



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	050100010000
District	Auburn Enlarged City School District
District Address	78 Thornton Avenue
Superintendent	Constance Evelyn
Date(s) of Review	February 14, 2014
Schools Discussed in this Report	Auburn Junior High School

District Information Sheet												
District Grade Configuration	K-12	Total Student Enrollment	4,513	Title 1 Population	47%	Attendance Rate			94%			
Free Lunch	41%	Reduced Lunch	6.5%	Student Sustainability	%	Limited English Proficient	0.3%	Students with Disabilities		13.85%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population												
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.2%	Black or African American	7.8%	Hispanic or Latino	3.7%	Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander		0.9%	White	81.7%	Multi-racial	5.9%
Personnel												
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/Appointed to District	1	Number of Deputy Superintendents	3	Average Years Dep. Superintendents in Role in the District	6	# of Directors of Programs		3				
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate in District	0	% Teaching Out of Certification in District	0	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp. in District	4%	Average Teacher Absences in District		7.4%				
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)												
District in Good Standing		Focus District	X	Number of Focus School Identified by District	7	Number of SIG Recipient Schools		4	Number of Schools in Status		7	
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	24.22%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	28.71%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	54.9%	4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)		77.21%	6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)		77.4%	

Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA			
	American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American
	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
	White		Multi-racial
X	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
X	Economically Disadvantaged		All Students
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics			
	American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American
	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
	White		Multi-racial
X	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
X	Economically Disadvantaged		All Students
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science			
	American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American
	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
	White		Multi-racial
	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
	Economically Disadvantaged		All Students
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective			
	Limited English Proficiency		

Tenet 1 - District Leadership and Capacity: The district examines school systems and makes intentional decisions to identify and provide critical expectations, supports and structures in all areas of need so that schools are able to respond to their community and ensure that all students are successful.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
1.1	The district has a comprehensive approach for recruiting, evaluating, and sustaining high-quality personnel that affords schools the ability to ensure success by addressing the needs of their community.		X		
1.2	The district leadership has a comprehensive and explicit theory of action about school culture that communicates high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents.		X		
1.3	The district is organized and allocates resources (financial, staff support, materials, etc.) in a way that aligns appropriate levels of support for schools based on the needs of the school community.		X		
1.4	The district has a comprehensive plan to create, deliver and monitor professional development in all pertinent areas that is adaptive and tailored to the needs of individual schools.		X		
1.5	The district promotes a data-driven culture by providing strategies connected to best practices that all staff members and school communities are expected to be held accountable for implementing.		X		

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.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
2.1	The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for the school leader to create, develop and nurture a school environment that is responsive to the needs of the entire school community.		X		

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.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
3.1	The district works collaboratively with the school(s) to ensure CCLS curriculum that provide 21st Century and College and Career Readiness skills in all content areas and provides fiscal and human resources for implementation.			X	

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.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
4.1	The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for teachers to develop strategies and practices and addresses effective planning and account for student data, needs, goals, and levels of engagement.		X		

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.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
5.1	The district creates policy and works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and resources that positively support students' social and emotional developmental health.			X	

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.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
6.1	: The district has a comprehensive family and community engagement strategic plan that states the expectations around creating and sustaining a welcoming environment for families, reciprocal communication, and establishing partnerships with community organizations and families.			X	

District Review Narrative:

Tenet 1.1: The district has a comprehensive approach for recruiting, evaluating, and sustaining high-quality personnel that affords schools the ability to ensure success by addressing the needs of their community.	Tenet Rating	E
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Debriefing Statement: The district has vigorous and systemic strategies for identifying staffing needs and recruiting highly qualified candidates to fill positions. District and school leaders conduct staff evaluations using research-based rubrics. Hiring and supporting qualified staff enables student needs to be addressed effectively.

Strengths:

Overall Findings:

The district staff has and implements a plan for, the recruitment, selection, orientation, professional development, and retention of staff. In addition, the plan addresses areas of discipline, safety in the workplace, compliance, and staffing to ensure that the most effective employees are deployed to the areas of greatest need.

Evidence/Information that lead to this Finding:

- The district’s comprehensive “Recruitment and Retention Plan” states the district’s mission is “To recruit diverse well-rounded educators who facilitate lifelong learning that is rigorous, relevant, and results driven for the 21st Century.” The district has robust and systematic structures in place for recruiting highly qualified, dually certified personnel. The district staff attends events such as Teacher Recruitment Days in Rochester, Buffalo, and Westchester County to recruit potential applicants. The district leadership reported establishing a “Fast Track process for hiring a more diverse teaching force. This process allows district staff to hire highly qualified candidates immediately during these “Teacher Recruitment Days” thus streamlining the hiring process and securing personnel who will reflect the diversity of the community. The district collaborates with Syracuse University to identify and attract inclusive special education teachers and a continuous interview process for substitute teachers to broaden the base of known candidates as openings occur within the district.
- The district, in collaboration with the teachers’ union, has adopted the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) rubric for teacher evaluation. Both school leaders and staff have received training on the evaluation process as well as the rubric, which is online for convenience. The district ensures consistency among evaluators and provides on-going professional development (PD) to address administrator reliability in observation protocols. In addition, the district ensures a strong focus on the provision of PD for teachers and other staff geared towards improving instructional practices in schools. School leaders and district leaders have rigorous procedures in place to schedule formal and informal observations. These observations are seen as a tool for increasing teacher effectiveness and provide regular, developmental feedback to staff through the Oasys system, an online method of recording evidence. These systems clearly identify strengths but also areas of instruction that are in need of improvement that become the focus for future observations.

- The district leadership reported that staff has collaborated with school leaders to institute several programs and strategies to retain staff. Examples of initiatives include offering competitive salaries and health benefits, establishing a wellness committee to take periodic surveys and oversee programs to ensure a positive work environment, and developing a transfer process to ensure that the most effective staff is assigned to schools and students where the need is greatest.

Impact Statement:

The district’s has established and implemented rigorous plans for recruiting, evaluating, and retaining staff. As a result, the schools in the district have personnel that effectively meet the needs of students and the broader community.

Tenet 1.2.: The district leadership has a comprehensive and explicit theory of action about school culture that communicates high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents.	Tenet Rating	E
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Debriefing Statement:

The district has a clearly developed theory of action focused on equity and access. District staff communicates the theory of action to all stakeholders and promotes a vision of high expectations for all students.

Strengths:

Overall Findings:

Guided by their vision of equity and access, the district leadership has identified three lenses that staff uses to guide school improvement initiatives. The lenses are high quality curriculum and instruction, systems thinking, and leadership and innovation.

Evidence/Information that lead to this Finding:

- The district leadership team has aligned district and Board of Education (BOE) goals with the theory of action including accountability targets. At the core of these goals and targets are the district’s high expectations for ensuring that there is a close alignment between professional practices and student outcomes, both academic and social. The district staff reported that the Administrators Leadership Team (ALT) meets monthly and the team members review goals and objectives to ensure continuous alignment with each school’s School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP). The district leadership has assigned school leaders to lead various district committees such as the recruitment and retention committee and the wellness committee, which focuses on moving the theory of action forward.
- The district leadership has an organized approach to communicating its theory of action including, televising BOE meetings, maintaining an open door policy for the community members, and conducting “listening tours” around the district where the district leader is accompanied by a BOE member. The district leadership presents a mid-year progress report to the BOE. In this report the district leader shares, for example, progress towards the BOE goals as outlined in the DCIP, progress made within the district committees such as the inclusion improvement team and the grade six transition planning team, and activities with “Schools of Promise” the collaboration with Syracuse University staff. The district leader shared that each member of the district cabinet serves on

various boards throughout the community including Community Round Table, Kiwanis, Knights of Columbus, and United Way. Participation on these boards provides staff with additional opportunities to share the district’s theory of action with community members, and to build stronger community partnerships. In addition, parents, as well as the broader community, are kept informed about school and district improvement efforts through monthly newsletters (mailed and on the website) as well as community meetings with the district leader and BOE members.

- District leaders reported that increased attention to data collection and analysis through a new software system is allowing staff to monitor individual student achievement more closely. By filtering and graphing a variety of data elements such as assessments, poverty, and homelessness, staff are adjusting instructional practices and addressing the theory of action related to higher expectations for all students.

Impact Statement:

The district staff effectively communicates the district’s theory of action to all stakeholders, which focuses all constituents’ attention on ensuring increased student achievement.

Tenet 1.3: The district is organized and allocates resources (financial, staff support, materials, etc.) in a way that aligns appropriate levels of support for schools based on the needs of the school community.	Tenet Rating	E
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Debriefing Statement: The district staff considers the needs of each school and provides resources equitably to schools in the district. As a result, schools receive levels of support to meet their students’ needs and to promote school improvement and student success.

Strengths:

Overall Findings:

Although financial resources are limited, the district staff has developed processes and strategies to ensure that available resources meet the needs of the school communities.

Evidence/Information that lead to this Finding:

- The district cabinet meets for two to three hours each week to focus on the district vision and how to best use available resources to achieve it. The team continually assesses available resources and re-deploys them where necessary. For example, district staff reported that they directed excess funds from a capital project towards upgrading technology identified as in need of improvement. The district staff’s review of the technology needs resulted in the creation of a five-year technology plan that staff will present to the BOE. The district staff shared that staff consistently seeks and secure grant funding to supplement the budget. To further the goal of creating a data-driven district, the district leadership used grant funds to hire a director of instruction to focus on the district goal of creating a data-driven district. The director’s role is to analyze data, meet with school staff, and provide ongoing PD to equip school staff to use available data to make instructional decisions in classrooms. The district staff also used the Innovation Zone grants to support co-teaching models, including common planning time for co-teachers, and on-going PD to

ensure equity and access, the district's theory of action, for all students.

- The district conducts surveys of building staff to identify needs and uses meetings with the ALT to discuss results and address issues within the buildings. Title I funding is monitored and used to support schools in high need. To further the focus on equal access, the district's student support team (SST) provides PD, using Innovation Zone funding, for school leaders, to address ways in which they can support the committees on special education (CSE).
- A curriculum and instruction team at the district level ensures that resources are equitably distributed to the buildings. One example is the movement of a half-time teaching assistant from one school to another to provide greater support to that building. In addition, the district staff shared that the district's "teacher-in-reserve" program allowed staff to quickly assign an additional fourth grade teacher at one of the Title I schools when a vacancy occurred. The district provides CCLS aligned materials and supplies as well as pays teachers to unpack the CCLS and align their lessons to the English Language Arts (ELA) modules. Although the district staff allocates supplies and building budgets based on student enrollment, the fiscal manager is aware of the district's vision and has processes in place for monitoring all requests from buildings to achieve that vision by reviewing line items and moving funds where possible to meet staff and student needs.

Impact Statement:

District staff has a comprehensive approach to acquiring, assessing, and allocating resources, which results in district and school staff effectively using resources to promote school improvement and student success.

Tenet 1.4: The district has a comprehensive plan to create, deliver and monitor professional development in all pertinent areas that is adaptive and tailored to the needs of individual schools.

Tenet Rating

E

Debriefing Statement: The district has an established plan to offer timely researched-based professional development. The plan includes a wide range of opportunities designed to meet the needs of staff and students.

Strengths:

Overall Findings:

The district is providing on-going PD from a wide variety of sources. The district staff ensures that all PD provided aligns to the district vision for school and academic improvement and promotes teacher effectiveness.

Evidence/Information that lead to this Finding:

- The district has comprehensive plans for both special and general education PD aligned to the district vision and goals. The priorities include data analysis, research-based practices, as well as implementation of instructional strategies that support students in meeting and exceeding levels of proficiency. The plan ensures a variety of support from district, school, and outside resources. The literacy coaches, the director of instruction, the chief information officer, and the SST all provide

training and support to staff throughout the district. The district staff also collaborates with coaches from the “Schools of Promise” program at Syracuse University, a program to support schools in need of improvement in Central New York to provide additional PD support.

- District staff conducts needs assessment surveys to identify PD priorities. The district staff circulates a calendar listing PD offerings from September through June among schools and staff. The calendar outlines PD activities by building, including staff meetings, inquiry team meetings, and assessment workshops. In addition, staff is encouraged to pursue additional PD opportunities outside the district. District leaders shared that they approve staff requests for training if the requests align with the district or school vision. Evidence from discussions as well a review of documents indicated that staff participate and engage in PD at high levels, which impacts positively on the district and schools’ leaders efforts to increase academic standards.
- SST members and literacy coaches offer follow-up support to staff. In addition, the director of instruction provides training focused on data-driven decision-making, and the coaches from the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) provide follow-up support in co-teaching and inclusion strategies. The collaboration with Syracuse University’s “Schools of Promise” provides on-going coaching, as well. These follow up services are adaptive and can be tailored to match and meet the differing needs of schools and staff.

Impact Statement:

The district has and implements a comprehensive PD plan throughout the district that addresses the needs of school staff and promotes increased teacher effectiveness.

Tenet 1.5: The district promotes a data-driven culture by providing strategies connected to best practices that all staff members and school communities are expected to be held accountable for implementing.

Tenet Rating

E

Debriefing Statement: The district embraces a data-driven culture and communicates expectations that all staff will use data to inform instructional decisions.

Strengths:

Overall Findings:

There is a data driven culture throughout the schools and the district office. District staff uses data to guide decision- making in their specific areas including fiscal management, human resources, and areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Evidence/Information that lead to this Finding:

- The district’s vision about the importance of data is widely communicated to all staff during meetings and presentations. Additionally, the vision is evidenced by actions taken by the district such as establishing a chief information officer position to oversee data collection and analysis at the district level. The district has adopted “Right Reason” technology for K-8 staff to use as a screening tool for students. The district staff reported that teachers use the available data to re-

group students and provide interventions for them through the Response to Intervention (RTI) process. Teachers also have access to grades and summative assessment data through School Tools, an electronic data system.

- The district staff sets high expectations for and support staff to use data to guide, inform, and drive instruction. Through PD procedures and protocols, and its close connections with schools, district staff identifies best practices that staff can adopt across schools in the district. As an example, the leadership team has recently received PD on “School Tools IQ” which provides another level of data disaggregation to support student learning and to improve academic achievement. Another example is that the district is currently supporting PD for teachers in how and when to adapt their pre- and post-assessments to better influence student learning and progress. An RTI audit was recently completed which identified ways to support teachers as they implement interventions for students. These practices reflect the district and school leaders’ commitment to identify student-learning needs and to help stakeholders adjust their teaching and learning strategies to promote increased student achievement.

Impact Statement:

The district staff’s continuous focus on the use of data ensures that practices of all stakeholders have access to data and can use data to examine school-wide practices to support increased student achievement.

This section provides a narrative that communicates how school communities perceive the support provided by the district.

<p>Tenet 2.1 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for the school leader to create, develop and nurture a school environment that is responsive to the needs of the entire school community.</p>	<p>Tenet Rating</p>	<p>E</p>
<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <p>Overall Finding:</p> <p>The district maintains communication with the school leaders through individualized and group meetings. All school leaders also attend the monthly district leadership team meetings. . The district leadership provides resources and supports to school leaders to promote the school’s vision. However, the district and school leaders have not ensured the collaborative development of SMART goals, or effective monitoring and evaluations of systems to ensure consistency in areas such as instructional practices.</p> <p>Evidence/Information that lead to this Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A school leader shared that he collaborates with personnel at the district office including the human resources officer for hiring and contractual issues, the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instructional support, the director of special education for help with alternative school placements. District office personnel have a rotating schedule in place to ensure representation at staff meetings in all the schools. All school leaders attend the monthly district leadership team meetings. During the district office interviews, staff reported that even though the school leaders are presently working without a collective bargaining agreement in place, they continue to work collaboratively 		

and collegially with district office personnel to benefit students.

- The district office provides select support options to meet some specific needs of the school community. For example, the director of instruction meets regularly with teachers to ensure teachers effective use of available data. She works exclusively with math and ELA in support of implementing the CCLS in those areas. District leaders assist the school leaders by conducting some teacher observations. Through grant funds, the district has provided an assistant principal who rotates around the district to serve as a substitute school leader. This added support in the main office provides school leaders relief from some management duties so they can visit more classrooms, conducting informal walk-throughs, and providing feedback to teachers. However, there is no consistent follow-up system in place to ensure that teacher practice and instruction meets the needs of all students. Based on classroom visits, reviewers concluded that there are inconsistent instructional practices across the school.
- One school leader shared that, while he did not fully collaborate with the district leaders to create his vision and goals, the school's vision and goals align with those of the district. The school leader stated that a representative group of all stakeholders did not create current school goals. Parents interviewed were not aware of, or clear about, the school's goals for improvement. The school leader and staff also report that overall involvement of family members in the school is minimal. The district has provided instructional coaches, funding for curricula that incorporates the ELA modules and data software to assist school staff in tracking student achievement. However, the supports provided by district leaders have not yet resulted in the development of a school environment that addresses the needs of the entire school community.

Impact Statement:

The district provides select support to the school leaders to implement the vision. However, the school and district leaders have not ensured involvement of stakeholders in the creation of the schools goals/vision or consistent instructional practices across the school, which limits opportunities for members of the school community to positively affect student achievement.

Recommendations:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Assist school leaders in creating a workgroup with representatives from all stakeholder groups to develop or update the school vision and SMART goals. Ensure school leaders establish protocols to monitor and evaluate all aspects of school goals.

Tenet 3.1 - Curriculum Development and Support: The district works collaboratively with the school(s) to ensure CCLS curriculum that provide 21st Century and College and Career Readiness skills in all content areas and provides fiscal and human resources for implementation.

Tenet Rating

D

Areas for Improvement

Overall Findings:

The district works collaboratively with the school communities to ensure curricula aligned to the CCLS in ELA and mathematics. However, the lack of teacher planning and collaboration across other subject and content areas creates uneven curricula and limits student exposure to the CCLS.

Evidence/Information that lead to this Finding:

- The curriculum, instruction, and assessment (CIA) team has established a short- and long-term plan to address the district’s priorities of data analysis, research-based practices, and meet and exceed proficiency with support, which includes measurement indicators, desired results or SMART goals, and key stakeholders. The district staff collaborated with stakeholders from the elementary, junior high and high schools to develop the “Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Plan – PK-12” as well as the companion “Inclusion Improvement Plan. A review of the “Team Members Agreement to Participate” document showed that each plan was created by a cross section of stakeholders, including district office personnel, building leaders, representative teachers, SST members, BOE members, parents, and a representative from a community-based organization (CBO). While an articulated plan for curriculum, instruction, and assessment has been developed, it has yet to be fully implemented.
- The district supports the director of instruction position as well as the newly created chief information officer position to provide data and technology support to school and district staff through grant funds. The district supports the work of the CIA team by providing stipends for the school improvement teams, funding continued curriculum work in ELA with the Springboard program and math with adaptation of the *Engage NY* modules, and purchasing “School Tool IQ,” the enhanced software program of School Tools that allows school and district leaders to monitor student data. During visits to classrooms, reviewers found inconsistent implementation of instruction aligned to the CCLS, especially in content areas other than ELA and math.
- The short- and long-term plans in place by the district outline a scheduled action plan for continuous review of curricula based on student data and alignment with the CCLS. For example, elementary and junior high schools state they are using “Springboard”, an ELA program that provides curriculum and assessments. However, IIT members observed that instruction in classrooms across ELA and other subjects did not consistently align to the CCLS. Additionally, IIT members observed that opportunities for student exposure to interdisciplinary curricula within and across grades and content areas are minimal. Teachers piloting of the *Engage NY* ELA modules only began this spring. District and school leaders state that, following the pilot, they plan to make an informed choice of ELA curricula that align with the CCLS. The district had planned to use Springboard Math, however, the district staff, school leaders, and teachers determined that the program is not fully align to the CCLS, and therefore decided to adopt the *Engage NY* math modules. While members of district staff

reported that they are gathering information to make a determination on which instructional programs to fully implement next school year, currently not all students receive rigorous instruction across all grades and content areas, as outline in the CCLS.

Impact Statement:

The lack of a fully implemented plan to ensure all curricula aligns to the CCLS results in limited opportunities for teachers to provide instruction that consistently aligns to the CCLS and challenges every student.

Recommendations:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Complete the process of curricula planning and implementation across all grades and content areas.
- Require all school leaders to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the curricula for alignment and fidelity through the classroom observation process.

Tenet 4.1 - Teacher Practices and Decisions: The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for teachers to develop strategies and practices and addresses effective planning and account for student data, needs, goals, and levels of engagement.

Tenet Rating

E

Strengths:

Overall Findings:

The district is focused on increasing student achievement and has processes, procedures, and long-term plans in place to support strategies and best practices in all classrooms.

Evidence/Information that lead to this Finding:

- Discussions with school leaders indicate that the district and schools make decisions, based on observations, data, and continuous dialogue, on PD offerings that support increased teacher effectiveness. Using School Tools and School Tools IQ school leaders, in conjunction with district staff, track student data and identify areas in need of improvement. Teams are in place at each school including data inquiry teams, which meet monthly to review needs and make recommendations on continued PD.
- School leaders state that the district provides multiple opportunities and supports for staff to better understand and utilize best practices. These include using student data to guide instruction, differentiating by student needs, supporting the co-teaching model, and collaborating through weekly department meetings in the junior high school. Evidence from discussions with district staff and teachers indicate that the district staff used Leadership and Innovation Zone funding to provide opportunities for teachers to have conversations about poverty, learn how to write behavior plans, review the ELA modules, examine the algebra curriculum, attend BOCES workshops, and become more familiar with the Springboard program.

- The district has provided a substitute assistant principal who rotates among the schools each week, thereby freeing up the school leader to visit classrooms and focus on increasing his/her role as instructional leader rather than building manager. School leaders state they are using staff meetings as PD opportunities to increase teacher effectiveness. In addition, teachers receive on-going support from the director of instruction who provides staff strategies for data analysis and subsequent instructional practices to target challenges. The district leader shared that the district plans Superintendent’s conference days to increase teacher awareness of best practices, such as co-teaching and differentiated instruction.

Impact Statement:

The district staff and school leaders work collaboratively to provide teachers follow-up support to increase their pedagogical knowledge, which enhances teachers’ skills in providing rigorous instruction for their students.

Tenet 5.1 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health: The district creates policy and works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and resources that positively support students’ social and emotional developmental health.

Tenet Rating

D

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Findings:

The district does not have a specific policy that addresses its role in, or commitment to, supporting the social and emotional developmental health of all students. The district provides resources, both internally and through collaboration with outside agencies, to support the social and emotional developmental health of some of the students whose behaviors interfere with their academic progress. However, there is limited evidence of how the district collaborates with these agencies to provide PD for staff.

Evidence/Information that lead to this Finding:

- The district provides components of training and support for staff concerning student social and emotional developmental health. School leaders and staff state that School Resource Officers (SROs) provide lessons about suicide prevention and anti-bullying, including cyber-bullying, to students and staff. The district created a school counseling advisory board to support the “Comprehensive School Counseling Services Plan K-12”. District and school leaders report that student support teams (SST) in the schools consist of guidance counselors, social workers, and school psychologists, although they primarily provide direct and support services to students, and only incidental training to staff. School staff state that they hold monthly at-risk/attendance meetings at each building. At the meetings, staff members discuss students’ academic progress and behaviors to develop action plans if necessary. Although leaders and staff state that informal training occurs through these team meetings, there are very few intentional PD opportunities provided by the district to increase staff awareness, knowledge, or skills in addressing the range of student social and emotional developmental health needs leading to academic success.
- On-going support is offered by the SST to the school leaders and teachers in the form of PD around protocols in place for processes such as crisis management, information and strategies to be used for challenges such as ADHD, autism, suicide, sexual abuse, and bullying. In addition, the SST

members attend at-risk/attendance meetings in each school building to ensure action plans are appropriate and to make connections with outside agencies as needed including, Child Protective Services (CPS). While community agencies, especially through “Single Point of Access”, offer mental health services to students, for example, there is little evidence that these agencies provide PD to school and district staff or that they collaborate with the district and school leaders in the development of the overall PD plan for staff.

Impact Statement:

School staff has the benefit of on-going district and school level support from SSTs. However, the lack of a formal district-wide policy that includes PD to build staff capacity to consistently address social and emotional developmental health reduces opportunities for student to receive supports that address their needs.

Recommendations:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Develop a district policy defining the district’s responsibility to provide resources to each school so that there is positive support for the social and emotional developmental health of all students relative to academic success. Include the district’s intent to partner with community organizations to deliver PD opportunities so that all district staff understand their roles in addressing student needs.
- Collaborate with school and community individuals and organizations to provide follow-up support to ensure that staff implements strategies designed to meet all student needs.

Tenet 6.1 - Family and Community Engagement: The district has a comprehensive family and community engagement strategic plan that states the expectations around creating and sustaining a welcoming environment for families, reciprocal communication, and establishing partnerships with community organizations and families.

Tenet Rating

D

Area For Improvement:

Overall Findings:

The district staff uses a variety of strategies to engage families in participating in the school and district to support their child’s education. However, the district lacks a specific policy that describes the district’s commitment to ensure consistent protocols and procedures to engage families across all schools.

Evidence/Information that lead to this Finding:

- The district supports programs that schools have developed including “Book and Breakfast” during which parents attend an early morning program and read to the children, quarterly parent workshops at the Title I schools, and eighth grade parent night where families can meet with counselors to plan a schedule together for students about to enter high school. School staff members shared that save for the grade eight high school orientation program, that family attendance at most of the school-sponsored events is low. Although few family members engage in school activities, the Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO) is active in some schools. Some family

members have participated in the SCEP teams and some attend team meetings to understand what is being taught and to better support their child. School staff members stated that they are aware that family and community engagement is valued by the district, although they are unaware of a district policy or incentives for schools to adopt a district policy.

- The district communicates with families through newsletters, the district website, and interim/report cards. The district staff tries to increase family involvement by holding superintendent community engagement meetings, monthly meetings of the district parent council, and ensuring that parents are represented on the elementary math curriculum review team as well as the team that developed the inclusion improvement plan. The district leader has instituted “listening tours” during which she visits places around the community, with a BOE member, to hear what community members want to share about the district. District-wide meetings and BOE meetings are held at different schools throughout the district to encourage and facilitate community engagement. Written communication is in English since English is the primary language of all families in the district. However, family members interviewed by the IIT shared that communication between home and school does not clarify school goals, academic expectations, or the role that families may play in helping children meet the expectations. Although school staff members reported that the district makes school and student data available to families by electronic means, not all families can access the electronic systems or know how to access the data. Additionally, the IIT found limited evidence of monitoring or evaluation of communication strategies at the district or school levels.
- The district and, in particular, the SST have numerous relationships with community agencies throughout Cayuga County. Partnerships with agencies such as Cayuga County Community Health Network, Health and Human Services Department, Child Family Clinic Plus, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Partnership for Results aids SSTs in their efforts to help guide students to making positive choices. However, the partnerships focus on limited areas of student support and do not address the needs of all families. For example, school staff and families interviewed by the IIT reported that some families could not access school events and resources because of limited or no transportation. In addition, school staff shared that district and school partnerships have not resulted in PD for staff or family members focused on developing and maintaining reciprocal relationships to support student learning.

Impact Statement:

The district and schools have initiated strategies promote family engagement; however, the lack of focus policy to address family involvement results in inconsistent outreach to families and low family participation in student learning and growth.

Recommendations:

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Develop a policy that describes the district’s commitment to engage families in reciprocal partnerships to improve student achievement.
- Provide incentives to schools for the adoption of uniform strategies, practices, and protocols that

are implemented with fidelity.

- Monitor and evaluate the success and effectiveness of the strategies and practices.