



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	131500010000
District	Poughkeepsie City School District
District Address	11 College Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 1260
Superintendent	Dr. Nicole Williams
Date(s) of Review	February 18, 2014
Schools Discussed in this Report	Morse Young Elementary

District Information Sheet											
District Grade Configuration	PreK - 12	Total Student Enrollment	4,421(2012 - 2013SY)	Title 1 Population	85%	Attendance Rate	92.74%				
Free Lunch	85%	Reduced Lunch	11%	Student Sustainability	%	Limited English Proficient	11%	Students with Disabilities	14.7%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
American Indian or Alaska Native	.2%	Black or African American	55.5%	Hispanic or Latino	28.2%	Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	1.4%	White	12%	Multi-racial	2.9%
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/Appointed to District	.5	Number of Deputy Superintendents	3	Average Years Dep. Superintendents in Role in the District	7	# of Directors of Programs	4				
% 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		Average Teacher Absences in District	6.03%				
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
District in Good Standing		Focus District	x	Number of Focus School Identified by District	4	Number of SIG Recipient Schools	2	Number of Schools in Status	7		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	9.8%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	5.7%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	43.6%	4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	50.6%	6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	62.7%		

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

<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>E</p>
<p>Debriefing Statement: The superintendent and district leadership have set high expectations for core areas including academic achievement, family and community engagement, and organizational efficiency and accountability. The district has a comprehensive approach for long-term recruiting, evaluating, attracting, and sustaining high-quality personnel. They are fostering relationships with local colleges and universities to increase recruitment measures.</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district has recruitment strategies and structures for sustaining high-quality personnel. The district has identified core areas by which to measure productivity, improve the evaluation of employee performance, and provide professional development (PD) through the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). These include robust evaluation and accountability systems, clear expectations for adult performance, and targeted PD. • The district was out of compliance in the prior year with New York State law regarding APPR, but worked to rectify this situation. As a result, all personnel received compliance training, and all school leaders received training in evaluation processes in order to build staff capacity to ensure the implementation of common evaluation procedures. Interviews with district and school leaders, and a review of documents, confirmed that a training program is underway and that the district has a PD plan to support leaders' understanding of staff evaluation. This plan is both targeted and differentiated, and focuses on measures of effectiveness, frequent feedback, and opportunities to reflect on practice. Further, school leaders attended summer training, which focused on refining their PD and evaluative skills. • The district develops and implements strategies to maximize staff retention. School leaders have filled teacher vacancies from local colleges and universities, have appointed retired teachers as instructional coaches, and have appointed veteran teachers to mentor new teachers in an effort to use experienced personnel and expertise from within the community to support schools. • Schools have personnel that are able to effectively address student needs. 		
<p>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.</p>	<p>Tenet Rating</p>	<p>D</p>
<p>Debriefing Statement: There are uniform measures in place to set high expectations across the district. The</p>		

district's motto is seen and evident throughout the district. However, the ongoing-targeted support for schools is not tailored to meet the unique needs of each school and their communities.

Areas for Improvement:

- The superintendent and district leadership, including the School Board, have a clear vision and high expectations for connecting professional practices to student outcomes. The district structure has been reorganized to be more efficient, and a deputy superintendent has been appointed. District audit practices and procedures, based on performance outcomes, are implemented and aligned with district policies. Inefficiencies and inconsistencies are identified and an evaluation cycle is in place. The processes for developing and implementing the plan are translated into different languages. While the district's expectations have been widely communicated, school-wide practices are developing to align with these expectations. The review team found that the district is in the process of communicating the connection between student outcomes and improved professional practice.
- The district is developing its communication about student expectations in order to improve student outcomes.

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

D

Debriefing Statement: The district leadership team has created structures and systems for the communication of high expectations to all stakeholders. There is a developing system of providing resources and instructional feedback linking practice to student data outcomes. However, these newly devised systems have not yet translated into school improvement, consistent high levels of student engagement, or academic success.

Areas for Improvement:

- The district has structures for deploying resources to reduce waste and improve performance. The superintendent reported that a strategic district-wide data dashboard tool reviews progress in three key areas: attendance, discipline/behavior, and academic performance. Audits are established to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of practice.
- The district provides school leaders the same support for allocated resources. The Fiscal Manager reported that school leaders have limited input in the development of their budget. The human resources manager shared that as a result of resource monitoring, some elementary schools had closed and some school leaders had consolidated and moved to other schools as part of the district's strategic development.
- The district allocates resources based on key priorities that include implementing a coherent teaching and learning framework, developing system-wide targeted PD, and embedding best practices to promote the achievement of all students, all of which are connected to measurable outcomes with timeframes. However, while appropriate, measurable impact on student outcomes

is not yet seen.

- While the district is developing systems to allocate resources to support school improvement, school are not consistently implementing these resources to improve student learning.

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 has a systematic plan to create, review, monitor, and evaluate PD. There is a developing system of instructional feedback and PD with the Focused Instructional Walkthrough tool, which connects to professional practice and student data outcomes. The Academic Instructional Coaches (AICs), mentor principals, and teachers are working to align instructional practices to student outcomes.

Areas for Improvement:

- The district has a comprehensive plan to deliver and evaluate PD. District staff shared their role in APPR and in supporting teacher skill development and use of a 30-60-90 day improvement plan that frames a path for ensuring successful outcomes. Curriculum training and coaching aligned to the rubric for supporting teacher skill development is ongoing. The district has reviewed the role of AICs and mentors, who support staff and model best teaching practices based on the rubric. Reviewers found that while coaches support lesson planning, assessment aligned to the CCLS, and instructional practices, AICs reported building-wide discrepancies, misconceptions, and varied expectations held by school leaders about the AIC's role.
- The district has a wide range of PD opportunities on curriculum content areas and pedagogy. While the district's initiatives, such as CCLS implementation, are well known, the success of the implementation is inconsistent. Instructional practices in classrooms do not support the needs of all subgroups. AICs are part of the Instructional Walkthroughs, but teachers and a school leader reported that the quality and frequency of feedback varies. While district goals refer to targeted and differentiated PD and the use of assessments, PD is not tailored to the needs of individual teachers and assessments are not consistently robust or tailored to individual need.

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 has created a system to collect, share and analyze school-wide attendance, discipline, and academic data. The data dashboard system allows stakeholders access to various data sources. This is starting to create a data-driven culture where staff members and school communities are held accountable for student achievement and progress. However, follow-up support for staff members and school communities, adjusted to specific best practices that lead to high levels of student achievement and engagement is inconsistent.

Areas for Improvement:

- The superintendent identified the need to use data to drive instructional improvement and student

learning as a priority and a worked to create a district wide data dashboard. The data inquiry teams are tasked with updating and inputting the information on demographics, student teacher attendance, discipline, interventions, and academic achievement. While this promotes using data to inform practice and gives leverage to necessary change, the information is not consistently used by all stakeholders to inform change in school and instructional practices.

- District leadership is committed to a culture of accountability. Stakeholders are encouraged to use data to evaluate their practice. While curriculum development teams, behavior management teams, and English language arts (ELA) specialists support this process, schools do not consistently collect and analyze performance data, and interviews with staff demonstrated that some staff did not understand the data. Further, teachers and school leaders use many different assessments, and this hinders their ability to make comparative judgments about student achievement.
- While the district is clear about its drive for a culture of accountability, and training is underway to support staff, teacher use of data as a means to measure student progress, including student subgroups is inconsistent.

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:

- The school leader reported that the district and school leadership work collaboratively. Weekly meetings give regular opportunities to engage and discuss developments and support. Staff interviewed and a review of documents demonstrated that the district is focused on establishing a culture for learning by strengthening the instructional core, which includes teacher knowledge and skill, student engagement, and academically challenging content. The district makes clear that the goal is to ensure students are on track to meet their target, leading to college- and career-readiness. To facilitate this, the district has provided quality professional support for schools and their communities with a focus on improving instruction in order to raise student achievement.
- The district supports and promotes the school leader’s vision to nurture and sustain the school community. The district is working with school leaders to maximize existing resources to support training, consultancy, PD, and staffing. Themes have included instructional practices, developing the curriculum to align with CCLS, APPR, and putting in place accountability and evaluation systems to strengthen staff knowledge and capacity.
- As a result of the district support, school leaders are better equipped to develop and nurture their school and are able to be more responsive to the needs of their 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:

- The district provides resources, training, and support to implement the CCLS curriculum, including 21st century and college- and career-readiness skills. The superintendent has ensured all AICs are trained in the CCLS and EngageNY modules and that they provide regular coaching and help unpack modules with teachers. Although teachers are scheduled to attend PD and in-service opportunities, teachers reported that systematic training or adaptation of modules had not occurred. Further, reviewers found limited evidence in one school that teachers modify curriculum for identified subgroups or regularly share best practice.
- The district provides support to schools to help them utilize assessment data to drive instruction. However, the superintendent reported that assessments had not been used effectively, so she had scheduled additional training and support for teachers and school leaders. The integration of the arts, technology, and instructional enrichment occurs, but teachers reported that there have been cuts in foreign languages, arts, and music.
- The district works collaboratively to help teachers and school leaders understand the CCLS, and the ELA modules. However, teachers stated that materials to support the modules are electronically available, but need to be printed. While some teachers shared that PD supports their growth, others stated that a lack of coaches and time constraints limit their development.
- While the district has provided training aligned to the CCLS that includes the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities, some staff reported that the training was inconsistent and not helpful.
- The inconsistent implementation of curriculum across the district limits student achievement.

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

Tenet Rating

D

Areas for Improvement:

- The district provides school leaders and teachers opportunities to develop strategies and practices that take account of school-wide effectiveness based on data. A district-wide data dashboard provides monthly data, and reviews progress, as a diagnostic tool. All district and school leaders have received training on Focused Instructional Walks (FILWs) in order to help improve teaching and learning, which focus on reading and writing across the curriculum. While the FILWs have generated discussion and opportunities for practice to be shared and highlighted, school leaders and teachers reported that feedback was infrequent and inconsistent.

- School leaders, AICs, and teachers reported they had implemented the district-wide 30-60-90 day improvement plan and that while coaching supported some teaching needs, it was not tailored to specific PD needs.
- District and school partnership has led to focused PD on district-wide initiatives. However, the lack of follow-up to ensure that teachers provide students with rigorous learning opportunities hinders student success.

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:

- The district has policies in place and works collaboratively with schools to support student social and emotional developmental health through a variety of partnerships. Two district directors of culture and climate are working to implement peer mediation and restorative justice, while a district-wide PBIS program helps staff to establish a positive school culture and climate. Additionally, the Six Pillars character development program and the Second Step Character Count development day positively support and contribute to student social and emotional developmental health.
- The district supports families and students through partnerships with several community organizations, counseling and social workers, and instructional support teams (IST) that include a school psychologist and district family advocate. Anti-bullying and health related workshops support and inform students and the local community. Parents reported that they appreciate the superintendent's fireside chats and circles of trust where parents and students can express concerns and opinions.
- The free breakfast in the classroom program has been expanded to all elementary schools and the district has seen an increase of 250 children eating breakfast. In September a Mission Literacy book campaign and reading circles began in all grades. Vassar College works with high school students for field trips, yoga, Spanish and ESL, and peer tutoring is in place to help middle and high school students in their coursework.
- The district and its partners provide staff, students, and families the resources and opportunities to get involved in their children's education, which improves student success.

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:

- The district is developing its comprehensive family and community strategic plan. The

superintendent's Pride First 100 Days Plus initiative is used as a way to measure where the district started and where the district is moving toward in its improvement efforts, and all stakeholders adopt the district motto. The superintendent reported that her priorities for communication were to be transparent, accessible, and to establish relationships with community stakeholders. To achieve this, she has hosted community meetings throughout the city and district, developed parent/community task forces, launched a superintendent's Twitter feed, and posted a link to send email to her on the website.

- The district is cultivating partnerships with community agencies, and expects school leaders to also engage collaboratively, whether partnering with the district family advocates, holding joint workshops, or sharing school-wide events. While a review of documents demonstrated parent involvement, one school is struggling to successfully reach out to parents or to engage them in partnerships. The district's evaluation of its goals acknowledges that the district needs to improve its communication with the families by communicating in multiple languages.
- Inconsistent parent communication and engagement limit student achievement.

DISTRICT LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

Tenet 1: District Leadership and Capacity

- 1.2: Work closely with staff to ensure they adopt the district's high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents and check that teaching and learning is targeted to the needs of all students.
- 1.3: Embed systems for providing instructional feedback linked to teacher practice and student data outcomes, so that these translate into school improvement, student engagement, and academic success.
- 1.4: Ensure that school practice fully supports differentiated learning and the CCLS-aligned instructional shifts. Tailor PD to meet the needs of individual schools and teachers and ensure best practices are adopted.
- 1.5: Embed the district's culture of accountability by developing the skills of school leaders and teachers to use data as a means to understand student progress, as well as streamlining the many different models in use to ensure assessment information is comparable and measureable so that it can be used to drive improvement.

Tenet 3: Curriculum Development and Support

- 3.1: Ensure teachers are appropriately trained to effectively deliver the CCLS, including the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities; provide further support for teachers in adapting modules that meet the needs of all students and ensure PD is systematic with regular follow up, which reinforce the expectation that school leaders and teachers are held to account.

Tenet 4: Teacher Practices and Decisions

- 4.1: Implement regular feedback after the FILWs and any other evaluative procedures; check the quality, frequency, and appropriateness of PD to drive district-wide initiatives and adjust accordingly.

Tenet 6: Family and Community Engagement

- 6.1: Help schools that are struggling to engage with students and their families to find ways to outreach successfully; provide written communication about student progress and school and district-wide information in languages other than English.