



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	650101060001
School Name	Perkins Elementary School
School Address	439 West Maple Avenue, Newark, NY 14513
District Name	Newark Central School District
School Leader	Susan Achille
Dates of Review	April 19 – 20, 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 Perkins Elementary School

School Configuration (2015-16 data)					
Grade Configuration	K-2	Total Enrollment	286	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	2	# SETSS	0	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	3
Types and Number of Special Classes (2015-16)					
# Visual Arts	3	# Music	3	# Drama	0
# Foreign Language	0	# Dance	0	# CTE	0
School Composition (most recent data)					
% Title I Population		100%	% Attendance Rate		96%
% Free Lunch		56%	% Reduced Lunch		6%
% Limited English Proficient		3%	% Students with Disabilities		11%
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native		0%	% Black or African American		6%
% Hispanic or Latino		11%	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		1%
% White		76%	% Multi-Racial		6%
Personnel (most recent data)					
Years Principal Assigned to School		16	# of Assistant Principals		0
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate		0%	% Teaching Out of Certification		0%
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience		4%	Average Teacher Absences		16.3
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2014-15)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		21%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		39%
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (Grade 4)		N/A	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (Grade 8)		N/A
Overall NYSED Accountability Status					
In Good Standing			Local Assistance Plan		
Priority School			Focus School		X
<p>SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:</p> <p>1. None provided.</p>					

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	54.5	64.0

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, a district-selected OEE, and a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SEIS) representative
- The review team visited 43 classrooms during the two-day review.
- The OEE visited 5 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 school leader experienced a death in her family, which necessitated a schedule modification to conduct both school leader interviews on the first day of the review. She was absent from school on the second day. Because of this circumstance, the OEE and school leader made fewer than usual joint class visits.

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 leader, teachers, and staff have embedded the school's hard work, excellence, accountability, respect, teamwork, and safety (HEARTS) values in the school culture. The school has a cordial and receptive environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. The school leader and staff greet students by name at the entrance every morning, and the school leader and teachers are readily accessible to parents under the school's open-door policy.
2. The school leader and student support team have implemented a comprehensive academic and behavioral referral procedure that has the potential to increase student success. Through this procedure, teachers identify struggling students, develop interventions for them, monitor their progress, modify the interventions as necessary to increase their effectiveness, and keep parents informed of intervention efforts and outcomes.
3. The school's self-reflection document resulted from genuine introspection by school leaders and staff and accurately identified many high priority areas for improvement, such as determining professional

development (PD) topics based on a needs assessment and teacher evaluation outcomes, and providing teachers with clearer expectations and guidance on using student performance data to plan lessons.

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 mid-May 2016, the school leader should plan and establish a building leadership team to support her in improving the school. The plan should include a definition of team members’ responsibilities (specific responsibilities should be determined once the team is established); the team composition (possibly including the school psychologist, grade-level chairs, and the administrative intern); the schedule of frequent, regular meetings; the means of communicating the team’s work to all stakeholders; and the methods for evaluating the team’s effectiveness.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- The school leader has not established clear goals and systematic procedures for school improvement. The school leader has set broad targets for student proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics, but has not expressed these targets as specific, measurable, ambitious, results-oriented, and timely (SMART) goals, and there is no central leadership team to develop, implement, and monitor the effectiveness of school improvement strategies. School leaders, teachers, and staff told the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that efforts to improve the school are often fragmented, inconsistent, and incomplete because of a lack of central direction and coordination. For example, although teachers are using data efficiently and effectively to address students’ needs in the school’s academic and behavioral referral process, school leaders have not yet developed a plan for teachers to use student performance data regularly and consistently to plan instruction and are not collecting and analyzing data to identify PD topics and modify school procedures.
- The school leader has adjusted the schedule to provide grade-level meeting time, but does not require teachers to set agendas for grade-level meetings, record the meeting minutes, or share the meeting outcomes with school leaders and teachers at other grade levels. Although teachers plan instruction based on Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and curriculum maps, there are no procedures to ensure that they adjust their instruction to meet diverse student needs.
- School leaders have not collected schoolwide data to determine whether teachers have a common understanding of the practices associated with the HEARTS initiative and implement these practices consistently. In addition, school leaders have not collected and analyzed data to determine whether this initiative contributes to positive student behavior.
- To date, the school leader and coaches have not established a schedule of informal classroom visits to provide teachers with continuous feedback on their instructional practices.

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 mid-May 2016, the school leader should re-institute the practice of requiring teachers to submit evidence of planning for a given period of time, upon request. This practice should be fully implemented in the 2016-17 school year. The school leader should review the evidence and provide feedback to teachers on how well they have aligned their planning to the CCLS, used data to inform their instruction, and planned higher-order questioning. During subsequent classroom visits, the school leader should monitor to ensure that teachers are implementing her recommendations for improving their instruction.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- Although this had been past practice, the school leader no longer regularly collects and reviews teachers' lesson plans. The school leader told the IIT that as part of the formal observation process, she discusses the plan for the upcoming observation with the teacher during the pre-observation conference and provides feedback on the effectiveness of the plan during the post-observation conference; however, tenured teachers are formally observed only once and non-tenured teachers are formally observed only twice annually. The IIT found that infrequent feedback from the school leader to teachers about the quality of their planning has been a constraint on the improvement of instruction. Reviewers found there is no continuity to ensure teachers are addressing the school leader's expectations.
- The school leader established a number of school priorities, including aligning instruction to CCLS standards; using data to adjust instruction to meet the needs of all students; accommodating instructional shifts; and planning higher-order questions. However, she has not developed effective strategies for acting on these priorities. While lesson plans reviewed by the IIT during the document review and classroom visits addressed CCLS standards, there was little evidence of fluid grouping of students based on their strengths and needs. Additionally, the IIT found few planned higher-order questions in teachers' lessons, and reviewers rarely observed higher-order questioning during class visits.

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 mid-May 2016, the school leader and coaches should have developed and implemented a plan to ensure that teachers "I can" statements reflect the standards addressed in the lesson and are stated in student-friendly language. All teachers should be expected to review each lesson's "I can" statements with the students and check for students' understanding. Once students understand their learning targets, teachers should ensure that students are able to take ownership of their learning.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- The school leader expects all teachers to post "I can" statements based on the standards addressed in each lesson and that these statements are displayed daily in all classrooms. However, reviewers noted

during class visits that some teachers transition to new lessons without always establishing a new instructional purpose. For example, in one observed class, a science learning target was posted, but the instruction was addressing reading objectives. Reviewers found that “I can” statements were often brief, vague, and phrased in language that early elementary students were unlikely to understand, such as “I can organize components” for a grade one lesson. It was unclear whether students understood the high-level vocabulary or whether “components” referred to mathematics or English language arts (ELA) content. In most observed classes, teachers did not clarify the meaning of “I can” statements, check periodically for student understanding, or modify instruction to ensure student mastery.

- IIT members asked students about their learning and work products during interviews and classroom visits. Most students could not state the purpose of their learning. Reviewers found little written feedback to students about the next steps to take in a sample of student work. When asked how they knew that they had completed their work correctly, students told the IIT that teachers placed stickers on correct work.
- The IIT found little evidence of differentiated instruction in observed classes. Reviewers observed that students were using the same materials to complete the same tasks, subject to the same expectations. Additionally, the school leader told reviewers, and interviewed teachers confirmed, that teachers were not using the results of the student interest inventories the school had administered to plan high-interest activities, even though these activities could have some potential to increase student engagement and ownership of learning.

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 mid-May 2016, the school leader and other representatives, perhaps including members of the district strategic planning team, should develop a plan to review character education programs/curricula and recommend a program for implementation at the school. This plan should include, but not be limited to, identification of key components required in a program; a timeline for research and identification; ways to monitor programmatic effectiveness; and assurances that the program will interface well with the existing HEARTS goals of the school.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- Stakeholders told the IIT that the HEARTS motto expresses the core values underlying the school’s approach to promoting students’ social-emotional developmental health: hard work, excellence, accountability, respect, teamwork, and safety. School leaders told the IIT that HEARTS principles constitute the vision and mission of the school. All stakeholders interviewed by the IIT could recite core HEARTS values and provide examples of the demonstration of these values. For example, students said that they exhibited “teamwork” by working cooperatively in their classroom groups. During monthly assemblies, school leaders recognize individual students and whole classes for exhibiting HEARTS values, and teachers distribute “HEARTS bucks” to reward positive student behavior.
- The school has not converted the HEARTS motto into a program. For example, there are no criteria to define positive behavior and ensure consistency in the awarding of “HEARTS bucks.” The school does

not have a curriculum and standard lessons to ensure that teachers and staff teach HEARTS values consistently from class to class within a grade and from grade to grade within the school.

- The school leader and staff told the IIT that the school does not have a character education curriculum with age-appropriate lessons that teachers can implement uniformly across all grades because most commercial programs are not fully consistent with HEARTS values. Some teachers use components of the Responsive Classroom program during morning meeting time, but use of the program is inconsistent and unregulated. All stakeholders agreed that staff members would have to customize any adopted program, or programs, to be compatible with HEARTS.

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 mid-May 2016, the school leader should work with teachers and the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) to identify a series of meeting dates, content, and presenters for informational meetings for parents and the school community to explain assessment data and guided reading levels. These meetings should define high expectations for student success and help participants understand the meaning of performance levels in reading, writing, and mathematics and implications for future student success in the intermediate grades and beyond. In addition, there should be presentations on guided reading and an explanation of leveled readers and what reading at a particular level means, including examples.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- Parents told the IIT that the school informs them about their children’s progress in many ways, including report cards, parent-teacher conferences, and notes home from teachers. Parents said that they attend programs and ceremonies celebrating the achievement of their children. They went on to say they collaborate with teachers and staff to plan appropriate academic and behavioral interventions to support their children.
- However, several parents told the IIT that they believed that the school leader’s expectations for student success were not high enough to prepare them for the future. Some parents expressed the view that there should be a greater emphasis on writing in the curriculum and said their children should be reading at a higher level than school leaders and staff currently expect them to achieve.
- The school shares aggregated and disaggregated formative and summative student performance data with parents, including the school’s results on state assessments. However, parents said they were unable to interpret the meaning of the performance levels for reading, writing, and mathematics. They added that they were particularly interested in the predictive validity of the performance levels, such as how well they could expect their children to perform when they moved on to the next grade and ultimately the intermediate school.
- Parents told the IIT they were uncertain of the meaning of the letters representing the guided reading levels and did not know how well their children were performing in comparison with the other children at their grade level. Parents told the IIT they would be able support their children at home more effectively if they had a better understanding of their specific strengths and needs.

ADDITIONAL AREAS TO ADDRESS

- Teachers provide centers for independent and small group work. However, teachers did not always design center work aligned to daily instruction or differentiated to meet the needs of all students. In the future, teachers should increase their understanding of how to use data to identify students' needs and target center work to address these needs.
- In many observed classes, the daily 120-minute ELA block was fragmented. Teachers divided the time into multiple segments that included writing, guided reading, centers, word study, listening, and learning strands from modules. In some observed classes, students worked on mathematics skills using their laptops during the English block. In the future, teachers should develop a more organized, integrated approach focused on reading and writing and consisting of whole group instruction, guided small group instruction, and differentiated practice and enrichment at the learning centers.
- There is limited PD and coaching to help teachers build a repertoire of instructional strategies and use formative data to plan and differentiate their instruction. In the future, the school leader and building leadership team should establish a comprehensive PD program to address identified teacher needs and a monitoring system to ensure that teachers are successfully implementing the methods, procedures, and strategies they have learned.