



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	540901040001
School Name	Jefferson Central School
School Address	1332 NY-10, Jefferson, New York 12093
District Name	Jefferson Central School District
School Leader	Eric Whipple
Dates of Review	March 22-24, 2016
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 Jefferson Central School

School Configuration (2015-16 data)					
Grade Configuration	K-12	Total Enrollment	252	SIG Recipient	No
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	0	# SETSS	0	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	0
Types and Number of Special Classes (2015-16)					
# Visual Arts	3	# Music	15	# Drama	
# Foreign Language	6	# Dance	0	# CTE	
School Composition (most recent data)					
% Title I Population		53	% Attendance Rate		96
% Free Lunch		53	% Reduced Lunch		25
% Limited English Proficient		3	% Students with Disabilities		18
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native		0	% Black or African American		0
% Hispanic or Latino		1	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		0
% White		97	% Multi-Racial		1
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		10
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience		7	Average Teacher Absences		10
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2014-15)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		19	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		22
Science Performance at levels 3&4 (4 th grade)		54	Science Performance at levels 3&4 (Grade 8)		77
Student Performance for High Schools (2014-15)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		84	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		87
Global History Performance at levels 3 & 4		68	U.S. History Performance at levels 3&4		76
4-Year Graduation Rate		76	6-Year Graduation Rate		81
Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Designation		16	% ELA/Math Aspirational Performance Measures		14
Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2015-16)					
In Good Standing			Local Assistance Plan		
Priority School			Focus School		X
SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:					
1. None provided.					

School Identification Status		
The school was identified for not meeting the subgroup performance minimum cut point for the following subgroups in 2014-15:		
Subgroup	School's Performance	Minimum Cut point
Economically Disadvantaged	61	64

Purpose of the visit

This school was visited by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) 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 NYSED. The team also included a district representative.
- The review team visited 33 classrooms during the three-day review.
- The OEE visited 16 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 are a combination of Stage One and Stage Two on the DTSDE Rubric.

SUCCESSSES WITHIN THE SCHOOL THAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD BUILD UPON:

1. School leaders have established a number of interventions to address the social-emotional developmental health needs of students and families. The school has developed a referral process and has a student support team that meets regularly to identify student needs, provide supports, communicate with families, and monitor student progress. The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program team acquired grants and community partnerships to ensure that all students have access to social-emotional supports.
2. School leaders have selected and are implementing Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) aligned English language arts (ELA) and mathematics curricula for kindergarten to grade six and are beginning to develop plans to support teachers in adapting curricula to meet the needs of diverse learners. Leaders are in the process of identifying an online curriculum-planning tool that teachers will use to ensure rigorous, standards-based instruction in all content areas at every grade level.
3. School leaders have used resources to ensure students receive supplemental academic supports both during and after school. Despite a budget deficit, leaders continue to fund two remedial reading specialists and an Academic Intervention Services (AIS) math position. A "mandatory help" initiative was implemented to ensure that all students successfully complete homework assignments, and the extended-day program includes academic interventions and enrichment for students in all grades.

4. School leaders are developing partnerships to ensure high school students have access to college-level coursework prior to graduation.

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 on March 28, 2016, school leaders should formalize a weekly schedule of joint walkthroughs to identify the prevalence and status of differentiated instruction throughout the school; establish a schoolwide goal and a set of clear expectations that will guide the expansion of data-driven instruction and differentiation; increase usage of the benchmark assessment database; and adjust the calendar of professional development to include time when assessment reports can be disseminated to staff and discussions about patterns and trends can begin. Throughout the spring, school leaders should work with curriculum coordinators to develop a plan to support teachers in using data to identify individual student strengths and needs and class trends in order to inform planning and practice.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- In interviews, school leaders identified data-driven instruction as a schoolwide goal; however, lessons in observed classes were largely teacher-directed and not adapted to address students' learning needs. School leaders rarely cited the lack of multiple entry points or offered recommendations for differentiation in their written feedback to teachers following classroom observations. Lack of Tier I interventions within classrooms has led to an increasing number of students being referred for reading and math instruction by specialists during core instructional time in the general education program. This reduces their access to the grade-level CCLS curricula. Additionally, parents told the IIT that the school provides limited enrichment opportunities for accelerated students.
- The school administers multiple assessments to identify students' strengths and needs; however, teachers are not routinely using assessment data to inform instruction. A review of training agendas showed that leaders devoted little professional development time to address the topic of data-driven instruction; however, the IIT examination of a report detailing assessment results from September 2015 showed that school leaders have begun to review data to identify schoolwide trends. School leaders have also collected, but not analyzed, data from the administration of the February 2016 assessments. Leaders are beginning to develop a protocol to track student performance longitudinally, which will enable them to identify areas of need and growth as they follow students from grade to grade.
- According to the 2015-16 professional development calendar, one session in December 2015 was devoted to a presentation on data use. Leaders told the IIT that teachers are beginning to work on adapting the new curricula; however, because curriculum work is at a very early stage it will continue in greater depth next year. School leaders intend to disseminate data findings, provide training guidelines and expectations, and conduct data conversations with classroom teachers in Spring 2016 to inform curriculum planning for the start of school in Fall 2016.

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:

- Within three weeks of this review, school and teacher leaders should adopt a schoolwide student data collection tool that includes all formative and summative student performance data. Teachers should begin to use this tool through spring 2016 to track the specific needs and progress of each student and to identify patterns and trends in their classes in order to inform their lesson planning and curriculum adaptation.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- The school does not have a systemic approach to data-driven instruction. Most teachers do not use formative or summative assessment results to drive curriculum development, lesson planning, or classroom instruction. Teachers administer a number of assessments including i-Ready, Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), and the benchmark assessments from the Journeys literacy and enVision math series that provide whole-class and individual student performance data; however, teachers do not systematically analyze data to identify trends or patterns in order to inform instruction.
- The school does not have a system for developing or reviewing lesson plans and many teachers rely solely on commercial teachers' manuals to prepare lessons. In most classes observed by the IIT, teachers did not vary instructional materials and tasks; typically, students used one text and engaged in the same activities during lessons. Similarly, teachers do not typically differentiate homework and assessments. School leaders said that teachers maintain writing folders and use the NYSED writing rubric to evaluate student progress, and some early elementary level teachers are using exit tickets to check for understanding. In observed classes and a review of lesson plans, the IIT found little evidence of teachers planning for curricula adjustments, purposeful groupings, task variations, and multiple entry points designed to address students' identified strengths and needs.
- Teachers administer BAS assessments four times annually in the elementary grades; however, reviewers found that students were unaware of their reading levels and not using texts aligned to their assessed levels during independent reading in observed classes. Students told the IIT that they were free to select independent reading books without teacher direction. Although Tier II and Tier III interventions are provided outside of the classroom for struggling students, teachers and leaders do not have a system for tracking the effectiveness of these interventions.

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 April 1, 2016, teachers should develop a clear, rigorous, and measurable student-learning target for each lesson. The objective should be visibly displayed to focus students on the purpose of

the lesson. Teachers should create a check for understanding for each objective to assess students' growth in knowledge and skills.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- School leaders do not have a policy that requires teachers to post the learning objectives for their lessons. In many observed classes, the objective of the lesson and the means by which the teacher was evaluating student learning were not evident. In observed classes across all grades, the review team asked students to explain what they were doing in lessons and why. Student responses were vague and focused primarily on the lesson content, such as "learning about customs in India," or activity, such as "completing vocabulary worksheets." Few students could express the lesson objective. Most observed lessons lacked an instructional strategy and were teacher-directed. The IIT found no evidence of project-based learning. Although some teachers posed higher-order questions, most of the worksheets and activities in observed classes did not promote opportunities for higher-order thinking.
- The IIT observed few lessons where teachers asked students to analyze, synthesize, or evaluate information. Most teachers did not engage students in text-based discussions or growth-promoting activities that develop higher-level vocabulary, abstract thinking, and transferable skills. Most teachers did not use interim checks throughout lessons to check on students' understanding. Additionally, reviewers found that few teachers maintain notes on teacher-student conferences or record daily performance data to track student progress in meeting grade-level performance standards.

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 March 29, 2016, school leaders should meet with the school support team to develop a data system to track and evaluate how the social-emotional health supports provided to students and families are removing barriers to learning and improving student performance.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- The school has an established referral process and the school support team meets regularly to provide identified students with needed services and monitor their social-emotional growth. Teachers and school leaders know the students and their families well and can speak with certainty about supports provided to individual students; however, there is no system for strategically monitoring the effectiveness of school interventions in removing barriers to learning.
- School leaders have established a vision and systems to support the social-emotional developmental health needs of students, and all interviewed stakeholders clearly articulated and showed support for the school leaders' vision prioritizing respect, hard work, responsibility, and kindness. Reviewers noted this vision was also evident in the thoughts and actions of the students. Trained staff members implement the PBIS curriculum with fidelity. The school has monthly celebrations of students

recognized for positive behaviors. Additionally, school staff are piloting the Level Two implementation of the PBIS program this year. Teachers serve as one-to-one mentors for the most behaviorally challenged students and use a check-in, check-out system to support them.

- The school collaborates with stakeholders and other partners to meet student needs. All students participate in annual community service projects and leaders have used Rolphie Fund grant monies to support the needs of economically disadvantaged students and families. Because the school has only one guidance counselor to serve kindergarten to grade twelve students who addresses issues ranging from academic to behavioral and grief counseling school leaders have formed a partnership with Schoharie County to increase the availability of services to students and families. The school participates in the Creating Rural Opportunities Partnership (CROP) program to provide academic support and enrichment activities for students. School staff members use a Blue Card system to help students correct behaviors that might lead to ineligibility for extended day programs. In addition, the school developed a “mandatory help” program to ensure that all students complete homework assignments and a college and career readiness course to guide seniors through the college search and admissions process.

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:

- Effective immediately, school leaders should develop a plan to improve parent participation in school activities focused on curriculum and academic achievement. A first step should include having school leaders and all staff members identify parents who do not regularly attend school events. Each school leader and staff member should telephone five parents to extend a personal invitation to a school event. School leaders should monitor the impact of this initiative at the Educational Forum scheduled for March 31, 2016.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- School leaders told the IIT that while many parents attend sporting events, concerts, and awards assemblies, very few parents attend meetings focused on the academic program. School leaders reported that fewer than ten parents attended a workshop series on the new curriculum adopted by the school, math night, or a meeting to explain the CCLS. Most parents said that they were uninformed about the CCLS and unable to support their children’s learning at home. In interviews and surveys, parents expressed confidence that their children were learning; however, 54 percent opted their children out of the New York State (NYS) ELA and mathematics examinations last spring, affecting the school’s ability to meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) targets. Leaders have scheduled an Educational Forum to discuss the school’s Focus status with families, but do not have confidence they will have an audience. Leaders and teachers spoke about having close relationships with families and described the support parents have delivered following school outreach efforts. The school leader said that he personally called individual parents to request their participation in this review. Fifteen parents agreed to attend; three times the number who normally participates in school meetings.
- School leaders provide frequent and varied communications to share their expectations for student

success with families. Parents endorse receipt of the school handbook that outlines school expectations. The school uses the eSchool application, which has a parent portal that enables families to monitor student grades, assignments, and attendance. Planners go home with students enabling parents to check on daily homework assignments. School staff make parental contact via SchoolMessenger, letters, flyers, email, and telephone calls. Each Friday elementary teachers issue weekly letters that provide academic and behavioral information. Report cards are issued four times annually and progress reports at five-week intervals. Parents receive phone calls every time a homework assignment is missing and to report progress when a child is on a Blue Card plan to address behavioral concerns. Some teachers post sample lessons on their websites.

ADDITIONAL AREAS TO ADDRESS

- The school lacks Tier I strategies that teachers can use to meet diverse student needs in the general education classroom. In the future, school leaders, curriculum coordinators, and lead teachers should identify Tier I strategies that all classroom teachers can implement and develop a system for tracking the impact of these strategies prior to referring students to at-risk intervention service providers.
- The school does not have a unified grading system and though some teachers use NYS writing rubrics, the rubrics are not adapted to ensure they are task-specific and grade-appropriate to enable students to take ownership of their work. In the future, school leaders should develop a schoolwide writing initiative that ensures that students in all grades are receiving rigorous, standards-based writing instruction and grade-appropriate writing assignments in all content areas.
- School leaders do not conduct informal observations frequently. In addition to formal teacher observations, school leaders should develop a calendar of regularly scheduled informal observations. Leaders should use this process to track and monitor the implementation and impact of targeted instructional initiatives on student performance.