



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	620600010000
District	Kingston City School District
District Address	61 Crown Street, Kingston, New York 12401
Superintendent	Dr Paul Padalino
Date(s) of Review	February 18, 2014
School Discussed in this Report	J. Watson Bailey Middle School

District Information Sheet												
District Grade Configuration	Pre K - 12	Total Student Enrollment	6639	Title 1 Population	17%	Attendance Rate	93%					
Free Lunch	38%	Reduced Lunch	8%	Student Sustainability	5%	Limited English Proficient	3%	Students with Disabilities	20%			
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population												
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	Black or African American	18%	Hispanic or Latino	12%	Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	2%	White	65%	Multi-racial	2%	
Personnel												
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/Appointed to District	2	Number of Deputy Superintendents	4	Average Years Dep. Superintendents in Role in the District		# of Directors of Programs	6					
% 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	8	Number of SIG Recipient Schools	4	Number of Schools in Status				
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	52%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	56%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	86%	4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	73%	6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	76%			

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

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

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

Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: Visionary leaders create a school community and culture that lead to success, well-being and high academic outcomes for all students via systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement.

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

Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support: The school has rigorous and coherent curricula and assessments that are appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for all students and are modified for identified subgroups in order to maximize teacher instructional practices and student-learning outcomes.

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

Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions: Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn, so that all students and pertinent subgroups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking, and achievement.

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

Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health: The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.

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

Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement: The school creates a culture of partnership where families, community members, and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being.

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

District Review Narrative:

Tenet 1.1: The district has a comprehensive approach for recruiting, evaluating, and sustaining high-quality personnel that affords schools the ability to ensure success by addressing the needs of their community.	Tenet Rating	D
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Debriefing Statement: The district has implemented a major restructuring program and redeployment strategies this year. Additionally, the district introduced staff evaluation structures, but these have not had a measurable impact on improving instructional practices. As a result, schools have not been able to respond fully to the needs of students.

Areas for Improvement:

- One of the district goals for 2013 – 14 was to restructure the elementary and middle schools to make efficient use of available resources. In order to do this, district leaders closed some schools and they merged others. During the review, district leaders explained how they implemented a redeployment program and put structures in place for recruiting and interviewing personnel, which include analyzing the needs of schools and recruiting staff that match these needs. Schools are invited to play an active role in this process.
- District leaders have been in the process of developing school leader expertise for evaluating staff, but these have had a limited impact on improving teacher performance in schools. The district leader indicated that there have been difficulties communicating agreed norms about the APPR process and that leaders have to develop the skills necessary to evaluate the impact of instructional practices on learning and to target effective professional development (PD).
- A review of documents demonstrated that other district goals for the year include a focus on student subgroups, but evaluation procedures are not being used to establish how these students could be better supported and this limits their academic needs being met. Additionally, district goals included the adoption of an integrated approach to learning for students with disabilities. The district is in the early stages of encouraging school leaders to make decisions about teacher placements in order to develop effective co – teaching partnerships.
- The high numbers of staff changes within the district have limited the ability of school’s to focus on instructional practices and the needs of sub groups of students, which hinders student achievement.

Tenet 1.2.: The district leadership has a comprehensive and explicit theory of action about school culture that communicates high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents.	Tenet Rating	D
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Debriefing Statement: The district leadership team has coordinated a comprehensive plan for restructuring schools while implementing both the new CCLS curriculum and systems to support the needs of students. While a theory of action has been communicated, and school leaders have collaborated with the district to adopt the new expectations, these practices are at an early stage of implementation across schools.

Areas for Improvement:

- The district leader has a clear vision for aligning practice throughout the district. This has resulted in

the creation of literacy centers in the elementary schools, the establishment of middle schools that contain grades five through eight, and the start of a grade nine academy at the high school. A number of stakeholders are beginning to support the vision for specialized learning communities within schools.

- Evidence indicated that the district is using staff expertise to support the social and emotional developmental needs of students and families by providing support through their connections with community agencies. Colleagues at the district continue to research new ways to develop this area and work has begun to use functional behavioral assessments to help all students learn more effectively.
- Although the district has employed consultants and outside agencies to develop materials and to promote teacher understanding of the CCLS, these have yet to have a measurable impact on curriculum delivery in schools. District leaders have been advocating professional learning communities within schools, but expertise is inconsistent and there is uncertainty about the benefit of the curriculum from teachers and parents. There is no strategic plan with targeted improvements for raising student achievement, so the district is unable to measure its rate of success or intervene to affect it.
- The district leaders reported that it has taken years for the district to realize its vision of an inclusive model for students with disabilities and that they still need to work on raising expectations for all students. Further, the district leader stated that there was growing pressure for the schools to move toward ability grouping because stakeholders recognized that the current system is not meeting the needs of all students.
- While the theory of action includes strategies to raise expectations for groups of students, students do not consistently achieve at high levels across the district.

Tenet 1.3: The district is organized and allocates resources (financial, staff support, materials, etc.) in a way that aligns appropriate levels of support for schools based on the needs of the school community.

Tenet Rating

E

Debriefing Statement: The district assessed its emerging needs and created a plan for realigning its resources. The district has supported schools as they have made organizational changes including redeploying specialist staff where necessary. As a result, schools are in a better position to respond to curriculum changes aimed at raising student achievement.

Strengths:

- District systems have been used to make strategic decisions as leaders have implemented a comprehensive plan to consolidate resources and close underutilized facilities without reducing staff as student enrolment has dropped. District leaders adjusted their plans in response to feedback they received from an earlier school merger that had not been as successful.
- As the district moves forward with its theory of action, leaders are providing schools with a range of support. District staff shared that teaching assistants are being reallocated to schools where the need is greatest as students with special needs are being moved to general education settings at

their home schools. District leaders changed the assessment schedule for these students to biennial assessments based on school leader input. The district also allocated instructional support to schools as they embed new practices, such as literacy coaches in elementary and middle schools and support for staff at the grade nine academy.

- District leaders have allocated further resources to meet the needs of students and their families, such as a part time English as a second language (ESL) teacher to create a magnet school for English language learners (ELLs). Additionally, as the numbers of homeless families increase, a coordinator is developing resources so that these families are better able to access after-school programs.
- District leaders have allocated resources to improve the curriculum and instruction, which improves student success.

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

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: The district allocated time for teachers and school leaders to train and prepare for the school year. District leaders provide ongoing informal support as practices are embedded, but this has not resulted in more effective practices that meet the needs of all students in classrooms.

Areas for Improvement:

- The district assessed the training needs of its school staff as they prepared to implement major changes at the beginning of the school year. A review of documents showed that schools were provided with a range of suitable PD, such as opportunities to develop expertise in data driven instruction, the CCLS, and the Response to Intervention (RtI).
- District leaders have encouraged schools to adopt a customized approach toward student social and emotional developmental health, so some schools have adopted the PBIS protocol, while others have chosen different methods. There is some evidence that this is having a positive impact and schools have seen a reduction in serious behavior incidents.
- A document review showed that leaders anticipated additional training needs and there is a detailed calendar to sustain support throughout the year. However, district leaders explained that there are inconsistencies in the way schools assess the effectiveness of their practice. For example, the achievement data generated by some schools is unreliable and when district leaders shared APPR data, it was clear that the positive overall figures were inconsistent with the low number of students meeting proficiency standards and graduation. This means that district leaders have yet to establish robust systems that help them identify relevant PD priorities.
- Some district leaders stated that they have been receptive to the ongoing needs of school staff as they rolled out programs to support the CCLS. Leaders commented that they adopted a more flexible approach toward RtI that is beginning to be implemented now. District leaders have made instructional coaches available so that they can support schools as they adjust to the demands of the CCLS and as they make modifications to meet student needs, but the work is inconsistent across schools.

- Although the district established a PD program at the start of the year, systems to monitor the implementation of strategies across schools are inconsistent, which limits student achievement.

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

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: Although the district is developing data management systems, there are inconsistencies in the way information is collected from the schools, which limits the ability of leadership to analyze information and to guide schools in improving systems and practices to raise student achievement.

Areas for Improvement:

- District leaders have made some strategic shifts to the roles of senior leaders in schools. For example, Assistant Principals (APs) now have specific responsibility for the impact of instructional practices on learning and high school guidance counselors are expected to track and support individual students to improve graduation rates.
- While the district has communicated expectations about how data is to be used to improve student achievement, the review team found that schools are not implementing these expectations across schools. District leaders reported that high school leaders are developing effective data management practices, but these practices are not consistent across schools. While district leaders stated that they are using common assessments as a reliable source of information, these assessments are infrequent, which limits the accuracy in using the information to evaluate the performance of schools.
- Issues with the reliability of school achievement data limit the district’s ability to target specific action to support improved student achievement. District leaders reported that there is little growth in achievement in ELA and a decline in math achievement at the high school level due to a lack of analysis and use of data to address weaknesses in instruction and learning.
- District leaders have not established expectations concerning the use of data to support student social and emotional developmental health and there are no systems in place to analyze data and use it to create strategies to meet student needs.
- The inconsistent collection and analysis of data limits stakeholder understanding of student performance and hinders student success.

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

Tenet 2.1 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for the school leader to create, develop and nurture a school environment that is responsive to the needs of the entire school community.

Tenet Rating

D

Areas for Improvement:

- The quality of support the district provided the school as they implemented changes has been inconsistent. Additional staff members have been placed in the school in response to indications that students with special needs needed more support on integrated instruction, and instructional coaches were placed to help the school adjust to the expectations of the CCLS; however, the measureable impact of these support mechanisms have been limited.
- Although the school leader was involved in district level discussions as the district created its annual vision, the school’s own mission does not align. While a document review demonstrated alignment about the importance of student social-emotional development, the review team found limited alignment in regard to expectations for academic rigor and the evaluation of instructional practices to improve student achievement.
- Although the school and district share some alignment between visions, the district does not consistently ensure that school’s implement plans to improve student achievement.

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

Tenet Rating

D

Areas for Improvement:

- The district takes the lead on curriculum decision-making and made most of the preparations necessary for the schools to implement the CCLS. The school leader explained that the district had consulted her about how best to accommodate the increase in enrollment at her school, as grade five students joined the existing school population. Her recommendation for a new block schedule in the upper grades was adopted. Teachers at the school noted that there continue to be some issues with the schedule and that some programs had to be changed, which led to an increase in the number of study hall sessions for grade eight students.
- The district provided support to the school so that teachers had a number of opportunities to develop an understanding of new instructional practices ahead of the academic year. The review team found that the district provides financial support for staff to attend PD sessions and that there are occasional reductions in instructional time to allow teachers common planning time.
- Curriculum materials are provided through the district, but school staff stated that they face difficulties adjusting to the new curriculum. Instructional coaches shared that teachers are not adequately implementing the pacing of the new curriculum or implementing the instructional shifts to meet the needs of students.
- The curriculum does not consistently align to the CCLS across schools, which limits student

achievement.

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

Tenet Rating

D

Areas for Improvement:

- The district provides school staff with some PD on best instructional practices. For example, the school leader stated that they had worked with colleagues from SUNY New Paltz concerning the CCLS and integrated co-teaching model. As a result, teachers are aware of curriculum requirements and some features of partnership teaching.
- The district provides sustained support for school leaders in order to support their staff. For example, the school leader explained that she had been given opportunities to develop expertise in data driven instruction and the CCLS. However, the lack of systems for collecting and analyzing data related to PD has limited the measurable impact on student outcomes.
- The review team found limited evidence of a district plan to address the discrepancy between the high numbers of effective teaching practices cited in the school's evaluation documents with the levels of student achievement. Teachers stated that the APPR process was not being implemented consistently and that few teachers felt they had been offered effective feedback to improve instruction.
- While the district has provided the school with PD opportunities, these have not led to the implementation of consistent instructional practices, which limits student success.

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

Tenet Rating

D

Areas for Improvement:

- The district is beginning to develop a policy for supporting student social and emotional developmental health and academic success. The school leader reported that there are a number of partnerships that are being developed, such as the Liberty Partnership, mentoring with Marist College, and the Girls Scouts to increase the commitment of girls toward Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).
- The district provides workshops that support teacher understanding of student development. However, since the RtI program implementation has been delayed, there is no formal coordinated strategy for managing student academic and behavior needs.
- The district supports the school by encouraging teachers to develop their knowledge and expertise of student development and the various ways this can impact their academic success. However, inconsistent implementation of student social and emotional developmental health supports limit student success.

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

Tenet Rating

D

Areas for Improvement:

- A document review demonstrated the district expectations for parent engagement, which is reflected in the school's goals. These principles include a commitment to shared school improvement planning with parents and other stakeholders, but parents commented that they felt these consultations lacked authenticity since it seemed that most decisions had been decided on before they were involved. This means that arrangements are not meeting the needs of families and there has been no increase in parent involvement.
- The district designed a transition plan for those middle schools expanding to include grade five students. The parents of these students commented that these events had helped their children make the adjustment. However, staff commented that the plans had not considered the other students already at the school who were not well prepared for the change.
- The district is developing a communication policy to meet the needs of families. The website is informative and parents are kept up to date by the superintendent's blog. There are workshops planned to help parents understand changes to the curriculum, project-based learning, and supports for student social and emotional development. However, parents stated that they did not feel prepared for the release of the new report cards, as they were unable to interpret the information that they contained.
- The district cultivates partnerships that support students and encourage family partnerships with the schools. A review of documents showed that the parent center at the high school has been able to collaborate with the Ulster County Mental Health Department based on grant funds obtained by the district. Interpreters are available to support non-English speaking families and the district organizes events to promote different cultures. In spite of these activities, a large proportion of the community is not represented in either district or school decision-making bodies.
- Schools in the district do not consistently work in close partnership with families to improve student achievement, which hinder student success.

Synthesis of Recommendations across All Schools Reviewed in the District:

DISTRICT LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS:

In order for the District's strategy and practices to align with the concepts in the Effective column of the Tenets the District should:

Tenet 1: District Leadership and Capacity

- 1.1: Ensure that schools evaluate and sustain high quality staff by holding school leaders accountable for the impact of the APPR process on improving the quality of instructional practices. Develop co – teaching instructional practices to meet the needs of all students.
- 1.2: Ensure that the theory of action includes measurable targets for meeting the academic needs of all students and hold schools accountable for using these goals to rapidly improve the achievement of all student sub groups.
- 1.4: Introduce robust systems for identifying PD priorities so that there is a sustained approach to developing instructional practice.
- 1.5: Coordinate a standardized strategy for using data to monitor and improve student achievement.

Tenet 2: School Leader Practices and Decisions

- 2.1: Ensure that there is clear alignment between district and school visions in order to support student achievement.

Tenet 3: Curriculum Development and Support

- 3.1: Develop the quality of PD for teachers on the expectations of the CCLS and the instructional shifts so that students develop a full range of skills.

Tenet 4: Teacher Practices and Decisions

- 4.1: Implement a standardized assessment procedure through the district so that there is a coordinated approach to monitoring student progress at regular intervals throughout the year.

Tenet 5: Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health

- 5.1: Implement a coordinated strategy for supporting student development with systems that enable school staff to monitor data in order to meet student needs.

Tenet 6: Family and Community Engagement

- 6.1: Improve arrangements for shared planning so that parent representatives are involved in decision making, become more engaged with the school, and develop understanding of student achievement data.