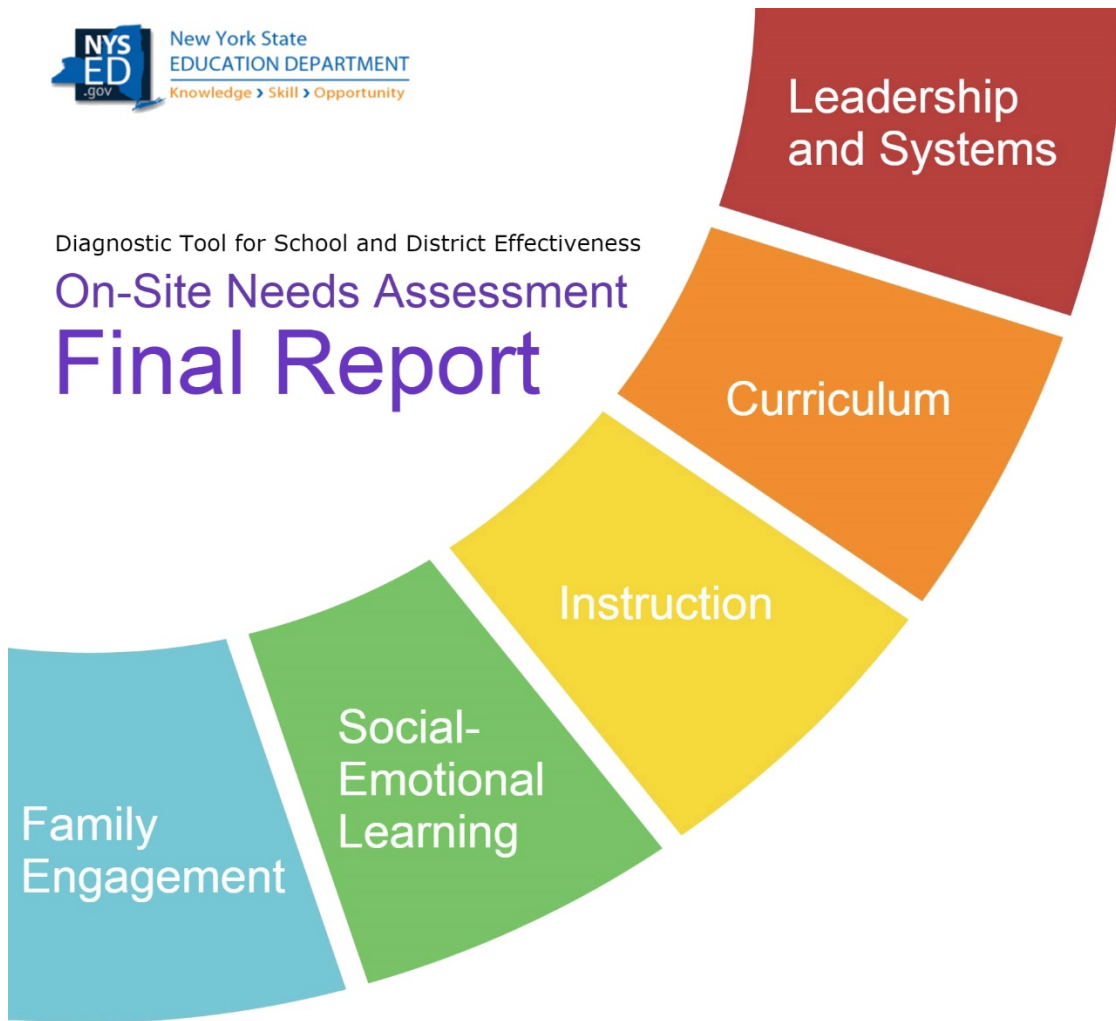


Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

Final Report



BEDS Code	430700010005
School Name	Geneva Middle School
School Address	101 Carter Road, Geneva, New York 14456
District Name	Geneva City School District
Principal	Mr. Robert Smith
Dates of Visit	February 5 -7, 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
1	2	1	2	1	1

Geneva Middle School serves 461 students in grades six to 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 and a Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The team visited a total of 46 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited 12 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 curriculum maps, lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- In advance of the visit, 39 of 63 staff members (62 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. For the 2018-19 school year, Geneva Middle School began a one-to-one laptop initiative that provides all students in grades six through eight with a laptop to use in class. The purpose of this program is to give students more individualized learning opportunities using differentiated classroom activities that their teachers create. The IIT observed students using laptops in class and working independently on various personalized tasks. Students reported that they enjoy using the laptops to complete their homework and other assignments and appreciate not having to carry heavy books to and from class. Teachers noted that students' use of the laptops is helping them prepare them for college and the world beyond the school. As a result of this initiative, teachers are able to use the available technology to design work to meet each students' individual needs and students are more engaged in meaningful learning tasks.
2. The Geneva Middle School has established a partnership with Finger Lakes Community College that provides opportunities for students to broaden their knowledge and gain experience with the technology available on a college campus. The principal stated that during the 2018-19 school year the college has provided students with exploratory courses that spark student interest in fields such as manufacturing, studio arts, and agricultural science, as well as many experimental classes that have broadened student thinking about the world of work. This initiative has also brought additional resources to the school, such as 3D printers and professional learning opportunities for teachers and resulted in students being exposed to a variety of educational opportunities that can lead to future career choices.
3. Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, school leaders have initiated a quarterly Geneva Middle School Parent Connect Day. The purpose of these sessions is to help parents better understand and support the school's personalized learning initiative and to provide parents with information on how to support their children's learning in school using the Chromebooks. During interviews with the IIT, parents reported they appreciate that the school is providing a way for them to support their children academically and connect with their child's teachers. Parents who have attended these sessions reported that the school has done a good job in communicating with them about what is going on in school, adding that they would like this to see the program continued. The principal reported that since the first Parent Connect Day meeting, the number of parents who have participated in this activity has doubled, and the principal is confident that this trend will continue.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **School and teacher leaders should re-visit the school's absence and lateness procedures to ensure that the school is proactively identifying and intervening when students are in danger of being chronically absent.** At the time of the February 2019 visit, the school had not yet evaluated student attendance policies and procedures during the 2018-19 school year. Additionally, there has been no follow up with the attendance teacher to ensure that attendance procedures are being implemented, updated, and applied appropriately. The team also learned that the attendance teacher is in the initial stages of modifying the school's attendance procedure in collaboration with designated staff so that the revised school procedure is aligned to district and school expectations. The principal reported that this intervention system is now a priority that will require monitoring and follow up with the attendance team by school leaders.

- **The principal should prioritize the goals and objectives of the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) to ensure that all identified goals and activities can be accomplished during the school year.** The principal reported that it is difficult to juggle the organizational demands and activities of the many initiatives outlined in the current SCEP. The school has yet to implement an action plan for achieving school priorities with progress monitoring checkpoints and clear expectations. The principal reported that he has been focused on consolidating some of the 2018-19 SCEP activities and goals based on what he believes the school can accomplish during the current school year.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The principal should designate Response to Intervention (RtI) horizontal and vertical planning time within the school schedule for teachers in grades seven and eight.** The principal reported that he had not programmed RTI horizontal and vertical planning periods for the grade seven and grade eight teams for the 2018-19 school year, although he was aware that teachers would like the time scheduled back into the program. The principal acknowledged that teacher teams use this planning time to develop interventions and cohesive support for students, citing positive feedback he received from teachers on the grade six team whose class schedules contain this planning time.
- **The principal should participate in the planning of responsive classroom practices to ensure that teacher schedules and developed lessons meet the needs of all students.** The principal reported that he has not participated in teachers' planning of the responsive classroom curricula. The principal acknowledged that he needs to play an active role in planning so that he can more effectively schedule and guide teachers as they develop lessons that meet the learning needs of all students.
- **The principal should set well-defined expectations for the school's instructional priorities with clear benchmarks and activity completion dates.** The principal reported in interviews with the IIT that he had not yet developed specific expectations describing what teachers are expected to do as they implement the school's instructional priorities, which include responsive classrooms, personalized learning, and family communication. As a result, the team found that teachers are implementing what they think are school expectations without clear direction from the principal or other school leaders. In the future, the school and teacher leaders should monitor progress towards the implementation of the school's instructional priorities.
- **The principal should utilize the school's support staff, such as school counselors, to provide teachers with in-house professional development (PD) on responsive classroom practices.** As the school continues to build capacity around the responsive classroom initiative, teachers interviewed by the IIT reported that they would like more training on responsive classroom practice. However, the IIT found that the school has not yet used internal human resources, such as the school's guidance staff, who can provide training and individualized support to teachers.

Learning at the School

- **Teachers should plan and implement lessons that are aligned to the Core Four 20-day planning tool in order to plan personalized learning lessons and integrate responsive classroom strategies.** During interviews with the IIT, personalized learning coaches reported that teachers are expected to use the Core Four 20-day planning tool to map out and plan personalized learning lessons, and teachers confirmed this expectation.

However, the principal and teacher leaders reported that all staff members are not yet using this tool to create their lesson plans.

- **School and teacher leaders should create curriculum resources that contain non-negotiable classroom practices to support English as a new language (ENL) students.** Teachers reported that they would like more professional development so that they can more effectively support ENL learners in their classrooms. The principal confirmed that the school has not yet provided teachers with specific strategies to support their ENL learners. In the future, the principal should provide teachers with a toolkit that contains clear and deliberate instructional strategies that they can incorporate into their lesson planning across all content area subjects.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Students would like teachers to enforce school rules consistently.** Interviewed students reported that teachers do not enforce the school rules consistently. For example, students reported that some teachers send students out of the classroom for behavior that they believe does not warrant removal from class. The principal acknowledged that some teachers have been inconsistently implementing and enforcing school policy and are putting students out in the hallway more often than others. Additionally, another student reported he was given an in-school suspension for wearing a headband. However, this student pointed out that girls are allowed to wear headbands because school and teacher leaders have said that students with long hair can wear them; the student who reported this discrepancy to the IIT was a young man with long hair. Other interviewed students confirmed that school and teacher leaders do not equally enforce this rule. Finally, students reported that a cafeteria rule states that students can only sit four at a table; however, some students reported that this rule is unequally enforced, as some students are allowed to sit five at a table.
- **Students would like incentives that focus not only on addressing student absenteeism but encouraging other positive student behaviors that will help to build student morale.** Students reported that they want to receive more incentives that are focused simply on rewarding good student behaviors. Students also reported that they would like more opportunities to participate in trips and other external school activities that would extend their learning, while also boosting their self-esteem, as a reward for good behavior.
- **Students would like to see a balance between the work they do on their Chromebooks and teacher-generated classwork.** Students interviewed by the IIT reported that lessons typically alternate between a daily use of Chromebooks and teacher-directed instruction. Students reported that they typically work either independently or in a whole-class group during class instructional time, with very little time spent working on teacher-prepared activities that encourage interaction with their peers. In classrooms visited by the IIT, team members confirmed that the interaction between and amongst students was minimal.