



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

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



<b>BEDS Code</b>	031502060001
<b>School Name</b>	Johnson City Intermediate School
<b>School Address</b>	601 Columbia Drive, Johnson City, NY 13790
<b>District Name</b>	Johnson City Central School District
<b>School Leader</b>	Ms. Margaret Kucko
<b>Dates of Review</b>	May 10-11, 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 Johnson City Intermediate School

School Configuration (2015-16 data)					
Grade Configuration	3-5	Total Enrollment	578	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	3	# SETSS		# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	3
Types and Number of Special Classes (2015-16)					
# Visual Arts	0	# Music	0	# Drama	0
# Foreign Language	0	# Dance	0	# CTE	0
School Composition (most recent data)					
% Title I Population		30%	% Attendance Rate		93.6%
% Free Lunch		72%	% Reduced Lunch		8%
% Limited English Proficient		2%	% Students with Disabilities		11%
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native		0	% Black or African American		14%
% Hispanic or Latino		12%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		5%
% White		61%	% Multi-Racial		8%
Personnel (most recent data)					
Years Principal Assigned to School		7	# of Assistant Principals		1
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate		0	% Teaching Out of Certification		0
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience		15%	Average Teacher Absences		4.4%
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2014-15)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		18%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		31%
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)		76%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)		
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. Implement a quality Response to Intervention System for both academic and behavioral areas.</li> <li>2. Develop stronger parent and school partnerships.</li> <li>3. Create a strong consistent data cycle.</li> <li>4. PBIS and Responsive Classroom Practices/Program – Behavioral Interventions to meet the social/emotional needs of all students.</li> <li>5. Common assessments and aligned curriculum developed for all core content areas.</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
Black	60	61
Hispanic	46	61

## 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 and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The review team visited a total of 41 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 such as lesson plans, schoolwide data, school leader feedback, teacher feedback, and student work.

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

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

1. The school has adopted the Respect, Organization, Attentive, and Responsibility (ROAR) program as part of its Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program. Staff members give students tickets when they exhibit positive behavior, and students can use these tickets to buy items and participate in special school activities. Students, staff, and families spoke favorably about the ROAR program and expressed the perspective that it has contributed to a more positive school culture.
2. The school has begun the process of reviewing student performance data to learn about areas where students may need additional support. Although this is a new process for the school, reviewers found evidence of a budding practice during a professional learning community (PLC) meeting in which teachers were examining data to inform instruction to begin planning lessons to re-teach content that was not learned the first time. School leaders noted that they expect to see continued growth in this area.
3. The review team observed protocols related to team teaching in which two teachers were assigned to

one classroom; typically, the general education teacher was paired with a bilingual or special education teacher. Reviewers observed a high level of purpose among these teachers, as one teacher often picked up where the other teacher left off. As a result of this practice, students had smooth protocols to follow, and teaching and learning time was maximized.

**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 May 23, 2016, the school leader and the assistant principal should begin conducting classroom walk-throughs in every classroom at least once per month. These visits should be approximately ten minutes in length and focus on the implementation of higher-level questions posted in each classroom and incorporated into the lesson.
  - Written feedback should be provided to each teacher within 24 hours of the classroom visit. The feedback provided should be specific, actionable, and formative, leading to improved instructional practices relating the feedback to higher-level questions.
  - The aggregate data from these visits should be tracked, analyzed, and acted upon to identify specific professional development (PD) opportunities that are needed to support the entire staff as well as individual teachers.
  - A feedback loop should be constructed to ensure that the feedback provided is being manifested through improved instructional practices.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- The school leader reported that she has not put a system in place to determine trends in teacher practice, target specific teachers who may need additional support, or evaluate the impact of recent PD or support on teacher practice. Teachers interviewed by the IIT stated that the school has not developed systems to provide follow-up support to ensure that their instructional practices are implemented with a high degree of quality and meet the standards expected of them. They also stated that they have to ask for follow-up to their PD training to determine if they are implementing these practices correctly. Teachers noted that while the school provides instructional coaches to help them develop new practices related to the use of data and differentiation of planning and instruction, there is no formal system to ensure that these practices are taking place with fidelity.
- The review team found through an examination of Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) feedback provided to teachers by the school leadership that the feedback typically described the lesson observed and offered minimal comments or recommendations related to the improvement of instructional practice. Most feedback focused on the climate and culture of the classroom and if students were on task during the lesson. The review team did not find evidence of feedback that focused on adapting the module lessons to meet the needs of all individual and subgroups of students, developing higher-level questions, or using data to drive instructional decisions. In almost all cases observed by reviewers, questions posed by teachers were low level and were asked to gauge student understanding of the content taught. Teachers stated that much of the feedback from the school leader was descriptive and overly laudatory rather than formative and actionable, with limited

strategies provided to improve their practice.

**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 June 3, 2016, the school leader should ensure that each English language arts (ELA) teacher uses the recent Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) assessment data to develop a minimum of one lesson plan that contains instructional groupings based on various skill deficiencies related to reading comprehension. Each grouping should be taught different content from the other groupings, using different instructional strategies, based on the STAR data. Prior to the lesson plan development, the school leader, along with other staff members whom she designates, should provide a workshop in which they explicitly show teachers how this activity is done. This should include the analysis of STAR data, the grouping of students, and the determination of what content to teach and how to teach it, as well as how this should be explicitly denoted on a lesson plan.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- The school leader stated that teachers do not take a consistent approach to the use of data, and she estimated that less than 20 percent of teachers use data to inform instructional groupings. During interviews with the review team, teachers reported that while they meet to discuss the use of data to inform what to teach and how to plan it, the process in which teachers should take assessment data and use it to inform lesson planning to effectively create differentiated learning opportunities for all students is not defined by the school leadership. Although teachers noted that they are aware of the need to differentiate lessons and adjust the curriculum to meet student needs, most teachers indicated that there is no set process or protocol to do so. Consequently, both the understanding and practice of using data to differentiate lesson planning is inconsistent among teachers.
- The review team observed a PLC meeting in which teachers were using the STAR assessment data to develop lessons that were supposed to be informed by data and differentiated as a result of this analysis. However, none of the lessons were designed by the end of the meeting, and the school leader stated that there was no follow-up planned to ensure that that teachers developed the lesson plans. The school leader and teachers reported that they do not regularly use the guided reading assessments to determine which students have reached specific levels or to track the percentage of students who have made gains. The school leader expressed the perspective that many teachers use their judgment to determine if students have progressed, and as a result, not all students may be placed in the proper groupings.
- To address the school's low performance on the State ELA assessment, the school leader reported that she expects staff to focus on reading comprehension in their curricula and lesson planning. The school currently uses the STAR assessment to gather information on student progress in reading comprehension, but the school leader stated that teachers are still struggling to link student performance data to teaching strategies to drive continued improvement in this area. Teachers noted that there is no clear process for this planning to happen with a high degree of fidelity, and the review

team noted that this practice was lacking in most lesson plans they reviewed.

**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 May 23, 2016, the school leader should ensure that each teacher posts a higher-level question related to the lesson objective for each lesson. The questions should require application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and/or creation and should elicit open-ended responses through a variety of instructional strategies.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- According to the school leader and teachers interviewed by reviewers, the school leader has not set expectations for teachers to provide rigorous objectives and tasks or to differentiate instruction based on data. The review team found through classroom visits that the majority of questions teachers posed to students were lower level and closed ended, limiting cognitive engagement among learners. Additionally, the review team observed few examples of question extensions posed by teachers to determine how a child came up with her/his response. For example, often review team members observed that a teacher would ask a student a question to gauge student comprehension of the content that was taught. After the child answered the question, the teacher typically did not ask a follow up question to engage the student at a higher, more rigorous level, or to determine the student’s thinking behind the response. In the majority of classes visited, the level of rigor was low, focusing on the acquisition of knowledge or the comprehension of concepts. In most lessons, teachers led, posed most of the questions, and provided limited opportunities for students to ask questions of their own or to work with peers to solve problems that have more than one correct answer. During discussions with the review team, most students shared that they find their classwork easy. In most classes, students did the same tasks and were taught in the same manner.

**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:**

- By May 27, 2016, the school leader and members of the student support team and/or Response to Intervention (RtI) team should develop a document that details the roles and responsibilities of the school leadership, each member of the student support team and RtI team, the office staff, each teacher and support staff member, families, and community members in regards to the school’s social and emotional developmental health programs. This document should also list and explain the school’s main social and emotional health programs and how they can be accessed by families and students. This document should be communicated at the June staff meeting, parent meetings, and community meetings, and it should be sent home with the school newsletter and posted on the

school's website and throughout the school.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- The school leader, teachers, parents, and student support team members interviewed by the IIT stated that the school has not provided training to enable each school community member to understand the school's social and emotional developmental health program, their respective roles and responsibilities in it, or how to identify and support students who may have social-emotional needs. Parents shared that they were not familiar with the school's social-emotional health programs unless their child was receiving support through the school, as this information may not be communicated to families unless they have a child who is in need of Tier two or three services. Student support team members stated that if a child is in the school's Check-In Check-Out program, it is possible that the parents may not be aware that their child is in the program or if she/he is completing the program requirements. The student support team, teachers, the school leader, and parents noted that a document detailing the school's social-emotional health programs and the respective roles and responsibilities of each school community member would be beneficial to all. Some teachers shared that the process to refer a child to Tier two or three support is unclear and arduous, and as a result, some teachers may choose to work with the child themselves in their own classroom. Members of the student support team also noted that some teachers choose not to refer their students for additional Tier two or three supports. Both student support team members and teachers acknowledged that some students might therefore not receive the social or emotional supports they need to be successful, as not all students who may have social or emotional needs are referred for additional screening or interventions.

**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 June 2016, the school leader should begin to include a minimum of four literacy workshops for families each school year, embedded in the school's current events schedule, that will allow families to understand the school's current literacy program, advocate on their child's behalf, and learn about strategies and resources that they can use at home to help their child improve her/his reading skills.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- The school leader does not have a formal plan on how to communicate effectively with families, and the school leader and parents stated during interviews that the school does not provide information to families on the school's academic program, grading policies, or expectations for academic success. Although the school leader communicates information concerning upcoming school events, he does not provide guidance on how families may contribute to the academic or behavioral success of their child. Parents shared that the school provides few opportunities for parents to help them understand the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and how to help their child at home. The school leader acknowledged that the school has not provided training for parents on the CCLS. Although some parents shared that they may receive some information on the CCLS when they meet with teachers at

the parent-teacher conferences, most parents reported that they often have to seek out their child's teacher to receive any information on how they can support their child at home. According to the school leader and parents interviewed by the IIT, the school does not provide families with information or training concerning strategies that could be used at home to improve their child's literacy skills. Parents stated that they would value events that could help them support the development of their child's literacy skills at home.

#### **SUBGROUP SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION**

##### **Recommendation for English Language Learners:**

- To ensure that instruction is better able to meet the needs of English language learners (ELLs), classroom teachers should plan instruction that is responsive to anticipated challenges ELLs may encounter. Planning should be done by the classroom teacher in conjunction with the ELL specialist to effectively address instruction and support the needs of ELLs by focusing on all four modalities (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). Data should be collected to inform the planning and delivery of instruction, including small group instruction, scaffolding, and pre-teaching.
- The New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) and the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) should be used to determine the units of study for each ELL student by proficiency levels provided in the modalities of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Using the targets of measurement and the performance level descriptions from the NYSESLAT scoring rubric, the proficiency levels should be used to provide data to set learning targets on an individual basis if necessary. Teachers of ELLs should assess the level of learning of each individual student on a daily basis to continue to inform the learning cycle.

##### **Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- The IIT's classroom observations showed that the interaction of ELLs during classroom instruction was minimal, and the instruction received by this subgroup was not rigorous, often only requiring information from these learners. Additionally, the four modalities of speaking, listening, reading, and writing were not incorporated into instruction, limiting cognitive engagement of the students. Reviewers saw little evidence of "true" integrated co-teaching and differentiation to meet the needs of ELLs.

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

- The school leader has not established school-wide goals that are well known or drive on-going school improvement efforts. The school leader stated that she has not established goals to specifically drive school-wide activities or used baseline data against which to measure growth. Additionally, interviewed families were not familiar with school-wide goals or how they could help the school meet its targets. In the future, the school leader needs to develop and share with the school community well known school-wide goals and expectations and provide information on how the various community members may support the school in attainment of these goals.
- The school leader does not use systems to denote progress toward school-wide aspirations or to track school-wide trends to determine if practices are done consistently at a high level of quality and with

regular follow up and support. The school leader stated that she does not have systems in place to measure whether or not her decisions related to pedagogy, student social and emotional health, or family and community engagement are having a positive impact. In the future, the school leader needs to set up systems to allow the school community to understand if the school is making progress toward its school-wide goals and to enable the school leader to make corrections if the school is not progressing at the rate necessary to meet its goals.