



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

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



|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>BEDS Code</b>                    | 651201060004   |
| <b>School Name</b>                  | Sodus Intermediate School  |
| <b>School Address</b>               | 54 Mill Street, Sodus, NY 14551  |
| <b>District Name</b>                | Sodus Central School District  |
| <b>School Leader</b>                | Dr. Ellen Lloyd  |
| <b>Dates of Review</b>              | April 19-20, 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 Sodus Intermediate School

| School Configuration (2015-16 data)                             |                    |                  |   |   |    |
|---|--------------------|------------------|---|---|----|
| Grade Configuration   | 4-6                | Total Enrollment | 221   | SIG Recipient                                 | no |
| Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2015-16)  |                    |                  |   |   |    |
| # Transitional Bilingual  | 4                  | # Dual Language  | 0   | # Self-Contained English as a Second Language | 3  |
| Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2015-16)         |                    |                  |   |   |    |
| # Special Classes   | 6                  | # SETSS          | 10  | # Integrated Collaborative Teaching           | 18 |
| 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  | 29.4               |                  | % Attendance Rate                               | 96.8  |    |
| % Free Lunch  | 46.6               |                  | % Reduced Lunch                                 | 10.4  |    |
| % Limited English Proficient                                    | 5.4                |                  | % Students with Disabilities                    | 13.6  |    |
| Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)                         |                    |                  |   |   |    |
| % American Indian or Alaska Native                              | 0                  |                  | % Black or African American                     | 12.2  |    |
| % Hispanic or Latino  | 18.1               |                  | % Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander     | 0   |    |
| % White   | 62.9               |                  | % Multi-Racial                                  | 6.8   |    |
| Personnel (most recent data)                                    |                    |                  |   |   |    |
| Years Principal Assigned to School                              | 2                  |                  | # 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                | 9.7                |                  | Average Teacher Absences                        | 20%<br>**due to LTS**                         |    |
| Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2014-15) |                    |                  |   |   |    |
| ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4                                 | 20.7<br>(avg. 4-6) |                  | Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4         | 34.7<br>(avg. 4-6)                            |    |
| Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)                 | 85%                |                  | Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade) | n/a   |    |
| Overall NYSED Accountability Status                             |                    |                  |   |   |    |
| In Good Standing  |                    |                  | Local Assistance Plan                           | X   |    |
| Priority School   |                    |                  | Focus School                                    | X   |    |
| <b>SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:</b>              |                    |                  |   |   |    |

| 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   | 46.5                 | 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.
- The review team visited a total of 45 classrooms during the two-day review.
- The OEE visited nine 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 are a combination of Stage One and Stage Two.

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

1. School leaders recognized the need for teachers to align their instruction to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), address the social and emotional development health of students, and analyze data to inform their planning and instruction. As a result, school leaders devised a schedule for significant common meeting times for teachers. Grade-level teams meet for 40 to 80 minutes each week, and vertical teams meet for 40 minutes each month.
2. In order to increase the instructional capacity of staff, school leaders, in conjunction with the district, developed and implemented for the first time a teacher observation plan in which building and district administrators observe untenured teachers three times annually and tenured teachers two times annually, and they conduct weekly walkthroughs.
3. During the current school year, school leaders began using resources strategically to address the social and emotional development health needs of students by hiring a crisis teaching assistant and a social worker to collaborate with the Response to Intervention (RtI) team. Students interviewed by the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) stated they feel comfortable with the new teaching assistant. Staff reported that students receiving counseling increased from two students in September 2015 to nine in March 2016, and students receiving direct instruction in social skills increased from five to nine students during the same period.

4. To address an attendance problem, school leaders analyzed past and current school year attendance data, set school-wide attendance goals, and focused staff, students, and families on achieving agreed upon goals. As a result, the number of students absent five or more days decreased from 153 students last year to 65 students thus far this year.

**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 April 25, 2016, the school leaders should undertake a targeted evaluation of student engagement practices throughout the school using existing walkthrough procedures. The school leaders should collaborate in supporting teachers’ understanding of the process and the impact on curriculum planning and instructional strategies. The school leaders should use information gathered during this process to identify strengths and deficiencies in practice and to determine a wider strategy that promotes student engagement to be implemented beginning September 2016.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- In classroom visits, the IIT found that student engagement was inconsistent throughout the school as shown by uneven participation of students in classroom work. Although school leaders have provided opportunities to increase the instructional capacity of staff, such as targeted professional development (PD), regular observations, common meeting times for teachers, and access to data, reviewers found that many teachers’ practices do not reflect the PD provided. School leaders indicated that they have provided support to teachers in the use of data. However, the IIT found little evidence to show that teachers understand and use available data to plan instruction that engages students while addressing students’ varying needs.
- The school leader acknowledged that she has not fully articulated the school mission and vision, and the IIT found through interviews that not all stakeholders are aware of how to support the mission. The self-reflection document indicated that the school uses data to establish measurable approaches to school improvement. However, the IIT found that staff do not effectively use available data to target improvements in instructional practices. The school leader acknowledged that school leaders are in the early stages of aligning plans and instruction to student data. The school leader indicated that she has plans to use data from walkthroughs and subsequent discussions to address critical areas in planning and instruction, such as student engagement.

**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 May 16, 2016, the school leaders should support the grades four, five, and six teams, in succession, in understanding the findings of the student engagement walkthrough procedure. This should include ways in which teachers could adapt curricular content through formulating strategies that enable students to discuss what they know, understand, and can do in dialogue with classroom

teachers and their fellow students.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- While school leaders provide some support to teachers such as collaborative meeting times and targeted PD, they do not yet ensure that teachers develop and modify curricula to meet students' varying needs. The IIT found minimal evidence to show that teachers consistently use data to plan and adjust instruction. In addition, a review of lesson plans showed that most teachers' plan did not include strategies and activities designed to engage students at high levels. During class visits, the IIT saw some examples of students engaging with another, such as when students worked together in pairs to discuss their class assignment; however, the IIT saw few other examples of students actively participating or engaging during instruction. School leaders indicated that focusing on student engagement one grade level at a time would enable them to target staff capacity building schoolwide.
- The review team found that although most teachers' plans align with the CCLS, most plans did not include strategies that focused on higher-order thinking skills. A review of documents and class visits showed that most teachers planned and asked low-level question that did not require deep thinking or detailed responses. Students interviewed by the IIT reported that their work was too easy and that teachers often spent too much time on one part of the lesson or on previously taught materials. Students also reported that teachers did not spend enough time on teaching new material.
- The IIT found that teachers have access to various assessments, but do not sufficiently use these assessments to modify or adjust curricula. The IIT found that teachers typically use information from assessments to determine and adjust interventions rather than to inform the planning and modification of curricula to meet the anticipated needs of all students. The IIT also found that not all teachers use assessments to provide feedback to students that help students understand their academic achievement and what they can do to improve their standing. During the small student group meeting, the IIT learned that some teachers provide brief and vague feedback on students' class and homework assignments. Some students said they were surprised by their achievement on tests and that their test results did not match other feedback they had received.

**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 May 16, 2016, the school leaders should assist the grades four, five, and six teams, in succession, in optimally using the results of the student engagement walkthrough procedure. This should involve consideration of the impact of various strategies on student engagement and understanding. Examples of such strategies include:
  - calling on students by name rather than asking them to raise their hands to enable teachers to both differentiate their questions and ensure all students are participating;
  - asking questions that require students to explain and/or demonstrate their understanding of desired learning outcomes;
  - continually checking for understanding using various methods including technology- and

- kinesthetic-based strategies; and
- promoting student-to-student discussion, strategic grouping of students, or peer-led learning to deepen and encourage student engagement and understanding.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- In most classrooms visited, reviewers found that teachers rarely used student engagement strategies to promote student learning. Learning opportunities varied little because teachers' instructional practice too often incorporated simple materials that did not meet the needs of all students. The IIT found that most teachers did not ask contextual higher-order questioning during instruction, and teachers typically called the same few students to respond to questions, which limited student participation.
- During class visits, the review team observed students copying and completing unchallenging work, and students reported to reviewers that they were unclear about the goal of the assignment. Although teachers provided support to students, the support was not differentiated, strategic, or consistent throughout the school. For example, the IIT observed that although several teachers provided worksheets to students, the information was the same for each student.
- In classrooms visited, the review team observed that most teachers did not effectively use formative assessment to guide students' learning either by adjusting instruction in response to students' misconceptions or by providing effective feedback in students' notebooks. Teachers reported that they adjust their instructional strategies continually. However, reviewers noted that the adjustments teachers made did address students' needs. The review team also noted that not all teachers effectively checked for students' understanding of the lesson. For example, in a math class, while teaching the conversion of an improper fraction, the teacher moved on despite it being clear that students did not learn the material presented. Similarly, in another class the teacher directed students to give a thumbs-up if they had the correct answer, but never looked at students to see who actually responded.
- During classroom visits, the IIT rarely observed strategic grouping of students except when a co-teacher pulled out a small group of students for instruction and when students were homogenously grouped in separate classes.

**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:**

- Beginning May 2, 2016, the school leaders should deploy the student support team to collaborate with classroom teachers in creating a classroom environment that promotes students' social and emotional developmental health. This should begin with student support team members conducting walkthroughs and checking in with students to provide greater continuity of care between interventions, support, and the classroom setting. Data gathered from these walkthroughs should be shared by student support team members with all RtI team members at RtI meetings and used to determine the impact of interventions on students' attitudes to learning, to make modifications to

protocols that sustain improvement, and to identify other potential student needs.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- School leaders have implemented some supports to address the social and emotional developmental health needs of students in crisis, such as creating social skills groups and hiring a school social worker and a crisis teaching assistant. However, the IIT found that the school lacks a comprehensive system to identify all students' social and emotional developmental needs and to remove barriers to learning for all students. Student support staff reported that they act in "silos" and seldom in a proactive, coordinated fashion. The self-reflection document indicated that school leaders have not sufficiently monitored the implementation of the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program, and as a result, there is a disconnect between the quality of individual support students receive in intervention and the services staff provide to maintain an environment that supports all students' social and emotional developmental health. The lack of consistency and a limited referral system affect staff's ability to provide optimal support to students.
- Although school staff use data to identify the needs of students in crisis, the IIT found that staff conduct little strategic analysis of the data to identify and respond to all students' social and emotional needs. The school leader reported in the self-reflection document that the school does not have a research-based program to address the social and emotional developmental health of students. The review team noted that data are reviewed in a reactive rather than in a preventative manner.

**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:**

- After administering the parent school climate survey, the school leaders should direct the school climate transformation liaison to disaggregate the data collected to provide a better understanding of the needs of the families of different student subgroups. In addition, school leaders should renew efforts to contact families who did not respond to the survey to determine the most suitable form of communication with them. School leaders should use this information to create a more strategic approach to developing high quality, two-way communications with families to secure effective home-school partnerships.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- The IIT found that although school leaders use a variety of methods to communicate with parents, they have not determined the suitability of these communications and the extent that current school efforts ensure that parents understand how to support their children's academic achievement. Interviews with parents and the student support team revealed that school leaders do not use their communications with parents to understand community challenges and needs, and most communications are for informational purposes. It was unclear to the reviewers if all parents receive or are able to access all available information. In addition, the IIT found no evidence of coordinated systems in place to monitor communications to and with parents. As a result, the school does not know if all families receive or access communications, and not all families can communicate

reciprocally with the school.

- Student support staff reported that although parents are alerted about available outside services that could benefit them, parents typically do not follow up on the recommendations made by staff. Student support staff also shared possible reasons why parents do not follow-up; however, staff did not indicate any specific actions taken to determine why parents had not responded to the recommendations. The school leader reported that most parent advocacy by the school focuses on student rather than family needs. The school leader also reported that the school has not provided any training for parents, and school-level data are not currently shared with parents.

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

- The school leader reported that no interdisciplinary curricula exist at the school and teachers do not work together to provide interdisciplinary curricula that promote student success. In the future, school leaders will need to address the development of an interdisciplinary curriculum.
- Team leaders do not adhere to and effectively monitor teachers' implementation of the school leader's mission, goals, and objectives, which impacts the consistency of schoolwide practices. In the future, the school leaders will need to build a coordinated capacity of the leadership team.