



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	043200050002
School Name	Salamanca Junior Senior High School
School Address	50 Iroquois Drive, Salamanca, NY 14779
District Name	Salamanca City Central School District
School Leader	Mr. Scott Cooper
Dates of Review	March 29-30, 2016
School Accountability Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Assistance Plan School
Type of Review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet for Salamanca Junior Senior High School

School Configuration (2015-16 data)					
Grade Configuration	7-12	Total Enrollment	517	SIG Recipient	NA
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	11
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	0	% Attendance Rate	93		
% Free Lunch	48	% Reduced Lunch	16		
% Limited English Proficient	1	% Students with Disabilities	17		
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native	38	% Black or African American	2		
% Hispanic or Latino	3	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0		
% White	56	% Multi-Racial	1		
Personnel (most recent data)					
Years Principal Assigned to School	0.7	# 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	16	Average Teacher Absences	13		
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2014-15)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	NA	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	NA		
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (Grade 4)	NA	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (Grade 8)	NA		
Student Performance for High Schools (2014-15)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	71	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	77		
Global History Performance at levels 3 & 4	72	US History Performance at levels 3 & 4	71		
4-Year Graduation Rate	65	6 Year Graduation Rate	NA		
Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Designation	5	% ELA/Math Aspirational Performance Measures	NA		
Overall NYSED Accountability Status					
In Good Standing		Local Assistance Plan	X		
Priority School		Focus School			

SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:

1. Improve attendance rate.
2. Decrease dropout rates.
3. Return to a middle school ethos.
4. Restructure an alternative school.
5. Use data-driven instruction.

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 State Education Department 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 the New York State Education Department. The team also included a district representative and a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SEIS) representative.
- The review team visited a total of 56 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.
- In advance of the review, the school provided results of a student survey that 397 (78 percent) completed.
- In advance of the review, the school provided results of a staff survey that 69 (81 percent) completed.

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:
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. School leaders have provided students with some quality resources to promote academic achievement. For example, students have been given tablets to help them complete homework assignments and create presentations.2. School leaders have provided several professional development (PD) opportunities, and over three-quarters of teachers reported that school leaders encourage them in their professional development.3. School leaders in conjunction with teachers, have organized and implemented extended learning opportunities that supplement curricular content. The school has varied programs and sports events, which are appreciated by students and families.

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 1, 2016, school leaders should develop a clear and concise statement of the school's vision for school improvement collaboratively with staff, students, and other stakeholders. This vision should be communicated to all stakeholders verbally, in writing, and visually through posters.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- The school leader reported to the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that he had not consulted with key stakeholders to develop a vision, goals, and strategies for school improvement. He stated that when he took over as school leader in July 2015, he formulated a vision for the school and a number of targets for improvement, but these were not widely discussed with stakeholders at the time and have not been revised or revisited.
- There were no references to the school's mission or goals in any of the documents examined by the IIT. During interviews with the review team, staff and parents stated that they were not aware of the school leader's plans and expectations for the school. However, teachers reported that when school leaders provided direction in specific areas, such as establishing interdisciplinary projects and events in grades seven and eight, they have ensured that these initiatives have been implemented with fidelity.
- Interviews with the school leaders and an examination of documents showed that the school leaders do not have a coherent system for monitoring individual and school-wide practices. As a result, school leaders are hindered in their ability to make informed operational decisions to move the school forward and raise student achievement.
- The school leader reported that there have been no formal systems for ensuring that resources are aligned to the school's priorities. For example, there have been no systems for ensuring that decisions about the hiring of staff are aligned with students' academic and social needs; however, plans reviewed by the IIT indicated that the school leader is now considering how this can be accomplished.
- Teachers stated that school leaders rarely attend team meetings. When reviewers asked for an explanation of this issue, school leaders shared that this was because they had not given attendance at these meetings a high priority. As a result, school leaders have little opportunity to discuss barriers to student success with staff and to develop collaboratively strategies for school improvement.

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:

Beginning April 4, 2016, school leaders should work with teachers to produce a common lesson plan format that clearly indicates lesson objectives and how they will be reviewed during and after the lesson. A lesson plan template should be introduced throughout the school no later than May 1, 2016.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- The lessons plans examined by the IIT did not effectively incorporate all students' learning needs to prepare them for academic success. For example, teachers' plans did not include higher-order questions, complex texts, and supplementary enrichment materials. During interviews with reviewers,

some students expressed the view that they were not challenged sufficiently. The review team found that students with disabilities are not supported effectively by lessons that are aligned with their current level of achievement.

- There is a great variation in the quality of lesson planning and no consistency in the way teachers plan for continuity and progression through the grades. The current lesson plan format does not include a section that indicates how teachers will assess students' understanding of learning objectives, both during and after the lesson. The lesson plans examined by the IIT rarely included opportunities for extended learning and student self-assessment. Many plans did not identify how students with disabilities will be supported to access the material in lessons.
- The IIT found that teachers are not consistently using student performance data to develop effective unit and lesson plans at their grade level and departmental meetings. Most lesson plans for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics examined by the IIT, were aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). However, lesson plans for other subjects were typically not aligned to the CCLS, and many teachers were not familiar with the grade level descriptions or expectations. Interviews with school leaders and teachers showed that they were not monitoring and adjusting the curriculum systematically. Teachers shared that there was little time for collaborative planning with teachers of subjects other than ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions: Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn, so that all students and pertinent subgroups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking, and achievement.

Recommendation for Tenet 4 – Teacher Practices and Decisions:

Beginning April 18, 2016, school leaders should plan a program of informal daily walk-throughs to ensure that teachers are reviewing learning objectives at the end of lessons to determine what students have learned. The visits should include conversations with students to check their understanding of the lesson content and objectives. School leaders should provide verbal and written feedback to teachers immediately following the lesson.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- School leaders acknowledged that they do not observe and monitor instruction regularly to ensure that teachers' instructional practices are informed by student performance data, address individual student needs and learning styles, and promote a high level of student engagement. Teachers stated that school leaders had not provided them with explicit guidance on how to use data to plan instruction. During classroom visitations, the review team found that few teachers were providing appropriate instructional interventions for individual students. In observed classes, although some teachers used "I can" statements as learning objectives, typically they rarely checked at the end of the lesson to determine student understanding and inform students about the next steps they would need to take to master skills and concepts. Several classes just ended when the bell rang, with no review or conclusion.
- During classroom visitations the IIT found that, instruction was not consistently aligned to the CCLS and content-based standards. In ELA and mathematics classes, for example, teachers typically referred to grade-level standards during lessons. However, in other subjects, such as science, this information was lacking. In many lessons observed by reviewers, teachers posed questions at the literal level of

knowledge and understanding. Most lessons were teacher-centered and provided only a single point of access, although students varied in skill level and background knowledge.

- Students expressed the perspective that they were physically and intellectually safe in class; however, the IIT found that teachers did not actively promote intellectual discovery and rigorous thinking in observed classes. For example, there was no evidence of cooperative learning activities to enable students to take ownership of their learning and participate in projects that develop higher-order thinking.

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 April 18, 2016, school leaders should form and select students to serve on a student advisory council that will meet weekly with school leaders to discuss ways in which the behavior management systems in the school can be implemented more constructively, consistently, and equitably. The minutes of these meetings should be made available to students, teachers, and parents.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- School leaders stated that they have not established a system for identifying the social-emotional developmental health needs of all students. In some classes the IIT observed, there were barriers to learning caused by disengagement, disruptive behavior, and a lack of consistent positive behavior management. In some instances, teachers' behavior management techniques were negative and punitive, leading to student resentment and further disruptive behavior. The ITT observed that posted class rules often consisted of lists of prohibited rather than expected behaviors. In interviews, students said that rule enforcement was sometimes inconsistent. For example, the review team found that some teachers permitted students to wear hats in class in violation of a school rule.
- During interviews, students shared some suggestions for improving the school, but noted that there was no process for them to make their views known to teachers and school leaders. Students reported that they would like the opportunity to take a more active role in the school community, and this issue was supported in discussions with teachers.
- The IIT's review of documents showed no evidence of a curriculum and targeted programs to support students' social-emotional developmental health. The school health department provides sex and drug education classes, but does not offer a comprehensive curriculum to meet the needs of all students. Reviewers' examination of documents indicated that many students are removed from health classes to attend intervention sessions. The ITT found that school leaders are not providing sufficient professional development (PD) to increase the capacity of the staff to identify and address students' social-emotional developmental health needs.
- Teachers and school leaders noted that there is no program or strategy for working with families to support the social-emotional developmental health needs of their children. Parents reported that school leaders have not actively engaged families in discussions about their children's social and emotional needs. During interviews, families did not express an understanding of their role in ensuring that barriers to student success are removed. The school collects little data to identify students' social-emotional developmental health needs; data that are collected are not used systematically to identify

and address the needs of the school's subgroups.

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 April 18, 2016, school leaders should select parents to participate in an advisory group. By May 1, 2016, the advisory group should create an action plan for improving reciprocal communication.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- During interviews, the school leader stated to the IIT that he has not formed a working partnership with families to better enable parents to work with their children so that students reach their full potential. Parents stated that the frequency of their conversations with teachers varied across the school. They expressed the perspective that school leaders lacked strategies for ensuring reciprocal communication with parents. There is no parent-teacher organization in the school. Parents noted that they would appreciate a more consistent dialogue with school leaders on a range of issues. The review team found that school leaders do not have a coherent plan for providing parents with techniques to help their children at home. Teachers reported that they have not had training on developing partnerships with families and the larger community. Parents stated that the school did not help them to locate appropriate external services and programs to help their children.
- Some parents reported that they did not understand the meaning of report card grades and that they preferred the former system where written comments were included on the report cards. The IIT found that the report cards consisted only of letter grades. When asked by the review team, the school leader stated that there is currently no plan to hold informational sessions to explain the grading system.

ADDITIONAL AREAS TO ADDRESS

- The school's system for curriculum development and renewal is not ensuring that all teachers are developing a rigorous curriculum to prepare students for college and career. Some current curriculum plans are not aligned to the CCLS. In the future, the school leader should monitor regularly to ensure that all curricula plans are aligned to the CCLS and the appropriate instructional shifts.
- There is very little data driven instruction. The school leader does not have a clear assessment policy, and teachers are confused about what assessments to administer and how the results should be used to drive instruction. In the future, the school leader should ensure that there is a school-wide assessment battery related to subject area content and CCLS standards.
- School leaders have not established a coherent system for identifying students' social- emotional developmental health needs. There are no procedures for collecting data in order to remove barriers to learning and ensure that students receive the support they need to be successful. In the future, the school leader should establish a school-wide system for identifying students' social-emotional developmental health needs based on the collection and analysis of relevant student performance data.