



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	412300010000
District	Utica City School District
District Address	106 Memorial Parkway, Utica, NY 13501
Superintendent	Bruce Karam
Date(s) of Review	March 28, 2014
Schools Discussed in this Report	John F. Kennedy Middle School Thomas Proctor High School

District Information Sheet											
District Grade Configuration	K-12	Total Student Enrollment	9625	Title 1 Population	56%	Attendance Rate	92.9%				
Free Lunch	77%	Reduced Lunch	6%	Student Sustainability	%	Limited English Proficient	16%	Students with Disabilities	16%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	Black or African American	26%	Hispanic or Latino	18%	Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	16%	White	37%	Multi-racial	4%
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/Appointed to District	7	Number of Deputy Superintendents	0	Average Years Dep. Superintendents in Role in the District	N/A	# of Directors of Programs	5				
% 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	5%	Average Teacher Absences in District	4 days				
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
District in Good Standing		Focus District	X	Number of Focus School Identified by District	9	Number of SIG Recipient Schools	1	Number of Schools in Status	10		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	Grade 3-8 15% High School 63%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	Grade 3-8 15% High School 23%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	75%	4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	67	6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	67		

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

District Review – Findings, Evidence, Impact and Recommendations:

<p>Tenet 1 - District Leadership and Capacity: The district examines school systems and makes intentional decisions to identify and provide critical expectations, supports and structures in all areas of need so that schools are able to respond to their community and ensure that all students are successful.</p>	<p>Overall Tenet Rating</p>	<p>D</p>
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<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>
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Debriefing Statement: The district has reduced personnel across all schools due to current fiscal constraints. District leaders liaise with specific school leaders to create communication links and provide support for staff evaluation protocols and professional development. However, staff inconsistently monitors the frequency and quality of feedback to instructors, which limits staff’s ability to effectively address the needs of all students.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

Although the district has established systems and structures to recruit and evaluate staff, fiscal cuts as well as weaknesses in evaluation systems negatively impacts the district staff’s ability to ensure all schools have personnel that effectively address the needs of all students.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Discussions with district leaders show that there are clear, established recruitment strategies and structures, which include partnerships with local colleges in Utica, and other colleges in the surrounding areas. The district leader reported that his focus is on recruiting the best personnel available. According to the school leader, although staff turn-over is low, fiscal cuts, which are out of the district’s control result in a decrease in staff each year. Discussions at the District Cabinet Interview indicated that these cuts have resulted in larger class sizes and diminished support services.
- Interviews with the superintendent and other district leaders, as well as a review of documents confirmed that training for school leaders and teacher leaders to improve their skills and knowledge in developing instructional practice is in progress. For example, the district staff links with BOCES to provide professional development (PD) on the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). School and teacher leaders have had training on how to evaluate teaching but observations in schools indicate that this has yet to prove effective in identifying and addressing weaknesses in instruction and learning or in addressing the needs and goals of all groups of students. Discussions with teachers indicated that feedback provided to them is not developmental, does not focus on effective instructional practices, and does not consistently lead to professional development (PD) offerings that address identified weaknesses.

Impact Statement:

The district staff has a plan to recruit high quality staff; however, fiscal constraints and weaknesses in the evaluations system affect the district’s ability to staff schools with personnel who effectively address student needs.

Recommendation:

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

- Develop school and teacher leaders’ understanding of evaluating instructional practices, with a focus on the needs of individuals and subgroups. When observing instructional practices, identify key areas for improvement and link them to each teachers PD program to improve teacher practices and address student needs.

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: District leadership identifies and generally communicates high expectations with most stakeholders. However, not all instructional practices and student outcomes are aligned with the district’s expectations, which hinders student achievement.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district leaders shares high expectations for students and staff, but has not ensured the expectations are consistently communicated to all stakeholders. In addition, district’s expectations are inconsistently reflected in teacher practices across schools.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district has established a consistent approach in communicating their immediate priorities with their schools. For example, "Big Picture meetings" are held at the beginning of the academic year to give all school staff vital information about the district staff’s current and future goals, expectations, and priorities. The school leaders then identify individual school priorities, which they intertwine with district goals and then include the priorities in the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP). Although some of the districts’ main priorities and objectives are communicated across school buildings, there is not enough focus on the importance of staff aligning their professional practices to student outcomes. For example, school leaders do not regularly provide feedback to teachers that inform teachers’ practices.
- Discussions with district leaders and school staff indicate that there are many languages spoken across the district and the district and school staff employs some mechanisms to facilitate

communication with families. Instructional coaches, who liaise with all schools, work with families to translate documents and newsletters when necessary to help ensure that the district's expectations are communicated widely. Individual schools have devised Data Nights to develop discussion and contact with families of English Language Learners (ELL). However, during discussions with the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT or review team) district leaders shared that parent attendance is inconsistent between schools and often low, and therefore opportunities are sometimes missed to disseminate messages of academic expectations to the widest possible audience.

- The district supports systems such as iReady, which school staff members use to collect and review student performance data. However, district staff acknowledges that the use of this data to inform instructional practice is inconsistent across schools and classrooms.

Impact Statement:

District has high expectations for student outcomes and the instructional practices of teachers. However, the district has not ensured that school practices align with student outcomes, which limits students from achieving 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:

- Ensure that all school leaders and teachers develop clear links between professional practices and student outcomes so that all students achieve at high levels of success.

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 has developed mechanisms for deploying resources and supports equally across the school communities. However, specific and unique needs of students, staff, and families are not consistently and effectively addressed to promote school improvement and success for all students.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district has some structures in place to support schools, but lacks clear practices and procedures to ensure that all resources are equitably administered to meet the needs of schools.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Discussions with district leaders and a review of documents demonstrated to the IIT that the district has some structures for organizing resources to address the needs of school communities. For example, the district supports schools staff in collecting and using data to support students. Schools

have access iReady, an electronic data system. In addition, there are structures and associated resources that focus on attendance, discipline/behavior, and academic achievement. District and school leaders spoke of structures such as school based inquiry teams (SBIT) operating in each school.

- District leaders are beginning to support school leaders in developing their roles and responsibilities relating to assessing and evaluating the quality of instructional practices within their buildings. However, district leaders do not demonstrate a clear system showing evidence of focused work leading to better achievement for individuals and subgroups such as students with disabilities or English Language Learners.
- During interviews with the IIT, district leaders shared that they look carefully at costings after examining data and identifying needs. Although district leaders reported having structures for assessing and evaluating the needs of the school communities, reviewers found limited evidence that these structures ensure that resources consistently align to the needs of schools.

Impact Statement:

Structures for deploying resources are in place. However, weaknesses in the assessment and allocation of resources hinder the district staff’s ability to ensure resources are effectively administered to promote school improvement 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:

- Ensure that rigorous and strategic procedures are put in place to identify school community needs and to target resources where they are in most need; monitor to ensure that the allocation of resources directly leads to improved instruction and achievement for different groups of students.

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
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Debriefing Statement: The district is implementing a plan to deliver and monitor PD in required and pertinent areas. In addition, teacher input and requests guide the development of the district PD plan. However, PD and follow-up support are not directly linked to improving instructional practice needs and consequently teacher effectiveness is minimized.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district staff offers PD activities to schools and there is a plan that list PD events throughout the year, which are available for all staff in schools. However, there is limited evidence that the district staff monitors and evaluates the PD to ensure PD leads to improved instructional practices that promote student

achievement.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district has a yearly plan that addresses the development of PD opportunities and is driven by the Regents Reform Agenda. The plan focuses on improving achievement through the use of data to improve instruction and ensuring that instructional practices of teachers are aligned with CCLS and contain the key instructional shifts of the CCLS for ELA and mathematics. Discussions with district staff showed that teachers received PD on instruction shifts to support ELA and mathematics. The district offers many PD opportunities, which is open to all staff in schools. In addition, district leaders reported that teachers use an electronic program to comment about the quality of PD they receive. School staff is surveyed and the data collected is then used to structure and develop a selection of PD workshops relating to teachers’ requests. Although district staff tracks attendance at these workshops, district or school leaders do not consistently follow-up, there is not enough follow up, either at the district or school level, to ensure that PD impacts positively on teacher effectiveness, particularly in relation to adapting curricula and tailoring instructional practices to meet the needs of students. The district staff has established a goal to make all schools in the district high performing; however, nine out of 12 schools in the district have been identified as focus schools.

Impact Statement:

Although the district has a clear plan for PD, district staff do not regularly monitor PD to ensure school staff implement the strategies from PD consistently across schools. As a result, the targeted PD does not yet lead 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:

- Ensure that staff monitor and evaluate the district PD plan determine the impact of PD on instructional practices and to determine additional PD needs. Adjust plan accordingly to address needs of schools district-wide.

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 leaders communicate expectations for the review and analysis of data by school staff members. Data teams meet in each school building for teachers to share and discuss student data. However, teachers are not yet using data to consistently create goals for students and address the needs of all students through the differentiation of instruction.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

Although the district leaders communicates expectations and identifies practices concerning how teachers can use data to inform their instructions, school leaders and teachers are not all held accountable for the quality of their instructional practices or the creation of goals for students. School staff inconsistently adjusts instructional practices to promote further student achievement.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Discussions with the district leaders shows there is commitment to a developing culture of accountability. District leaders reported that they communicate district expectations during meetings in individual school buildings, particularly regarding how they expect school leaders and teacher to use data. School staff collects and analyzes iReady data for ELA and mathematics and discuss these data at grade level and SBIT meetings. However, during school visits, the review team noted inconsistent approaches within schools of how teachers use data or goals for students to drive improvement.
- The District PD calendar shows that through the PD provided by the district, teachers are being encouraged to adjust their practices and include the key instructional shifts of the CCLS for ELA and mathematics in lessons. Discussions with district leaders and a review of documents indicated that teachers do consistently plan lessons to focus on the needs of individuals or subgroups. The school and district leaders do not effectively monitor the quality of instructional practices to ensure teachers' use to adjust instructional practices to promote greater student achievement.

Impact Statement:

Although the district leaders communicate their general expectations, they do not ensure staff across the district collect and use data consistently to understand how students are performing and to adjust their practices to develop goals for students, which hinders increased 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:

- Ensure that all teachers develop a deep understanding of using data to adjust their instruction and establish goals for their students, through PD and rigorous monitoring so all student and subgroups achieve.

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>D</p>
<p><u>Areas for Improvement:</u></p> <p>Overall Finding:</p> <p>District leaders speak confidently about the strategies and structures they provide to encourage school leaders to engage and consult with the school community. While district staff provides support to school leaders, these supports have not resulted in consistent approaches in the planning and monitoring of instructional practices across all schools.</p> <p>Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with the superintendent and district leaders demonstrated that the district leaders promote and encourage a reciprocal relationship with the school leaders. Although the district leaders have a vision of what is needed to improve student achievement not all of district leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the weaknesses in schools that need to be addressed urgently and rigorously to bring about improvements in student achievement. Evidence from school reviews and discussions with school staff show that not all school stakeholders are aware of the goals, including those regarding improving achievement. • Interviews with district and school leaders confirmed that district and school leaders are focusing on improved instructional practices. The district has provided PD on topics such as implementing the CCLS. Evidence from school reviews showed that school leaders inconsistently implement their systems for observing instructional practices in all schools and classrooms. In addition, procedures are not yet firmly in place to identify the aspects of instruction that are in most need of improvement and then aligning the identified weaknesses to a systematic and strategic program of PD that the district and school leaders monitors for the impact it has in all classrooms. During discussions with the IIT, district staff shared that although they are aware of the need to focus on the achievement of subgroups such as ELLs and students with disabilities, staff instructional practices do not consistently address the needs of these sub-groups. During school reviews, the IIT also found inconsistencies in the quality of teachers’ planning and delivery of instruction to address the ability levels of all students. <p>Impact Statement:</p> <p>The district has not ensured school leaders implement systems to observe, evaluate, and monitor instructional practices with fidelity, which minimizes the school staff’s ability to consistently respond to the needs of the entire school community to promote increased student achievement.</p>		

Recommendation:

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

- Ensure that district staff, school leaders, and staff work together to identify weaknesses in the planning and delivery of instructional practices. Provide additional training to school leaders to build their capacity to conduct and monitor evaluations systems with fidelity.

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 offers the schools training through their PD program to support teachers in developing curricula and delivering instruction that aligns to the CCLS. However, district and school leaders inconsistently monitor and evaluate the impact of this training on improving the quality of the instruction students’ receive.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Discussions with the superintendent, school leaders, and teachers confirmed that all teachers are supported through the district’s PD program, which includes topics such as aligning instruction to CCLS. Discussions also indicated that the district has a plan in place to support curriculum development and allocates some resources to support this program.
- Observations and discussions within schools showed that teachers are beginning to use curricula, particularly in ELA and math that align to CCLS, but not consistently across all grades. District staff, school leaders, and teachers acknowledged that some departments are further along in developing coherent, rigorous curriculum aligned to CCLS than others, which results in an uneven academic experience for students as they move through the school.
- School leaders expressed that the district leaders work collaboratively with the schools to ensure schools develop curricula that aligns to the CCLS. However, discussions with staff as well as classroom visits demonstrated that not all teachers aligns the curricula to CCLS or adjusting curricula to meet the needs of individuals and subgroups to ensure. The IIT found limited evidence from the review of documents and classroom visits of teachers’ referencing the key instructional shifts in ELA and math in their lesson plans or instruction.

Impact Statement:

The district does not routinely monitor and evaluate the work of each school. Teachers inconsistently deliver instruction that is CCLS aligned, which limits opportunities for students to receive rigorous instruction that prepares them to be college- and career-ready.

Recommendation:

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

- Regularly monitor and evaluate how successful the schools are delivering instruction that is CCLS aligned. Identify what is needed, in each school, to improve the quality of instruction students receive, to ensure they are all sufficiently challenged, and link all information gained to develop future PD.

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
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Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

Discussions between district and school leaders are continuous and district leaders provide schools with supports and strategies, such as workshops, to improve their instructional practices. However, observations of instruction show little impact of this PD.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Discussions with district leaders and school leaders and a review of the PD calendar showed that school leaders and staff have access to training opportunities to help them identify best practices and strategies. All staff members have received training related to student growth, achievement, data-driven instruction as well as the CCLS and the instructional shifts. While evidence from the school reviews indicates that some teachers are beginning to use data, practices are inconsistent across classrooms. Reviewers found that most teachers minimally refer to data in their planning or use data to adjust their instructional practices. In addition, teachers inconsistently develop short- or long term goals for individual or groups of students.
- Although the district provides follow-up support for some training for example, the implementation and alignment of CCLS, there is limited evidence, at district or school level, of any follow-up systems based on the evaluation of previous PD that is offered to school staff.

Impact Statement:

The school district's lack of monitoring of PD and systematic data support limits the ability of school leaders and their staff from providing students with consistent, rigorous learning opportunities that meet the needs of individuals and subgroups of students.

Recommendation:

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

- Provide follow-up support to teacher on effective use of data. Monitor teachers' use of PD strategies to ensure teachers use data to devise plans and deliver instruction that addresses the needs of individual student and those of sub-groups.

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

Tenet Rating

D

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

While the district provides some support to schools that focus on students' social and emotional needs, the district does not ensure that all schools implement a formal program to support the social and emotional developmental health needs of all students.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Discussions between district and school leaders and a review of the current PD plan demonstrated that the district PD program includes minimal activities that focus on the social and emotional developmental health needs of students. The district self-evaluation document showed that members of the school staff, for example, have attended Anti-Bullying programs. However, during discussions with the IIT parents and students in one of the schools reported incidences of students disrupting classes, bullying other students, and using racial slurs. However, neither teachers nor support staff identified these as issues.
- District staff ensures that schools focus generally on attendance, discipline, and academic performance for all students but observations and discussions in schools indicate that schools lack systems and structures to ensure, for example, that all students are known by an adult.
- District leaders with responsibilities for students with disabilities do not work with schools to ensure that teachers consistently address the academic, social, and emotional needs of students with disabilities in their the instructional practices. Observations during classroom visits and discussions with some school staff and parents indicated that individual education plans (IEPs), with targets, are in place for students with disabilities. However, teachers do not regularly adjust curricula to address the needs or goals of students with disabilities. In addition, teachers reported that they sometimes do not receive copies of students' IEPs.

Impact Statement:

The district has worked in schools to establish some procedures to address the social and emotional development health needs of students. However, the district has provided few training in the area of student social and emotional development health needs, which limit staff capacity to provide the optimal supports that address all students' needs.

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 district-wide policy that focuses on the delivery of PD topics to all school leaders and staff that align to student social and emotional developmental health needs and academic success. Monitor and evaluate the school staff implementation of the plan to ensure that all students learn in schools with positive cultures and climates.

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:

The district staff provides supports to encourage family engagement. However, the lack of a comprehensive family and community engagement plan limits opportunities for parents to communicate reciprocally with schools and the district in support of their children.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Discussions with the superintendent and district leaders and a review of the district self-assessment and PD plan indicates that although parents have been given much information, about a number of issues, the impact has been minimal in relation to developing partnerships with parents or enabling them to be more engaged in raising student achievement. School leaders confirmed that the district is in the process of developing a policy that outlines its strategy for promoting better parental engagement and participation in the life of individual schools as a community. The district staff reported that the district provides instructional coaches to translate documents and newsletters, when necessary. Evidence from meetings with parents and school leaders during school reviews indicated that parents do not consistently receive data from the district about how well schools are performing or information on how schools, the district, and parents can better work together for the benefit of all students.
- During school reviews, while some parents spoke positively of their engagement with staff, many parents did not. Some parents interviewed by the IIT shared that there are not regular planned opportunities for families to come into school to discuss their children’s achievement. In addition, parents reported that the most frequent contact with schools staff is phone calls from teachers to inform parents of a problem with their child. School staff reported that families have some opportunities to be involved and that school staff arranges meetings with individuals when necessary; however, parent involvement in and attendance at school events is low. A few parents, particularly those with students who had behavior issues, were pleased with the individual support

they receives, which parents reported, resulted in a change in the behavior of their children.

Impact Statement:

District and school leaders are in the early stages of developing policy for family and community engagement. Although district-wide PD focuses on parent involvement, the lack of a comprehensive plan to engage families and develop partnerships limits reciprocal communication with parents. As a result, parents do not work in close partnership with schools to provide 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:

- Develop a district-wide policy that focuses on ensuring that there are established communication links at both the district and school-level to promote partnerships with families that enable all stakeholders to work in close partnership with each other to provide supports needed to improve student achievement.