



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	022601060000
District	Wellsville Central School District
District Address	126 West State Street, Wellsville, NY 14895
Superintendent	Kimberly Mueller
Date of Review	May 15, 2014
Schools Discussed in this Report	Elementary, Middle, and High School

District Information Sheet											
District Grade Configuration	PK-12	Total Student Enrollment	1312	Title 1 Population	53%	Attendance Rate	95.3%				
Free Lunch	44%	Reduced Lunch	12%	Student Sustainability	99%	Limited English Proficient	<1%	Students with Disabilities	13.8%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.4%	Black or African American	1.6%	Hispanic or Latino	1.2%	Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	1.7%	White	94.2%	Multi-racial	0.9%
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/Appointed to District	4	Number of Deputy Superintendents	0	Average Years Dep. Superintendents in Role in the District	0	# of Directors of Programs	3 Directors: Curr. and Instr; Finance and Operations; Special Ed/Student Services				
% 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	22%	Average Teacher Absences in District	Attendance Rate: 99.9%				
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
District in Good Standing		Focus District	X	Number of Focus School Identified by District	3	Number of SIG Recipient Schools	3	Number of Schools in Status	3		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	X	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		Science Performance at levels 3 & 4		4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	X	6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)			

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
X	White		Multi-racial
X	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
	White		Multi-racial
	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
	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
	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
	Economically Disadvantaged	X	All Students
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective			
	Limited English Proficiency		

The AYP indications are based on the 2012-13 School Report Card data released (April 2014)

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: EFFECTIVE		E		

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>E</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>

Debriefing Statement: The district has a comprehensive system for recruiting high quality personnel who believe in the district’s theory of action and are able to use instructional strategies to address student needs. Newly hired staff are supported by mentors and school leaders who provide frequent, individualized feedback to ensure professional growth. Retention of staff is incentivized by ongoing professional development (PD) as well as a full tuition reimbursement program. This comprehensive approach to supporting highly qualified staff results in personnel who can effectively address student needs.

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

The district has a comprehensive approach in place for recruiting, evaluating and sustaining high quality personnel to meet the needs of the school community.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- As part of the recruitment process, the district provides notices of available positions through a variety of sources, such as the internet, the district website, newspapers, and placement offices at colleges and universities in various areas. District leaders reported to the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that they value a diversity of perspectives and that they are making a special effort to recruit highly qualified staff from outside the local vicinity. As part of the district effort, school leaders attend local and regional career fairs and take an active role in identifying and interviewing potential candidates. In addition, many student teachers from college and universities are placed in the district’s schools, which enable leaders and staff to have the opportunity to become acquainted with these individuals during their time at the school. Subsequently, student teachers who show promise and meet the needs of the school community are then recruited for openings in their areas of expertise.
- The district uses the Danielson Framework for Teaching model to evaluate staff. An observation schedule is prepared to ensure that all staff are observed formally and informally, as well as via walk-throughs. School and district leaders provide one-to-one feedback to the staff and record this feedback using the online system, “Teachscape.” District leaders indicated to the IIT that they are mindful of staff strengths and challenges and are not reluctant to move staff to ensure the best fit for the individual that will result in increased student achievement. The topics and focus of ongoing

PD are based on those areas identified during teacher evaluations/observations that require strengthening. School leaders also participate in continuous PD around the Danielson rubric so they know it well and district leaders can be assured that staff evaluations are calibrated and consistent.

- Once hired, all new teachers are mentored by experienced teachers chosen by the school leaders. The district is the recipient of a Teachers of Tomorrow grant from the New York State Education Department, which provides additional funding for low-performing schools or those schools experiencing teacher shortages. The grant provides stipends for new teachers for up to four years. In addition, when teachers enroll in a graduate program that leads to New York State certification, they receive a tuition reimbursement from the district.

Impact Statement:

The district has recruitment, hiring, and evaluation strategies and processes in place to ensure that high quality personnel are employed and retained to effectively address students’ 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: The district leadership holds high expectations for the achievement of all students. Much work has been accomplished to connect professional practices, including instructional strategies and data analysis, to student success. Although the theory of action has been communicated to the school community in a number of ways, all students are not yet successful at achieving at higher levels.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

District leaders have developed a theory of action. However, district leaders are still in the process of ensuring that all stakeholders know and understand the vision of high expectations for student achievement and are effectively engaged in achieving it.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- District leaders reported to the review team that they have used a variety of methods to communicate the theory of action to school leaders and other district staff. For example, the administrative cabinet participates in summer retreats during which time they receive PD and have the opportunity to set expectations for the next school year. District and school leaders collaborate with outside education experts (OEs) and staff from the Cattaraugus/Allegany Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to develop the district comprehensive Improvement plan (DCIP) and the school comprehensive educational plan (SCEP). Leaders engage in book studies and have the support of outside consultants who help increase leaders’ understanding of the Danielson rubric. The leaders agree about furthering the theory of action in their schools. District leaders indicated that there is evidence that the “early adopters” in the schools are striving to push students

to higher levels of success. , However, reviewers found that not all stakeholders, including teaching staff, know about the expectations or are engaged in supporting students towards higher achievement levels. In addition, currently, there are limited methods of communicating the theory of action to other constituents in the school community.

Impact Statement:

Because district leaders are still in the process of ensuring that the theory of action that supports a culture of high expectations for student achievement is effectively communicated, understood, and supported by all stakeholders, high levels of student success are limited.

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 robust plan to communicate the vision of high expectations for all students to all stakeholders.
- Monitor, through teacher observations and communication with all stakeholders, levels of understanding and actions that lead to higher levels of student 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

E

Debriefing Statement: The district has adjusted their process for allocating resources to address school needs. This new process of decentralizing the budget and basing allocations on numbers and needs of students per school has allowed the district to align resources with the goals of the district comprehensive improvement plan (DCIP). This has enabled the district to strategically allocate resources to support school improvement and success.

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

Resource allocations are made strategically to meet the needs of the school community.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- Budgets are based on student needs with allocations determined by the student population, by school needs, and by instructional programming needs. District leadership reported that when the proposed budget is being developed, district leaders meet with department heads and school leaders to learn of their needs and program requirements. Once the budget is passed, school leaders are responsible for managing their funds through a site-based practice.
- Beyond tax levy funding, the district uses its Title I, IIA, and school improvement grants predominantly for improving teacher and leadership practices, as outlined in the DCIP and SCEPs.

District leaders noted that because they recognize how critically important technology is to their students' future success, they have entered into purchase agreements with the Western New York Regional Information Center (WNYRIC) to provide 1:1 computers for all students in grades three through twelve this school year and will add additional computers for kindergarten through grade two in July 2014. This will result in all students throughout the district having their own mobile devices. To ensure that technology is used effectively in all classrooms, the district has created new positions of "technology integration coach" and "instructional support specialist" to assist with the continued implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) modules.

Impact Statement:

The district ensures that the allocation of resources is aligned with both the DCIP and the SCEPs in all schools, and makes expectations clear that there should be alignment between spending on resources and improvement to student outcomes, which promotes school improvement and 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

E

Debriefing Statement: The district has a PD plan that is aligned to the DCIP and SCEPs, which addresses the needs of the school community. Many PD opportunities are provided by onsite consultants and are listed in a comprehensive calendar for the school year. Best practices learned during PD sessions are monitored and supported by district and school leaders during teacher observations and walk-through activities.

Strengths:

Overall Finding:

Working with staff within the district and consultants from outside, the district is providing targeted PD aligned to goals and needs, as outlined in the DCIP and SCEPs for each school.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- District leadership reported that a PD team comprised of representatives from the district office and from all schools, which included two parent members, developed a comprehensive PD plan and calendar. The plan outlines PD that is aligned with district and school goals and includes data analysis, differentiated instruction, and increased student engagement. As part of the ongoing implementation of the CCLS, PD offerings include topics such as, recognition of what the CCLS looks like in classrooms, close reading, literacy instruction, formative and summative assessments, and deep inquiry into the English language arts (ELA) and mathematics modules, especially as addressed during Network Team Institute (NTI) sessions provided by the State Education Department (SED).
- School leaders were provided with in their own PD opportunities, such as working with the Danielson rubric, moving from building manager to instructional leader, and establishing SMART goals for each school. Many of these topics were chosen based on data collected from teacher

evaluations by school leaders and an analysis of all evaluations from the previous school year. PD is delivered by district and school leaders, outside consultants, and by staff acting as turnkey trainers using the materials they worked with at outside PD sessions. District leadership reported that this method of training aids in building internal capacity of staff. In addition to on-site training, staff are invited to request other PD opportunities at BOCES workshops, the Cattaraugus-Allegany Teacher Center, and national conferences targeted to their instructional and/or content area.

Impact Statement:

The PD provided by the district is targeted to best instructional practices, especially focused on the implementation of the CCLS, which promotes increased teacher effectiveness.

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

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: The district has communicated its expectations regarding the use of student data. Benchmarks and assessments are in place and data is collected and analyzed. The district is making progress for the general education population. However, teachers are not consistently using data to modify instruction to meet the learning needs of all students. Thus, the learning gap for students with disabilities continues, and the graduation rate is not raised for all students.

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district promotes a data-driven culture and provides support for teachers to use data effectively. However, teachers are not consistently using data to change instruction for students with disabilities.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district has provided a number of ways for staff to access information about student achievement, including STAR assessments for kindergarten through grade eight, AIMSweb for kindergarten through grade two, and the Scholastic Reading Inventory. Elementary teachers use running records to monitor student progress in reading. The district has put in place a new software program, *eDoctrina*, which is a centralized system for teachers to access assessment data. District leaders reported that a cadre of teachers has been trained to use *eDoctrina*, and more training and implementation are planned for the next school year. The district has made assessment tools available for all teachers.
- Although the district has communicated its expectations regarding the use of data, not all teachers are using data to improve teaching and learning. While there is some strategic grouping and re-teaching, these methods are inconsistently practiced, especially with students with disabilities. Data from State assessments indicate that, with the exception of grade three mathematics, no elementary student with disabilities scored in the proficient range. Formative testing is done within classrooms, but there is little indication that those data are used to address modifications in

curriculum and/or instruction.

Impact Statement:

The district communicates expectations concerning teachers' use of data to guide decision-making and improve instruction. However, limited training and guidance minimizes teachers' ability to adjust their practices to increase student achievement, especially for students with disabilities.

Recommendation:

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

- Provide additional training so that all staff understand how to use data to improve instruction. Develop procedures and protocols to hold staff accountable for not only collecting data but for using it to improve instruction, especially for students with disabilities in general education classes.
- Work with the BOCES special education school improvement specialist (SEIS) and district student support services to review special education programs, including the data on suspension rates for students with disabilities, to determine and address causes of poor student performance.

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:

Overall Finding:

The district leader is committed to moving school leaders from building managers to instructional leaders. To assist school leaders with this effort, the district works collaboratively with the schools and provides school leaders with support to address the instructional needs of the school community.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- School leaders reported to the review team that the district leadership is supportive of their work. Administrative meetings are held twice a month during which time the expectations for student improvement are the focus. School leaders indicated to the IIT that they understand that they are held accountable for higher student achievement, and they appreciate that they are given the latitude to implement the expectations in ways that are appropriate and will be successful in their buildings. District leadership noted that the district continues to provide PD for school leaders in a variety of ways, including further work with the Danielson Framework for Teaching, leadership training, and data-driven instruction. In addition, school leaders are given the opportunity to attend

regional and national conferences to strengthen their expertise.

Impact Statement:

The continuous support that the district provides for school leaders, along with a clear vision for student achievement, promotes student success.

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 is focused on improving instruction and provides some support for the implementation of the CCLS. However, limited short- and long-term plans for a comprehensive curriculum across kindergarten through grade twelve minimizes the ability of school leaders to implement the CCLS in schools.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- District leaders indicate that the district provides multiple opportunities for staff to develop a deeper understanding of the CCLS in ELA and mathematics. Several consultants and coaches, along with ongoing PD opportunities, help teachers use the modules provided by the State to support their instruction. Additional instructional support has been offered in guided reading, close reading, instructional shifts, and performance-based assessments, for example. School leaders cite these opportunities to enhance instruction; however, they report that there is not a broad vision for the development of curricula across the district. Rather, attention is given to implementing CCLS modules instead of recognizing that modules alone are not a curriculum. Much of the curricular planning is left to the school staff with input and decisions often made by the consultants rather than at a district level. The district leaders indicated there are plans for PD, delivered by BOCES consultants, around curriculum work in the summer of 2014.

Impact Statement:

Although the district is providing some curriculum support and PD around implementation of the CCLS, the lack of a comprehensive plan for development of curricula aligned to the CCLS in ELA, mathematics, and other content area standards, limits teachers' ability to provide students with challenging learning opportunities.

Recommendation:

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

- Establish and implement a long-term plan, with short-term interim goals, for a comprehensive curriculum from kindergarten through grade twelve. Support teachers with PD around curriculum

development, including performing gap analyses, as needed.

- Monitor periodically the written and taught curriculum, using student data to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of students in preparing them for college and career.

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

Tenet Rating

D

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district collaborates with the schools to provide PD and instructional support to teachers. However, there is limited focus on the needs of special education teachers, which limits the ability of teachers to provide students with consistently rigorous learning opportunities.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district collaborates with school leaders and staff to provide ongoing PD for teachers and leaders. A comprehensive PD plan has been developed, but without significant input from the special education staff. The plan includes specific areas of focus, targeted goals, and activities and is aligned to the SCEPs and the DCIP. While special education teachers are included in the overall PD activities, they shared with the IIT that there are few sessions devoted directly to their particular needs. Exceptions include the establishment of an action research inquiry team, work on aligning individualized education program (IEP) goals, and a focus on CCLS for integrated co-teaching staff.
- In addition to focused workshops, the district leaders reported they have also enlisted the expertise of several consultants throughout the school year. One consultant addresses the implementation of CCLS, and another consultant concentrates on strategies for student engagement. Of the thirteen consultants, both independent and from BOCES, only one worked with special education teachers to address data analysis. Teachers shared with the IIT that PD often seems unfocused to them. School leaders report they use the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) system to observe and evaluate how well the information from the PD is being implemented in individual classrooms. Leaders remarked in this context, that sometimes they observe that what has been communicated in the PD is implemented in the instruction and sometimes it is not.

Impact Statement:

While the district and school communities collaborate on the identification and implementation of PD, special education staff is not always included in the conversations; thus, their specific needs are not consistently addressed. This results in some students not being challenged with rigorous learning opportunities.

Recommendation:

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

district should:

- Ensure that all stakeholders representing student needs, including teachers of students with disabilities, collaborate to develop and implement the PD plan
- Develop and use protocols to hold staff accountable for implementing best practices and strategies learned during PD and coaching to ensure that all students are consistently provided with rigorous learning opportunities matched to their needs.

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

Tenet Rating

I

Areas for Improvement:

Overall Finding:

The district's limited collaboration with the schools hinders their ability to address the social and emotional developmental health of all students.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district is the recipient of two grants that address some social and emotional developmental health needs of students. The Community Schools Grant provides a mobile dental unit, social worker support, and parenting training, and the 21st Century Schools Grant includes extended learning, enrichment, and physical fitness opportunities for students in kindergarten through grade eight. While funds from these grants support direct services, the IIT found little evidence that PD is offered on an ongoing basis to school and district staff around students' social and emotional developmental health needs. Staff reported to the review team that social and emotional development health is not a current focus of PD and is "not a district priority."
- The district participated in the "Student Risk and Protective Factor Survey" in 2013, sponsored by the Allegany Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (ACASA). Students in grades six, eight, ten, and twelve answered a series of questions about their social and emotional health. Results showed that, for those grades, between 70 and 90 percent had been bullied at least once within the last thirty days. Half of all female students in those grades indicated that they "felt depressed most of the time." Approximately one quarter of the females in those grades reported, "They hurt themselves by cutting or burning when they were upset." Leaders at the middle school stated that they plan to review these results. The review team found no evidence of a plan in place to address these issues with staff or students.

Impact Statement:

The lack of collaboration between the district and the schools regarding students' social and emotional development health results in students not receiving the support they need to appropriately address their

needs.

Recommendation:

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

- Use the ACASA survey and other information from student support services and community agencies to identify social and emotional developmental health needs of the district's students and develop an action plan in collaboration with all stakeholders.
- Review the district PD plan and include opportunities for district and school staff to work together to develop strategies to address students' social and emotional developmental health needs.
- Provide follow-up support to staff to ensure they have the ability to implement strategies learned.

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 shares information with parents and families in a variety of ways. However, district communication is predominantly one way, district/school to home, and partnerships between the district or schools with parents and families to improve student achievement are limited.

Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:

- The district leaders reported they are committed to using technology for instruction and for communication. Information about school events and other news, including student achievements, is communicated to families on a weekly basis using social media. Monthly newsletters are posted to the district website for the entire community to view. In addition, all parents and students in grades six through twelve have accounts on the "Parent Portal" from which they can access student grades, assignments, and other pertinent information. Parents interviewed by the review teams were familiar with the Parent Portal. However, they also reported that many parents do not have access to computers or may live in areas where there is no internet service. Staff stated that next year they plan to use text messages to communicate with parents. In this rural community, there are limited organizations to work with in partnership, but there are some partnership opportunities that could be developed. The ACASA "Student Risk and Protective Factor Survey" indicated that one third of all students surveyed in grades six, eight, ten, and twelve showed a risk factor of low neighborhood attachment, which points to the need to create and support family and community partnerships.

Impact Statement:

The district does not fully support partnerships with families and community organizations, which limits ways of supporting increased student achievement, especially for the most vulnerable students and families.

Recommendation:

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

- Develop and implement a communication strategy, with shared goals of improving student achievement, which results in two-way conversations with families leading to productive partnerships that benefit all students and their families.
- Develop and implement a plan for partnerships with community organizations to address the needs of students and families.