



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

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



<b>BEDS Code</b>	651501060004
<b>School Name</b>	North Rose- Wolcott Middle School
<b>School Address</b>	5967 New Hartford Street, Wolcott, NY 14590
<b>District Name</b>	North Rose-Wolcott Central School District
<b>School Leader</b>	Mr. Mark Matthews
<b>Dates of Review</b>	April 26-27, 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 North Rose Wolcott- Middle School

School Configuration (2015-16 data)					
Grade Configuration	5-8	Total Enrollment	351	SIG Recipient	NA
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2015-16)					
# Transitional Bilingual	NA	# Dual Language	NA	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	2
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2015-16)					
# Special Classes	8	# SETSS	0	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	8
Types and Number of Special Classes (2015-16)					
# Visual Arts	17	# Music	10	# Drama	0
# Foreign Language	10	# Dance	NA	# CTE	0
School Composition (most recent data)					
% Title I Population			62	% Attendance Rate	95.5
% Free Lunch			50	% Reduced Lunch	9
% Limited English Proficient			.02	% Students with Disabilities	13.6
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native			1	% Black or African American	1
1.7% Hispanic or Latino			8	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0
% White			87	% Multi-Racial	3
Personnel (most recent data)					
Years Principal Assigned to School			3	# 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			27	Average Teacher Absences	8.5
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2014-15)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4			23	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	24
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (Grade 4)			n/a	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (Grade 8)	74
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. Increase student achievement in reading.</li> <li>2. Increase student achievement in math.</li> <li>3. Increase student achievement in grade eight science.</li> <li>4. Increase participation of all stakeholders in supporting, maintaining, and developing positive learning conditions for all students.</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	59.5	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 a total of 30 classrooms during the two-day review.
- The OEE visited eight 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 One on the DTSDE Rubric.

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

1. School leaders recognize the need to provide all students with equal access to academic and extracurricular opportunities, and they have started to engage teachers in conversations about equity.
2. In order to promote the establishment of academic enrichment programs and community partnerships to address the social-emotional developmental health needs of all students, the school leader shared with the review team that the school leadership team will be guided in its efforts by the vision of the school as a safe and enriching learning environment that prepares students to make positive and meaningful contributions to society.
3. Reviewers observed one classroom where students developed and presented questions for a Socratic seminar. This method was used to promote student engagement and higher intellectual thinking. The school leader stated that he intends to provide additional opportunities, such as at faculty/staff meetings, for teachers to share their practices for engaging all students in quality and effective discussions.

**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 13, 2016, the school leader should survey and recruit a school leadership team that is representative of all stakeholders. The team should:
  - have its first meeting by May 25, 2016 to set priorities and begin planning structures for school operating systems;
  - meet biweekly, with agendas created prior to the meeting, and notes and attendance should be kept;
  - establish timelines, roles, and responsibilities;
  - select two ways to collect data that set baselines, benchmarks, and outcomes to verify results; and
  - agree to support the selected initiatives by meeting their responsibilities in a timely manner.

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

- The school leader shared his vision and goals for school improvement with the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT). However, the review team found little evidence that most stakeholders were aware of or embraced the vision or goals. The school leader acknowledged that parents, community partners, and school paraprofessionals did not participate in developing the vision and goals, nor did they attend scheduled meetings to complete the school improvement document. He also stated that the current school leadership team is not functioning in an effective manner. The school leadership team meetings are not well attended, and the team does not monitor the implementation and evaluation of the school improvement plan. Parents, teachers, and students interviewed by reviewers were not able to articulate the vision, mission, and goals. The IIT found no evidence of written displays that focused on the vision and goals for school improvement or that the school had disseminated this information to families or the community. The school leader stated that he would like to create a new vision and mission statement in order to build support for the school's goals from the entire school community and that he plans to present a proposal for a new vision and mission statement at the newly formed school leadership team meeting.
- School leaders have not developed a systematic process for determining priorities or assessing the extent to which school initiatives result in improved student performance. The school leader reported that there is no structure in place for continuously monitoring the school's practices, programs, and progress toward the accomplishment of school-wide goals. The review team found that the school leader has not defined roles and delegated responsibilities that do not belong to the educational leader, such as leadership for student behavior management and student support services. The school leader reported that the school will be implementing a new tracking and monitoring system that better meets the school's needs for comprehensive and targeted use of data. However, he did not provide the review team with a description of the new system.

**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 May 9, 2016, members of the leverage leadership team should visit at least seven classes weekly and provide feedback by the end of the next day.
  - Teachers should be made aware of the academic focus through the weekly update newsletter.
  - The leverage team should monitor and analyze the implementation of feedback to determine teacher accountability.
  - The leverage team should use the same instrument for class visits and feedback to be able to collate data to measure progress and trends and identify areas for improvement, growth, and professional development (PD).
  - Data should be presented to the school leadership team and classroom teachers at monthly faculty meetings.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- The leverage leadership team is comprised of the school leader, assistant school leader, and director of special education. The school leader stated that one of the goals of the leverage team is to focus on using classroom visits as an opportunity to coach teachers in improving student learning. However, the IIT found that the leverage leadership team’s written and verbal feedback to teachers has not resulted in changes in instructional practices that lead to improved student outcomes. The school leader reported that he communicates his expectations for a rigorous curriculum and lesson plans through staff meetings, staff development, and coaching; however, teacher interviews and classroom visits indicated that staff are not following the expectations noted by the school leader. Although the school leader began providing feedback to teachers on lesson plans in March 2016, reviewers found that not all teachers incorporated the feedback in their planning and instruction and that the school leaders have not developed a system to ensure staff accountability.
- Teachers use the EngageNY curriculum modules. However, the IIT found that teachers do not adapt written curricular and lesson plan documents to meet the diverse academic needs of students, especially students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students. Lesson plans examined by the IIT showed that teachers do not use data to differentiate the content, process or product for students. The review team’s observations of classes indicated that teachers do not use data to inform their need to review, re-teach, or adopt other instructional strategies. Although the school leader has developed a protocol for triannual assessment, teachers do not use formative assessments to plan for and modify lessons.
- Although the expectation that teachers will set learning targets is in its third year of implementation and the school leader has made this a priority, the IIT found that not all teachers include learning targets in their lesson plans. An examination of lesson plans by the review team showed that not all teachers write learning targets that define explicit outcomes for students.
- The IIT found little evidence of teacher’s use of data, and modification to lesson plans that would result in meaningful feedback to students. The majority of classrooms visited demonstrated whole group, teacher led instruction; for example, instructional materials, delivery of content, and independent assignments were the same for all students. The lack of modified and differentiated activities limited multiple access to learning for students. When feedback was provided, it did not include insights to improve academic performance or to promote student ownership of learning.

The IIT team found that written feedback was mostly descriptive. Students interviewed stated that feedback from teachers is primarily verbal and brief and that it does not indicate the next steps to take to improve their work.

**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 June 1, 2016, teachers should use formative assessments, such as exit tickets, to determine next steps in creating learning targets for each student. Data from formative assessments should be used to plan extension activities in order to accommodate all learners.
  - The school leader should present PD on the use of formative assessments at the next faculty meeting on May 23, 2016.
  - During class visits, the leverage leadership team should monitor lesson plans to see the application of formative data for instructional differentiation.
  - On a monthly basis, teachers should monitor student achievement on end-of-unit assessments by collecting and comparing test results from the prior month to gauge impact.
  - Student achievement should be reported to the leverage leadership team at the end of each month in a format determined by the leverage leadership team.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- School leaders have not implemented a systematic process to monitor teachers’ practices or to ensure instructional differentiation. The school leader stated that he has not established a progress monitoring structure due to the lack of a consistently functioning school leadership team. During classroom visits, the IIT observed that teachers’ instructional practices do not promote high levels of engagement and student-centered learning. Students reported that teachers typically do not differentiate class work. Instruction observed by reviewers was often teacher-centered, with teacher lecture followed by students completing packets of worksheets. The IIT found that most teachers asked students lower-level recall questions and answered more complex questions themselves. In most classrooms visited by the IIT, small numbers of students monopolized class discussions, limiting the ability of teachers to check for other students understanding throughout the lesson. The IIT also observed that students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs) were not consistently engaged in most classroom activities and that teachers provided few accommodations for these groups of learners.
- The school leader stated that teachers have participated in PD in instructional practices that support economically disadvantaged students; however, teachers have not yet widely accepted or implemented these strategies due to a lack of an internal monitoring system. Teachers shared that internal supports are needed to build teachers’ capacity to deliver differentiated instructional strategies to economically disadvantaged students. The IIT found that the leverage leadership team does not consistently align their classroom visitations to PD provided to teachers.
- Although teachers use a variety of assessments, they do not typically use data from formative assessments to inform and adjust lesson plans to engage students in self-reflection and provide

them with timely and specific feedback. The IIT found that there was no evidence of teachers modifying plans based on data from exit tickets. Teachers have tools for frequent assessments; however, they do not use the resulting data to modify instruction to meet student needs. The IIT found no evidence that the school leaders have provided clear protocols to guide teachers in the use of data in modifying lesson plans or the curriculum.

- A review of lesson plans by the IIT showed that teachers are not clear about the meaning of the term “instructional strategies” and instead listed steps to be followed during the class. The review team also found that objectives were not written to address the diverse needs of individual or groups of students. The objectives in most lesson plans the IIT reviewed were not aligned to the assessments.

**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:**

- The school should create and implement social-emotional enrichment activities and additional academic supports that are inclusive of all students, including after-school activities, academically advanced courses of study, grade-level trips, dances, sporting events, and all social events sponsored by the school.
  - By May 13, 2016, all student support services team members and special area subject teachers should submit a plan to supervise an enrichment activity group for students during the 2:15-2:50 p.m. after-school period, with membership open to all students, to start by May 23, 2016.
  - By May 16, 2016, after-school academic support and re-teaching should be extended beyond the assignment completion activity period.
  - Starting May 13, 2016, data should be collected to measure the impact of enrichment inclusion and academic support on behavioral incidents, office referrals, and attendance at these activities to determine impact. Data should be presented to staff at monthly faculty meetings.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- School leaders have not developed a comprehensive social and emotional developmental health plan that addresses the needs of all students, and they have not provided PD to staff that focuses on identifying and supporting student needs. During interviews with reviewers, the school leader stated that the school needs to select and implement a curriculum to support and expand the school’s existing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program even though that program is not being fully utilized. The student support services team and school leaders reported that the Cougar Pride Team, an extended committee of PBIS, collects student management data and prepares a report. However, the Cougar Pride Team has not developed a plan to disseminate the information and create action plans based on the data.
- The school leader reported that he has engaged staff in conversations about issues concerning equal opportunity for all students presented by an annual grade eight honors trip that rewards

students who are high academic and social achievers. The system for selecting students for the trip is based on teacher recommendation, Honor Roll membership, and ability to pay. The selection process tends to exclude students who are not achieving at an academic mastery level. The school leader noted that there are no class trips or extracurricular activities that provide an equitable enrichment experience for all students.

- The school leader has developed a process for teachers and parents to request assistance for students with academic and/or social-emotional needs. However, the IIT found that students were not consistently provided with academic and/or social-emotional interventions during the activity period that occurred at the end of the academic day. The school leader stated that the process for obtaining assistance for students has not been widely accepted or implemented by teachers because of insufficient evidence that could be used to identify targeted interventions for students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and general education students. The school has not collected and analyzed data from multiple sources, such as attendance records, office referrals, and behavior incidents to identify trends that would inform the development of interventions to meet student needs.
- School leaders have not adequately engaged or expanded the services of school and community stakeholders in efforts to provide academic enrichment and social-emotional support to all students. The school has one community partner, the Wayne Behavioral Health Network, arranged through the district for all schools. A psychologist from the Wayne Behavioral Health Network visits the school twice a week and provides services to individual students and their families. The student support services team meets with the Wayne Behavioral Health Network monthly to share information about students receiving services, but the information is not integrated into behavioral plans or academic intervention plans.

**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:**

- With guidance from the school leader, teachers should increase the effectiveness of communication with parents and families.
  - By May 6, 2016, teachers should update their Family Link weekly to ensure that information posted is timely and current.
  - By May 16, 2016, teachers should select communication methods that match family needs and begin communicating with parents to update them on their children’s progress in academics and behavior. Methods of communication may include Class Dojo, email, phone calls, and face-to-face communication.
  - By May 6, 2016, teachers should record all contacts with parents and families through a communication log that includes date, time, topic of conversation, and outcome including future steps.
  - By May 6, 2016, teachers should respond to parent requests for information within 24 hours and should include these responses in the communication log.

The school leader and the director of curriculum and instruction should provide a PD session in June

2016 on effective communication skills and strategies to use with parents and families.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- School leaders do not provide on-going communication to staff, families, and students regarding expectations for student success. The review team found no evidence that the school leader has established expectations for staff to maintain and document communications and interactions with parents although the school leader noted that he communicates with individual parents on an as needed basis. Multiple opportunities for reciprocal communication are not in place, which limits staff knowledge of the needs of students and families. The school leader reported that data and information are not consistently shared and presented in ways that are understandable to parents and enable them to support and advocate for their children.
- School leaders noted contractual differences between grade five and six teachers and grade seven and eight teachers regarding parent-teacher conferences. The conferences are required at grades five and six but not at grades seven and eight, which tends to limit some parents from consistently engaging in communication with school staff. Teachers interviewed by the IIT expressed the perspective that most communication to parents is related to negative behavior of students in the classroom. Parents shared that they have had difficulty with some teachers responding to requests for information about their children. Parents also stated that in order to obtain information and assistance, they need to strongly advocate for their children.
- Teachers are expected to use and update their Family Link web sites to ensure that parents who access them are informed of relevant school and student information. The IIT found that not all teachers consistently use the web sites as a tool to communicate with families. The school has not trained teachers in practices for communicating with parents or provided parents with strategies to communicate effectively with the school. Teachers reported, and the school leader confirmed, that on-going PD is needed to improve teachers' skills in communicating with parents and to help them understand the needs of families living in poverty. Grade Five Orientation is the only venue for providing training to parents in the ways that they may support their children's learning. The school sent parents a request for assistance form to fill out so that additional resources and interventions could be provided to support their children's academic achievement; however, parent response was very low.

**ADDITIONAL AREAS TO ADDRESS**

- The school leaders have not identified school-wide standards of practice that will be required for all teachers to use in order to provide each student with essential skills needed to produce quality work at higher achievement levels. Most displayed student work and independent classroom assignments examined by reviewers did not reflect high expectations for the presentation of work or the use of a quality rubric. Most worksheets distributed to students did not have a heading that included the content, directions, and places for student name and date. Learning targets and "I can" statements were not visible in many classrooms. In the future, school leaders should ensure that protocols related to student assignments and presentation of student work are implemented by all teachers with fidelity.
- Although 97 percent of teachers were rated Highly Effective in the 2014-15 Annual Performance Professional Review (APPR), only 11 percent of students performed at Levels 3 and 4 on both the

2015 New York State English language arts (ELA) and math assessments. Members of the leverage leadership team have not developed a process to collaboratively ensure that their feedback to teachers is targeted, actionable, and reflective, thus impacting student learning. As the school leaders move forward in focusing on improving student achievement, they should ensure that the feedback teachers receive from the leverage leadership team improves instructional practices and student learning outcomes.