



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	430700010000
District	Geneva City School District
District Address	400 West North Street, Geneva, NY 14456
Superintendent	Trina S. Newton
Date(s) of Review	May 22, 2014
Schools Discussed in this Report	Elementary, Middle, and High School

District Information Sheet											
District Grade Configuration	PK-12	Total Student Enrollment	2188	Title 1 Population	63%	Attendance Rate	93%				
Free Lunch	61%	Reduced Lunch	10%	Student Sustainability	% NP	Limited English Proficient	5%	Students with Disabilities	11%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	Black or African American	17%	Hispanic or Latino	21%	Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	2%	White	56%	Multi-racial	4%
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	2				
% 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	9				
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
District in Good Standing		Focus District	X	Number of Focus School Identified by District	3	Number of SIG Recipient Schools	3	Number of Schools in Status	3		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	32%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	29%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	60%	4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	83%	6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	85%		

NP = Not Provided

Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA			
	American Indian or Alaska Native	X	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
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics			
	American Indian or Alaska Native	X	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
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	X	Limited English Proficient
X	Economically Disadvantaged		All Students
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective			
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	
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 1:		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>
<p><u>Debriefing Statement:</u> The district has established external partnerships to ensure that schools have the personnel, and support for the personnel, in place to meet student needs. District leaders articulate and monitor the implementation of rigorous standards and high expectations for all students and staff through observations, walk-throughs, and learning walks. These expectations and practices lead to increased opportunities for both professional growth and increased student achievement.</p> <p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <p>Overall Finding: District leaders understand the power of forming external partnerships with colleges, universities, and the surrounding community to help support instruction and learning.</p> <p>Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding: <i>(Note: the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) gathered evidence from a review of documents and interviews with district leaders, principals, staff, parents, and students.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District leaders, in interviews with the integrated intervention team (IIT), described the many formal and informal approaches to ensure that personnel can address student needs. In particular, formal and informal partnerships, with Hobart and William Smith College as well as the Warner School of Education at the University of Rochester, provide varied opportunities to support teachers and school leaders through collaboration and coaching. The reciprocal arrangement with Hobart and William Smith College, especially, allows college students to carry out action research projects, participate in classroom activities, including tutoring of district students, and have a venue for student teaching. The schools benefit from the results of the research as well as having additional instructional support within classrooms. Leadership coaching provided from the University of Rochester professors supports building capacity amongst school and district leaders. The initial financial support for this work was from a grant won by the district. When the district’s grant was finished, the University of Rochester sought (and won) one of their own to continue this work with the school district. • The district leader reported that although there is little hiring currently occurring due to budget cuts and an existing list of eligible teachers who had been excessed in recent years, the partnerships with 		

colleges and familiarity with many candidates through these programs has provided the district with a pool of qualified recruits. The district is aware of the need for greater diversity in their teaching and administrative staff and in response, has brought this issue to the attention of the local African American Men’s Club as well as the National Hispanic Institute. They have partnered with “Today’s Students Tomorrow’s Teachers”, an organization whose mission is to recruit and mentor minority students through high school and college, and into teaching careers.

- The district leader indicated that for teachers already on staff, the District has an established program of evaluation in place. Using the Danielson model, school leaders carry out observations, walk-throughs, and learning walks during which school and district leaders evaluate how well teachers are implementing material addressed during professional development (PD) sessions. The district leader reported that cabinet level administrators review every observation and use those data to make decisions on continued PD to be offered. To ensure consistency in evaluations across the district, school leaders regularly convene to view videotapes of teaching and compare scoring and ideas based on their observations.
- District leaders reported that teacher turnover in the district is low. To ensure that teachers continue to grow, the district, along with community partnerships, have established a program whereby four teachers per year go through the program to become National Board Certified Teachers. This program is at no cost to the teachers involved. Once the teacher is nationally certified, they receive an annual stipend to commend them for this work. The district has a goal of twenty percent of their teachers to be nationally certified.

Impact Statement:

The impact of cultivating numerous partnerships to provide continuous support for teachers and school leaders, as well as putting many systems in place to recruit, select, evaluate, and maintain a strong staff, results in personnel at all levels of the district who can meet the needs of students.

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 leadership believes that all students can succeed if given appropriate opportunities and supports and has communicated this belief to the wider school community. District leadership communicates these expectations internally through programming decisions to increase academic rigor, and externally through extensive relationship building with community stakeholders. As a result, student achievement is showing improvement in some critical areas.

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

District leaders hold high expectations for all students regardless of background or prior experience. Programs

and protocols have been put into place, and others are planned, to ensure success for every student.

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.)*

- One statement, repeated twice by the district leader during interviews with the IIT, sums up the district's theory of action and her philosophy: "Don't ever tell me 'they can't'!" High expectations are held for all students including those with disabilities, those for whom English is a second language, and/or those from economically disadvantaged circumstances. The school leader repeatedly stated to reviewers that planning for student success starts early. Programs for students, beginning in pre-Kindergarten, are planned with the vision of those students crossing the stage at graduation. The district leaders firmly believe that students in need of intervention must be identified early, and supports must be in place to address their challenges and monitor their success. In an effort to ensure that all teachers are teaching to high levels of rigor, a Learning-Focused lesson design model was introduced and its implementation is being monitored. The requirement to use this lesson model, as well as continued PD by a cadre of trainers/coaches around the Common core Learning Standard (CCLS) and the New York State modules, communicates to staff the importance of implementing higher level standards with fidelity. The district has held several meetings for parents to explain the implementation of the CCLS to them. In an effort to make sure that all parents had the opportunity to become familiar with these higher expectations for all students, the district made a special effort to communicate with the Hispanic population of the school community. District leaders reported they have hired a bilingual educator for this purpose who is currently translating all pertinent documents into Spanish.
- The district leader reported that they have made program changes to provide courses and programs that are more relevant to students with the intention that graduates will be better able to compete in a global society. For example, the district has eliminated classes with low enrollment in favor of offering more rigorous and relevant classes. Programs such as Project Lead The Way, which offers engineering courses for high school students, have been introduced. Using technology, the high school now offers twenty-three Advanced Placement (AP) courses (many online). Starting next year, all students will be required to take an AP history course. District leaders know the research shows that when a student takes one AP course, they are more inclined to take additional ones. District leaders reported that through their strong partnership with the local hospital, they are able to offer a biomedical sciences program for students interested in this field. District leaders are proud of the fact that in this year's "U.S. News and World Report" rankings, Geneva moved from 141 to 114, out of the 170 top schools in New York State. One of the goals of the district is to increase the graduate rate. District leaders reported that a few years ago the graduation rate was 64 percent. This year, 2014, the graduation rate is over 80 percent, with this year's junior class on track to graduate next year at 85 percent.
- The district leaders reported to the IIT that they were mindful of the importance of all school leaders sharing consistent messages about high expectations for all students with their staff and with each

other. To this end, the district holds regular meetings with school leaders, including principals and assistant principals. The district has also established a PD committee to create the PD plan for the district. These plans are based on data received through school and districts leaders' classroom visits, current trends in educational research, and information gained during institutes with the State Education Department. Resulting PD is sustained throughout the school year through teacher meetings, coaching opportunities, and superintendent conference days.

Impact Statement:

The district is communicating its theory of action to all groups of stakeholders in a variety of ways, thus, students are achieving at higher levels of success than in the recent past.

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

HE

Debriefing Statement:

The district has well-developed mechanisms and structures in place for aligning resources to address the needs of the school community. Partnerships have been created with community organizations, including colleges and universities, to further the work of the schools and district. The strategic use of resources enables the district to promote school improvement and support student success.

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

The district uses its tax-levy funds, extensive partnerships, and grant funds to leverage programs, resources, and to support staff in a variety of ways to promote 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.)*

- Over the last several years the district has lost state aid and been affected by the State's "gap elimination adjustment" program. To make up this shortfall, the district has reviewed its programs and organizational structures to ensure the most effective and efficient practices are in place. For example, the district recently created the position of "Assistant Superintendent for Administration," who oversees human resources, technology, maintenance and operations, as well as the duties of data coordinator. Additional restructuring/reimagining of positions, including reorganizing roles and responsibilities, has resulted in a smaller district cabinet. Fewer cabinet positions has allowed for better communication amongst its members as well as a more efficient budgeting process.
- In interviews with the IIT, the district financial officer reported that the district employs a zero-based budget strategy to ensure that each year the budgeting process begins with a focus on program and what is best for students. Many constituent groups are involved in the process and kept informed as the process moves forward. For example, the budget advisory committee includes district personnel,

the Board of Education, and community members. The meetings, of which there were three during this year’s budget discussions, drew between fifty and sixty community members. A financial audit committee meets monthly and reports to the Board of Education on progress and programmatic and staffing decisions. District leaders provided an example of a change in staffing that was made as part of this process. The decision involved the move from hiring health aides to hiring licensed practical nurses. While licensed practical nurses require higher salaries than health aides do, they are able to provide a broader range of services to the students. This addition is a plus in a community where so many children are from economically disadvantaged homes and may not be receiving adequate health care outside of school.

- District leaders reported that although the community has traditionally been accepting of higher tax levies, the district is strategic about leveraging funding from a number of outside agencies and non-profit organizations, as well as aggressively pursuing grant opportunities. One example of a partnership that is reaping benefits is one with Alfred University and The Confucius Institute to teach Mandarin Chinese in the elementary school. While students are reportedly enjoying this program, the bigger benefit is the contribution to the district’s goal of preparing their students for success in a global economy. This initiative, once grants, stipends, and pilot status are calculated, costs the district only \$3,200 per year. Another example of a healthy partnership is with “Geneva 2020”. This group of community businesses and individuals supports the district with “time, talent, and treasure (i.e. money)”. The work of Geneva 2020 members is directly focused on the goals of the district, including increasing graduation rate, literacy, and college and career readiness for all students.

Impact Statement:

The impact of the district’s creative budgeting, forward thinking, and concerted effort to create and nurture partnerships both locally and across the state results in resources being used to address goals and promote improvement in all schools within the district.

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

E

Debriefing Statement:

The district has structures in place to identify professional development needs throughout the district. A district-wide professional development plan, based on identified needs, is in place to address the targeted areas. Follow-up support is provided by teacher leaders, coaches, school and district leaders, and outside consultants leading to increases in teacher effectiveness.

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

The district has organized PD offerings aligned with and focused on the district’s goals for all stakeholders in the district, including all district and school leaders as well as staff.

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 leaders reported they have mobilized the Teaching and Learning Committee and its subcommittees to review the district’s goals and determine, using data, what areas of curriculum, teaching, and learning should be addressed and supported through ongoing PD. These committees have representation from the district level, as well as school levels, to ensure that needs are met throughout the district, and PD is differentiated and targeted for challenges in individual schools. The focus for all PD is improving instruction and student performance. To this end, superintendent conference days are themed and programs are designed to address such areas as classroom management, supporting success for difficult students, and awareness and appreciation of diversity. The overarching area currently being addressed during PD is implementation of the CCLS. Teachers interviewed by the IIT reported that there has been a considerable amount of PD offered by the district. ,
- The district leaders explained how they have organized sustained PD using consultants in a variety of areas. Professors from Hobart and William Smith College, situated in Geneva, provide programs and support to teachers through coaching and participation in research projects within classrooms. School and district leaders also work closely with consultants and coaches from the University of Rochester, focusing on building capacity with regard to leadership skills. The Aussie group works with staff with a focus on curriculum and instruction vis à vis on the CCLS and best instructional practices. In addition, regular workshops are provided throughout the year for district and school leaders and coaches to develop and implement a consistent approach, district-wide, to address and support data-driven instruction (DDI) Pre-Kindergarten through grade twelve. It is the district’s belief that using DDI in every classroom will result in more timely interventions and increased student success.

Impact Statement:

By having a strategic plan for the development and implementation of focused, sustained PD for all stakeholders within the district, teacher effectiveness is increasing.

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 promotes data use through regular meetings with school principals and through a consultant who facilitates the data driven dialogue process. While the district has identified a best practice around data driven decision-making, currently there are varying degrees of implementation among the schools in the district regarding data use, which is resulting in inconsistent levels of student achievement.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district is committed to using all forms of student data to drive instruction and has processes in place to support this commitment. Currently, not all schools and/or stakeholders are using data consistently to raise 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.)*

- District leaders reported that through its committee structures and strategic use of consultants and coaches, the district has communicated its expectation that data will be used to improve student performance. The district expects school leaders, through the teacher observation and evaluation process, to identify strengths and challenges amongst their staff. Teachers and student support staff are expected to collect and analyze individual student data to address student needs. District leaders indicated they monitor these processes and make personnel and instructional decisions accordingly. Processes and protocols are being put into place and monitored for effectiveness. Since the schools have had a history of operating in silos, district leaders reported they are working to ensure there is an understanding among teachers, Pre-Kindergarten through grade twelve, of the use of data to drive decision-making. Teachers are identifying, through the help of consultants and coaches, best practices for using data. However, district leaders indicated that not all teachers are using these practices currently. While the district cabinet has a clear vision of how they believe data should be used, it is not evident that all teachers have a clear understanding of how to take the information they are collecting to adjust their instruction accordingly. Additionally, the district cabinet indicated that recent personnel changes in the middle school have resulted in slower movement in that building towards a data-driven culture for all.
- In an interview with teachers at the middle school, one teacher indicated that while staff have been exposed to a number of programs, she was not sure if they have made a difference. For example, she reported that they are using the Fusion mathematics program for students in grade six Academic Intervention Services (AIS), but that teachers have not had training in this program and it is not being tracked for its effectiveness. She added that data use is in the infancy stage. School and district leaders recognize that data is not yet systematically collected on all programs to discern program effectiveness.

Impact Statement:

The district leaders are promoting their expectation for a data-driven culture across all schools. However, not all stakeholders are currently adjusting their instruction based on data and not all programs and initiatives are yet systematically monitored and measured for their impact on school and district goals; therefore, increases in student achievement are not consistent across the district.

Recommendation:

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

- Hold staff accountable for monitoring student achievement via individual data, aiding students in setting instructional goals, and ensuring that those goals are met in a timely way.

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

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.	Tenet Rating	E
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Strengths:

Overall Finding:

The district provides many opportunities for school leaders to work collaboratively with each other and with the district leaders to create and sustain environments that will lead to 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.)*

- In interviews with the IIT, school and district leaders reported that principals and assistant principals meet with district leaders on a regular basis to discuss the district’s mission and vision, as well as ways to strengthen a culture of high expectations leading to student success.
- A school leader reported that he has an open and honest relationship with district leaders and that they are very supportive of changes that he has initiated. He indicated that the directors all work well together but they do not all meet as much they should. District leaders described their “Metrics of Success” program, where district and school leaders collaboratively determine what data they will collect to help determine how well each school, and the district as a whole, are meeting the goals of increasing the graduation rate, increasing proficiency in literacy, and preparing students to be college and career ready. District leaders reported that they, along with school leaders and Board of Education members, engage in “learning walks” where they visit the schools and classrooms to obtain first-hand knowledge of the day-to-day workings of each school. The district provides school leaders with continuous PD, including regular workshops and the services of mentors and coaches to help build leadership capacity, and consultants to share additional techniques for providing DDI support for teachers.
- The IIT found through interviews with school and district leaders and a review of documents, that the district has supported significant changes in individual schools through the School Innovation

Funds grant, such as adjusting the middle school schedule, reconfiguring the AIS program, and establishing a Freshman Academy at the high school.

Impact Statement:

Using a variety of methods and in a variety of areas, district support for school leaders and their programs raises the achievement of students across the district.

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

D

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district is addressing curriculum development and the implementation of CCLS through instructional coaches, teacher leaders, and curriculum work for some teachers.

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.)*

- Based on interviews and classroom visitations, the IIT noted that teachers across the district are currently working on implementing the CCLS. This work is predominantly focused on elementary teachers, and mathematics and English language arts (ELA) teachers at the secondary level. They have been writing curriculum and incorporating New York State modules into their instruction. The district offers curriculum writing days in the summer (depending on budget constraints) and provides some release days for this work. Consultants from the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and Aussie have supported this work as well. However, teachers shared with the review team that while there has been some planning and discussion about horizontal and vertical articulation of curriculum, that articulation does not yet exist across all subjects. The district is in the process of supporting the development of a comprehensive curriculum aligned with CCLS.
- Special education teachers reported that there is a lot of PD offered throughout the district, but little that is targeted specifically to them. They indicated they would like to have the opportunity to learn more about differentiation and co-teaching. A school leader reported differentiated instruction is needed, particularly for their ELL population. Several teachers also reported that they need more PD on differentiation.

Impact Statement:

The district is currently addressing the alignment and implementation of CCLS with the district's curriculum. However, the lack of a comprehensive curriculum aligned to the CCLS means that not all students are benefiting from a challenging curriculum at all levels.

Recommendation:

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

- Develop and implement a plan to create comprehensive curricula for all content areas, Pre-Kindergarten through grade twelve, that aligns with the CCLS and challenges all students, including special education students and English Language Learners
- Provide PD opportunities for special education teachers to increase their capacity to differentiate instruction for special education students while holding them to high levels of achievement.

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:

The district and schools are working together and with various consultants, coaches, and teacher leaders to increase teacher effectiveness. However, this collaboration is a work in progress and has not yet achieved consistently challenging learning opportunities for all students.

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 has strategically planned a variety of PD opportunities to address the goals of increasing the graduation rate, increasing proficiency in literacy, and preparing students to be college and career ready upon graduation. The district leaders reported they have established a Teaching and Learning Committee to collect and review data to determine PD needs of school leaders and teachers. District leaders are also reviewing information gathered from classroom walk-throughs and teacher evaluations. They indicated that the process revealed, for example, that many teachers were not checking for understanding on a consistent basis, so that practice is being addressed through PD.
- District leaders reported that they have used consultants from area colleges, BOCES, and private companies to provide PD on CCLS implementation, best instructional practices, data-driven decision making, mathematics strategies, and effective planning. However, the school leader reported that the staff at the middle school does not do a sufficient job of differentiating instruction so that meaningful lessons are created for all students. He reported that he was making this a priority in the middle school.
- District leaders reported that a data coordinator has been added to the staff, data teams have been

formed at the schools, and professional learning communities have been established at some schools. A middle school leader indicated that data has not been a strength at the middle school. He is addressing this at the school level by providing PD during faculty meetings on how to have data-driven dialogue. While many supports are in place, the IIT found that these activities are works in progress and not entirely consistent across all schools in the district.

- A teacher at the middle school who was part of the vertical teacher group interview reported that although they have a Response to Intervention (RtI) process, they are missing an RtI interventionist. She stated, “We are missing interventions and monitoring. We rely on afterschool programs, which students have to buy into as interventions.” She went on to say that while her team is able to monitor the effectiveness of strategies, it was not a school-wide practice as there was no time built into the day to monitor interventions with students. Another teacher indicated that teachers have been exposed to a number of programs but she was not sure if they have made a difference, as they are often not tracked for effectiveness.

Impact Statement:

Teachers are in the process of learning best practices with regard to planning, instruction, and levels of engagement. However, the supports in place by the district are not yet widespread and consistent enough to result in rigorous learning opportunities for 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:

- Ensure that all staff take part in the PD offered and are implementing best practices in the classroom.
- Use data to ensure that each student is engaged and benefiting from effective teaching strategies.

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

E

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

The many programs in effect around social and emotional development health of the diverse school community are evidence that this area is of great importance to the district leaders.

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.)*

- Policies and partnerships to address the social and emotional developmental health of students are

in effect in the district. The district leader summed up the philosophy by saying, “Nothing is going to happen in this school district without the social and emotional health of these children.” Decisions about programs are made strategically. The main program in effect across the district is Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) plus the advanced program associated with that system, Positive Actions with Students. As witnessed by the review team in the middle school, this program, including monthly, themed lessons in all classes, provides incentives to students for positive behavior. In addition to PBIS, a “Character Academy” has been developed at one of the elementary schools to provide additional support to students who are challenged socially and behaviorally, and may be having difficulty at home. The Character Academy provides a program that allows for students to build relationships with caring adults with the goal to avoid them becoming part of the discipline system and thereby able to remain in school. This academy promotes skills and behaviors in preparation for the students’ move to the middle school. The district encourages schools to stop operating on a deficit system when dealing with challenged students. District leaders shared their belief that discipline should be positive rather than punitive.

- District leaders described their efforts to focus on the diversity in the school community, such as the intentional development of partnerships with groups that represent students’ diverse backgrounds and/or situations. They have partnerships with the African American Men’s Club; National Hispanic Institute; Today’s Students, Tomorrow’s Teachers; The Council on Alcoholism and Addictions; the Center for Multicultural Affairs at Keuka College; the YMCA, and the Boys and Girls Clubs. District leaders shared a question that they ask at district meetings: “Who aren’t we serving?” If a group is potentially identified as not being served, the situation is remedied. For example, there was concern raised that the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender (LGBT) population might be marginalized. The district responded by contacting the LGBT Center of the Finger Lakes to provide training to teachers on this issue.
- Based on interviews with various stakeholder groups, the IIT learned that there are student support teams in every school consisting of the school psychologist, guidance counselors, the school nurse, general and special education teachers as well as the school leader. This team collects and monitors data on specific students and targets support to address their needs. The district has been recognized by the New York State Education Department for its RtI program at one elementary school and invited to present to the Board of Regents. The district leaders indicated that they were aware of the growing number of autistic students in the elementary school. In response, they have put programs in place to meet this growing need in the elementary school and are developing a plan to address the needs of these students as they move into the middle school.

Impact Statement:

The district is vigilant about providing social and emotional developmental health supports for all sub-groups of students, thus, student needs are appropriately addressed.

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 created a comprehensive, intentional, and strategic plan to engage families and community organizations in a variety of ways to promote student 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.)*

- The district uses its PBIS program to engage families in school activities. This is particularly true at the elementary schools where families participate in activities at least twice a week throughout the school year. Parents interviewed at the middle school were familiar with the PBIS and Positive Actions with Students program at the school and were aware of the district’s mission, for students to “lead lives of consequence.” The district communicates with families via newsletters and phone calls as well as with a website that district leaders reported has been updated to make it more user-friendly. While district leaders indicated that communications, written and verbal, are translated into Spanish with provisions to translate into other languages if, and when necessary, parents who were interviewed indicated that this may not always be the case. One parent reported that the Connect-Ed calls used to be in both English and Spanish but now are just in English. This parent stated that she has observed Spanish students arriving at school too early when there was a school delay. She speculated that this likely indicated their parents had not been notified of the delay in their native language. Another parent reported that the feedback from a consultant that was hired by the district last year indicated that communication with parents needed improvement. She stated that she has seen significant improvement in this area this year.
- The district leader reported the district has partnerships with health agencies and clinics in the area, Hobart and William Smith College, and with the Geneva Police Department and their School Resource Officer program. Beyond these more traditional types of partnerships, the district leaders have created many unique partnerships and programs to ensure a collaborative environment to benefit students. Some examples include supporting students’ career readiness by establishing a viniculture program that aligns with opportunities provided by the Finger Lakes region’s wine industry; forming an apprenticeship program with home builders in the area; and providing a job coach through local businesses for a “work based learning” program for students with disabilities.
- The district leader spoke about her efforts to engage with the local community. She described engaging in a “walkabout” program with Board of Education members to visit with families in their neighborhoods. Accompanying her are highly placed community leaders, such as the Chief

Executive Officer of the hospital, who is Puerto Rican, and who joins her for visits to the Hispanic community in the city. District leaders strive for transparency regarding the changes they are making in the schools so they take every opportunity to share “the state of the district” messages at meetings of community organizations like the Rotary Club. The district leader uses a report developed at Hobart and William Smith College in 2011, “Success for Geneva’s Children,” to compare the data (graduation rate, proficiency on state exams, achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students and those not economically disadvantaged) represented in the report to the current data. She reported that the district is improving and moving towards the district leader’s goal of becoming “the premier district in Central New York.”

Impact Statement:

District leaders have been strategic about creating family and community partnerships where stakeholders have a clear understanding of the mission and vision of the district. These groups are working together to support student success, and there is increasing evidence of higher student achievement.