

**School Turnaround Office**  
**Systemic Supports for District and School Turnaround Grant (SSDST)**

**YONKERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS – AUGUST 2015**

<b>School/District Background</b>	<b>Provide a brief overview of your district including location, size, demographics served, and needs of the district. Please provide an overview of why you decided to participate in this grant.</b>
	<p>Yonkers City School District (YCSD) is located in the lower Hudson Valley, immediately north of New York City. A vibrant learning community of over 26,000 students from 100 diverse cultures and nationalities in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12. It is guided by a rigorous core curriculum and innovative programs in thirty-nine schools. Students participate in learning opportunities in the classroom, with colleges and universities, museums and cultural institutions, major corporations and local businesses, as well as non-profit and community groups, and government agencies. The district's mission is to empower all students to take their place in the world as knowledgeable, competent, responsible citizens and "To Achieve Excellence Together".</p> <p>The District determined that the plan for school improvement and data inquiry should be revisited after an analysis of the reports from the NYSED interventions for the schools in accountability status and the results of the NYSED ELA and math assessments. Under Strand #1, the District departments concentrated on all of the organization's resources and mutually agreed upon coordinated goals and activities. The District and an outside consultant worked with all Priority and Focus school teams to develop an effective School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) which encompasses all available resources. Through the SSDST grant, several District departments collaborated to build administrative capacity and strengthen the district approach to school improvement by creating a better understanding of strategic planning. Weekly meetings are held to coordinate efforts and resources in the Priority and Focus schools. SCEPs are discussed in Principal evaluation meetings and during District school visits. Decisions are intentional, coordinated and data-driven.</p> <p>Members of the Division of Teaching and Learning participated in nine School Quality Reviews. A consistent comment on reports was the lack of data-driven instruction in the schools. Three District departments coordinated school improvement efforts with a goal to embed a cycle of data-driven inquiry in the Priority and Focus Schools. In addition to systemic professional development for data teams on data analysis, the District identified a second goal which was to increase the use of assessment for learning strategies in the classroom. Through the collaboration of the instruction and data departments at the District level, a sustainable system of support for the schools has been created and will remain after the grant has ended.</p>
<b>Promising Practice to be Highlighted</b>	<b>Thoroughly describe a promising practice currently taking place at your district as a direct result of the strategies through the SSDST Grant with each strand implemented. Also provide an explanation as to why this particular practice was chosen to be implemented at your district.</b>
	<p>District administration decided that the overall Districtwide Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP) needed to be revisited and aligned with the NYSED ESEA waiver requirements. In addition, the SCEPs needed to be refined and aligned to the District goals. Through this grant, all school principals were trained on the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) and strategic planning by District administration and change coaches contracted through this grant. Coaches met with the Priority and Focus school teams onsite and with the District on an ongoing basis. Summary reports were submitted to</p>

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	<p>the District after every school visit.</p> <p>The current SCEPs incorporate SMART goals based on recent data and are seen and known by all stakeholders. Decisions are intentional and designed collaboratively through leadership teams. To sustain this practice, the District assigned Central Office administrative teams to each school to review each SCEP and monitor/evaluate progress toward goals, review data and conduct school visits. These teams have an in-depth understanding of the schools and can advocate for additional human and fiscal resources for that building.</p> <p>Under Strand 4, the District Department of School Improvement, and the District Departments of Testing and Evaluation and Student Accountability worked collaboratively to design and expand the Priority and Focus School data teams. There was a need to create common systems for data analysis schoolwide. District administration from School Improvement and Testing joined a partner and conducted professional development for the data teams. That training specifically addressed the 5 step data cycle. School visits by the facilitators to provide technical assistance followed the trainings. In addition, after review of the DTSDE reports and districtwide classroom walkthrough reports, an additional focus on formative assessments was identified for staff development. The District purchased the Keeping Learning on Track program for all of the Priority and Focus Schools. The data teams received the Foundations' training. These teachers became the leaders for the Teacher Learning Communities (TLCs) at their schools. Time was allotted in all schools for the TLCs to meet and discuss strategies implemented in the classrooms. Rich discussions amongst peers were observed by school administration. The program will continue in the following school year.</p>
<p><b>Evidence</b></p>	<p><b>How do you know the practice you have described is promising and/or successful? How have you measured its effectiveness and/or success?</b></p>
	<p>The District reviewed consultant summaries from the school visits, teacher evaluations and the DTSDE reports. Positive feedback was received in terms of improved data analysis and understanding in the schools. School review teams noted data was included in the discussions in focus group interviews, displayed on data walls, and was part of the overall school decision-making process. Stakeholders referred to more than one data source during interviews and were aware of available resources and reports.</p>
<p><b>Looking Ahead</b></p>	<p><b>What are your sustainability plans and hopes for the future (both short and long-term) of your promising practice?</b></p>
	<p>The District plans to sustain all initiatives that began under this grant. Opportunities will be provided for data teams to self-report, identifying what works with whom and under what circumstances. Teams will meet and share practices across the district. Professional book talks will continue as teachers found them to be effective and a positive, collegiate learning time.</p> <p>Reference resources such as templates, trifolds and screencasts were developed to sustain the initiatives that began under this grant and will be available for the data teams. The District, in collaboration with one of the consultants, developed a Data Guide and will train the data teams on the roll-out procedures.</p> <p>Finally, teams will train parents and families on MAP data in order to create a common understanding of the reports and identify ways in which parents can support students at home.</p>

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<b>Additional documentation</b>	<b>Please provide any additional documentation/attachments/website links created/demonstrate/communicated as a result of the implementation of the SSDST grant initiatives.</b>
	YPS Screencasts and Tri-folds are available to administration and staff. See attachment for list of these resources.