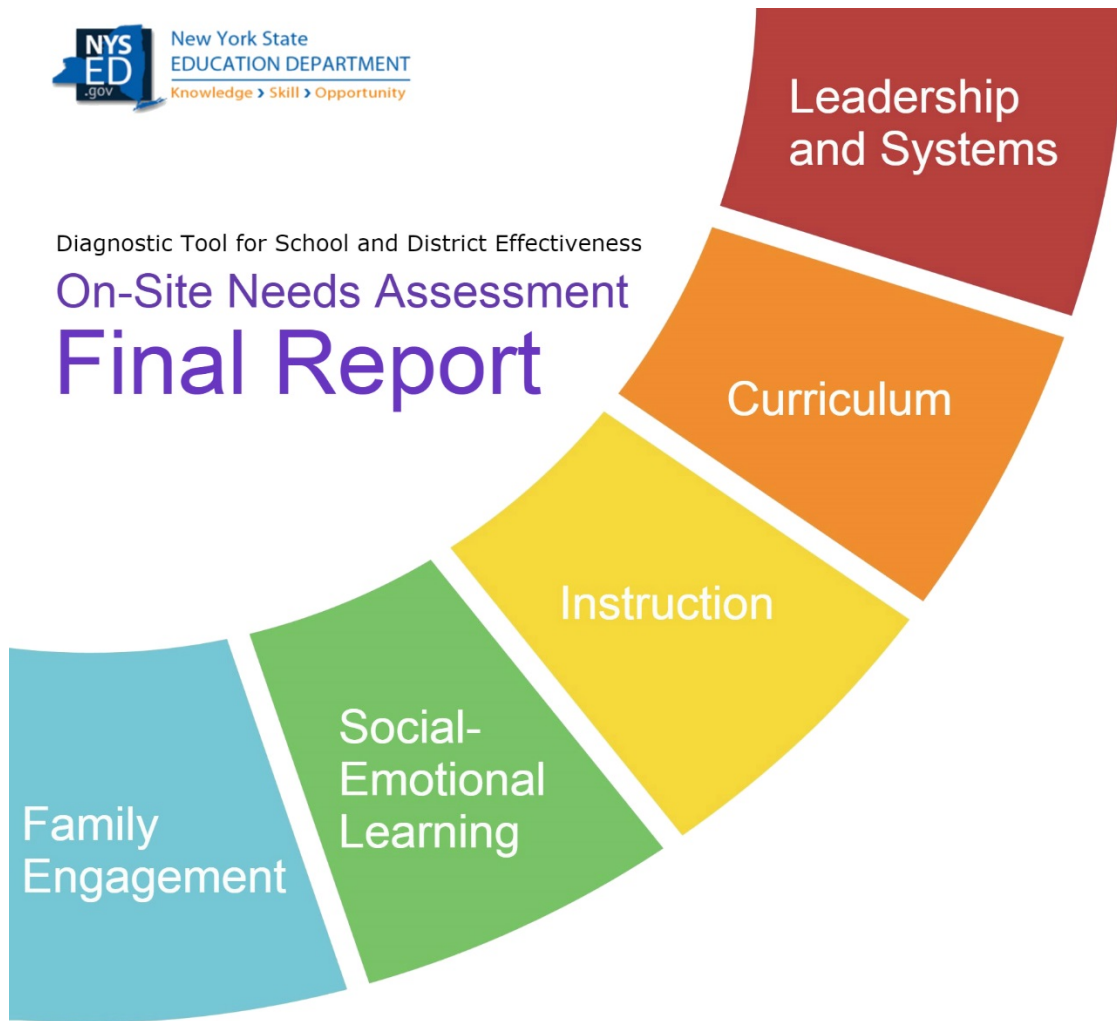


Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

# Final Report



<b>BEDS Code</b>	<b>190501040004</b>
<b>School Name</b>	<b>Coxsackie-Athens Middle School</b>
<b>School Address</b>	<b>24 Sunset Boulevard, Coxsackie, New York 12051</b>
<b>District Name</b>	<b>Coxsackie-Athens Central School District</b>
<b>Principal</b>	<b>Mr. David Proper</b>
<b>Dates of Visit</b>	<b>March 26-28, 2019</b>



## 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	3

Coxsackie Athens Middle School serves 390 students in grades five through eight.

## 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 32 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited 6 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, teacher feedback, and teacher meeting minutes.
- In advance of the visit, 29 staff members (78 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

## Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. The principal stated that in 2018-19, there has been a renewed focus on involving students in extra-curricular activities. The school offers an array of after-school activities, including a garden club, knitting club, and computer coding club. The school also offers opportunities to participate in athletics, such as baseball, softball, cross country, and track. The principal reported that this year, more than two-thirds of students are participating in at least one extra-curricular activity. Interviewed students spoke enthusiastically about these opportunities and stated that participating in these activities has increased their motivation to attend school every day.
2. The school uses an online portal that allows students and parents to access student grades and monitor academic progress. Interviewed students stated that teachers update their grades weekly, and most students reported that they regularly use the system to check their grades, see what assignments are due, and access information about what they can do to improve their work. All interviewed parents stated that they regularly access the portal to monitor their child's academic progress.
3. The principal reported that in 2018-19, one hundred percent of students are involved in community service through activities such as volunteering at the local food pantry and the Every Animal Counts program, grade-level community days, and community clean-up days. Interviewed students spoke with pride about their community service and stated that it has helped to increase awareness of their surroundings and given them a better understanding of what they can do to improve their community.

## Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

### Systems for Improvement

- **School leaders should ensure that teachers understand the purpose of the many meetings they attend and how they relate to school improvement efforts.** Each morning, teachers attend a variety of meetings, such as professional learning communities, grade-level meetings, professional development (PD) meetings, staff meetings, and department meetings. However, interviewed teachers stated that they did not understand how all of these meetings relate to school improvement efforts or result in improved instructional practice. In the future, the principal should clarify the purpose of each meeting, communicate how these processes lead to a more cohesive organization, and explain how these meetings will lead to the attainment of schoolwide goals.
- **The school should use data to inform the school's PD plan.** Currently the PD plan is developed by the school's teachers and leaders on the district and school LINKS team. Teachers indicate what training they believe they need to improve their practice, and the team develops a PD plan based on this information. However, teacher practice data and student performance data are not considered when developing the PD plan. In the future, the principal should provide the LINKS team with teacher and student data, and the team should use this data along with teacher preferences to inform the development of the PD plan.

### Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The principal should clearly communicate his expectations for implementing instructional priorities.** When asked about the principal's instructional priorities, both the principal and teachers identified student engagement as the principal's primary focus. However, the IIT found that there wasn't a shared understanding

of what student engagement should look like in the classroom, and many teachers stated that they were not sure if they were meeting the principal's expectations. In the future, the principal should clearly communicate to teachers what he considers to be essential elements of instruction, including his definition of student engagement. The principal should provide teachers with PD, targeted feedback, and on-going communication through the school's morning meeting protocol to ensure that they understand his instructional expectations.

- **The principal needs to provide teachers with actionable feedback to help them improve their practice.** Many teachers stated that although the principal conducts informal class visits, they do not receive feedback after he visits their classrooms. Additionally, in reviewing an Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) feedback document, the IIT found that most feedback included a description of what was observed during the lesson but did not offer suggestions or next steps for improvement. Interviewed teachers stated that they would like the principal to provide them with feedback after visiting their classes that includes suggestions to help them to improve their practice. In the future, the principal should visit classes regularly and provide teachers with formative feedback after each visit.

## Learning at the School

- **Teachers need to establish clear and consistent expectations for student behavior.** Interviewed students reported that in some classes, they can use ear buds to listen to music, wear hoodies, and chew gum, but in other classes, they cannot. They also stated that in some classes, students are asked to go to the office after one offense while in other classes, teachers wait until the student has been reprimanded multiple times before taking a similar action. Interviewed teachers and the principal confirmed that different teachers have different expectations for student behavior. Students reported that because behavioral expectations vary from class to class, they do not always know how they should behave. In the future, the principal should direct grade-level teams to establish clear expectations for student behavior so they can provide a more consistent environment for their students.
- **Teachers should plan lessons that lead to high levels of student engagement.** Most observed lessons were teacher-led, and most questions asked of students were low-level and required only short responses. Many interviewed students reported that they have few opportunities to participate in class discussions and as a result they are often bored. In addition, many students stated that they did not see a connection between what they were learning and their everyday lives. In the future, the principal should provide teachers with training and support in utilizing strategies to make instruction more rigorous, interesting, and relevant to learners.

## Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Families would like information about what they can do at home to help their children learn.** Interviewed families stated that while the online grading portal allows them to monitor their child's grades, they would like the school to provide them with information about what they can do at home to help their child be successful. Some parents stated that they would like teachers to provide them with additional information to help them understand their child's learning needs.