



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

---

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



<b>BEDS Code</b>	590501060000
<b>District</b>	Fallsburg Central School District
<b>District Address</b>	115 Brickman Road, Fallsburg, NY 12733
<b>Superintendent</b>	Ivan J. Katz
<b>Date(s) of Review</b>	May 6, 2014
<b>Schools Discussed in this Report</b>	Benjamin Cosor Elementary School

District Information Sheet											
District Grade Configuration	PreK-12	Total Student Enrollment	1371	Title 1 Population	56%	Attendance Rate	96%				
Free Lunch	51%	Reduced Lunch	5%	Student Sustainability	87%	Limited English Proficient	9%	Students with Disabilities	15%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	Black or African American	11%	Hispanic or Latino	41%	Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	2%	White	41%	Multi-racial	5%
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/Appointed to District	8	Number of Deputy Superintendents	1	Average Years Dep. Superintendents in Role in the District	8	# of Directors of Programs	4				
% 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	14%	Average Teacher Absences in District	7/day				
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
District in Good Standing		Focus District	x	Number of Focus School Identified by District	2	Number of SIG Recipient Schools	2	Number of Schools in Status	2		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	21%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	25%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	74%	4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	84%	6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	75%		

<b>Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA</b>			
	American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American
X	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
	White		Multi-racial
X	Students with Disabilities	X	Limited English Proficient
X	Economically Disadvantaged		All Students
<b>Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics</b>			
	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	X	Limited English Proficient
	Economically Disadvantaged		All Students
<b>Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science</b>			
	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
<b>Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective</b>			
X	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	
	<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 1:</b>			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		X		

	effective planning and account for student data, needs, goals, and levels of engagement.				
<b>Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health:</b> 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	
<b>Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement:</b> 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><b>Tenet 1 - District Leadership and Capacity:</b> 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><b>Overall Tenet Rating</b></p>	<p><b>D</b></p>
<p><b>Statement of Practice 1.1:</b> 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><b>Tenet Rating</b></p>	<p><b>D</b></p>
<p><b><u>Debriefing Statement:</u></b> While the district has enhanced its systems for recruiting staff, it is in the process of refining its evaluation system. As a result, the schools do not consistently have staff members who effectively address student needs.</p> <p><b><u>Areas for Improvement:</u></b></p> <p><b>Overall Finding:</b> The district has implemented processes to improve the hiring of high-quality staff. Further, the district is modifying its evaluation process to focus more on staff development and less on compliance. The district continues to enhance its professional development (PD) strategies to support staff growth.</p> <p><b>Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The district evaluated its approach to recruiting and took deliberate steps to enhance its hiring process. For example, it has increased the size of the candidate pool in order to recruit and select a high quality and diverse staff. The district has been able to expand its staff and has been filling new positions specifically to support staff development. For example, a director of staff evaluation and student data position was created and filled by an internal staff member. In addition, staff support at the elementary school was reconfigured to provide the school with two full-time coaching positions. The district also identified a similar need at the junior-senior high school. However, the district was awaiting budget approval to create this coaching position.</li> <li>• School leaders indicated that the district is in the process of changing from use of the NYSUT teacher evaluation process to the Marshall process. They found the NYSUT approach resulted in a compliance-driven process and are making the changes to foster better staff development and growth. At the time of the review, the procedures for evaluating the quality of instruction and student learning were not effective in bringing improvements to instruction and student achievement as feedback did not focus on the aspects of instruction that are most in need of improvement.</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact Statement:</b> Schools do not consistently have personnel that are able to effectively address student needs.</p>		

**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 expand the candidate pool to ensure high-quality and diverse staff members are hired who are aligned with the district’s mission and vision; implement a teacher evaluation system that focuses on providing staff with actionable feedback and supports, which promote continuous improvement and hold teachers accountable for quality instruction.

**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**

**D**

**Debriefing Statement:** While the district leadership has a theory of action in place, it has not been systematically communicated to all stakeholders. As a result, not all constituents put the theory of action into practice and not all students achieve at high levels of success.

**Areas for Improvement:**

**Overall Finding:** District planning documents indicated district priorities and strategies for improvement, but staff members do not consistently implement them. In addition, while a sense of urgency was evident during visits, the district’s improvement efforts are not driven by clear and measurable goals. The district is beginning to develop strategies to enhance communication with stakeholders.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP) and the superintendent’s action plan articulate a clear set of priorities that define a theory of action. Specifically, the DCIP identifies increasing the academic achievement of students with disabilities; enhancing community/parent involvement and engagement; implementing the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS); enhancing academic intervention and enrichment services; and improving student data review practices as five areas of focus for the district’s improvement efforts. However, interviews with district staff found that they were not all fluent or consistent in identifying and describing the district’s priorities.
- Though district staff consistently noted the focus on raising student achievement, there is limited use of concrete measurable goals to drive improvement efforts. For example, DCIP goals focus on developing plans and establishing practices and protocols rather than articulating the desired impact on teaching and learning. Similarly, the superintendent’s action plan includes a column for measurement, which focuses on tools and sources of evidence as opposed to benchmarks and targets.
- District staff acknowledged the need to improve communication and indicated that they are seeking better ways to disseminate information. For example, the district plans to create a superintendent’s

community advisory council to review district policies and programs and solicit stakeholder feedback, including parents and school staff. In addition, the district also noted limited attendance at events, such as town hall meetings, and has identified the need to increase parent engagement in district planning.

**Impact Statement:**

Without clear priorities and goals understood by all stakeholders, not all students achieve high levels of success.

**Recommendation:**

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

- Enhance communication strategies so that all stakeholders understand and adopt a clear set of priorities aligned with the district’s theory of change; establish clear and measurable goals and benchmarks against which to regularly measure progress; establish structures and procedures to inform the community, and solicit feedback from all constituents regarding the district’s improvement efforts.

**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:** The district uses both staff input and the recent district review to identify resource priorities. Effective fiscal management and the attainment of grants have resulted in the district’s ability to maintain personnel, fund new positions, and provide tools to support school improvement. Consequently, the resources in the district provide opportunities for school improvement and success.

**Strengths:**

**Overall Finding:** The district has maintained and expanded its staff, despite budget constraints, and has made strategic investments in resources to enhance teacher development and student learning opportunities.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The district has secured a number of grants that have allowed it to maintain and enhance programs and staff positions during an economic downturn in which many districts have had to cut staff and programs. For example, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) and extended school day grants have supported after-school programming for students. District staff indicated that staffing stability has allowed them to maintain their school improvement strategies.
- The district has invested in a number of technology programs to support staff and student learning. For example, curriculum software has been put in place, and PD has been provided to support teachers in its use. In addition, the district now subscribes to PD 360, an online PD platform that

provides individual and groups of staff members with a range of resources and training. Finally, schedules are being aligned so that students can take advantage of distance learning opportunities.

- The district has created some key positions in alignment with its strategic plan. The director of staff evaluation and student data position was created to support school leaders in implementing a teacher evaluation system that fosters improved teaching and learning. Similarly, dedicated coaching positions have been created to provide teachers with targeted support, which is separate from the evaluation system in order to build teacher capacity.

**Impact Statement:**

The district’s allocation of resources provides opportunities for improvement and success.

**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**

**Debriefing Statement:** While the district is improving its PD planning and delivery process, it is not systematically aligned to district needs, which limits the effectiveness of all district staff.

**Areas for Improvement:**

**Overall Finding:** The district is developing a PD plan based on assessed needs, but delivery and follow-up are inconsistent.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- There is a newly developed district-wide PD plan and calendar created collaboratively by a committee of school stakeholders. The district conducted a needs assessment to determine teacher PD needs. A number of sources were consulted, including district and school staff, BOCES staff, and external audits. Teacher surveys revealed that teachers were unhappy with large group trainings and the lack of follow-up. However, PD is not yet comprehensive and fully aligned to the district’s identified needs. For example, while it is beginning to address the need for more data-driven decision making to support the establishment of the district’s Response to Intervention (RtI) system, there is limited training available on parent engagement.
- Although the district is beginning to tailor PD opportunities to the specific needs of its schools and staff, delivery is not consistent. One reason is that participation in PD is voluntary; as a result, district staff noted that they are not consistently getting the attendance necessary to build capacity across their staff. Similarly, at the time of the review, the district had hired two coaches to support staff at the elementary school with plans for a high school coach, but as with PD, the use of coaching is voluntary and only about half of the staff made use of this resource. Further, there is a lack of follow-up to ensure that PD and support is translating into practice. School and district leaders are not rigorous in ensuring that strategies learned in PD are consistently implemented in all

classrooms. For example, district staff acknowledged that school leaders are not consistently holding staff accountable for completing unit plans.

**Impact Statement:**

PD has not led to consistently high levels of teacher effectiveness.

**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 the PD plan based on an ongoing assessment of needs; ensure participation in critical PD aligned to district priorities and that school leaders hold teachers accountable for putting PD into practice.

**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 communicates expectations for staff use of data; however, teachers do not consistently use data driven strategies across the district, which limits student success.

**Areas for Improvement:**

**Overall Finding:** Though the district is a data-rich environment, a data driven culture has not yet been established.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The review team found that the district is a data rich environment. For example, a number of assessments are administered regularly, including NWEA and DIBELS to monitor student performance. The APPR process requires staff to engage in goal setting and the monitoring of student performance through the Student Learning Objectives (SLO) process. District leaders are using data to identify needs and target supports and have made data-driven decision-making a priority. For example, the district has offered training in this area, including NWEA’s “Climbing the Data Ladder” and NYSUT ELT’s “Making Assessments Work.” However, a data-driven culture is not evident across the district. While coaches and PD are focused on supporting the use of data to inform instruction and interventions, not all teachers are making use of these opportunities. In addition, school leaders are not holding teachers accountable for developing curriculum that meets student needs based on data. The district is making efforts to improve its evaluation system; it allowed teachers to choose a new rubric and is therefore moving to the Marshall process.
- The district has clear priorities, but does not have clear and measurable goals to drive its improvement efforts. As a result, conversations about district and school level data are limited. For

example, town hall data meetings became generic school reform meetings out of concern that the topic of data would not engage parents.

- The district has identified the need to improve its RtI practices. It has begun training in this area, with more training planned in order to develop a clear process with defined tiers of intervention based on data. The first training focused on academic support, and the next one will address social-emotional development. Each school is developing a plan to be implemented the next school year. The district is investing in external consultants to support this initiative and working to establish RtI as a general education program, rather than a special education referral process.

**Impact Statement:**

Stakeholders across the district do not consistently have a deep understanding of how students are performing in order to adjust their practices and promote student achievement.

**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 provide training and coaching around the use of data and follow-up to ensure PD is translating into effective practice; hold teachers accountable for using data to develop curriculum and plan instruction that meets the needs of all students; establish clear and measurable goals and collect data to monitor progress.

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

<p><b>Statement of Practice 2.1 - School Leader Practices and Decisions:</b> 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><b>Tenet Rating</b></p>	<p><b>E</b></p>
---	----------------------------	-----------------

**Strengths:**

**Overall Finding:**

The district works collaboratively with the school to support the school leader.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The district is small and school leaders interact frequently with district staff through daily phone and e-mail communication. The district has been actively involved in helping the school develop a rigorous SCEP. The school leader indicated that the district is providing ongoing PD aligned to priorities, such as the CCLS, data, the APPR, and SLOs. The district has also hired coaches to work in the school to attend grade team meetings and work with individual staff members. In addition, the district leadership is open to, and supportive of school, staff going out to leadership training.

The school leader stated that everything that they brought to the district has been supported.

**Impact Statement:**

The school community has a clear vision supported by district staff members.

**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 has worked collaboratively with the school to implement CCLS aligned curricula.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The school leader reported that the district and board has fully supported implementation of CCLS aligned curricula. This was evident by the fact that this year’s budget was designed to support continuous PD related to the new curriculum and full-time coaching positions were created to support CCLS implementation. The district has monitored CCLS activities in the school through regular walk-throughs

**Impact Statement:**

The curriculum provides teachers with opportunities to deliver instruction that is CCLS aligned.

**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**

**E**

**Strengths:**

**Overall Finding:**

The district works collaboratively with the school to support teachers.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The district has provided PD opportunities and coaches to the school to support the implementation of the CCLS and the use of data. Budget cuts resulted in the loss of some aides, but the school leader felt this did not have a significant impact on instruction and stated that additional resources and materials were distributed to support instruction.

**Impact Statement:**

Teachers and instructional staff have the resources necessary to develop rigorous learning opportunities.

<b>Statement of Practice 5.1 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health:</b> The district creates policy and works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and resources that positively support students' social and emotional developmental health.	<b>Tenet Rating</b>	<b>D</b>
---	---------------------	----------

**Strengths:**

**Overall Finding:**

The district does not consistently provide resources to the school to address student social and emotional developmental health.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The school participates in some district-wide teams related to safety, wellness, and discipline and the district supported the hiring of a school resource officer. The school leader indicated that interventions are in place and outside supports are available, though they are seeking supports for those with needs that are more intensive. Some information is provided to teachers, such as a pamphlet of resources and PD led by the social worker and psychologist. However, teachers shared that they needed more training in the area of social-emotional development.

**Impact Statement:**

Students do not consistently receive supports that appropriately address their needs.

<b>Statement of Practice 6.1 - Family and Community Engagement:</b> 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.	<b>Tenet Rating</b>	<b>E</b>
--	---------------------	----------

**Strengths:**

**Overall Finding:**

The district supports the school's parent engagement work.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The district provides a number of resources that support the school's communication and engagement with parents, such as an annual community event. The district introduced a phone blast/text message system to enhance communication with parents, and supported the hiring of a bilingual receptionist. In addition, the district maintains a website and Facebook page. The school leader indicated that parent issues referred to the district level, such as transportation problems, have been handled quickly. Further, the school leader stated that when parents have gone to the district requesting to change their children's teacher, the district staff supported the

school leader's decisions.

**Impact Statement:**

The schools work in partnership with families to provide supports needed to improve student achievement.