



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	180300010000
District	Batavia City School District
District Address	260 State Street, Batavia, New York 14020
Superintendent	Christopher J. Dailey
Date(s) of Review	6 June 2014
Schools Discussed in this Report	Followed Batavia MS Review

District Information Sheet											
District Grade Configuration	PK - 12	Total Student Enrollment	2405	Title 1 Population	11.4%	Attendance Rate	95%				
Free Lunch	44%	Reduced Lunch	10%	Student Sustainability	90.9%	Limited English Proficient	<1%	Students with Disabilities	12.1%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	Black or African American	6.7%	Hispanic or Latino	6.3%	Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	<1%	White	76.8%	Multi-racial	9.0%
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/Appointed to District	2	Number of Deputy Superintendents	0	Average Years Dep. Superintendents in Role in the District	0	# of Directors of Programs	4				
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate in District	0	% Teaching Out of Certification in District	1	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp. in District	3	Average Teacher Absences in District	6.79				
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
District in Good Standing		Focus District	X	Number of Focus School Identified by District	1	Number of SIG Recipient Schools	1	Number of Schools in Status	0		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	30%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	23%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	91%	4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	84%	6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	77%		

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
	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
	Economically Disadvantaged		All Students
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics			
	American Indian or Alaska Native	X	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) 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	
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 1: EFFECTIVE		E		

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 – Findings, Evidence, Impact and Recommendations:

<p>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.</p>	<p>Overall Tenet Rating</p>	<p>E</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 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.</p>	<p>Tenet Rating</p>	<p>E</p>

Debriefing Statement: The district leader has developed a systematic, comprehensive approach to ensure that schools hire and retain high quality personnel that possess the skills to effectively address student needs. Students, parents, and teachers in addition to administrators and district leaders are part of the interviewing process. Professional development (PD) opportunities provide support for school leaders to understand staff evaluation through classroom observations and feedback to improve instructional practices. The district employs a strategy of mentoring, orientation, and continuing PD to retain new staff. The process resulted in retention of staff and successful hiring of new personnel to meet the needs of the student population.

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

The district leader has implemented effective strategies to recruit and sustain quality staff that are prepared to and provide a range of professional development strategies for the overall improvement of the district and schools.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The existing practices for recruiting and sustaining high quality staff were reviewed and refined a few years ago to ensure they were functioning effectively and were serving the purpose well. The district leader concluded that on reflection the district has recruited quality teachers who are making a difference in classrooms.
- There is a formal mentoring policy in operation to support and ensure quality. New mentors are trained during the summer, ready to support newly appointed staff. This ensures that the district has a good retention rate among its staff.
- The district system of Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) is based upon the Kim Marshall Book. The district leader worked with Unions to discuss the move from traditional observations to mini-observations, as a more effective way of monitoring the quality of teachers. The APPR plan was developed and shared with teachers. In response, 88 percent of teaching staff accepted the plan, which has been introduced positively in all schools across the district. This was evidenced in the Middle School review. To support the implementation, there has been a dialogue with a school leaders and communication with teachers who have been provided with folders and trained in the use of eDoctrina. This technological package is helping teachers improve the

gathering of evidence and self-evaluation. Another way the district has supported this initiative is through the superintendent meeting regularly with the high school leader, who is new in his post. The focus of these meetings has been the use and challenges presented by eDoctrina and how teachers are coping with the package to provide appropriate targeted support for the school.

- The APPR system is meant to flag professional conversations about instruction. The district leader shared the challenges experienced in the efforts to make feedback rigorous. This was evidenced in the Middle School practice, where the documented examples illustrated the focus upon professional evaluation through the criteria, rather than the quality of instructional practice.
- A new executive director, qualified in curriculum and instruction (EDC&I) and experienced in the use of data to drive improvement, was appointed in February 2014. The executive director has the responsibility to support schools through significant changes to the curriculum, teaching, and learning in order to strengthen the district team and expand the skill base of the district leaders.
- The district leader attends weekly district management meetings. Through these, he has been able to reach out to the Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to Monroe district 1 and 2 as well as to school leaders. Batavia City School District (BCSD) belongs to a cluster of four districts and for the first time with the appointment of the EDC&I and the district’s own PD catalogue has been produced to offer quality curriculum development over the summer recess and the year ahead. A growing number of applications have already been received and the interest in this new service is planned to improve the quality of curriculum and instruction.

Impact Statement:

Because of the systematic recruitment strategies offered by the district, appointments are made that ensure teachers display the quality and expertise to support effective learning and achievement

Statement of Practice 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

Debriefing Statement:

The district has developed a comprehensive theory of action that includes high expectations for instructional practices that support high student outcomes. The theory of action is widely communicated to all stakeholders through a variety of electronic and traditional media methods. The clear, strategic leadership has resulted in improved student achievement and progress. In the last two years, the school district has made gains in comparison to other small city school districts in State testing in math and English language arts (ELA) in grades three through eight, Regents examinations, and improved graduation rates.

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

The district has developed a vision and mission that clearly communicate high expectations to school leaders, teachers, staff, parents, and students about the importance of rigorous teaching and learning in order to increase student achievement. That vision is shared across the district team and the new appointments provide further opportunities for supporting school improvement.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding: *(Note: the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) gathered evidence from a review of documents and interviews with district leaders, principals, staff, parents, and students.)*

- The superintendent was involved in the mission/ vision discussions that took place with schools. This process was instrumental in the introduction of “Take Care of BCSD” slogan, which now appears on all paperwork sent out from the district office.
- Ways of publicizing the district have evolved through the Facebook, Twitter, and the district website. The district leader is trying to encourage Board of Education members to hit on Facebook. These are a few of the creative ways and strategies in use to communicate the vision and share the purpose with all district stakeholders.
- A management retreat is organized annually as a way of reaching out to school leaders. The leader of the Middle School spoke very positively of this practice and the positive impact it has on school leaders at the end of the academic year. The members of the Board also attend an outreach and, finally, the district organizes a meeting with teachers and school leaders to communicate the vision for future plans.
- Empathy is a feature of the community and social service groups that serve the district. The district is successful in keeping the special education children in Batavian schools. There are four classrooms to facilitate the education of students with disabilities in the high school and students travel from other districts because of the positive ethos generated by district policy.
- The emphasis district-wide is on the development of systems that operate from a relational point of view. Goals are set and the process involves a range of stakeholders including the district leader, the management team, school leaders, and teachers. Everyone has a role to play; the focus is on the positive and this is not always easy to achieve. One example of generating a positive atmosphere was when the district administration team served the teachers ice cream sodas at the last faculty meeting of 2013, to say thank you for the work that had been done to support the changes, and teachers have expressed their appreciation of this.

Impact Statement:

Because of the district’s systems to promote and embed a clear vision and mission district-wide, high expectations have been set that promote a sense of purpose through the relationships established with school

leaders and teachers. Consequently, this is making a difference in improving achievement and student success.

Statement of Practice 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

Debriefing Statement: Structures and processes for allocating sufficient resources across the district to respond to the needs of the school communities have been implemented. Additional financial resources are acquired through grants to support specific projects that address targeted student, staff, and family needs. As a result, resources in the district are effectively administered to promote school improvement and success.

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

Careful, strategic planning has managed to increase the reserves to support school funding to a significant amount. This has been successful in supporting the achievement of school and district improvement, through the economic downturn, by the acquisition of grants to support specific projects that target family and staffing needs in order to increase student achievement.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding: *(Note: the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) gathered evidence from a review of documents and interviews with district leaders, principals, staff, parents, and students.)*

- The district leadership structure is new and is already having impact on school improvement. The director of data and assessment is being rolled into the EDC&I's role when the former retires at the end of term. This is creating a very positive team with a good mix of mutually supportive skills. The management team supports the decision making for the district. The district leader works from informed decisions and is proactive in championing the vision, mission and goals of the district.
- The leaders of the middle school, working in collaboration with the district leaders have developed a strategic plan for school improvement across all grades. However, the more specific need for the district is to improve academic achievement in the middle school, designated as a Focus School by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). According to documents provided by the district, out of 78 small city school districts in New York State (NYS), Batavia has made considerable gains in achievement compared to the other small city school districts. In addition, of 22 schools in local BOCES, have moved from 19 to 12 based upon the outcomes from 3-8 ELA and math assessments in grades three through eight. School leaders are invited to attend and discuss their needs at the scheduled budget meetings that are held, in October of each year. The EDC&I and her team are influential in allocating and distributing resources according to need through their monitoring program across schools. The district leadership team (DLT) has tried to be proactive in predicting need from the changing population of the district it serves. Successful strategic planning has allowed the district to sustain the workforce through good fiscal management, which allows for a reserve to buffer financial difficulties.

- Funds are allocated across the district based on student enrollment and school based needs. The director of special education works with the school leaders to review teacher population and student need. Re-organization and consolidation have had a significant impact across the district and the leader has worked hard, for the past eighteen months, to improve the district. Management meetings underpin this support. The leader’s background as an administrator, then assistant superintendent, and now a superintendent enables him to bring experiential knowledge to the process.
- The interview with the business administrator confirmed that there are structures to assist the fair deployment of resources to ensure that the requests of the school leaders are met. The budget from the previous year is copied and used by school leaders as a financial road map on which to predict spending. New administrators, such as the high school leader, review the past five year budget allocations to identify spending trends and to request for the new fiscal year. The business administrator and district leader meet with school leaders to determine their staffing needs. Consolidation affected this, and mistakes were made, but resulted in a saving of over a million dollars in the short term.
- The district maintains approximately 230 staff. Retirement incentives offered during the first and second year of employment facilitates a 20 percent turnover of staff. The tax rate also supports staff retention. District fiscal policy is flexible and facilitates the use of these reserves in a managed way. More money has been invested to maximize BOCES aid and support the development of instruction. Confirmed deviation from normal spending can occur through parent groups supporting funding.

Impact Statement:

The strategic approach of the district has enabled good fiscal management to sustain the workforce. Carefully managed approach to allocating resources across the district and collaborative planning resulted in school improvement and increased student achievement.

Statement of Practice 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	D
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Debriefing Statement: The district does not have a formalized PD plan, but is in the process of developing a calendar for the 2014-15 school year. PD is offered through a combination of building efforts, district-wide opportunities, BOCES support, and other specific training programs. However, the focus of the PD is more of a quick fix, serving only to fill gaps in a non-coherent way. As a result, the needs of students are not met across all schools.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

Tithe newly restructured DLT is currently working on creating a PD plan using evidence form previously

constructed documents. Efforts are being made to create partnership between the PD team and the instructional team to help build capacity between instructional coaches, teacher leaders, and school and district leaders toward improving the quality of instruction at the school levels. The problems of poor attendance and negative perceptions are being addressed to create more desirable changes toward school improvement.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding: *(Note: the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) gathered evidence from a review of documents and interviews with district leaders, principals, staff, parents, and students.)*

- The PD plan expired in 2012. While re-structuring of the DLT has been undertaken, the district has sensibly used the District Schools Comprehensive Improvement Plans (DSCIP) and the School Comprehensive Education Plans (SCEP) to drive what has been happening. The EDC&I focuses upon data in partnership with the district to determine decisions about PD. The summer catalogue has been produced to drive what will happen during next school year. The DLT intends to reflect upon the knowledge gathered over the summer experiences through the exit surveys to maximize resources.
- There is also a priority to focus upon grades five to six transition. There is the opportunity to track this through the Carnegie technology. Code X trainers are also booked to show teachers what the ELA would look like if the pairing grades were undertaken linking 1:2, 3:4, 5:6 and 7:8. The future priority is to introduce academic leveling of standards from kindergarten through grade eight. To support this drive, the EDC&I is running classes on “Data Wise” to inform, support, and to provide the structures to help encourage a climate where data-driven instruction (DDI) thrives. This increased emphasis upon data is a priority in order to target students who are outside the sphere of success.
- The focus of the Professional Development Plan (PDP) has been to fill the gaps. To support this work a PD committee was established. An audit of teacher views in relation to current practice was undertaken. Teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) are involved. The plan is to facilitate the partnership of the instructional Team (IT) and the PD Team working together.
- Allocated funding is to be used to provide release time for the days out of the classroom. Some teachers this year have been out of the classroom up to 17 days. The EDC&I are in the process of building relationships with staff minimize the disruption of instruction and improve teacher attendance.
- One of the key elements of support offered through the part-time district role is through coaching the teaching of reading, working with teachers one-to-one and using data to highlight best practice. This role started in January 2013 and is still in the developmental stages despite some observed progress. Additional support for the implemented changes is listed as one of the PDP goals to achieve consistency across the district and customize the use of eDoctrina in schools. Through this work, the plan is to link the data back to the APPR system to make it more effective.

Impact Statement:

Although a PDP has not been finalized, priorities have been set to shape and drive future instructional practice through strategic, targeted support and funding. The new DLT is determined in its drive to improve current practice through changing mindsets of existing staff, cultivating enthusiasm for change through building the skills of key personnel to act as catalysts in the process. However, this targeted PD is one step in the plan to promote school improvement and student success. The absence of a PD plan to drive instructional practices result in low expectations for teacher effectiveness and a decrease in student academic achievement.

Recommendation:

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

- Finalize the PDP working towards the goals and priorities strategically to support improvement in instructional practice and the focus upon multiple points of access.
- Target PD to build upon strengths and eliminate weaknesses in practice to support the needs of all students by moving away from a “one size fits all” didactic approach to more effectively facilitating learning for all groups of students through planned differentiation.

Statement of Practice 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

D

Debriefing Statement: The district leadership team has upgraded the district-wide data collection and management systems. Expectations for how data is to be used by staff members to support student learning have been communicated throughout the district data teams have been established in each school. The teams are learning how to use data to identify needs and inform shifts in instruction as well as associated practices, and decision-making. However, school and teacher progress in meeting the expectation varies. As a result, a data driven culture (DDI) is still in the developmental stage and expectations for student achievement are not realized.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district is pushing for the development of a DDI culture in schools. Expectations for the effective use of data in improving curriculum, teaching, and learning have been communicated district-wide, but the vision is not yet embedded consistently because some teachers remain resistant to change and are slow to develop the skills to use data in planning instruction.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding: *(Note: the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) gathered evidence from a review of documents and interviews with district leaders, principals, staff, parents, and students.*

- The district leader uses research as a basis for focusing on DDI in schools. The district aims to

encourage the use of individual learning plans for all groups of abilities. The work to date has not generated a consistent vision about using data to drive instruction. Also the use of the academic intervention services (AIS) through monitoring is highlighted as an area for future focus to ensure partnerships develop between AIS and general classroom teachers to maximize the use of time and instruction.

- There are positive signs of greater consistency in some aspects including the use of learning targets, focus upon exit/ entry strategies, and the implementation of the APPR initiative across the district. These strategies are beginning to shape instruction, but are not yet driving the quality of instruction in meeting the needs of all students. As an indicator of improvement, the district encouraged schools to support the lowest readers through a Read 180 program last year and all students passed the English assessments for the year. Another measured success involves the physics teacher at the high school who uses clickers to drive next steps in student learning. Using technology, this teacher differentiates instruction and uses Google docs nightly to process the targets for the next day's learning.
- Future district priorities focus upon accountability of teachers through monitoring and removing teachers that are not adapting to change. In addition, the district has shown leadership in moving from offering teachers the choice of following the district planning tool to enforcing this practice. The district plans to implement uniform templates that are common to all and to promote the use of eDoctrina district-wide with fidelity. This is to support the drive to build consistency in the quality of instructional practice for all students.
- The EDC&I has devised a plan to introduce spreadsheets of student data through the current initiatives. The idea is to establish credible data points for students throughout their educational lives. This structure would allow progress to be tracked and interventions to be targeted in the long term.
- Teachers are requesting time to score and calibrate together and the district plans to ensure they have the skills to use the time well through targeted PD. In addition, with more analysis of behavioral data is necessary to understand the trends and patterns in order to provide appropriate support and proactive interventions.
- Improvement in the instructional practice has been highlighted in the elementary schools through the scrutiny of student response to target scaffolding and differentiated support. In addition the audit, observation, discussion, planning and support through coaching offered by the special education school improvement specialist (SEIS) initiative provides an exemplar of practice to drive future improvement.

Impact Statement:

The district has initiated plans to establish a DDI culture across the district. Expectations have been shared and

the outcomes monitored of existing practice in the use of DDI. Targeted PD is planned to ensure consistent district-wide implementation of the priorities identified. However, the work to date has not generated a consistent vision about using data to drive instruction. As a result, there is insufficient use data to monitor student progress and improve the academic achievement of all students.

Recommendation:

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

- Continue to develop proven strategies to support all teachers in using data to promote the highest achievement possible for individuals and all subgroups.
- Provide more training for teachers to understand how the using data that reflect the cultural and social differences of their students impact upon their learning;
- Analyze behavioral data to determine the current trends and patterns emerging from the referrals in schools, both academic and behavioral to target effective ways of supporting the needs of students and their families.

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

<p>Statement of Practice 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>
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Strengths:

Overall Finding:

The district leader has developed strong relationships with school leaders based upon clear communication and an understanding of the support they require. The administrative management team meets weekly to share information and agree on appropriate intervention to support schools, their leaders, students, and their families. These practices reflect the ways in which the district is effectively collaborating with its school leaders to meet the needs of the school.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding: *(Note: the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) gathered evidence from a review of documents and interviews with district leaders, principals, staff, parents, and students.*

- Batavia has an effective and cohesive leadership team. . As a team, they share the same vision and purpose, which builds capacity for the vision to grow. The school leader finds the district leader very communicative, collaborative, and supportive. This district’s policy is to invite the administrative team to the district summer retreat. The topics studied include books, discussion topics, and PD such as DDI, CCLS, and APPR observations.

- The district has established an instructional leadership team, a technology committee, a PD committee, an APPR committee, inclusive interview processes, regular meetings with union leadership in the school buildings, and participation in numerous charity events in order to provide strategic support for school leaders and their communities.
- The district vision and goals are created at the administrative team retreat. These are then shared with the Board of Education (BOE) during their retreat for review and revision. The outcomes are then revisited with the administrative team through their meeting, and then school leaders take the vision and goals back to the staff in the school. This collaborative process facilitates communication and a shared understanding of purpose between the district and school leaders.
- All committees work to improve the outcomes for students. The strategic plans are having an impact. The district leader is aware that they have not yet harnessed the student voice, but there is a plan to do so in the future.
- The interview with the Director of Special and Alternative Education (DoS&AE) confirmed that conversations with school leaders occur daily. Through this department, the district targets the support for students with disabilities who are provided Tier 2 and a Tier 3 level of intervention. The DoS&AE works with coaches and with schools to guide them into positive approaches.
- The strategic approaches of the district have resulted in the maintained attendance of students in district schools rather than losing them to other institutions outside the district.

Impact Statement:

The district works closely with school leaders to strategically support and monitor the needs of school and the school community. This on-going support is making a difference in school, which is facilitating more successful outcomes for students and families

Statement of Practice 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

E

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

The district is committed to the implementation of an effective curriculum district-wide aligned to CCLS that offers opportunities for links to be created across grades and disciplines. To achieve this goal, the district works collaboratively and strategically with school staff to support curriculum development and provide necessary resources so that students are enabled to achieve greater success.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding: *(Note: the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) gathered evidence from a review of documents and interviews with district leaders, principals, staff, parents, and students.*

- School leaders reported that the district has hired an Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction (EDC&I) to support the implementation of the CCLS curriculum to improve the quality of instructional practice. School leaders confirm that a common template has been designed for unit and lesson planning to encourage teachers to use data to modify instruction and offer multiple points of access for students.
- School leaders and teachers confirm that the summer PD catalogue has already been produced offering opportunities for teachers to focus on CCLS and include modeling lessons that are aligned to CCLS. To support the training the district has purchased materials to support CCLS implementation
- Teachers stated that the district sent Middle School staff to training before involving teachers in the selection of CCLS curricular programs. Although the curriculum series selected by the teachers was a significant financial investment, the district purchased the series and continues to provide training and coaching in its implementation. District leaders are monitoring the implementation of the CCLS-aligned curricula and modules. The administrative team works well as a curricula monitoring and evaluating body at the elementary level, although the teams do not work as well at the middle school and high school level. School leaders report that resources are managed well at a district level, but address the lack of fidelity as a priority for the PD offered through the catalogue this summer.
- To effect change more successfully, school leaders report that the district plans to target different areas relating to existing school response to the CCLS implementation. The long-term plan for each building will be the point of reference to drive conversations and reviews to determine improvement. For example, plans are in place to link teachers' planning in math and music to overcome barriers between subjects and create cross-curricula opportunities through planning.

Impact Statement:

The district is effectively implementing a curriculum that is aligned to CCLS. In addition, structures are in place to promote a culture that is focused upon and guided by data in order to modify instruction to meet the needs of all students, and enriching curricular experiences for all.

Statement of Practice 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

D

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

There has been resistance from teachers to adopt rigorous planning practices that use data and offer multiple points of access for students. PD is offered that is geared to fill the gaps in school practice, but the outcomes are not consistently applied district-wide. Consequently, there is limited impact from the district initiatives on student learning outcomes.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding: *(Note: the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) gathered evidence from a review of documents and interviews with district leaders, principals, staff, parents, and students.*

- School leaders and teachers confirm that the district included teachers in the decision-making for curricular alignment to CCLS. This was supported through the district providing training in the teacher-selected Code X series. In addition, a comprehensive data collection program has been purchased and installed by the district to capture, store, and sort data. School leaders report that the district has established school data teams in each school for reviewing student work in order to inform teacher practice. The meeting observed through the Middle School review offered opportunities for teachers and AP to discuss student responses to work in general terms, but no reference was made to individual or subgroup data to establish opportunities for multiple points of access for students with differing abilities.
- Teachers stated that the district has produced and implemented a district-wide unit and lesson plan template. For this year, teachers have been given the choice to follow it or not. This is prioritized to change over the summer through the training offered by the PD catalogue. The management team discusses what teachers need, based on student scores and PD that the teachers attend. To inform these meetings, school leaders submit student and school data to the district office on a monthly basis.
- Since the appointment of the EDC&I, the district has prioritized changes in approach for the coming academic year. There has been an audit meeting to determine the gaps, which exist in current practice. School leaders report that exemplars from school practice have been gathered that show the impact of the skills strand upon the writing component. It is planned that this is to be integrated. The district has also utilized math coaches in every building. That keeps the communication active to inform the district about teacher difficulties. This is helping to cascade information and support. The teachers have now used the math modules at kindergarten through grade five with fidelity and this has had positive impact on teachers' confidence and students' learning.

Impact Statement:

Because the monitoring and evaluation of PD has not been sufficiently rigorous, changes to the curriculum have not been made with fidelity. Past practices in PD whereby teachers could choose whether to attend or not have limited the improvement of instructional practices and student outcomes.

Recommendation:

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

- Ensure that teachers and school leaders understand the difference between rigor and difficulty by establishing teacher plans that are effective tools in supporting learning of all subgroups;
- Encourage school leaders to develop learning climates where all stakeholders have the opportunity to learn and progress;
- Encourage and develop a culture of self-reflection to drive improvement by planning strategically for the short and long term through goal setting at every level.

Statement of Practice 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
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Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district serves a population that is changing in character and families are displaying needs that require more support from social workers and counselors. The district offers PD and support for staff, but the pace of change is slow. As a result, in a growing numbers of cases, student social and emotional developmental health needs are not always met.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding: *(Note: the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) gathered evidence from a review of documents and interviews with district leaders, principals, staff, parents, and students.*

- School leaders report that the district is always supportive, and seeks to meet school leaders’ recommendations. District policy requires school leaders to provide regular updates on the needs for school safety and discipline. Additional support has also been provided through the partnership with many external resources facilitated by the district’s special education director. The district and school rely increasingly on the mental health support group, because of the growing numbers of cases district-wide.
- The IS together with the guidance counselors provide training to all new teachers related to the social and emotional developmental health needs of students. In addition, the grant written by the district is to facilitate a social worker for every school building. Furthermore, the district leader has a long-term goal to provide an adult learning center for the community.

- School leaders and support staff noted that the district sponsored training relative to the Olweus anti-bullying and Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) programs three years ago. Following its implementation, the administrators were charged with the responsibility to monitor the impact of the initiative.
- The district does provide at least 67 different clubs and activity groups for students. For example, they have an orchestra and band and a range of sports teams. Data shows that 58 percent of students engage in music, 70 percent engage with clubs and 68 percent in sports.

Impact Statement:

The district has a range of strategies that it encourages staff to use to support students’ social and emotional developmental health. However, teachers do not always understand individual student need or appropriate ways of supporting this. As a result, student emotional and behavioral needs are not always met and this has an impact on their success as learners.

Recommendation:

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 supported by a district-wide PD plan for 2014-2015 with clear success criteria to determine progress and impact of individual and groups of students;
- Ensure district policies appropriately support student emotional and behavioral health;
- Ensure the plans for developing the data points and tracking of students across the system is established and embedded.

Statement of Practice 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

E

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

The district has a range of policies and structures that have been implemented to encourage families to engage with the schools that their children attend. The district communication strategy is creative and varied, and provides a range of choices for parents.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding: *(Note: the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) gathered evidence from a review of documents and interviews with district leaders, principals, staff, parents, and*

students.

- School leaders state that the district has supported school initiatives to engage families by providing stipends for teachers, refreshments, and childcare. In addition, the district website is able to translate news into community-relevant language through the support of University of Buffalo. Data shows that ELL students and families are increasing in number and, in response, the district has hired another English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher to support students with new languages.
- Surveys of parents, students, and teachers are purchased, administered, and processed by the district but limited responses resulted in data that is not statistically sound.
- School leaders informed reviewers that the district has partnered with community agencies such as United Way to provide supports for students and families such as the backpack program. Through this initiative, students are sent home with backpacks filled with supplies and food. Another partnership with 'Habitat for Humanity' builds homes for families in need of housing.
- School leaders state that communities utilize school buildings all the time. When asked, families shared that what prevented them from attending school functions, was childcare. In response, the district now provides funding for schools to offer baby-sitting services through the use student volunteers and retirees. Face book and Twitter have been popular vehicles for communication. Robo calls also get out the message. Local service organizations are involved in the schools. Considering home-school partnerships of critical importance in student success, outreach to "hard to reach families" is an area that district leader wants to improve.

Impact Statement:

Although the district has utilized a range of initiatives to support and engage with families and the community, numbers responding on a regular basis are not large and this is still a priority for future improvement. Partnerships with community providers are wide ranging and make a difference to the families supported. The district funds family involvement and outreach and is responsive to the views of its community. In many ways, the district is effectively cultivating relationships to support the community it serves.