



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

**DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)**



<b>BEDS Code</b>	630300010007
<b>School Name</b>	Glens Falls High School
<b>School Address</b>	10 Quade Street Glens Falls, New York 12801
<b>District Name</b>	Glens Falls City Schools
<b>School Leader</b>	Dr. Mark Stratton
<b>Dates of Review</b>	April 5-7, 2016
<b>School Accountability Status</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus School
<b>Type of Review</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

### School Information Sheet for Glens Falls High School

School Configuration (2015-16 data)					
Grade Configuration	9-12	Total Enrollment	590	SIG Recipient	No
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2015-16)					
# Transitional Bilingual	2	# Dual Language	0	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	0
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2015-16)					
# Special Classes	8/18	# SETSS		# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	10
Types and Number of Special Classes (2015-16)					
# Visual Arts	34/14	# Music	7/10	# Drama	0
# Foreign Language	10/18	# Dance	0	# CTE	120
School Composition (most recent data)					
% Title I Population		0	% Attendance Rate		91
% Free Lunch		35	% Reduced Lunch		6
% Limited English Proficient		---	% Students with Disabilities		16
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native		0	% Black or African American		5
% Hispanic or Latino		3	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		2
% White		88	% Multi-Racial		2
Personnel (most recent data)					
Years Principal Assigned to School		8	# of Assistant Principals		2
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate		0	% Teaching Out of Certification		0
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience		3	Average Teacher Absences		
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2014-15)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		NA	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		NA
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (Grade 4)		NA	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (Grade 8)		NA
Student Performance for High Schools (2014-15)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		87	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		87
Global History Performance at levels 3 & 4		84	US History Performance at levels 3 & 4		83
4-Year Graduation Rate		75	6 Year Graduation Rate		77
Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Designation		42	% ELA/Math Aspirational Performance Measures		
Overall NYSED Accountability Status					
In Good Standing			Local Assistance Plan		
Priority School			Focus School		X
<b>SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:</b>					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve our Economically Disadvantaged graduation rate.</li> <li>2. Improve our math Economically Disadvantaged proficiency.</li> <li>3. Improve our ELA Economically Disadvantaged proficiency.</li> <li>4. Improve our graduation rate for ALL students.</li> <li>5. Improve our attendance.</li> </ol>					

School Identification Status		
The school was identified for <b>not meeting</b> the subgroup performance minimum cut point for the following subgroups in 2014-15:		
Subgroup	School's Performance	Minimum Cut point
Economically Disadvantaged	127	133

## Purpose of the visit

This school was visited by the State Education Department Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) because of its low performance.

The purpose of this review is to provide the school with feedback regarding the practices across the school and to provide a number of actionable recommendations to direct the school's work in the immediate future.

This report is being provided as a feedback tool to assist the school and to help identify areas for improvement. These areas can address the subgroups identified or they may be broader and cover additional subgroups or the entire school. NYSED recognizes that there are dedicated staff members at the school committed to the success of the students. The report below provides a critical lens to help the school best focus its efforts.

## 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.
- The review team visited a total of 41 classrooms during the two-day review.
- The OEE visited eight classrooms with the school leader during the review.
- Reviewers conducted focus groups with students, staff, and parents.
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including curriculum maps, lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.

**RATING SUMMARY:** The Review Team concluded that the school's current systems and practices most closely align with Stage Two on the DTSDE Rubric.

### SUCCESSSES WITHIN THE SCHOOL THAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD BUILD UPON:

1. Teachers, staff, parents, and students reported that the school leader has established a positive climate for teaching and learning. Teachers and staff members told the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that the school leader expects them to act as role models for students. The IIT observed courteous and respectful interactions between students and between teachers and students throughout the school. Students stated in interviews and the IIT confirmed in classroom observations that teachers were supportive and encouraging. Students said that they felt safe in class because their teachers were caring and concerned.
2. School leaders have developed a curriculum in each content area aligned to the Common Core and based on NYS standards. The curriculum provides teachers with explicit guidance on course content and pacing. Department heads meet quarterly to review the curriculum and make necessary modifications in the sequencing and time devoted to topics and units in every course.
3. School leaders have created a credit recovery program that allows students to rectify course failures and complete missing work in current courses. The students enrolled in this program go to a work

completion room during one or more periods of the school day. Teachers assigned to the work completion room provide supervision and support to the students.

4. Parents told the IIT that school leaders keep them informed about the academic progress and needs of their children. Each quarter, school leaders mail home a five-week progress report and a term report card. In addition, the school maintains a student and parent portal that provides recent test and quiz results, information on homework completion, and notice of long-term assignments.

**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.

**Recommendation for Tenet 2 – School Leader Practices and Decisions:**

By April 18, 2016, the school leader should develop a system to measure the impact and effectiveness of the following Tenet 5 recommendation that the school has agreed to implement: All students who have missed on average five days per quarter, or per school leader’s request, will be assigned a mentor with whom these students will check in daily. The school leader may provide mentors for other students at his discretion. This system should include a goal that can be measured by attendance data; a progress monitoring procedure; opportunities to adjust practices based on interim data; and regular updates to inform the school community about the success of this program.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- The school leaders collect a variety of data. However, the IIT found limited evidence of established systems in place to analyze and use data to inform and adjust practices. Most stakeholders interviewed by the IIT expressed the view that the school was on track to meet its goal of increasing the graduation rate by five percent; however, they were unable to cite data to support this belief, such as the percentage of students in the class of 2017 who had accumulated sufficient credits to graduate. The school leader stated that although school leaders monitor school-wide attendance and suspension data regularly, they do not use these data to make timely adjustments in the programs and services provided to students to target attendance and suspension rate goals.
- The school leader has not developed a systematic procedure to assess the outcomes of his resource allocation decisions. The school leader indicated that he provided every student with a Chromebook to increase opportunities for self-directed learning and engagement. Although school leaders, teachers, and students expressed the opinion that this resource has had a positive impact, the school has not collected and analyzed data to determine whether instruction has improved and learning has increased as a direct result of the use of Chromebook technology.
- The student support team has developed and implemented procedures to identify and provide services for students who need intensive academic and/or emotional support; however, school leaders have not collected and analyzed relevant data to determine the effectiveness of these procedures and programs.

**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.

**Recommendation for Tenet 3 – Curriculum Development and Support:**

By April 18, 2016, the school leaders should ensure that teachers’ lesson plans include a lesson objective and two questions to be posed during the lesson. These questions should be higher-order (applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and creating), open-ended, and broad enough to allow for more than one correct response.

As soon as possible, the school leader should provide an in-service for staff to explain his expectations for lesson objectives and aligned open-ended, higher-order questioning. He should also provide training for teachers on instructional strategies that meet the needs of diverse learners.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- The IIT found that teachers’ plans define the content of the lesson, but usually did not specify the instructional strategies that will be used to achieve the lesson objective. School leaders and teachers told the IIT that the school leader expects teachers to refer to the district’s curriculum maps for the content of their lessons; however, the review team found in interviews that he has not explicitly set an expectation for teachers to adapt their lesson plans to address the needs of diverse learners. Few of the lesson plans examined by the IIT contained evidence of data-driven planning, and provisions for flexible grouping, higher-order questioning, and multiple tasks and entry points to challenge all learners. Most lesson objectives were at the concrete, factual level. School leaders and teachers told the IIT that the school leader did not regularly review their lesson plans.
- School leaders and teachers in interviews stated that there was no targeted professional development to help teachers realize the school leader’s vision of rigorous learning experiences for all students. The IIT found that the school leader has not provided teachers with an operational definition of rigor. During discussions with the IIT, although the school leader and some teachers said that staff have a common understanding of what rigor meant, their definitions varied widely.
- Teachers stated that school leaders did not always provide them with actionable feedback following observations and walk-throughs, and the IIT found that observations reports contained minimal actionable feedback.

**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.

**Recommendation for Tenet 4 – Teacher Practices and Decisions:**

By April 18, 2016, school leaders should ensure that all teachers post a main lesson objective and two questions to be posed during each lesson that they teach. The lesson objective should be referred to throughout the lesson, and the questions should be higher-order (applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and

creating) open-ended, and allow for more than one correct response.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- The school leader has not clearly stated and enforced his expectations for high-quality instruction. Although there is an expectation that teachers post a lesson objective and essential questions, the IIT found that lesson objectives and essential questions were posted in only two observed classes. When asked, the school leader said that he did not enforce this expectation consistently. The school leader told the IIT that he provided teachers with targeted feedback on both higher-order questioning and rigorous learning opportunities because these were his highest priorities; however, when asked, teachers stated that he rarely commented on either of these components. The IIT’s review of feedback documents showed that the most comments included in the reports focused on student engagement, and few comments related to the priority areas identified by the school leader.
- The IIT found that most instruction in observed classes was teacher-centered and based on the acquisition of factual knowledge and basic skills. There were few opportunities for students to discover concepts, patterns and trends, and discuss implications. In classes visited, teachers rarely asked questions that required students to apply knowledge and skills to real-world situations, or to solve problems that have more than one solution. Instead, most teachers’ questions required students to recall facts about the lesson content. Few students asked their own questions or demonstrated intellectual curiosity in observed classes. The review team found little evidence of teachers varying their instructional strategies to engage all students, or grouping students by common strength or need.

**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.

**Recommendation for Tenet 5 – Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health:**

In order to create positive relationships leading to increased attendance and academic achievement, particularly among the economically disadvantaged subgroup, by April 22, 2016, the school leader and student support team should ensure that all students who have missed, on average five days per quarter, or per school leader’s request, will be assigned a mentor with whom these students will check in daily. The check-in should be a brief meeting to determine how well the day is going for the student and how the mentor might help the student. Mentors should call home when their mentees are absent to inquire about the reasons and how the school might help. The school leader may provide mentors for other students at his discretion.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- The school leader presented disaggregated attendance data to the IIT, which showed that two-thirds of the students who have averaged five or more unexcused absences per quarter are economically disadvantaged. The school leader, teachers, and student support team members told the IIT that chronic absenteeism was clearly an impediment to student success, but the school had not yet developed a strategic plan to improve student attendance, especially the attendance of students from economically disadvantaged families.
- In interviews, students stated that there was a least one adult in the school that they felt comfortable

consulting about social and emotional problems; however there was no formal procedure in the school for establishing and maintaining mentor-mentee relationships.

**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.

**Recommendation for Tenet 6 – Family and Community Engagement:**

By April 18, 2016, the school leader should begin to use the school’s community boutique as a venue for reciprocal communication between school staff and parents, especially the parents of economically disadvantaged families. School staff should arrange time to hold structured conversations with parents who shop at the boutique about each of their children and provide them with information about the school’s academic resources and strategies to help their children. Better reciprocal communication may result in increased student attendance and consequent improvements in academic achievement and graduation rates.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- The school leader stated that he has not developed a plan to ensure effective outreach to all families and to promote reciprocal communication. Although the school provides families with comprehensive information about students’ academic performance through progress reports, report cards, and the student and parent portal, the school leader told the IIT that he leaves it to staff to determine the regularity of communication with families on other matters, such as how parents can support student learning at home. The school leader added that he does not formally monitor the frequency and nature of staff communication with families.
- Evidence gathered during the review indicated that some events planned after school such as those focused on the CCLS and the parent portal were not well attended by families. The school leader and student support team indicated that they had been unsuccessful in engaging economically disadvantaged families and forming strong reciprocal relationships.
- The school leader and student support team members have helped to institute a clothing store located within the school, known as the community boutique, which provides the families of middle and high school students free used clothing. Staff reported that the school’s Helping Others Pursue Excellence (HOPE) committee operates the community boutique in efforts to strengthen the school’s relationships with families, especially economically disadvantaged families. Members of the HOPE committee told the IIT that the number of families who shop at the community boutique has increased from fewer than ten each week when it first opened several months ago to over 100 currently.

**ADDITIONAL AREAS TO ADDRESS**

- The IIT found that not all stakeholders are aware of the social- and emotional developmental health programs and services needed to ensure that all students’ needs are met. The IIT found no evidence of written protocols or processes to identify students in need, to provide students with appropriate programs and services, and to determine the effectiveness of offered programs and services. In the future, the school leader should conduct a needs assessment; create a plan for instituting a social-emotional developmental health curriculum; establish student identification and referral procedures; and implement appropriate programs and services and evaluate their effectiveness.