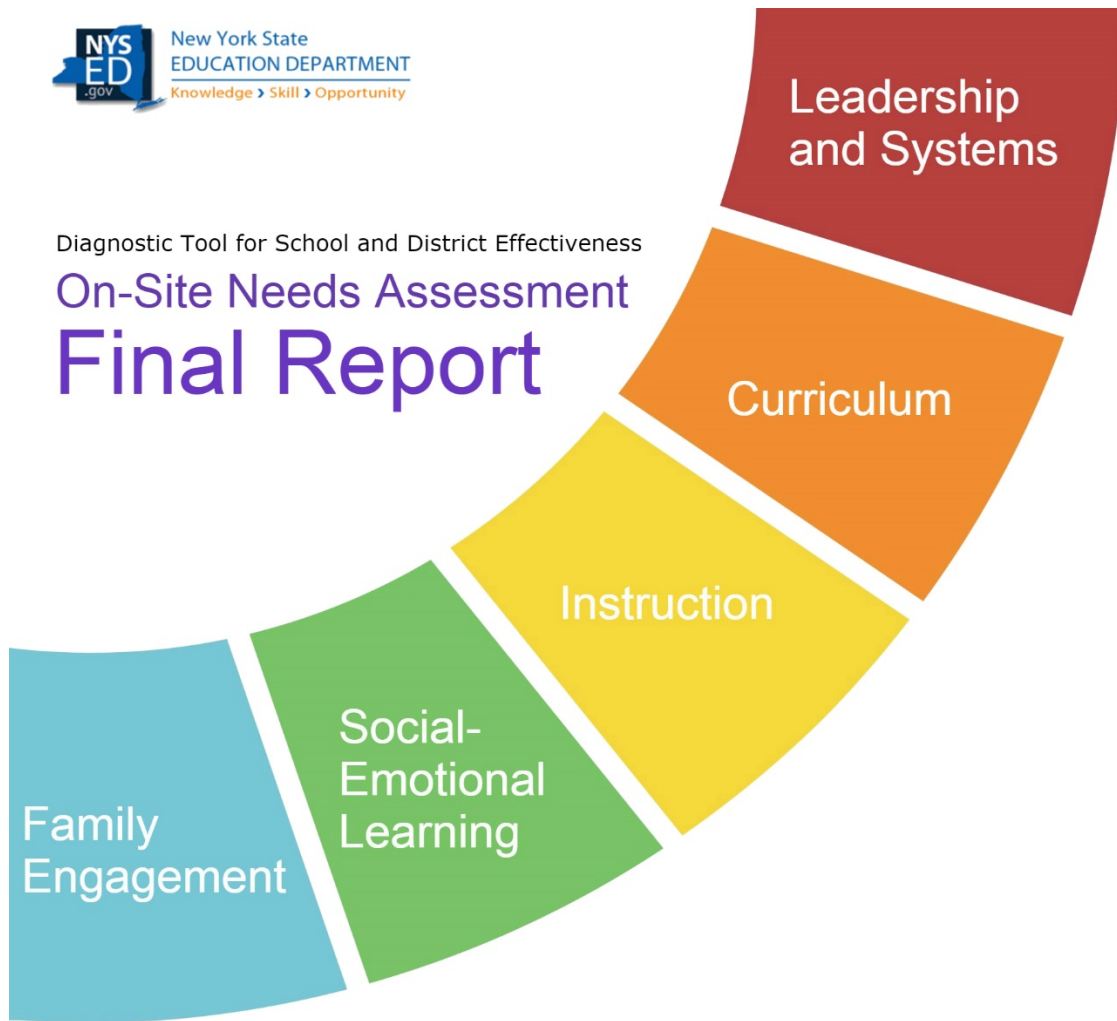


Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

Final Report



BEDS Code	12040104001
School Name	Charlotte Valley School
School Address	15611 NY-23, Davenport, NY 13750
District Name	Charlotte Valley Central School District
Principal	Thomas Molle
Dates of Visit	March 27-29, 2019



Purpose Of The Visit

This school was identified as needing additional support by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Because of this identification, NYSED arranged for an Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) to visit the school. The visit is intended to help the school identify areas of need that are making long-term success a challenge and provide several visible Quick Wins that can be accomplished and demonstrate the school’s commitment to improvement.

The report provides a critical lens to help the school best focus its efforts.

School Performance

New York State uses multiple indicators to determine the identification status of schools across the state. For each of these indicators, schools receive a number of 1 (lowest), 2, 3, or 4 (highest) that corresponds with how the school performed in relation to either other schools and/or performance targets. More information about how these levels are determined can be found at: <http://www.nysed.gov/accountability/essa-accountability-designation-materials>

The most recent results for the “All Students” group at the school are as follows:

Elementary/Middle School Performance Indicators

Composite Performance Achievement Level	Student Growth Level	Combined Composite and Student Growth Level	English Language Proficiency Level	Average ELA and Math Academic Progress Level	Chronic Absenteeism Level
2	1	1	-	1	4

High School Performance Indicators

4 Yr Grad. Rate <67%	Composite Performance Achievement Level	Average of 4-, 5-, and 6-year Graduation Rate Levels	Combined Composite Performance Achievement and Graduation Rate Level	English Language Proficiency Level	Average ELA and Math Academic Progress Level	Chronic Absenteeism Level	College, Career, Civic, Readiness (CCCR) Level
No	2	3	2	-	2	3	2

Charlotte Valley School serves 398 students in grades pre-kindergarten to twelve.

Information About The Visit

- The visit was led by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from NYSED. The team also included a district representative.
- The team visited a total of 38 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited 13 classrooms with the principal during the visit.
- Team members conducted interviews with students, staff, and parents.
- Team members examined documents provided by the school, including schoolwide data.
- In advance of the visit, 17 staff members (57 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. This school year, school leaders introduced the school's mentoring program for students in pre-kindergarten through grade six. All students have mentors chosen from the school staff. Staff and students are now beginning to discuss social-emotional learning (SEL) topics, such as bullying and career choices. Students shared that they enjoy taking part in these weekly afternoon discussions. Teachers reported that they are now more aware of SEL components and this has had a positive impact on student behavior, as evidenced by the decrease in office referrals this year.
2. The elementary grades have celebrations called "Pride in the Valley" to acknowledge students who have demonstrated school mission character objectives, such as being thoughtful of others. This school year, parents were invited to these award assemblies. This has resulted in family participation in the school community, as data show that the number of parents attending the celebrations has increased significantly over the course of the school year.
3. School leaders introduced the student safety patrol to assist with a number of tasks around the school, such as raising and lowering the flag daily and directing students in hallways during transition. Students and teachers reported that this has contributed to improved student behavior in the hallways and around the school.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **The principal should identify the incremental steps and activities that build on one another to measure progress toward larger goals.** The Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) observed that the 2018-19 School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) goals are only partially specific, measurable, ambitious, results-oriented, and timely (SMART), and the benchmarks do not have graduated steps towards SCEP goals. For example, the goal for Tenet Two is for teachers to receive monthly written actionable feedback on their curriculum implementation and instruction. Teachers reported that thus far this school year, some teachers have had one classroom visit and others have had none. As a result, progress towards achieving this and other SCEP goals is limited. Implementing prior SCEP goals and recommendations to drive school improvement around school-level processes, practices, and systems that demonstrate an impact on student achievement will need to be prioritized.

- **The principal should use data to inform school improvement decisions.** The principal said he is focusing on multiple school improvement initiatives, such as continuing to monitor the implementation of the mathematics curriculum and decreasing the opt-out rate for the New York State (NYS) assessments; however, benchmark data that is collected needs to be analyzed to identify key trends and make improvement decisions. In discussions with teachers and school leaders, the IIT learned that using data to identify the school’s strengths and weaknesses and areas for improvement in a strategic manner should be a focus area for the school. In the future, the principal should conduct an analysis of all school data to establish focused and measurable schoolwide goals, especially those related to improved student achievement.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The principal will need to organize the administration of the school so that the necessary improvements take place.** The IIT found that there is no overall coherent strategic plan for the organization and administration of the school. As a result, although a great deal of effort is being put into activities schoolwide, these are not having the desired effect of moving the school forward. Teachers and students stated that the principal is frequently called away to deal with tasks that others could handle. The principal shared that organizing his time so that he can concentrate on the key issues, such as the quality of instruction, so that student achievement can be improved, is an area of focus for improvement. Further, the IIT found there is a need to delegate responsibilities effectively in order to free the principal up to focus more fully on school improvement. A consultant was hired to help with improving instruction; however, the consultant has mainly been used for undertaking routine administrative duties.

Learning at the School

- **Teachers should use questioning to extend students’ understanding of the lesson material and to encourage them to think deeply about concepts or ideas contained in the unit of study.** The IIT observed that in many lessons, especially in mathematics and science, questions were low level and required students to provide single-word answers. Both the previous NYSED report and the 2018-19 SCEP identified the use of higher-order questioning as an area for development, and this continues to be an area in need of improvement. Interviewed teachers said that they need more professional development (PD) in how to frame questions that engage students in higher-order thinking. Students said they find that many lessons, especially in mathematics and science, do not challenge them to think deeply, and several shared that they “switch off” in these classes.
- **Teachers need to take into account students’ prior learning and levels of achievement when planning tasks.** In many observed classes, the IIT observed that students of all achievement levels were working on the same task, some of which were low-level. For example, the IIT observed high school students coloring in maps of North America showing the different stages of the last glaciation. Interviewed students reported that they found this task simple and would have liked to have learned more about the reasons behind the onset of ice ages. In other classes, all students were working on the same packet, and the students with disabilities in the class were being helped to complete the packet, even though the support teacher said they were finding the task difficult. Students shared that they feel that a lot of the work they are given is “busy work” and that they feel capable of working at a much higher level. The IIT noted that sometimes the material provided for students with disabilities was poorly matched to their abilities.

- **Teachers need to provide students with opportunities students to engage in discussion and work together.** In many observed classes in grades seven through twelve, the IIT noted that students had few opportunities to discuss the lesson content because instruction was teacher-directed. Typically, the teacher talked for most of the lesson, and students sat and occasionally some responded to questions, but the majority of students were passive. In some classrooms, desks were organized so that the arrangement did not allow students to work together in pairs or groups. In several mathematics lessons, questions were directed to the same students repeatedly. The result was that the majority of students, mostly girls, lost interest in the lesson. The IIT also noted that older students had few opportunities to take responsibility for their learning or to determine their own learning targets. In the future, the principal should conduct regular visits to mathematics and science classes in the middle and high schools to determine the degree to which lessons are student-centered, and he should provide written actionable feedback to teachers on how they can improve their instruction so that it fulfills the school’s core belief of “putting students first.”

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Students reported that the principal does not come into classrooms very often, and they think he should so that he can see how teachers are teaching.** High school students reported that when the principal occasionally comes into the classroom, their teachers teach more effectively and involve students more in the lesson. Students also commented that the principal does not see typical teacher instruction or interaction with students when he is not there. Teachers and the principal confirmed that the principal does not visit classrooms often.
- **Students and parents stated that incidents of bullying occur regularly in the school and that school leaders and teachers do not deal with them effectively.** This was confirmed by teachers, staff, and parents. Parents noted they were concerned that they had spoken to the principal about several incidents, but these had not yet been resolved satisfactorily.
- **Students reported that they would like more opportunities to be involved in the organization of the school.** For example, students said they would like the student council to organize events for students. Teachers noted that the student council has ceased to function and there are few opportunities for students to contribute to the school community.
- **Teachers shared that the present template for lesson planning is restrictive and that they would like school leaders to allow teachers to present their lesson plans in different ways.** Teachers reported that the template has to be filled in online and that some teachers would prefer to plan on paper. This sentiment was expressed by several teachers.
- **Teachers reported that they find the policy of locking classroom doors to be a nuisance because lessons are disrupted every time someone needs to get into the room.** This was confirmed by teachers and students. The principal reported that the idea of locking classroom doors was recommended by State Troopers some years ago, but the policy had not been revisited recently.
- **Students and parents reported that there is no consistent schoolwide grading system.** Students and parents reported that grades are not consistent, and as a result, students think grades are given inequitably. Further, students and teachers shared that they feel that some teachers are more generous in their grading of student work than others. Students also reported that some teachers grade essays while other do not, and interviewed teachers confirmed this. Further, the IIT observed that student homework was graded in some subjects but not in others.