



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	441600-01-0000
District	Newburgh Enlarged City School District
District Address	124 Grand Street, Newburgh, NY 12550
Superintendent	Ralph A. Pizzo
Date(s) of Review	May 20, 2014
Schools Discussed in this Report	Heritage Middle School, Newburgh Free Academy

District Information Sheet											
District Grade Configuration	PreK-12	Total Student Enrollment	11,028	Title 1 Population	68%	Attendance Rate	95%				
Free Lunch	58%	Reduced Lunch	10%	Student Sustainability	%NP	Limited English Proficient	14%	Students with Disabilities	14%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	Black or African American	26%	Hispanic or Latino	45%	Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	2%	White	24%	Multi-racial	1%
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/Appointed to District	3.5	Number of Deputy Superintendents	1	Average Years Dep. Superintendents in Role in the District	9 months	# of Directors of Programs	6				
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate in District	0	% Teaching Out of Certification in District	2%	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp. in District	1%	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	12	Number of SIG Recipient Schools	1 SIF	Number of Schools in Status	10		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	E/M=18% HS=78%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	E/M=15% HS=81%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	Gr 4&8 71%	4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	69%	6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	73%		

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
	White		Multi-racial
	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
X	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			
	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:				I

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>I</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: Although the district has cultivated several partnerships in an effort to address personnel issues, there is no comprehensive plan on how to evaluate and monitor personnel practices. Consequently, the district’s current approach limits the ability of the schools to address the needs of all students.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district has some policies and procedures in place for hiring, evaluating, and retaining personnel. However, the policies and procedures have not been updated and implementation is inconsistent across the district.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district has hiring policies, which have not been revised since 2009, for both classified and professional employees. The hiring process includes four phases: preparation, recruitment, interview, and closure. Although there is not a great deal of hiring currently, the district has participated in recruitment fairs, and openings are advertised on the On-Line Application System (OLAS) through the Putnam/Northern Westchester Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). A Diversity Recruitment Subcommittee is being assembled to establish a partnership with historically Black colleges and universities to help bring more diversity to the teaching ranks. Although policies are in place, district leaders reported to the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that the interview process is inconsistent across the district.
- Once teachers are hired, they are assigned a mentor who has been trained to provide support to individuals new to the district. District leaders stated that they are currently researching other mentoring programs. The district receives two grants that are part of their retention strategy: Teachers of Tomorrow, which provides stipends and tuition reimbursement for teachers in hard to fill areas, as well as a Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (STLE) grant. This grant provides support for teachers and leaders to attend leadership institutes, earn college credits for advanced degrees, and participate in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).
- Teachers are evaluated using the Danielson rubric. However, district leaders reported that the evaluation system is not implemented with fidelity across the schools in the district. They indicated

that a recalibration is needed because of the inconsistencies in implementation.

Impact Statement:

The district’s plan for hiring, evaluating, and recruiting high-quality staff has not been implemented consistently across the district. As a result, not all schools have personnel that effectively address the needs of all students.

Recommendation:

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

- Update its hiring policies, ensure they are understood by stakeholders, and require that school and district leaders adhere to them; provide a consistent mentoring program for new hires and a monitoring process to assess the effectiveness of the program
- Ensure that all staff members who evaluate teachers understand the Danielson rubric and use it consistently. Provide on-going professional development (PD) for evaluators to calibrate their findings, using the rubric, so judgments about instructional practices made across the district are uniform.

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

I

Debriefing Statement: The district has not developed a theory of action. Without a theory in place, the district is not able to communicate its vision and expectations to address constituents’ needs. As a result, not all students have the opportunity to achieve high levels of success.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district does not have an explicit theory of action that is communicated to stakeholders.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- While district leaders have high expectations for students, including increasing graduation rates and improving student achievement, these expectations have not been developed into a theory of action that can be communicated to schools, families, and the broader community. District leaders reported to the IIT that they have been attending “Strategy in Action” seminars at Harvard and understand that they must create a strategic plan with three to five goals that are agreed upon and focused on by all stakeholders. District leadership indicated that one reason for a delay in crafting a theory of action is because a new superintendent will be starting work in the district in July 2014 and that his ideas need to be incorporated into the strategic plan for the district.

Impact Statement:

The lack of an explicit theory of action around high expectations for all students results in not all students being able to achieve at high levels of success.

Recommendation:

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

- Develop a theory of action that supports a culture of high expectations for all students; design and implement a plan to communicate the theory of action to all stakeholders within the school community.

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
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Debriefing Statement: The district is in the process of attempting to align resources with the needs of the school community; school based resources are allocated through district funds and augmented with grant funding. However, resource allocation procedures and decisions are not always in keeping with school needs and improvement has not yet been achieved in all schools within the district.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

Allocation of resources does not always take into account the instructional and programmatic needs of schools within the district.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- District leaders shared with the IIT that the processes for obtaining resources have not been clearly delineated for them or for schools and any procedures that are articulated are not consistently followed. For these reasons, they indicated it is difficult to determine if resources are allocated in an equitable way across schools. It is not clear which budget allocations fall under the purview of the school leaders and which are the responsibility of the directors.
- Most decisions about allocation of funds occur at the district office. District leaders indicated to the IIT that they request input from the school leaders but the feedback they receive is inconsistent and opportunities for joint problem solving or decision making are rare. The district has been operating under severe fiscal restraints for several years; district leadership noted that they have lost funds through the state-mandated gap elimination adjustment over the last two years. When developing the budget they indicated that they have been asking themselves, “what can we cut” rather than “how can we support student achievement.” The district is in the process of attempting to change that mindset.

- The fiscal office of the district has put a system of checks and balances into place. However, that system is predominantly a bookkeeping/procedural system around matching codes and budget lines to ensure compliance.

Impact Statement:

The lack of clear procedures and structures and limited communication with school leaders regarding allocation of resources hinder school improvement efforts and success.

Recommendation:

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

- Collaboratively develop processes and protocols for assessing and deploying resources that are transparent to stakeholders; establish a monitoring system to ensure that resources are equitably distributed across the district to meet student needs.

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

I

Debriefing Statement: While the district has a PD plan, there is no formal district-wide calendar, and PD offerings are not comprehensive or aligned with the needs of the school community. Consequently, the ability of staff to meet the needs of stakeholders is hindered.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district does not have a comprehensive PD plan or formal calendar of offerings, and the PD offered within the district is disjointed. Some of the PD is focused on the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) but many of the sessions are work sessions, rather than learning sessions, for teachers.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district’s PD plan, which encompasses the school years from 2011-2014, indicates three target areas: promoting the success of students by understanding content and curriculum, using meaningful assessments and data analysis; implementing research-based instructional practices that engage and challenge learners; and nurturing and sustaining an inclusive school culture. A review of the agendas for PD sessions, which are often half day for three hours, throughout the year, indicates that the time is frequently spent accomplishing tasks, such as designing grade- level action plans or tracking lab hours or learning how to use a recording device. At one school, the agenda listed seven unrelated topics; ten minutes were allotted for each topic and the remaining thirty minutes were devoted to scoring examinations. In many schools, superintendent conference days early in the year were used for reviewing CCLS modules.

- The district does not have a formal calendar for PD throughout the year. District leaders shared that PD, especially at the secondary level, is not structured and that the program itself is not “on-going, focused, or consequential.” They indicated that for some schools, the school leaders cannot conduct follow-up because they are concentrating on their role as building manager rather than instructional leader. In addition, the school leaders may not have attended the PD sessions themselves so they may not be familiar with the content or expectations. Some school leaders have attended leadership academies at Harvard, which focused on how to craft a theory of action, how to communicate it to staff, and what initiatives can be implemented to link back to the theory of action.

Impact Statement:

The lack of a comprehensive and targeted plan with appropriate monitoring and follow-up, hinders the district’s ability to ensure that PD leads to increased teacher effectiveness.

Recommendation:

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

- Create a revised PD plan that is aligned with the district’s mission and vision and then create PD offerings that align with the plan; communicate the plan and a PD calendar to all stakeholders, alerting them to revisions as needed.
- Establish rigorous procedures to follow-up and monitor implementation of content and strategies addressed in PD sessions to ensure that student achievement is improving, based on increased teacher effectiveness.

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	I
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Debriefing Statement: The district has not communicated consistent expectations regarding the use of data to inform instruction. Data are not analyzed at the building, classroom, or student level to identify areas of need. Since the district has not fully established a system or expectations for the ongoing collection, analysis, and monitoring of data, staff do not have a deep understanding of how all students are performing. Therefore, instructional practices cannot be adequately adjusted to improve outcomes of all students.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district has not provided clear expectations concerning the use of data to inform instruction. Data are being collected in some schools and for some programs but there is little direction from the district on how results can be used to increase student achievement.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- District leaders reported to the IIT that there is a lack of urgency within the district to affect change. Using data is one of the areas that are slowly beginning to take hold across the district. One of the comments during the curriculum and instruction focus group was that teachers are just becoming familiar with the content they are expected to teach. The implication shared by participants was that this is the reason they are not differentiating with subgroups, that the instruction is not systemic, and that the collection and analysis of data is not part of the routinized plan. During the PD focus group, members shared that they are having conversations about how instruction can improve student achievement and the suggestion was that teachers can start by improving instruction and engaging students.
- Staff shared that school leaders are requesting PD on the effective use of data. The district has supplied the book, "Driven by Data." However, the district has not provided explicit expectations around the use of data to improve teaching and learning. For those school leaders and staff who are attempting to use data, there is little monitoring or accountability to the process.

Impact Statement:

The district's lack of systemic data collection and analysis and clear expectations communicated to all staff about the use of data to inform instruction hinder teachers' ability to adjust their practices to increase 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:

- Communicate its expectations for the use of data across all schools; support school leaders and staff in implementing best practices related to data in order to inform and adjust instruction.

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

I

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding: The district does not work collaboratively with the schools or provide support options to enable the school leaders to address the needs of the school community.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- School leaders indicated to the IIT that the district is reactive, not proactive, in their dealings with the school. They feel that in some respects there is a disconnect between the district and the school buildings. When the IIT asked for some examples of how the district was supportive of the school’s work, one example was from two and a half years ago, the other from three years ago. School leaders provided no recent examples of support although one school leader reported there had been many meetings focusing on the DTSDE review process.
- School leaders expressed concern about the lack of communication between the schools and the district. Often decisions that affect the school are made at the district level without conferring with the school leaders. One school leader indicated to the review team that there is a certain amount of autonomy granted from the district and that, in fact, that school does not have to “run in parallel with the other schools in the district.”

Impact Statement:

The district’s limited communication with the schools and lack of collaboration, hinder the ability of the school leaders to meet the needs of the school community and improve 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:

- Establish protocols for regular, meaningful communication with the schools, including supporting the school leaders as they create a school environment conducive to learning.

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 provides some support for the implementation of the CCLS, but the impact of its work is not leading to sustained improvements in student learning and achievement.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Schools across the district are in the process of implementing the CCLS. The district plans some superintendent conference days to enable staff to work on modules and instructional shifts. School leaders indicated to the IIT that from their perspective, the timeline the district has in place is unrealistic given the amount of work that is needed to ensure the implementation of the CCLS.
- The district provides some support for PD focusing on the EngageNY modules and the CCLS. One school leader recounted district PD near the end of last school year in which grade level teachers in

the core content areas learned more about the CCLS. School leaders indicated they were not invited to attend those sessions, leaving them at a disadvantage when attempting to offer support to their staff and monitor their progress.

Impact Statement:

Although the district is providing some curriculum support and PD around implementation of the CCLS, the inconsistency of that support results in instruction that is not challenging for all students.

Recommendation:

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

- Develop a comprehensive plan for CCLS-aligned curriculum development, including mechanisms for ensuring that all school leaders and staff obtain a common understanding of the content, skills, and instructional shifts that are required.

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

I

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

While the district provides some PD regarding instructional practices, it does not consistently consider staff and school leader needs when providing PD opportunities.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- School staff reported to the IIT that during district PD days they can count on ELA or mathematics PD to be included in the training. While other topics are offered, they are not consistently in keeping with staff needs. For example, staff members in one school indicated that they were especially interested in the collection and analysis of data and ways to use it to monitor student progress, but no PD was provided in those areas. They shared that in that school, one of the school leaders has access to data on the district level so when it is obtained, it is shared with the instructional staff. The IIT found no evidence of district follow-up to the PD that is offered to school staff.

Impact Statement:

District provided PD is not targeted to the needs of staff or monitored for consistency of implementation, so not all students are afforded rigorous learning opportunities.

Recommendation:

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

- Use data and open communication with school leaders and staff to plan and deliver PD targeted to

staff and student needs; provide follow-up activities to support all staff as they implement new material.

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

I

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district does not work collaboratively with the schools to support students' social and emotional developmental health.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- District leaders shared with the review team that individual schools have programs and/or partnerships that focus on students' social and emotional developmental health. However, the IIT found that there is limited collaboration between district and schools in this regard. School leaders specifically cited a lack of social workers in the district and felt that they now had to take on the role of social worker themselves. Additionally, the social workers that are available do not report to the school leaders so their scheduled time at the school is often limited due to other priorities.
- The IIT review of the agendas for district PD days indicated no evidence of any sessions devoted to the social and emotional development health of students.

Impact Statement:

The district does not collaborate with the schools to provide support for students' social and emotional developmental health needs or provide PD to staff to enable them to address these issues. Therefore, students not receive the support that appropriately addresses their needs.

Recommendation:

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

- Work collaboratively with the schools by providing resources and PD sessions that address students' social and emotional developmental health needs; provide follow-up for staff to enable them to appropriately address students' needs.

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:

While the district has a parent involvement and engagement policy, it does not have a systematic approach to ensure that implementation is consistent across all schools.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district's "Parent Involvement and Engagement" policy document lists ways in which parents can become involved with the district, such as volunteering at schools, attending parenting classes, and helping students at home. The policy also addresses communication issues and explains the coordination between community agencies/programs and the district. There are suggestions for parent representation, such as serving on building planning teams and joining the parent teacher organizations (PTOs). In addition, there is a list of ways that the district intends to build capacity for parent involvement, such as activities to explain the State's academic content standards, building level meetings to explain how children learn, and ways for staff to value parent contributions. This document and other examples of parent communications are translated into Spanish. While this policy, which was revised in April 2013, seems comprehensive, some district leaders report that the school community does not understand the policy. They report that it has not been communicated broadly to all stakeholders.
- School leaders shared with the IIT that they feel any parent and/or community involvement is left to the schools to initiate. Each school leader was notified of his or her Title I allocation for parental involvement and of the materials and supplies they requested. Some school leaders indicated that it is difficult to engage some parents in the school and that their interaction was limited to phone conversations.
- During the focus group interviews, district leaders provided examples of activities planned by some schools to which only twelve parents attended although at an open house at one school there were approximately 200 parents who attended the event. Thus, parental involvement in some instances is school and/or activity specific.

Impact Statement:

Although the district has a policy for family engagement, it is not well articulated to the schools and is not implemented consistently, which limits the supports needed to improve 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:

- Collaborate with school leaders to support and increase parental involvement that is specific to the culture of the each school building; monitor the success school leaders have in involving parents in school functions. Share those strategies with all schools in an effort to increase parental involvement district-wide.