



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	541001040001
School Name	Middleburgh Junior/Senior High School
School Address	291 Main Street, Middleburgh, NY 12122
District Name	Middleburgh Central School District
School Leader	Lori Petrosino and Michael Teator
Dates of Review	May 10-11, 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 Middleburgh Junior/Senior High School

School Configuration (2015-16 data)			
Grade Configuration	7-12	Total Enrollment	392
		SIG Recipient	
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	11	# SETSS	2
		# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	7
Types and Number of Special Classes (2015-16)			
# Visual Arts	4	# Music	5
		# Drama	0
# Foreign Language	3	# Dance	0
		# CTE	0
School Composition (most recent data)			
% Title I Population		% Attendance Rate	
		96%	
% Free Lunch		% Reduced Lunch	
		14%	
% Limited English Proficient		% Students with Disabilities	
		22%	
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)			
% American Indian or Alaska Native		% Black or African American	
		1%	
% Hispanic or Latino		% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	
		1%	
% White		% Multi-Racial	
		1%	
Personnel (most recent data)			
Years Principal Assigned to School		# of Assistant Principals	
16		0	
3			
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate		% Teaching Out of Certification	
0%		3%	
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience		Average Teacher Absences	
11%		9	
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2014-15)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	
199		219	
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)		Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	
92		71	
Student Performance for High Schools (2014-15)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	
80		83	
Global History Performance at levels 3 & 4		US History Performance at Levels 3&4	
83		83	
4 Year Graduation Rate		6 Year Graduation Rate	
82		82	
Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Designation		% ELA/Math Aspirational Performance Measures	
20		33.8%	
Overall NYSED Accountability Status			
In Good Standing		Local Assistance Plan	
Priority School		Focus School	
		X	
SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase graduation rates. 2. Increase number of students meeting APM (Aspirational Performance Measures). 3. Continue to address attendance rates. 			

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

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 an OEE second reviewer and two district representatives.
- The review team visited a total of 30 classrooms during the two-day review.
- The OEE visited 12 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 lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- Two years ago the middle school and high school were combined, which resulted in both school leaders from each of these schools being assigned as co-principals of this newly established school.

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. The school leaders recognize the need to continue to implement and monitor the comprehensive attendance policy that includes parental involvement and communication. Due to these efforts, the attendance rate increased from 93 percent in 2014-15 to 96 percent in 2015-16.
2. School leaders, teachers, students, and parents recognize that the school's culture and climate are strengths. As a result of the school leaders' attention to culture and climate, the school is seen by the school community as a safe and orderly place for students to learn and for staff to work. The IIT found that staff and student relationships are very positive.
3. The school leaders recognize the need for structures and systems to be put in place. They have begun to explore the creation of systematic plans for interventions, walkthroughs, professional development (PD), scheduling, and parent trainings.
4. School leaders, staff, parents, and students reported that school-community partnerships, celebrations, and events have continued to increase yearly. The school leaders recognize the need to

continue to expand the use of outside resources that support students' needs and showcase students' accomplishments. For example, the school-community event known as Technopalooza will showcase projects that have been done by students throughout the year in the technology (industrial arts) classes.

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 May 25, 2016, school leaders should:
 - conduct weekly joint walkthroughs to identify schoolwide pedagogical strengths and areas in need of improvement;
 - create a list of non-negotiables that will inform their observations and teacher feedback;
 - establish and share with teachers common expectations related to curriculum and instruction;
 - identify one instructional focus that will drive the walkthroughs for the beginning of the 2016-17 school year; and
 - create a monthly schedule for weekly joint walkthroughs to be conducted during the 2016-17 school year. For the first two months, walkthroughs should focus on the targeted instructional focus, and subsequent walkthroughs can be differentiated to address individual teacher needs, such as checks for understanding. School leaders should provide teachers with clear and actionable feedback.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- The school leaders shared that two years ago the middle school and high school were combined, and that each school's leader was then assigned as a co-principal of this newly established school. While the school is led by the two co-principals, the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) found that they do not consistently work together to create and share with staff a common overarching vision for the school. During interviews with the review team, the school leaders expressed different philosophies and approaches to the administration process. They stated that, as a result, they do not jointly conduct teacher evaluations or provide feedback together, but rather independently monitor the quality of instruction. School leaders also stated that they have not established a systematic approach to conducting evaluations and walkthroughs, and teachers shared that without feedback, they do not view walkthroughs as useful in driving school improvement and raising student academic performance. Similarly, the IIT's interviews with staff and a review of documents revealed that formal evaluations do not include feedback, are not rated, and do not contain instructional strategies for teachers to use to improve instruction for all students. The school leaders reported that although the focus for this year's walkthroughs was on higher-order questioning techniques, they did not give feedback to teachers after the observations on teacher questioning. The school leaders acknowledged that there is a need for them to work as a team and for staff to see them as a cohesive team.
- During classroom visits, school leaders and reviewers observed that most lessons were teacher-centered and did not provide appropriate challenges and support for all students. Further, classroom visits demonstrated that many lessons did not include small group instruction, data driven groupings, or promote student engagement and discourse. The IIT found that instruction across the school was

not of sufficiently high quality to support and raise student achievement. The school leaders and the review team noted that the instructional practices vary from room to room as a result of the differing instructional visions of the two leaders.

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:

- During the week of June 13, 2016, school leaders should collaborate with content teacher coordinators to create a schoolwide vision of academic excellence that will inform teacher planning. This stated vision should drive grade-level and department meetings.
- Beginning in September 2016, regularly scheduled monthly meetings should focus on how to incorporate higher-order thinking questions in lesson plans and delivery. Meetings should address:
 - scope and sequence of units;
 - specific higher-order thinking skills relevant to each unit;
 - interdisciplinary opportunities; and
 - criterion-referenced assessments.
- Create a higher-order thinking skills question template as a reference/anchor chart for student use and placement in classrooms. School leaders should monitor the implementation during the walkthrough process beginning in September 2016.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- The school leaders reported, and teachers confirmed, that the school leaders have not established expectations in regard to teacher lesson planning. As teachers are not required to have lesson plans available for school leader review except during formal observations, school leaders do not regularly review and monitor teachers' planning. As a result, the IIT found that teachers' lesson planning is not guided by data analysis and does not incorporate teaching strategies to address the range of student learning needs and promote high levels of student thinking and engagement. For example, reviewers observed that although there were a large number of students in need of instructional support in many classrooms, lesson plans did not include supports to improve all students' academic skills. The school leaders reported, and teachers confirmed, that school leaders have not scheduled grade-level, departmental, or vertical alignment meetings into the master schedule to support lesson planning. The school leaders acknowledged the need to establish these meetings in order to provide opportunities for teachers to plan interdisciplinary lessons and activities, to create informal and formal assessments, to address the scope and sequence of units, and to develop higher-order thinking questions for all lessons and units.

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:

- At the next staff meeting on May 20, 2016, the school leaders should clearly articulate the expectation that by May 23, 2016, every lesson should have a learning objective aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that is visually displayed for students to reference. Teachers should make sure that they share and discuss learning objectives with students at the beginning of the class period so that students understand the focus of the lesson. Teachers should also design checks for understanding to ensure that the objectives are being achieved.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- School leaders have independently implemented instructional walkthroughs to monitor instruction in classrooms. However, reviewers noted in their classroom visits that teachers did not typically post learning objectives aligned to the CCLS or review these learning objectives at the start of each lesson in order to prepare students for learning. In addition, students interviewed by the IIT were unable to describe what they were learning in their classrooms. In many observed classrooms, teaching strategies and learning tasks did not always meet the range of student learning needs, address specific barriers, or result in high levels of engagement for all students. For example, the review team observed many lessons in which all students completed the same learning tasks at the same level using the same materials, with no modifications for students' different academic levels. Reviewers observed little teacher use of higher-order questions to deepen and extend student learning, and they found little evidence of teacher practices that supported the needs of all students. The school leaders stated that although they have not established a consistent procedure for instructional walkthroughs to monitor teacher instructional practices, they recognize the need for all teachers to discuss and share learning objectives with students so that they understand the purpose of the lesson being taught in order to improve achievement.

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 31, 2016, school leaders should identify and appoint members of the school-based intervention team and meet with them to create a schedule for the 2016-17 school year. During this meeting, school leaders and the team should begin to create a plan for an intervention process. The plan should include a referral process, templates to document intervention, timeline for review of interventions, next steps for students who have been identified with social-emotional and/or academic needs, and the point person responsible for monitoring the implementation of the plan and its impact on the students' progress. School leaders should monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the process at least once every semester.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- Interviews with the school leaders, teachers, and the student support staff revealed that the school leaders have not established a systematic and comprehensive system to respond to when teachers or

parents raise concerns about an individual student's academic achievement or social and emotional health needs. The review team found there is no effective process in place for staff to make referrals and then meet with the school-based intervention team to identify, implement, and monitor strategies and supports for individual students. The school leaders described the relationships between students and teachers as very positive and stated that staff are caring and concerned about their students. Teachers reported that they routinely check on the social and emotional needs of students by meeting with them during or after class; however, there are no formal systems or programs in place that would enable staff to identify the social and emotional needs of all students and provide appropriate developmental supports. Staff also stated, they are unaware of services provided to students by outside agencies due to confidentiality issues. For example, many times students have been served by agencies such as Berkshire Farm's VISION Program, Liberty Partnership, and Rophie Funds without the staff being aware that this was occurring. The school leaders, teachers, and the support team shared that there is no whole-school vision, strategic plan, curriculum, or programs in place to provide planned, structured supports for student social and emotional needs. In addition, the school leaders, support team, and school-based intervention team reported that the school does not have a system for collecting and analyzing data related to students' social and emotional developmental health.

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:

- Beginning May 16, 2016, school leaders should begin to develop a plan to build parents' capacity to access and understand student achievement data. School leaders should:
 - schedule a parent event during the first week of June to introduce the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) benchmark data system used by the school to track student progress;
 - provide parents with an overview of why the tests are administered, what data they provide, and how the data are used;
 - discuss schoolwide trends shown by the data and provide class reports to inform parents of how their children are performing relative to their peers;
 - provide parents with a report of their individual child's benchmark scores and an explanation of how to evaluate the progress their child has made throughout the year; and
 - present an overview of the interventions and enrichment opportunities provided by the school to accommodate all students' learning needs.
- During the summer of 2016, school leaders should create a calendar of parent data meetings for the 2016-17 school year. Meetings should be scheduled for after the school receives the results of each benchmark assessment. These meetings should support parents in understanding and monitoring their children's progress throughout the year and afford parents the opportunity to partner with the school to ensure their children's academic progress.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- The IIT found that the school has developed positive and supportive relationships with students, parents, and community members. The staff use a range of communication tools including flyers, the parent portal, the student portal, letters, emails, newsletters, and progress reports every five weeks to

share information and enable communication with families. However, two-way communication varies from teacher to teacher; parents shared that the frequency and quality of communications vary depending on individual teachers. Because the school is located in a rural community, not all communications are available to all families, as many families do not have internet access. Parents reported that although the school sends home NWEA benchmark data, they are not provided opportunities to meet with staff or school leaders on interpreting the NWEA data, state test results, or other student data. Discussions with parents about student achievement are limited to the Open Houses and special academic ceremonies. Parents interviewed by the IIT stated that they have a need to understand NWEA and other student data to make sure they are able to assist their children at home. The school leaders reported that they recognize the need for family support in the area of NWEA data analysis and interpretation.

- School leaders stated that meetings are needed throughout the year to support parents in understanding and monitoring their children’s progress. The school leaders and teachers also stated that increasing parent engagement is challenging, often because of transportation issues and parent work schedules. Although the school leaders stated that this is an area they wish to address, they have not established clear goals or action plans to do so. Parents reported they receive little helpful information unless they attend school events or request it from the school. Further, parents shared that they are not clear about course offerings or their children’s learning levels and that they would appreciate support and guidance to help them understand the CCLS to support their children’s learning. However, the review team found that the school has no strategy in place to find out about families’ support needs. As a result, the school leaders do not have data to inform a plan in order to establish activities and events to address families’ needs and increase their engagement with the school. The review team also found that the school has no coherent, integrated system for collecting and sharing data so that all members of the school community are able to understand student and family needs.

ADDITIONAL AREAS TO ADDRESS

- School leaders acknowledged that there is a need to establish a clear vision, mission, and goals to effectively drive school improvement. This was confirmed by staff and parents, who were not able to articulate a school vision. However, the school leaders stated that a long term vision is impossible to create until the district establishes a Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP). In the future, school leaders should create a school vision, mission, and School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP) that is aligned to the district’s CEP.
- The review team found that the school leaders typically do not use systems to monitor schoolwide practices. For example, the school leaders reported that they do not regularly monitor instruction, provide feedback to teachers after walkthroughs, or monitor the effectiveness of communications to parents. In the future, the school leaders should work to establish systems to monitor schoolwide practices so that they are able to identify and address areas for improvement.
- Although the school leaders provide PD opportunities, reviewers found that there is no focus or systematic approach to PD. For example, school leaders and teachers reported that while PD is provided during the year, there is no follow-up or coaching in the classroom based on PD. In the future, school leaders should create a focused and systematic PD schedule for the year to support and improve teacher learning and practices in the classroom.
- School leaders reported that there is a need for teachers to use data to inform curriculum and

instruction and to provide feedback to students. Most student work reviewed by the IIT did not have feedback from teachers. In the future, school leaders should encourage teachers to provide feedback to improve student learning.