



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

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



<b>BEDS Code</b>	51110106007
<b>School Name</b>	West Side Elementary School
<b>School Address</b>	25 Wilson Street, Gouverneur, NY 13642
<b>District Name</b>	Gouverneur Central School District
<b>School Leader</b>	Ms. Charity Zawatski
<b>Dates of Review</b>	April 19-20, 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 West Side Elementary School**

School Configuration (2015-16 data)					
Grade Configuration	UPK-5	Total Enrollment	251	SIG Recipient	NA
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2015-16)					
# Transitional Bilingual	0	# Dual Language	0	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	0
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2015-16)					
# Special Classes	1	# SETSS	0	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	8
Types and Number of Special Classes (2015-16)					
# Visual Arts	1	# Music	1	# Drama	0
# Foreign Language	0	# Dance	0	# CTE	0
School Composition (most recent data)					
% Title I Population	75	% Attendance Rate	94		
% Free Lunch	63	% Reduced Lunch	5		
% Limited English Proficient	0	% Students with Disabilities	19		
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0	% Black or African American	1		
% Hispanic or Latino	2	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0		
% White	97	% Multi-Racial	0		
Personnel (most recent data)					
Years Principal Assigned to School	4	# of Assistant Principals	0		
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0	% Teaching Out of Certification	2		
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	15	Average Teacher Absences	13		
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2014-15)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	10	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	22		
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (Grade 4)	72	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (Grade 8)	NA		
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. Provide professional development on independent individualized reading through target skill instruction.</li> <li>2. Set up co-teaching in an inclusive environment.</li> <li>3. Introduce cooperative planning to support co-teaching partnerships.</li> <li>4. Set up responsive classroom practices.</li> <li>5. Develop data-driven instruction to drive differentiation.</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	55.5	64

## 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 and a district-selected OEE.
- The review team visited a total of 38 classrooms during the two-day review.
- The OEE visited six 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.

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

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

1. School staff instituted a club to encourage students to read a wider variety of books. There has been a substantial increase in the number of books read by students since the institution of this book club, and reading proficiency scores on Accelerated Reader (AR) testing increased from 3398.3 points in March 2015 to 5566.2 points in March 2016.
2. The school leader and staff instituted new initiatives such as home visits to improve student attendance, and the attendance rate has increased from 94 percent to 95.5 percent in the current school year.
3. The school leader and teachers have succeeded in engaging more parents through multiple opportunities such as student-led parent-teacher conferences, orientation nights, and social events. In interviews with the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT), parents said that the school leader and staff made them feel welcome at school. According to a review of sign-in sheets, parental attendance of school sponsored events has increased incrementally during the period between September 2014 to April 2016.

**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:**

Beginning in May 2, 2016, school leaders should conduct daily classroom visits to ensure that the integrated co-teaching model is being implemented with fidelity and consistency throughout the school. School leaders should provide immediate feedback to co-teaching teams.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- Professional development (PD) records show that all staff have received training in the integrated co-teaching model. The school leader reported, and a document review confirmed that she provided substantial resources to support this initiative. Although school leaders conduct formal and informal observations according to the district rubric and provide teachers with constructive feedback, the IIT found through an examination of records that these observations were too infrequent to ensure that the integrated co-teaching model was being implemented with fidelity and consistency throughout the school.
- During class visits, the IIT saw few examples of effective co-teaching models. In most co-taught classes observed by the review team, one teacher took the lead while the other acted as an assistant, performing tasks such as distributing and collecting materials, or merely standing by and listening. In interviews with the review team, teachers did not express a clear understanding of the roles of the teachers in a co-taught classroom, and teachers did not define and delineate the distinct responsibilities of each co-teacher in the lesson plans reviewed by the IIT.
- The IIT found that the co-teachers in classes visited provided minimal opportunities for students to interact with the teachers and each other, and students appeared to lose interest because of this lack of interaction. Most teachers did not make use of strategies such as think-pair-share, discussions, or small group activities to motivate students. In the classes where co-teachers interacted effectively with each other and the students, the level of student engagement was high, enabling more rapid progress.

**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:**

Beginning on April 15, 2016, school leaders should sample student work weekly to ensure that teachers are providing students with appropriate feedback about the next steps to take to improve their work. This feedback should be relevant to lesson and task objectives.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- In interviews with students and through a review of student work, the IIT found that teachers provided limited feedback to students on how to improve their work in conversations and through written comments. In observed classes, teachers provided students with general comments such as “Good Job” and “Well done,” without making evident to students how they were demonstrating

understanding or mastery of the lesson objective and curriculum standard.

- In a review of lesson plans, the IIT found that although teachers aligned instruction to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) they did not use student performance data to inform their planning and provide targeted support to individual students. Most of the lesson plans the IIT examined did not specify students' performance levels and the next step each student needed to take to make continuous progress.
- In observed classes, teachers often posed questions that could be answered "yes" or "no, such as, "Is this problem correct?" This mode of questioning did not help students think rigorously and deeply about their learning. Teachers often provided students grades or scores on quizzes and short tests without an accompanying explanation of the meaning of these ratings in terms of skill and knowledge acquisition.
- Teachers rarely made connections across subject areas to promote a more comprehensive understanding of the entire curriculum and increase the opportunities for success. For example, in an ELA lesson where students were reading a text about colonial life, the teacher did not refer to the unit on the colonial period in social studies. Comments made by students in interviews indicated that many students did not understand the purpose of what they were learning.

**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:**

Beginning on May 2, 2016, teachers should use the information collected from on-going assessments to adjust student groupings according to students' learning needs in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- The IIT found that in most classrooms visited teachers relied upon whole group instruction and did not group students by common needs or used on-going assessments such as the positioning of thumbs to indicate the degree of understanding and exit tickets. Additionally teachers did not adjust instruction to meet students' need. As a result, some students were frustrated because the task presented to them was too difficult. For example, in one mathematics class where students were plotting points on a graph using coordinates, some students were observed to be placing the points randomly because they did not understand the concept of counting along the x-axis first and then up the y-axis.
- There were few opportunities for students to engage in peer and self-assessment in observed classes. In many classes, students were off-track and disengaged. For example, in one observed class some students were discussing what they were going to be doing after school during an ELA lesson and other students were drawing doodles on their worksheets rather than attending to the task.

**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:**

Beginning on April 25, 2016, school leaders should meet with teachers to ensure that the responsive classroom

system is being implemented with fidelity and consistency in all classrooms. This should be monitored weekly by school leaders as part of regular class visits.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- The school leader has initiated some programs and procedures to foster students’ social emotional developmental health, but these initiatives lack coherence and there has been limited monitoring and corrective action to ensure consistent implementation. The IIT found through interviews and a review of documents that the school leader established a system to promote and reinforce positive student behavior based on the Responsive Classroom program. Although teachers received common training, the implementation of this program is inconsistent across the school. For example, the IIT learned in interviews that some teachers have developed an informal system of sending students from one teacher to another when their behavior is unacceptable, which is not consistent with Responsive Classroom protocols. The school leader told the IIT that she established a system to ensure that every student has at least one adult to go to who knows the student well, but teachers have not implemented this system consistently.
- Most classrooms have their own rules and procedures, which generally result in a safe environment, but students told the IIT that there were constant disruptions, such as students talking out and talking back, students ignoring the teacher, and students distracting or annoying other students while they were attempting to complete their work.
- Student support team members reported that most responses to students in crisis were reactive rather than proactive. The IIT found that school leaders and teachers collect very little data concerning students’ social and emotional developmental health needs and school leaders have not formally determined the effectiveness of the procedures and programs the school uses to promote students’ social-emotional developmental health.

**thTenet 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 May 2, 2016, teachers should produce an information sheet to go in Friday folders and/or student agendas to suggest what steps parents can take to support their children’s work at home with space for parents to respond. School leaders should ensure that this system is being maintained consistently throughout the school as part of their regular class monitoring visits.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- During discussions with the IIT, most parents shared positive comments about the school and said that school staff were welcoming, supportive, and quick to respond to concerns. However, many parents expressed the view that they did not receive sufficient timely information about how well their children were progressing academically. Parents told the IIT that they were frustrated because they were well aware of the school leader’s high expectations for student success, but did not feel well equipped to help their children reach these expectations. Although information about grades and personal development are reported to parents three times each year, parents said that this was too

infrequent for them to take action when a problem arose.

- The school leader reported that although an electronic system had been established to provide parents with information about students' academic progress, this system had limited effectiveness as a means of communication because only half of the parents had internet access. Additionally, the school leader and teachers told the IIT that teachers initiated a communication system consisting of Friday homework folders for all students and agendas for older students, but staff are not yet implementing this system faithfully and consistently.

#### **ADDITIONAL AREAS TO ADDRESS**

- There are currently few links between curriculum domains. In the future, school leaders should provide further opportunities for teachers to plan interdisciplinary units and activities collaboratively in order to increase student engagement and provide students with greater opportunities for success.
- Student performance data is scattered in separate files and records. This disconnection makes it difficult for school leaders to conduct a holistic analysis and determine trends and patterns. In the future, school leaders should establish a coherent data analysis system to inform decision-making and move the school forward more rapidly.