has not successfully engaged families in raising student achievement. School leaders and staff described a number of communication tools, such as the beginning of year orientation, back-to-school events, newsletters, progress reports, and report cards where expectations are made clear. However, parents stated in interviews that they felt that communication did not always adequately highlight the positive things their children are doing or learning, which they feel might help to engage more parents. Parents said that some individual teachers made clear to them their expectations for academic success, but this practice was not consistent. The school leader recognizes some difficulties in attracting larger number of parents to school events, particularly in relation to informing parents about what their child is learning.

- Some parents shared with the review team they are happy with the communication between school and home, as they are kept up to date through newsletters, report cards, and personal contact with teachers, support staff, and school leaders. Interviewed parents described teachers and staff as very accessible when they reached out to staff, which was often informally during drop-off and pick-up or via e-mail and phone. However, not all parents found the school responsive. For example, a parent raised concerns about the appropriate placement of her child and heard nothing yet but “we’ll get back to you.” The school leader is planning to survey parents to determine the most effective channels of communication and make adjustments to current practices to foster a stronger partnership between the school and home.
- Parents interviewed indicated a desire to better understand how they could help their children’s learning and how they could help the school achieve its aim of improved academic success. The school leader indicated that the school has attempted a variety of strategies to increase family engagement and understanding of its programs with limited success, such as providing food and childcare during school events. However, there is little evidence to indicate that there has been a systematic approach to providing parents with support, guidance, or training to help them be partners in their children’s learning. Staff report that training for them to help build partnerships with parents and families has taken place in the past, but not recently.
- During interviews, parents stated that they receive information on their children’s academic progress through progress reports and report cards, but some stated that the report cards are hard to understand. In addition, parents raised concerns about the high grades and scores their children receive on report cards that do not align with their low performance on state assessments. The school leader stated that he is examining how to provide parents with clearer data and learning goals to allow them to better monitor their children’s progress and understand their achievement level relative to state standards.

Recommendation:

- Implement student-teacher-parent conferences that require families to pick up end-of-year report cards at the school and use this opportunity to disseminate information about summer learning opportunities.