New York State EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment
Final Report

Leadership and Systems

Curriculum

Instruction

Social-Emotional Learning

Family Engagement

BEDS Code	280522030004
School Name	Northside Elementary School
School Address	55 Powell Place, Farmingdale, NY 11735
District Name	Farmingdale Union Free School District
Principal	Michael Febbraro
Dates of Visit	May 15-17, 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:

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	2	1	4

Northside Elementary School serves 458 students in kindergarten to grade five.

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 29 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited ten 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 student work.
- In advance of the visit, 52 staff members (100 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. The Keys to Success program, which has been implemented in the school for the past two school years, is an integral part of the school's culture and recognition system. The school has continued to build momentum for the program in the 2018-19 school year to foster a positive climate and culture within the school. The team noted that signage outlining the Keys to Success is displayed throughout the building and referenced consistently by the staff. The program includes opportunities for teachers to identify students who have exhibited the positive attributes of the Keys to Success for schoolwide recognition throughout the school year. Every stakeholder group interviewed by the team celebrated the success of the program and described how it has positively changed the environment of the school by giving the students a detailed framework for expected behavior.

2. The school, as well as the district, supports the teachers' learning and professional development (PD). The teachers have had multiple opportunities to receive PD and participate in collaborative learning sessions during the current school year. The principal shared that the instructional coaches, as well as teachers, have provided PD, including turnkey training, throughout the current school year. The principal shared that this focused dedication to the learning needs of the teachers will likely help teachers grow in their practice. The teachers shared that they appreciate the dedication the school and district have to their growth as educators.

3. The school is a safe and welcoming place for students, staff, and community members. All stakeholder groups stated early in their discussions with the IIT that the school is the hub of the community and that they have no worries regarding student safety. Parents said the school is an important source of information about community events and also the place where they meet, connect, and socialize with other parents and friends.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **The school leaders should develop a system to monitor and analyze fundamental aspects of the Keys to Success system.** The IIT found that Keys to Success, the school's program for recognizing students who exemplify positive character traits, is a very positive and well-received program throughout the school. However, during focus groups, students and parents separately questioned how few students are recognized during the bimonthly rallies and the frequency with which the same students are selected. For example, the team learned that some students were recognized twice within the past two years, while others were not recognized at all. When the team asked the principal about the tracking of the students who are recognized to ensure a wide variety of students receive the recognition, he stated that a list of students who were previously recognized is maintained but not shared with the staff. The principal acknowledged that maintaining a list of students who have been selected and sharing it with the staff would prevent the same students from being identified by multiple teachers. Additionally, the principal stated that tracking the expected outcomes of the Keys to Success program would help strengthen the program and allow the school to make changes or adjustments to the program as needed.
- **The school leaders should create a PD plan outlining how to support students and teachers in identifying and creating student math goals and implementing next steps to achieve those goals.** The IIT learned in

discussions with teachers and students that although the students develop learning goals in English language arts (ELA) collaboratively with their teachers, they do not engage in this practice in other content areas, such as math. The school leaders agreed that having students collaboratively develop goals in math with their teachers would provide the students with direction and focus towards improved achievement, as having a shared goal will focus students' learning and the teachers' instruction.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The school leaders should identify preferred times for potential class interruptions for each specific grade level depending upon the yearly instructional schedule.** The IIT learned in discussions with teachers that interruptions during the block-out instructional time caused by requests to provide items to or receive items from students often disrupt the students' learning. For example, classroom instruction is sometimes interrupted by requests to provide a student with messages from the office, to pick up a lunch that was dropped off, or to retrieve a musical instrument. The school leader stated that the number of interruptions can be reduced, but not all interruptions can be prevented. The school leaders acknowledged that clearly identifying the preferred times to call into classrooms to share or receive student items or information from the office and making adjustments year-to-year depending on the annual grade level schedule would help reduce the interruptions to instruction.

Learning at the School

- **Teachers should share AIMSweb Plus and other formative assessment data with all students so they may better understand their learning progress and set instructional goals.** AIMSweb Plus is the district's benchmark testing and data collection system. Students use this data to collaboratively develop learning goals in ELA, but this practice has not yet been extended to other content areas. Parents and teachers interviewed by the team agreed that if the students have a better understanding of their assessment data and learning progress, they would be able to better focus their learning. Currently, grade five students participate in student-led parent-teacher conferences. The principal stated that providing students with a history of their AIMSweb Plus data and having students participate in the process of setting personal learning goals will allow the students to share this additional information about their academic progress with their parents during the student-led parent-teacher conferences.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- S**ome parents are concerned with the amount of time staff are absent from the classroom for PD and meetings.** Parents interviewed by the team acknowledged that the PD sessions and committee and team meetings are beneficial for the staff and the school but expressed concern that their children do not receive instruction from the certified staff when they are absent from the classroom.
- **Teachers are concerned with the number of students who are being pulled out of instruction for additional services.** Interviewed teachers shared that there are mandatory services, such as physical therapy, counseling, music lessons, and resource room support, that require students to be pulled out of the classroom. The

teachers and principal stated that they have reviewed the schedule many times in previous school years but have not found any good solutions to reduce the number of pull-outs from classrooms. Both the principal and teachers agreed that tracking the frequency and nature of the pull-outs would provide them with a more holistic view of the reasons and possibly provide a wider view of patterns.