



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	580235060000
District	South Country Central School District
District Address	189 N.Dunton Avenue, East Patchogue, New York 11779
Superintendent	Dr. Joseph Giani
Date(s) of Review	April 25 th 2014
Schools Discussed in this Report	Bellport High School

District Information Sheet												
District Grade Configuration	Pre-K-12	Total Student Enrollment	4808	Title 1 Population	3.07%	Attendance Rate			93.64%			
Free Lunch	38.7%	Reduced Lunch	7.11%	Student Sustainability	94.7%	Limited English Proficient	7.11%	Students with Disabilities		13.02%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population												
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.84%	Black or African American	19.1%	Hispanic or Latino	29.08%	Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander		0.15%	White	46.6%	Multi-racial	%
Personnel												
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/Appointed to District	1	Number of Deputy Superintendents	3	Average Years Dep. Superintendents in Role in the District	2	# of Directors of Programs		2				
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate in District	0	% Teaching Out of Certification in District	0	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp. in District	9	Average Teacher Absences in District						
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)												
District in Good Standing	No	Focus District	yes	Number of Focus School Identified by District	1	Number of SIG Recipient Schools		1	Number of Schools in Status	0		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	34%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	25%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	76%	4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)		79%	6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	84%		

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

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

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

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

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

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

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
4.1	The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for teachers to develop strategies and practices and addresses effective planning and account for student data, needs, goals, and levels of engagement.		X		
Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health: The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.					
#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
5.1	The district creates policy and works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and resources that positively support students' social and emotional developmental health.		X		
Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement: The school creates a culture of partnership where families, community members, and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being.					
#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
6.1	The district has a comprehensive family and community engagement strategic plan that states the expectations around creating and sustaining a welcoming environment for families, reciprocal communication, and establishing partnerships with community organizations and families.			X	

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.	Overall Tenet Rating	D
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.	Tenet Rating	E

Debriefing Statement:

The district has a planned approach for recruitment, support, and evaluation that ensures effective staffing levels for its schools. The district has a plan for supporting school leaders.

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

District leaders are purposeful in the recruitment and retention of personnel.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district leader confirmed that the district has been going through rapid changes recently, with six superintendents in position in the last seven years. However, under the current administration, an effective system for recruiting, evaluating, and sustaining high quality personnel to meet the needs of all students has been maintained and enhanced. A new system for candidate selection and interview has streamlined recruitment arrangements and ensured objectivity. The “chain of command” structure brought in by the incoming district leader (DL) has been used to create a tiered selection process for the vetting and interviewing of candidates, which has made the selection process more secure.
- The district leader stated that the district has adopted the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) teaching practice rubric as a model for teacher evaluation, involving the teaching union in the decision process in order to secure general commitment to the model. The district launched the teacher evaluation model in a well-planned and systematic manner, providing two full days at the start of the academic year to train teachers and evaluators in the use of the rubric.
- The district leader has been active in responding to the needs of schools by creating new positions and appointing key staff and teachers. The ongoing issue of outreaching to hard-to-reach families has been addressed through the appointment of a family involvement coordinator, with the appointee having the bilingual skills to meet the needs of the growing English as a Second Language (ESL) and Spanish speaking community.

Impact Statement:

The district recruits personnel that have the potential to meet the needs of students.

Statement of Practice 1.2: The district leadership has a comprehensive and explicit theory of action about school culture that communicates high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents.

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement:

While the district leadership team has articulated a plan of action to embrace all stakeholders in order to create a healthy school and district culture, it is not yet clearly understood or articulated by all groups. Staff alignment of professional practices with student outcomes based on the plan is not yet pervasive.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district’s commitment to sustained improvement is not known by all stakeholders.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Documentation and discussions indicate a well-designed range of communication channels has been established to convey the high expectations of the district leader and his team for improvements in student achievement, family engagement, and student well-being to school leaders and administrative teams. Although these expectations are clearly understood and acted upon at school leader level, having been set out by the district leader and his team as administrator action plan (AAP) goals to be adopted by all school leaders within the district, there has been a delay in full implementation at staff and teacher level.
- The student achievement objective is focused on the introduction of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the implementation of data-driven instruction (DDI). Currently, however, in the school reviewed in tandem with the district, the introduction of the CCLS is fragmented across subjects and no consistent approach appears to be in place. In some subjects and classes, an attempt is being made to address the CCLS and instructional shifts in instructional practice, while in other subjects and classes instruction shifts are not addressed.
- Similarly, with regard to DDI, the school leader, in dialogue with the district and his team, has instituted a quarterly testing program to provide data of student progress at regular intervals. At this time, it is being used for departmental curriculum review and item analysis, and has not been generally used to guide teaching and learning at an individual student level. Apart from the AAP goals, the district leader has activated a generic plan for supporting school leaders through the introduction of the Multidimensional Principal Performance Rubric. A school leader has reported to the review team that this has been an effective review framework for professional development PD.

- The district leader confirms that communication with the broader audience of stakeholders is at the development stage. The district leader has established some networks of district groups, such as the South Country Leadership Network, involving a number of community groups, churches, and interested parties. With regards the broader constituency, despite a restructured website and letters to parents in English and Spanish, the communication of the theory of action needs further development.

Impact Statement:

The lack of knowledge and understanding of the district’s theory of action prevents district leader and school leaders working in unison to raise student outcomes.

Recommendation:

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

- Develop the communication of the district’s theory of action and goals to all stakeholder groups. Work with school leaders to ensure that the CCLS and DDI become fully embedded in instructional practice.

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

Tenet Rating

E

Debriefing Statement:

The district is well organized in responding to school needs, and in seeking and obtaining relevant funding to support and implement critical initiatives, which are beginning to have an impact on improving teachers’ pedagogical skills.

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

The district allocates resources equitably to meet student needs.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district leader and his team have carried out an assessment of the needs and relevant budgeting conducted through committees at building and school leader level, as well as panels from different schools and groups. This has enabled them to target resources in response to the needs of different school communities in an open and transparent manner.
- The restructuring of the district leadership to establish assistant superintendent posts for human resources, and curriculum and instruction, has improved the quality of decision-making for

budgetary allocation throughout the district. The district leadership in conjunction with the Board of Education (BoE) has maintained the personnel levels overall and supplemented staffing levels in relation to schools' needs. To address a shortfall in the quality of science provision at elementary level, the district has funded a science organizer. In relation to the district-wide issue of improving parent engagement linked to improving students' career and college readiness, the district has directed funding for the appointment of a parent university coordinator who works with the PTAs to develop parent workshops. Although parent turnout has not been strong so far, there is confidence from the district leader that this will improve over time as these opportunities become more widely known. Documents reviewed by the IIT showed that the district has worked with schools to establish a set of specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (SMART) goals that include measurable increments in students' success.

Impact Statement:

Resources are effectively administered and distributed to promote school improvement and student success.

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 calendar for professional development based on the analysis of data in relation to critical initiatives. However, the follow-up support for professional development is inconsistent.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

Alignment between PD and improvements in student achievement and instruction are not yet established.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district has a comprehensive plan for the provision of professional development (PD) opportunities in support of the three key AAP goals. Within the scope of the implementation of the CCLS and the instructional shifts, selected staff members have attended central training and a turnkey approach to in-school delivery has been implemented to distribute knowledge across the faculty.
- Three instructional coaches have been appointed to support teachers' development towards the implementation of the CCLS and instructional shifts in lessons. The coaches model teaching, so directly making an impact upon the improvement of aspects of classroom practice. The district has distributed the coaching team across three grade groupings K-2, 3-6, and 7-12 so that, over time, all teachers will be able to access coaching expertise.
- A PD calendar has been published by the district, based on an analysis of data and of need in

relation to critical initiatives. Teachers and staff have participated in a wide and relevant range of PD in relation to the improvement of instructional practice, of student academic success, and in relation to the improvement of students' social and emotional developmental health.

- The district leader has a vision for the improvement of instructional practice that is tied closely to the CCLS model and a shift toward a student-centered teaching model. In his own words, “at the moment we have a lot of teachers who are deliverers of lessons; we want them to become facilitators of learning”. To improve the quality of social and emotional developmental health provision, the district is implementing the Intervention (RtI) model in relation to student behavior. Staff members have already participated in training. However, follow-up support for PD is not consistent. Teacher observation reports and feedback offer advice and guidance to the teacher for the improvement of instructional practice. However, there is no evidence to show that guidance has been acted upon or that follow-up visits have been made to confirm improvement. The district does not have a mechanisms to monitor the cycle of observation-guidance-improvement-observation conducted at the building level. The district leader is aware that current assessments are over-generous, but has a long-term plan to address that issue.

Impact statement:

Structures are not in place to ensure that PD is directly leading to school improvement.

Recommendation:

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

- Establish a comprehensive plan for professional development and review mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of professional development to ensure that improved instructional practices make a positive impact on student college and career readiness.

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 communicates expectations for the development and collection of data, but has not yet implemented ways of collating and translating this into practical information that can be used systematically by schools and teachers in driving a culture that spreads best practice in instruction and learning.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding

The district has been proactive in driving forward on a data-driven culture but this has not been replicated in all schools and classrooms.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- There is clear evidence to show that the district has worked with the high school to set SMART annual set the agenda for the school in terms of data awareness.
- At a targets for student performance, based upon the statistics of previous years' performance levels. This has broader level, there has been effective resourcing to support the development of a data-driven culture. An assistant district leader leads uses data to inform action planning and improving instructional practice. The district's success in being awarded a Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (STLE) grant has enabled the district to consolidate the drive towards a data-driven culture by providing the funding for the appointment of a leader for the implementation of data-driven instruction (DDI). This is needed in order to take the use of data to the next stage.
- Although the district has worked with the high school to put in place a quarterly testing program to provide regular access to student performance data, the expectation that the analysis of that data is used to create a culture of DDI has not yet been fulfilled. However, there is some evidence that student performance data is analyzed by some department and used to make curriculum adjustments. Further evidence shows that teachers have not used student performance data to make decisions about individual student progress. There is little evidence to show how the district uses the instructional shifts to make connections between DDI and student-centered instruction.

Impact statement

The district has not yet established a mechanism to promote best practice on data-driven instruction in the schools. As a result, school leaders are unable to create a common language around the data and guide teacher teams to analyze, discuss and use students data to promote the success of all student.

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 shared vision focused on student learning and a well-defined mission statement aimed at using student data from a variety of different sources to promote optimum student achievement. Empower school leaders to work collaboratively on purposeful analysis of data, and guide them in making data-based decisions at the school level. Monitor rigorously the use of data by schools to ensure that DDI is used to frame student-centered instruction and raise achievement.

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

<p>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.</p>	<p>Tenet Rating</p>	<p>E</p>
<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <p>Overall Finding: The school leader is appreciative of the level of support provided by the district leader. However, the development of a more cohesive and supportive collaboration can lead to consistent school improvement.</p> <p>Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school leader reported that he was pleased with the new district leadership (the deputy leader has been in post since July 2013 and appointed team in July/August period). In the view of the school leader, the new district <i>leader</i> has brought a strong sense of vision, leadership expertise, and a culture of teamworking. • The district has worked collaboratively with the school. An assigned assistant deputy leader (ADL) has worked directly with the school leader to help the school leader prepare the administration’s strategic plan, setting four specific goals for this academic year. The school leader was complimentary about the level of support the ADL has provided in helping him to establish a more inclusive culture within the school and one based on high expectations of student success. • The school leader reported that he has worked closely with the district in planning to build a culture of DDI at the school. The district is supportive of the school leader’s work in addressing current issues of student underperformance through the Credit Recovery program for students in danger of not graduating and the Right Reason program to help students successfully complete the Regents tests. <p>Impact Statement: The developing partnership between the district and school leader has yet to result in sustained school improvement.</p>		
<p>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.</p>	<p>Tenet Rating</p>	<p>E</p>
<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <p>Overall Finding:</p>		

The school leader, in his short time in the position, perceives the district support to be effective.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school leader reports that the district has played a major role in helping the school move forward to implementing the CCLS and introducing DDI. The district has funded staff development opportunities in English language arts (ELA), math, social studies, and languages other than English (LOTE).
- The district leadership has worked closely with the teachers’ union to help introduce New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) teaching standards as a tool for teacher appraisal. The school leader believes this is a move in the right direction and it has been linked to a systematic schedule of teacher observations covering all teachers.
- The school leader reports that district has worked closely with him to establish a committee consisting of the school leader, the link assistant DL and high school department chairs to plan the implementation of CCLS in the school and the use of data to support teaching and learning. His work has been beneficial to the work of the school, but it is too early for there to be a discernible impact on teaching and learning.

Impact Statement:

The district utilizes various supports for implementing the CCLS and help keep students in school and on the path to graduation, which can lead to sustained improvements in instruction and 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

E

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

The district leader has an instructional vision that supports CCLS, and professional development to support school leaders and teachers.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school leader reports that one of the district goals is implementing CCLS through DDI, and he has worked closely with the district, planning for it. The district has provided relevant professional development for staff and, with the school leader, has organized meetings involving the department chairs of the core areas to look at CCLS implementation. The impetus is to apply CCLS references to lesson observations and conversations with teachers on improvement of instructional practice.

- The district provided the funds for ELA and math teachers to attend the Albany conference on the use of the Tri State Rubric. There were opportunities for the attendees to share with colleagues and subsequently check lesson plans and unit plans against Tri State Rubric criteria.
- The drive from the district is on how teachers are injecting rigor into their practices and moving towards a student-driven classroom setting. The school leader reports that because of the work of the district in supporting school development, the school is moving towards the implementation of CCLS. There is now more student engagement and strategies, such as group work and pair work, are being used in lessons. Teachers are also conducting more ongoing assessment of student progress through the use of entrance and exit tickets.

Impact Statement:

As a result of supportive district leadership toward school development initiatives and willingness among all school leaders to collaboratively improve instructional practices that are aligned to CCLS, increased student engagement academic achievement are achieved.

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

Tenet Rating

E

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

The district leaders have supported the school leader's effort to provide positive behavior plans to target issues that promote positive student social and emotional developmental health needs.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district has worked with the high school to ensure a well-staffed student support team is in place, consisting of three social workers, five guidance counsellors, two psychologists, and one homeless liaison person with a district-wide remit. The school leader reports that the district has worked closely with the school to ensure funding for student social and emotional developmental health (SEDH).
- The school has been supported in introducing safeTALK, a program on suicide awareness that prepares anyone over the age of 15 to identify persons with thoughts of suicide and connects them to suicide first aid resources. All support staff have received training as well as a number of the faculty and, via the PTSA, members of the community and some students. In addition, key members of staff have been funded to become certificated trainers of safeTALK.
- With guidance from district student support services and school leader input, the school's student

support services have restructured the student referral process. The outcome has been a more professionalized process, with 100 percent of student referrals now coming through the student support services team instead of referral by parents.

- The school has been supported to establish a building-level team, looking at behavioral training, comprising the school leader and seven other members. The school leader reports that the district has been instrumental in introducing behavioral Response to Intervention (RtI) training. Funding from the district has allowed school staff to attend RtI training and a training schedule has been developed for members of staff and teachers to be trained. This is part of a major shift towards the implementation of RTI with the district schools.

Impact Statement:

Despite the school leader’s perception that the district support is effective, the social and emotional developmental health needs of students are not fully met.

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:

Partnerships between the district, school and home are still developing and are not based on a clearly articulated plan to connect families to the work being done by the district and by the schools.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The school leader reports that family engagement needs to be increased. He mentioned that although the district does not yet have a strategic plan regarding family and community engagement, it has implemented through each school’s AAP a goal focused on increasing family engagement and the participation of all families at school and in the education of their children.
- The district has encouraged the school to involve parents in the support of their children in processes, such as preparation for testing and the school has organized math test prep workshops.
- The school leader confirms that the district has directed funding for the appointment of a parent university coordinator to work with the PTSA, and sees this role as a valuable agent for change in improving the school’s aim of working with parents in raising students’ academic success and their college readiness.
- The Parent Portal continues to be maintained by the district, and this has been a valuable source of

information for parents. The district sends parents regular letters informing them of upcoming events and opportunities; these are sent out also in Spanish to meet the needs of parents who have little knowledge of English. The school also reports that the district student support service has organized a parents' forum for educational workshops, lectures and general information.

Impact Statement:

A lack of robust partnerships between school and home hinders student opportunities for academic and social 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 strategic plan with SMART goals regarding family and community engagement and ensure that the plan is implemented with fidelity and its impact on student and family outcomes monitored and evaluated systematically.