



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	660900010000
District	Mount Vernon Public Schools
District Address	165 North Columbus Avenue, Mount Vernon, New York 10553
Superintendent	Ms. Judith Johnson
Date(s) of Review	May 21, 2014
Schools Discussed in this Report	Longfellow Middle School

District Information Sheet											
District Grade Configuration	K-12	Total Student Enrollment	8,192	Title 1 Population	73%	Attendance Rate	92%				
Free Lunch	56%	Reduced Lunch	7%	Student Sustainability	8%	Limited English Proficient	9%	Students with Disabilities	20%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	Black or African American	76%	Hispanic or Latino	17%	Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	1%	White	5%	Multi-racial	0%
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/Appointed to District	2	Number of Deputy Superintendents	3	Average Years Dep. Superintendents in Role in the District	2@2 1@6	# of Directors of Programs	3				
% 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	1%	Average Teacher Absences in District	10 days				
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
District in Good Standing		Focus District	x	Number of Focus School Identified by District	6	Number of SIG Recipient Schools	1	Number of Schools in Status	7		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	16%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	12%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	73%	4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	68%	6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	71%		

Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA			
0	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	X	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
	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			
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: DEVELOPING			D	

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>D</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>D</p>

Debriefing Statement: The district has prioritized and developed a multi-step process for the recruitment and selection of highly qualified personnel. However, a comprehensive plan, inclusive of new partnerships with institutes of higher education, is still in development. As a result, they are working toward building a workforce to effectively address all student needs.

Overall Finding:

The district does not yet have a comprehensive plan for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified personnel.

Areas for 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.)*

- At the time of the visit, the interim superintendent had served for a little less than two years. Under her leadership, the district had mobilized existing resources to address the recruitment of personnel. The district cabinet members and the director of special education all identified recruiting and retaining a high quality workforce as a primary district goal during interviews. They agreed that they were in the process of developing an action plan to ensure highly effective personnel in all schools. The superintendent and assistant superintendent for human resources described the same criteria as critical for all new positions: certification, knowledge, experience, ability to speak and write English, and expertise with technology. They also described a mismatch between staff skills and district needs in many of the current position lines. Additionally, they shared that corresponding bureaucratic and political obstacles have interfered with accelerating the needed changes in job descriptions.
- The district has utilized a retirement incentive as a strategy to recruit highly qualified teachers. This incentive enabled the district to hire 50 teachers, five principals, and seven early literacy specialists; efforts were underway to secure elementary school teachers, who are also certified in literacy. During the 2013-14 academic year, the district filled two central office leadership positions to address two student subgroups, a director of English language learners (ELL), and a director of

special education. Even with the retirement incentive, budget challenges had prevented the hiring of all of the needed positions; however, the superintendent reported that she had worked to tap existing talent in addition to the external recruitment efforts. For example, the superintendent tapped the grants administrator to assume a role of assistant superintendent of accountability, innovation, and school improvement, and a long-serving teacher in the district became the director of ELL. The superintendent also created a curriculum-focused central administrative team that prioritized time in schools working directly with principals and teachers. Other important positions had been difficult to fill including library media, and teachers of math, and earth science. Additionally, union and political variables influenced the hiring of many job postings for clerical, security, and civil service positions and this had presented a challenge for effective and comprehensive staff hiring and management.

- Observations in schools indicated that there are not rigorous systems in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of instruction. Although teachers are observed according to the criteria of the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR), timely and actionable feedback is not always given and the process is not used effectively to guide professional development (PD) planning aimed at improving instructional practices.
- The review of documents revealed a multi-step recruitment plan for 2014-15. At the time of the visit, the district had recently created a new partnership with several institutions of higher education, with a clear emphasis on preparing and employing new teachers who would be able to succeed in the district's schools. According to district staff, they were focused on canvassing "far and wide" by using consultants, going to colleges, and using electronic and print media. However, this work had just begun so it had not yet been able to ensure success. All of these steps supported the vision set forth by the superintendent and had the potential, with additional resources, full implementation and sustained effort, to support the schools being in the address of the academic needs of their school communities.
- At the time of the visit, expectations for quality and practice had increased. The superintendent instituted a process where she interviewed all final candidates for teaching positions. She explained that this was needed to ensure high quality teachers, and to build capacity of the school leadership teams in teacher selection. For example, teaching assistants are now required to have a teaching degree and teachers of ELLs and elementary school teachers are expected to have literacy degrees. As the district moves forward to bring on a permanent superintendent, the school community was mobilized to vote for the budget. This was passed and represented many of the initiatives undertaken by the interim superintendent. During the visit, aggressive recruitment was underway for a permanent superintendent, deputy superintendent, and assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, but the lack of these critical positions caused instability even amidst the strong leadership of the interim superintendent.

Impact Statement:

The plans in place have not been fully developed and/or are not robust enough to ensure schools' ability to hire and retain high quality personnel and to ensure all students' success.

Recommendation:

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

- Build upon the work started and work closely with school leadership teams to develop school based leadership capacity and to fully develop a recruitment and retention plan to ensure that all students have access to high quality personnel; develop a clear strategy to focus on staff support, development and retention.

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: The district has developed a theory of action with the school’s stakeholders. The district’s goals and objectives are currently being shared with the school community. As a result, the district is in the initial stages of ensuring high expectations and achievement for all students.

Overall Finding:

The district has an actionable theory of action, but it is not able to demonstrate its positive impact on teaching and learning.

Areas for Improvement:

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

- The district has developed a clear and actionable theory of action. Inherent in the theory are high expectations for all learners and a focus on quality teachers and school leaders, and partnerships with the community. The superintendent expressed that the work ahead is focused on accelerating student achievement, underscoring that in order to be successful and reach the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), students will have to do more not less. The district’s goals and objectives are shared with all stakeholders at the opening convocation and all staff members receive a palm card with the district’s goals and objectives. The superintendent noted that the theory of action was developed to guide the work of the central office administration and school leaders. The district also has a comprehensive document titled “Key Levers for District Improvement” with an emphasis on capacity and system building (building communication systems among staff/administrators and teachers), and the district goals and objectives are meant to guide the work of everyone else.
- The district’s theory of action, goals and objectives were discussed explicitly in all the Integrated Intervention Team’s (IIT) interviews with the district staff. A review of documents found that there is a collaborative process leading to the development of the theory of action and goals during a leadership

retreat in the summer of 2013. In addition, there is widespread and ongoing distribution of and reference to the goals in district correspondence, forums, and professional development (PD). The district has shared the expectation that all program and financial requests align to the district vision in order to be considered for approval. The superintendent noted that she facilitated 30 presentations to the Mount Vernon community to describe the work plan and accomplishments within the context of the district goals and initiatives. This work contributed to the passing of the 2014-15 school budget, which will be sufficient to enable the realization of her district improvement initiatives.

- Despite the district’s efforts, the theory of action is not translating to effective practices in all schools and in all classrooms. At the time of the visit, there was a disconnect between the district’s aspirations and school practices. Discussions in schools indicated that not all stakeholders are fully cognizant of the district’s expectations. In addition, procedures and protocols for driving forward school improvements are not effective enough in addressing weaknesses in school-wide and individual practices. Instruction is not consistently data driven and along with the curriculum is not adequately meeting the needs of all students. Consequently, the district’s theory of action is not a driving force in all schools to significantly enhance student opportunity for academic success.

Impact Statement:

The district’s theory of action, goals, and objectives have the potential to support high expectations and high achievement for all staff and students in the district, but much remains to be done for the theory of action to be translated into effective practice in all of its schools.

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 the district’s theory of action is communicated clearly to schools and that the necessary systems and supports to ensure that it is consistently applied with fidelity by monitoring and evaluating progress towards goals and objectives are in place. Take appropriate actions to make mid-course adjustments in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning to raise achievement for all students and subgroups.

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

I

Debriefing Statement: Although the district has worked to mobilize existing resources to meet the needs of the school community, the lack of increased school district collaboration, reciprocal accountability, and a systemic plan limits rigorous and sustained school improvement.

Overall Finding:

The district has assembled a strong central office leadership team and is beginning to organize and allocate resources effectively, but has not yet ensured alignment with schools and adequate allocation across schools.

Areas for Improvement:

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

- The district is “beginning to build and nurture a culture in which student achievement standards are measured for all areas of district operations.” The assistant superintendent for business and the district cabinet emphasized the lack of fiscal resources and their being faced with the question “How do we preserve and improve the quality of educational programs in a climate characterized by inadequate fiscal resources?” Within this context, the district reported that it plans to develop a three-year financial plan assuming flat or limited New York State aid resources and projected wage and benefit increases.
- During IIT interviews, the superintendent, the assistant superintendent for human resources, and the director of special education all described a process by which a needs assessment for staffing was conducted, and needed positions were created, filled, or earmarked. They had also established a staffing allocation committee consisting of human resource, and district and school administrators to support the allocation of existing and new staff positions. The district completed a performance audit on the cost of services for students with disabilities, ELLs, and the general education population for cost efficiency. They also conducted a Kindergarten through eight restructuring study, which resulted in a plan to phase in these schools beginning in the 2014-2015 academic year.
- The assistant superintendent of school improvement and the curriculum administrators identified multiple federal funding and grant funding sources that support curriculum and PD, and a process by which school requests were reviewed by the cabinet, and the curriculum and instruction department, to approve requests based on alignment with district goals. The process included ensuring that identified needs were in alignment with district goals and objectives. These resources were used to support the implementation of the CCLS, but had been minimally differentiated by schools. At the time of the visit, resources were not equitably distributed to help ensure student success.
- The work to effectively allocate resources was occurring at the time of the visit, within the context of an improving but fragile district culture that was described by the central office team as distrustful, wounded by the historic lack of continuity in district leadership, and full of hope and despair all at the same time. A few members of the district cabinet described challenges in relationships between central office and some school leaders, and concerns that some still operated in an autonomous manner without collaborating with the central office.

Impact Statement:

The resources in the district are not yet equitably aligned across all schools to promote and ensure school improvement and student success.

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 to hold school leaders fully accountable for the effective use of resources; support school leaders sharing of resources to support efficiency.

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

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: The district plans to deliver and monitor PD on CCLS-aligned curriculum and instructional practices, based on an assessment of student and staff needs. However, staff is only beginning to develop a shared understanding of quality CCLS-aligned instruction and to engage in purposeful conversation and collaboration to contribute to informing a comprehensive PD plan. The lack of such a plan limits teacher effectiveness.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district has prioritized building staff resources and capacity to support CCLS-aligned teaching and learning, and recently began providing comprehensive PD to staff, tailored to the needs of each of its schools.

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 curriculum and instruction team described a process by which student performance on statewide assessments and progress monitoring tools, staff surveys, and principal evaluations were used to determine PD priorities. The assistant superintendent for human resources described a process where she reviews all of the teacher evaluations and identifies and shares needed areas for professional learning with the curriculum and instruction team. Across all interviews, interviewees consistently identified the same priorities for PD, focusing on Common Core Engage NY modules, specific instructional strategies, and databased inquiry strategies. The district disseminates PD calendars for staff and school leaders, has engaged in a partnership with Bank Street College to support the development of teacher leaders, and tracks participation in PD offerings. Interviewees explained that the PD offerings were not yet differentiated because of the basic need to develop capacity on CCLS curriculum and instruction across the district. The curriculum and instruction team also mentioned that they were openly learning with the teachers and teaching aides as the CCLS represents new knowledge for everyone.
- The district has prioritized early literacy, literacy across the content areas, and the use of technology for PD. They use the Engage NY modules and all teachers have attended at least three training sessions on these modules. Professional development has also focused on the development of a

common understanding of what quality instruction is especially in math and English language arts, and the use of data to inform ongoing instructional improvement. Instructional walkthroughs are conducted, based on the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Evaluation, and the implementation of the Engage NY modules. The director of technology shared the work underway to provide updated technology across the district and detailed the significant amount of technology PD offered during the 2013-14 academic year to support CCLS. However, evidence from lesson observations and discussions with school leaders indicated that these efforts are not reflected in instructional practices in the classrooms. Time and money spent on PD in specific areas is not consistently leading to improvements in instruction and student achievement in target areas. Although there are some limited signs of improvement much work still needs to be done to ensure a close alignment between money spent, PD provided and quantifiable improvements in student outcomes.

- In all interviews, interviewees described signs of transforming culture where trust, continuity, and confidence in leadership had been damaged in previous years, and have started to develop during the 2013-14 school year. Through a NYSED grant award for district turnaround, the district developed new partnerships with three organizations: Bank Street College, the Annenberg Institute for School Reform (AISR), and Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (MCREL). One of the goals of the partnership is to build the leadership capacity of district and school leaders. The district utilizes consultant coaches to support the action planning process with their lowest performing schools.

Impact Statement:

The PD provided is only beginning to have an impact on instructional practices and student progress.

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 there is close alignment between the PD provided and improvements in teaching, learning and student achievement; school and district leaders should work closely to monitor and follow up on the impact of PD in the classrooms and make adjustments when and where needed.

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

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: The district leadership promotes a data-driven culture by clearly, visibly, and repeatedly communicating the expectation that staff engage in professional learning communities (PLC) focused on analysis of student data to drive instruction. Professional development for school leaders and teachers has begun to develop staff competencies in this area. However, all stakeholders have not yet established practices to adapt instruction based on an ongoing analysis of student data.

Areas for improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district is supporting the development of a data-driven culture through the identification of prioritized data analysis strategies, which are in the early stages of implementation.

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

- The district leadership team established student outcomes as a priority, which has created a sense of urgency in the district. The leadership team has set district-wide expectations for PLCs in each school and the ongoing review of student work. The district has worked with one of its partners, MCREL, to develop protocols and to set district-wide expectations for the collection, review, and analysis of data. Training has been provided to school leaders and a walkthrough protocol was designed by MCREL to monitor instructional practices. The district is beginning to share and assess data. An assessment calendar with practice Regents, and other assessments is distributed district wide. The district used the "Survey of Educator Data Use" (Wayman, Cho & Shaw) showing staff perception of an increase in three areas from December 13, 2013 to April 14, 2014, and there was no change but there were changes in four areas. Increases were seen in Data Use in Practice, Support for Data Use, and School Leadership. No change was seen in Data Effectiveness, Data Attitudes, Use of Data in Planning Instruction, or Using Data with Others.
- The use of I-ready, a web-based progress monitoring and intervention tool was widely credited with schools' beginning success with looking at student achievement and monitoring progress. Interviewees stated that school leaders were also beginning to look at data on line and that use of data to inform instructional decisions as well as to form groups has consistently increased throughout the 2013-14 school year as evidenced by walkthrough, observations, and building leadership feedback. However, evidence from lesson observations and analysis of teacher planning clearly indicated that there is still a long way to go because too few teachers are using data to guide, inform, or drive instruction and ensure that the needs of students are met. Evidence from lesson observations indicated that school leaders are not using academic achievement and progress data as a tool for determining the quality of instruction or for holding teachers accountable for the progress of the students they teach.
- A review of documents and interviews found that weekly school-based PLC/Data Driven Instruction (DDI) meetings are held at all school sites to support data-driven instruction, but interviewees confirmed varied levels of effectiveness. However, staff reported that the quality and depth of these meetings varied widely from school to school and that the outcomes of these meetings infrequently translated into adaptations to instructional practices that brought about advances in student learning and progress. Across interviews, interviewees stated that all teachers were expected to participate in PLCs but that the district was in the process of developing strategies to support implementation,

including the sharing of best practices across schools.

Impact Statement:

The data-driven practices that are shared across the district are not yet fully developed or widely implemented to support the adjustment of practices in promoting accelerated student achievement.

Recommendation:

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

- Strengthen district-level support provided to school-based PLC teams and provide opportunities for these teams to learn from each other; provide ongoing PD opportunities to support teachers' developing plans for instruction, using summative and formative assessments; rigorously monitor instruction and planning and ensure that data is used effectively to bring sustained improvements to student achievement.

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	D
--	---------------------	----------

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding: The district leaders are aware of the school leaders' vision for the school and the plans to implement that vision. The district leader provides support to address the needs of the school community, including emphasizing the district focus on early literacy efforts to ensure that explicit reading strategies are implemented.

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 school leader aligns the vision of the school with the vision of the school district. The vision is shared with all stakeholders at the beginning of the school year. The school leader has a high regard for the district leader who is described as collaborative, and supportive of the schools efforts for school improvement. The district leader ensures that an administrative team from the district that is curriculum-focused supports the school by working directly with school leaders and staff in the schools. The school leader uses the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) criteria to conduct teacher evaluation, and classroom observations. However, the process does not effectively guide professional development (PD) planning aimed at improving instructional practices for teachers.

Impact Statement:

The district leader supports the school leader and provides some resources to support the school. However, the absence of support to provide for a sustained professional development program limits the ability of the school leader to build adult capacity that is responsive to the needs of the school community.

Recommendation:

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

- Provide PD opportunities that help school leaders stay current in their instructional practices and increase their effectiveness.
- Increase the overall resources that will support the school leaders’ vision to increase student academic achievement to become more responsive to the needs of the school community.
- Devise mechanisms and structures to more fully support the school leader in a collaborative process that enables the school to design solutions to address the academic and SEDH needs of the school community.

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 leadership team is in the initial stages of working with schools to ensure CCLS alignment based on using data driven strategies.

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 of the district leader’s priorities is to incorporate literacy across the content areas. The emphasis on this work is on teaching students authentic and transferable reading and writing skills and strategies within each content area. This initiative supports the implementation of the CCLS at the school level. Curriculum experts at the district provide PD in ELA and mathematics to help teachers confirm, revise, and ultimately improve their thinking and instructional practices in these subjects. The ELA and mathematics teachers have attended PD on using the EngageNY website for ELA, which is the grade specific 3-12 curricula and includes six modules that focus on reading, writing, listening, and speaking in response to high-quality texts. Staff from the Division of Curriculum and Instruction reviews the school curriculum and monitors the implementation of the CCLS ensuring that the vision of the district is supported in the schools. The district support team provides teachers with staff

development sessions to improve instructional practices. The district also sponsors professional development in the use of data driven instruction. However, school leaders indicated that these have minimal effect on changing school practices.

Impact Statement:

The district staff provides PD opportunities, aligned to the CCLS that are in the beginning stages. However, the limited capacity of teachers to understand how the CCLS applies to curricula outside of ELA and mathematics is challenging for school leaders. This limits the school leader’s ability to ensure rigorous and coherent curricula across all subjects and grades.

Recommendation:

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

- Develop procedures to ensure that the curricula is monitored and evaluated to enable CCLS curricula to be implemented with fidelity across all grade levels for all students.
- Ensure that all teachers (and principals for that matter) receive ongoing, content-based, job-embedded professional learning opportunities in CCLS. Provide all teachers in the district with specific, content-based PD in reading instruction

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 leaders communicate explicit goals to encourage teachers’ use of best instructional practices. However, the district is in the beginning stages of having teachers plan and develop strategies based on data to engage students in rigorous academic experiences.

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 is beginning to update technology across all schools; however, based on lessons observed these efforts are not reflected in the instructional practices of the classrooms visited.
- Collaboration takes place between school and district leadership to define district-wide goals. The district provides some PD for the use of data to drive school goals and decision- making. The data to measure whether the school is achieving these goals is not disseminated in a timely manner. The school data is submitted by the school on a monthly basis; however, the data is not reviewed and discussed to provide guidelines for improvement at the school level. The district leadership team does

not meet with the school leaders to discuss the PD needs based on the school data.

Impact Statement:

Although teachers participate in common planning sessions and attend district sponsored CCLS PD, classroom instructional practices observed do not reflect CCLS aligned instruction incorporating high levels of student engagement or academic rigor based on DDI, particularly for students with disabilities.

Recommendation:

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

- Develop a comprehensive strategic plan to provide follow-up support to teachers to tailor their instructional practices focusing on data to address the academic needs of all students, including the use of technology and other enrichment activities.

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

Tenet Rating

D

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district provides monthly training in the area of SEDH for some staff and informs the school of outside agencies to assist in addressing the SEDH needs of students. However, not all staff receives PD to support students' social and emotional developmental health needs.

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 a monthly PD calendar in the area of SEDH. This is provided for teachers and student support staff who attend the monthly meetings. The district provides the student support staff with information regarding support from outside agencies that will provide services to students. These include the local law enforcement agencies, which conduct community meetings to provide interventions at the school level.

Impact Statement:

Although PD opportunities and community resources exist, the PD and follow-up supports are lacking for classroom teachers which limits students' SEDH needs consistently being met.

Recommendation:

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

- Develop a policy supported by a district-wide PD plan targeting SEDH, for all staff including classroom teachers to develop the capacity to address the SEDH needs of individuals and groups of students.

- Ensure district policies appropriately support student emotional and behavioral health, including transient students and students with disabilities.

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

D

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

There are limited district wide efforts to address parental involvement at the school level. Efforts that have been implemented do not always establish needed partnerships and promote increased parent engagement.

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 school leader coordinates parental issues within the school building staff and coordinates parental activities such as, Parent University, PTA meetings, parent involvement week, & weekly bulletins. The district works with the school and local law enforcement agencies to conduct community meetings that address conduct of students that affects the school community.
- The district’s parent web page has numerous school, district, and community resources available to inform and support parents and families.

Impact Statement:

The district comprehensive parent involvement program is in operation, but limited extension to the school communities, results in limited family involvement of families, parents and community organizations.

Recommendation:

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

- Expand communication strategies, including online systems to enable families to engage in exchange of student, school, and district information in a timely manner.
- Ensure that community resources available to support students and families are disseminated across the community.