



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	151102040000
District	Lake Placid Central School District
District Address	50 Cummings Road, Lake Placid, NY 12946
Superintendent	Dr. Roger P. Catania
Date(s) of Review	April 10, 2014
Schools Discussed in this Report	Lake Placid Elementary School

District Information Sheet											
District Grade Configuration	K-12	Total Student Enrollment	668	Title 1 Population	19%	Attendance Rate	95%				
Free Lunch	34%	Reduced Lunch	(Combined)	Student Sustainability	NP	Limited English Proficient	0%	Students with Disabilities	13.8%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
American Indian or Alaska Native	.01%	Black or African American	.07%	Hispanic or Latino	.03%	Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	1.9%	White	94.6%	Multi-racial	2.4%
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/Appointed to District	1	Number of Deputy Superintendents	0	Average Years Dep. Superintendents in Role in the District		# of Directors of Programs	0				
% 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	9%	Average Teacher Absences in District	2012-13 school year = 7.5 per day 2013-14 school year = 5.5 per 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		Number of Schools in Status	NP		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	31%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	25%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	96.8%	4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	83%	6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	93.1%		

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

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
1.1	The district has a comprehensive approach for recruiting, evaluating, and sustaining high-quality personnel that affords schools the ability to ensure success by addressing the needs of their community.		X		
1.2	The district leadership has a comprehensive and explicit theory of action about school culture that communicates high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents.			X	
1.3	The district is organized and allocates resources (financial, staff support, materials, etc.) in a way that aligns appropriate levels of support for schools based on the needs of the school community.		X		
1.4	The district has a comprehensive plan to create, deliver and monitor professional development in all pertinent areas that is adaptive and tailored to the needs of individual schools.		X		
1.5	The district promotes a data-driven culture by providing strategies connected to best practices that all staff members and school communities are expected to be held accountable for implementing.			X	
	OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 1:		E		

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

District Review – Findings, Evidence, Impact and Recommendations:

<p>Tenet 1 - District Leadership and Capacity: The district examines school systems and makes intentional decisions to identify and provide critical expectations, supports and structures in all areas of need so that schools are able to respond to their community and ensure that all students are successful.</p>	<p>Overall Tenet Rating</p>	<p>E</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 1.1: The district has a comprehensive approach for recruiting, evaluating, and sustaining high-quality personnel that affords schools the ability to ensure success by addressing the needs of their community.</p>	<p>Tenet Rating</p>	<p>E</p>

Debriefing Statement: The district has formed relationships with community organizations to assist in the recruitment and retention of new staff and has an established teacher evaluation system in compliance with the approved Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) protocol, which is both understood and implemented by district and school leaders. Professional development opportunities are provided by the district, schools, and outside agencies in support of teachers’ efforts to implement the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and are teacher driven. The district’s system for selecting and evaluating personnel, and its outreach to the wider school community to promote a shared culture where learning is prioritized, promotes staff quality, retention, and the schools’ ability to promote student success.

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

The school district has a systematic means for recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining high quality staff.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school district collaborates with community partners in order to recruit candidates to fill vacancies, such as the State University at Plattsburgh and the College of Saint Rose in Albany, as well as the local Board of Cooperative Extension (BOCES). In addition, the district places advertisements in newspapers, as well as on the online application system (OLAS), which many candidates use to search for jobs. To ensure a systematic approach to the recruiting and hiring process, the school district established a comprehensive recruiting and hiring policy in March of 2013, through which it has hired eight full-time staff. The district used this new system to conduct job searches for three school leader openings in the previous school year. The district received over 100 applications, which it considered a strong and deep pool of candidates. The new process includes the use of search teams who review and approve job descriptions of open positions as well as review the necessary qualifications of candidates. This ensures that those hired have proper credentials, as deemed by the district or New York State. The school district also created search and interview teams, which include various school and community stakeholders, to ensure that the candidates are asked questions and evaluated through a variety of different perspectives. All of these teams are trained to ensure that the questions asked are appropriate and non-discriminatory. The district

leader reported that the top candidates in all but one search accepted the school district's offer.

- The school district regularly convenes and provides on-going feedback to staff in order for them to improve and better serve the district's students. The school leaders meet once a week as the district administrative team; they also speak daily with the district leader. The district leader reported that he tries to visit each school daily, and the elementary school leader and staff stated that they see him "all of the time" and that he is frequently available. The district leader reported that he has regular conversations with all school leaders in order to gain an understanding of what is currently happening in each school, to learn what is important to the schools, and to identify the resources that may be needed for each school's success. The elementary school leader detailed how the school leader has helped him understand the district Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) system. He added that the district leaders developed an evaluation schedule for the staff and administrative team that is followed with fidelity and in accordance with the district contract.
- The district retains staff at a high rate, with little staff turnover. Over the past five years, the district has lost one percent of staff to non-retirement resignations. This high rate of staff retention has allowed the district to work with a core group of teachers to implement programs and provide the corresponding PD necessary to meet staff needs. The superintendent acknowledged that the key to staff retention is to "make the school a wonderful place for teachers to teach and students to learn," and adds that "salary is not the motivation; it is shared common values."

Impact Statement:

Effective retention, evaluation processes, and recruitment strategies enable the school district to provide students with high quality staff members.

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 has established a variety of ways to promote a culture of collaboration, the application of such expectations is uneven and vague, and the culture of high expectations has not yet permeated to all groups and subgroups of students, which is limiting high levels of success for all.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

While the school district sets goals in a collaborative process, the lack of specific measures to both determine if high expectations are systematically promoted, and to gauge progress towards the identified goals, impedes the district's ability to ensure high levels of student success.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school district has collaborated with its stakeholders to develop district-wide goals, though these goals and corresponding data points are not specific, and there was a lack of evidence that high expectations have been communicated throughout the district. One of the six district-wide goals listed in the DTSDE self-assessment is to “Promote academic improvement and enhance a culture of achievement. This goal has corresponding data points of “test scores, graduation rates, responses to survey questions, college and career outcomes, and the percentage of transfers to prep schools”. It is not possible to ascertain if this goal has been or will be met, as there is no measurable outcome established for any of these data sources in relation to the goal itself. Another goal is to, “Increase communication, inclusion, collaboration, and ownership.” The corresponding measures for this goal are, “response to survey questions and committee participation rates.” While these are appropriate measures, what is lacking are the establishment of benchmarks that would enable the school district to determine if it is making progress towards district-wide goals. By establishing measurable benchmarks and outcomes, the district would be better able to communicate with its stakeholders how the district defines high expectations.
- The school district provides a multitude of opportunities to meet with the district leader and he has embraced this communication style, developing multiple groups as a means to facilitate community involvement through several forums, including the Budgetary Focus Group and Strategic Planning Advisory Group. These groups include members of the wider school community as well as school and district personnel, which fosters family and community involvement and ownership of district decision-making. As a result, the district leadership believes that the school community understands the district’s needs, and is in a better position to support district efforts.

Impact Statement:

The lack of specific goals and benchmarks for high expectations throughout the district limits the school district’s ability to determine if it is providing high caliber services to its students and stakeholders.

Recommendation:

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

- Define what it considers are “high expectations” with its stakeholders and create corresponding outcomes attached to each of the district-wide goals to illustrate its commitment to high quality achievement.

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 a distributive decision-making model, based on the needs of the school community, to allocate financial resources and human capital. School leaders advocate for the needs of their school community, while taking into account the well-being of the district as a whole. The district’s

system for allocating resources aligned to schools' needs means that schools are adequately equipped to promote school improvement and success.

Strength:

Overall Finding:

The school district provides resources to each of its schools in a manner that promotes equity while addressing specific needs to promote student achievement throughout its district.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- According to the district leader, the school district develops a budget every year in accordance with New York State Education Department (NYSED) guidelines. He stated that he assesses the needs of the schools on a regular basis and that the school leaders communicate with the district what their needs are as they develop their budgets. As all of the school leaders are new this year, the district's business official provided them with training and feedback on how the budget process works. The district leaders also formed a Budgetary Focus Group, which met regularly and gathered input from community stakeholders. It also provided information to the wider community; in order educate them on the needs of the schools and about how resources are being used. The district leader stated that this was a valuable process and that the collaboration between the district and the community has the potential to inform the budgetary process in the future to support high student achievement.
- The district leader and school leaders determined that in order for them to better support student achievement district-wide, technology needed to be upgraded in the classrooms. Based on a needs-assessment that was conducted in each school, school and district leaders decided that technology in each school needed to be both upgraded and expanded in the form of teacher laptops, student accessibility, multi-media, and software, which benefits both regular education and special education students. As a result, teachers and students now have greater access to technology, the Internet, and software programs, such as talk to text software, which promotes multiple points of access for all learners.
- The school district has also shared staff members when a school was in need of additional staffing. For example, when a teacher assistant was needed in the elementary school, the district and school leaders moved a teaching assistant from the middle school to the elementary school. They determined that the loss of this position would have less impact at the middle school than it would at the elementary school. This sharing of resources demonstrates a district-wide approach to resource allocation.
- The district writes grants to supplement school budgets. The district obtained a school improvement grant, which was used to purchase writing and mathematics programs for the elementary school, as well as to provide supports in the form of professional development (PD) for staff members. These programs were selected because they support the Common Core Learning

Standards (CCLS) and for their potential to promote high levels of student engagement, which is in congruence with the vision of both the district and the school. The district provided training for teachers in the writing program through Columbia University’s Teachers College. Teachers are provided with opportunities to attend trainings outside of the school as well as access to specialized trainers from Teachers College who provide job-embedded coaching in the classrooms. As a result, the program has been implemented with fidelity in the elementary school classrooms. The review team who conducted classroom visitations at the elementary school corroborated this.

Impact Statement:

The ability of the district and schools to allocate resources collaboratively allows the district to make decisions that benefit all members of the school community to advance the district’s instructional program.

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 a professional development team that primarily consists of and is lead by teaching staff from the district. This team has developed a PD plan centered on the CCLS and related academic resources, as well as training based on issues unique to the schools’ students and community. The school leaders provide support in the form of staffing, time allotments, and fiscal allocations as a means to facilitate implementation of best practices. The plan results in reflective PD that is tailored to the needs of learners and teachers.

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

The school district’s PD plan allows for considerable staff input and is reflective of the needs of staff members to best meet the needs of their students.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The new district leader wanted to gain insight from staff members in terms of the development the district’s PD plan and, to this end, he developed a PD committee, which empowers staff to guide their own professional growth. The committee consists of teachers from the three district schools who work together with the district’s administrative team. The PD committee solicits input from all teaching staff and then works together to gauge the interests and ideas from the staff at large to develop the district PD plan. This ensures that the district’s PD program is driven by the needs of the staff. The committee takes into account the district’s student performance data, as well as the objectives of the Lake Placid Central School District’s (LPCSD) instructional program, and implements the plan accordingly. This school year, the main priorities in the elementary school were to implement the writing and mathematics programs, as well as to increase student engagement. The school’s targeted PD plan helped organize the school’s PD around those areas and, as a result, both programs were implemented with fidelity. The integrated intervention team (IIT) found that student

engagement was strong in every classroom visited.

- District leaders reported that a PD calendar is established in the spring before the start of the new school year, and the PD committee communicated the calendar to all staff members. The PD Committee has input into determining the number of full and half days the school will provide staff and helps to determine what specific trainings would benefit the most staff members, making the PD as targeted as possible. Following the PD trainings, staff is surveyed to determine if the training was effective; however, student achievement data for the district is not used to evaluate if the PD is having a positive impact on student achievement.
- Staff members are also provided with individualized PD, usually upon their request, which can be more specifically tailored to the content and grade level they are teaching. For example, the reading coordinator at the elementary school recently modeled a Lucy Caulkins writing lesson for several grade three teachers who requested additional support. This specialized PD provides teachers with the opportunity to see how their students react to best practice strategies modeled by another teacher.

Impact Statement:

The district PD plan provides teachers with the training necessary to provide its students with quality instruction.

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 is in the process of developing a data-driven culture to drive student learning, professional development, and the district decision-making process. Though the expectation at district and school level is that data is used to drive decisions around the implementation of the CCLS, this is not done regularly. The result of this process is a non-systematic approach to decision-making at district, school, and classroom level, which limits student achievement and the attainment of school goals.

Area for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The school district lacks overarching evaluation systems to determine if their decision-making and corresponding activities are effective at multiple levels.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Though the school district has undertaken several initiatives this school year, driven by its district-wide goals, such as the implementation of new instructional programs for the elementary school and new means to develop PD opportunities for the district staff, it lacks mechanisms to determine if these new practices are effective. The school district has formed a PD Committee made up of teachers and other district staff members, which plans PD opportunities for the entire school year.

When speaking to the district leader and some members of this committee, a weakness was identified. While there are means for all staff to contribute to the development of the annual plan and to provide feedback on the quality of the PD through surveys, there is no means to determine if the PD effectively advances the school's academic program, fostering greater student achievement. When asked if the student performance data supported the new PD format, the committee members interviewed were unable to demonstrate a proven alignment between the PD committee's decisions and activities, and improved student achievement.

- Additionally, in classroom visits and interviews with the elementary school's teachers, the IIT noted that although the teachers were aware of the student achievement data, all teachers did not consistently use this data to differentiate instruction or to modify the curriculum in order to meet student needs. Teachers could not link their decisions and activities with increased student achievement in a systematic way. Though there is anecdotal evidence to support students' academic gains, there was no concrete evidence provided to determine program effectiveness.
- The elementary school was able to show a correlation between staff implementation of Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) and a decrease in office disciplinary referrals (ODRs).

Impact Statement:

While there is some use of data to determine effectiveness in some areas, the lack of a data driven culture to determine program effectiveness limits the school district's and the schools' ability to determine if what they are doing is working as well as intended.

Recommendation:

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

- Develop systems and measurements, using student performance data, to determine if decisions and activities are promoting desired student achievement results.

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

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

The school leader receives regular and on-going support from the district office, which enables him to create a school environment that is responsive to the needs of his school community.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school district has provided the elementary school and staff with regular and on-going support with the PBIS program, which is correlated with a reduction in ODRs by half from the 2012-13 to 2013-14 school year. In interviews with the IIT, the school leader, staff members, and parents acknowledged the school’s efforts in creating a positive school culture that contributes to the well-being of all students.
- The school district supports student social and emotional well-being and academic success by providing the elementary school with student support team personnel. The elementary school has a school counselor and a reading coordinator, and shares two school psychologists. These professionals meet regularly with the school leader, as well as, with their counterparts in the middle/high school, to ensure that their activities are in alignment with both the school’s needs and the districts’ programs and vision for student support.
- The school and district leaders meet every week to discuss issues of the school district concerning academic programming, facility and fiscal management, as well as programs that support student social and emotional well-being. Each of the school leaders, all of whom are new this school year, attribute these regular meetings, coupled with regular communication with the district leader several times a week, with ensuring that activities at each school support the district’s vision. Additionally, this ensures that resource allocation decisions are based on student need. For example, through the budget process, \$7,000 was allocated for office supplies. After doing an inventory of supplies, a school leader noted that there were multiple supplies left over from the current year. This meant that the money earmarked for that purpose in the upcoming year could be shifted into the supervisory budget line for use in other needed areas such as PD. The support and guidance of the school district helped the school leader modify his budget and provide resources in a more targeted manner to better facilitate student achievement.
- The school district provides the school with in-house grant writing services, through which both of the elementary schools’ writing and mathematics programs were purchased and supported with corresponding PD. These programs allow the school to provide programs that support the CCLS to promote the academic achievement of all of its students.

Impact Statement:

The school district’s support and guidance allows the school leaders to make decisions based on student and school needs.

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:

While the district has provided some support to schools to promote CCLS adoption, the district is phasing in

CCLS adoption at a deliberately slower pace to ensure full understanding and ownership of best practices as the district gains a common understanding of good teaching practice in all areas.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The elementary school does not have a CCLS curriculum established, though the school is taking steps to implement this in time. The district leader stated that instead of trying to do too much too soon, he is allowing individual teachers to implement aspects of the CCLS which “all can agree are vital to good teaching: specifically, data, technology, and student engagement.” He reported that the district invites teachers, through summer curriculum work and during common planning time, to “look at ways to promote the CCLS and movement towards it.” He acknowledged, “Some people are doing very well, and some are moving slowly. ” He stated that he believes this to be the best way to move instructional programs forward. This process, while taking into account each person’s individual preference regarding CCLS implementation, creates uneven structures in which the CCLS are not implemented systematically. As a result, there are no norms established for what is expected in each classroom and what is left to choice.
- The vertical teacher group, consisting of teachers across various grade levels in the elementary school, reported to the IIT that there has been no curriculum mapping done across grades yet, and that the “unpacking” of the CCLS “has not taken place yet.” There is a reliance on the writing and mathematics programs, and while these programs support the CCLS, they do not constitute a curriculum.
- In an interview with special education teachers, the teachers stated that there is no school-wide expectation communicated about how to meet the needs of students with disabilities through the CCLS or regular education programming, or how this shared responsibility should be met. The special education teachers reported that the school leader has shared an expectation that all students with disabilities will be in general education and that a co-teaching model would be used next year. The lack of a CCLS curriculum that is modified based on student needs, is limiting the school’s ability to provide multiple points of access for each learner.

Impact Statement:

While the school district provides guidance in terms of how and what to teach, the lack of guidelines, expectations or a timeframe for the full implementation of a CCLS curriculum has a negative impact on the schools’ and district’s ability to meet the needs of all learners.

Recommendation:

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

- Work with school leaders to establish timeframes for component parts, as well as the entirety, of the Common Core Learning Standards to be developed and implemented in each school.

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:

While the school district collaborates with school leaders and staff members to develop a targeted PD program, it does not use data systematically to inform all of its PD decisions and follow-up support.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- In an interview with the three school leaders and the district leader, the IIT learned that the district does not have a system for linking student performance data to the district's PD process or plan. While the school and district leaders spoke about monitoring teachers' satisfaction with the PD they receive through the use of surveys, the district does not monitor the PD's direct effect on teacher practices and in turn, the change in teacher practices' effect on student achievement. While school and district leaders believe that teacher practice has improved because of PD, they indicated there was no quantitative data collected which would indicate if the PD provided to teachers has resulted in improved student achievement. Though the elementary school provides three types of regular student performance data several times a year using AIMS WEB, STAR and Fountas and Pinnell, no study has been conducted to determine if, based on new classroom practices, student growth or proficiency has increased comparatively this year over last year with the same cohort of students. This lack of systematic evaluation limits the district's ability to determine to what extent the PD process and plan are meeting the needs of all teachers effectively, and whether they, in turn, are meeting the needs of all learners.

Impact Statement:

The school district does not use student performance data systematically to inform its PD process or plan, limiting its ability to adopt changes necessitated by the identification of teacher and student learning needs.

Recommendation:

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

- Adopt a model of tying in its PD plan and process with student performance data as a means to determine the PD plan's effectiveness in meeting the needs of all teachers and learners.

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 school district provides human resources and communicates policies and protocols to ensure quality social and emotional supports for its students.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school district has a policy in which all staff members receive training in programs that promote social and emotional supports for schools and students. An example is the district-sponsored PBIS program, which provides a research-based system for social and emotional support. The district provides regular training for teachers in PBIS to support its vision of safe and orderly schools, which are conducive to teaching and learning, and includes a character education component for all students. The school district has also provided the elementary school with funds to implement the Primary Project, a play therapy program geared to help students in grades Kindergarten to grade three who show through the use of a screening tool emerging school adjustment difficulties, and provides them with one-on-one time with a specially trained and supervised paraprofessional. Over ten percent of the school population has benefited from this program, and it has been attributed with helping its participants deal with social and emotional issues in a productive and proactive manner. As a result of the various supports in the school, all members of the school community who were interviewed reported that they feel safe in the school, both intellectually and physically, and many students interviewed consider their school "a second home."
- The school district provides the schools with the members of their respective student support team (SST). In the elementary school, this team consists of the reading coordinator, psychologist, guidance counselor, the Committee on Special Education (CSE) chairperson, and the Title one coordinator, as well as the school's special education department. The district provides time for each school's SST to meet every month to ensure a common vision and understanding of the social and emotional needs of stakeholders. The SST provided the review team with multiple documents relating to the policies, systems, and practices concerning student social and emotional support, as well as evidence that these practices and policies are shared with all staff members throughout the year. This robust communication system, supported by the district, demonstrates that staff has the training necessary to identify students in need of additional support and are provided with appropriate resources to ensure all students are appropriately cared for.

Impact Statement:

The school district provides its schools with robust support to ensure that its staff receives appropriate training and its students receive appropriate care in regards to their social and emotional well-being.

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 school district cultivates reciprocal relationships with all groups of stakeholders leading to a welcoming environment and meaningful partnerships.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district provides multiple means for stakeholder outreach in the form of parent conferences, which over 95 percent of families attend, district committees to gain feedback in areas concerning hiring, budget development, and strategic planning, as well as regular and ongoing public sessions in which the new district and school leaders have introduced themselves to the school community. In the parent interview for the elementary school, all parents acknowledged the efforts of both the district and school leaders to be accessible, stating that with the high administrative turn over the past year, the community appreciated the efforts of the new administration to get to know the families.
- The school district has policies that incorporate the expectations for regular and on-going communication between the schools and families. In addition to parent conferences, the school leader at the elementary school hosts an informal Friday morning meeting with families and community members where the school leader provides updates on school matters and invites reciprocal feedback from families. The school district also provides a website, which keeps families and community stakeholders abreast of district activities, as well as a Parent Portal, which allows parents online access to their child's grades and other academic information. Parents interviewed stated that they appreciated these measures of communication, and most stated that they use both online resources on a regular basis to keep informed.
- The school district provided all families with a Community Resource Guide 2014, which lists all of the community groups in the area that provide supports to families and children, their services and their contact information. Additionally, the school district has formed partnerships with two county mental health agencies, which can provide immediate services in case of a mental health emergency, such as talk of or action towards self-harm. The district has provided school and community training relating to suicide prevention after several current students were identified as at risk of self-harm, and some recent graduates took their own lives. The members of the district student support services team stated that the feedback they received following this training was very positive by all attendees and they believe that the training will help staff identify students who need additional supports, thereby preventing another tragedy from occurring.

Impact Statement:

The school district provides its stakeholders with the necessary communication and supports to provide the appropriate academic, social, and emotional supports to the district's students.