

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

# Final Report



<b>BEDS Code</b>	170500010011
<b>School Name</b>	Kingsborough Elementary School
<b>School Address</b>	24 W. Eleventh Avenue, Gloversville, NY 12078
<b>District Name</b>	Gloversville Enlarged School District
<b>Principal</b>	Trisha Bobowski
<b>Dates of Visit</b>	January 7-9, 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.

## 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 district consultant.
- The team visited a total of 26 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited seven 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, the school provided results of a staff survey that 26 staff members (76 percent) completed.
- The school serves 334 students in grades pre-kindergarten through two.

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

1. The principal has prioritized reducing the number of student absences for the 2018-19 school year. She introduced a monthly Kingsborough rally to recognize students who have been outstanding in meeting schoolwide behavioral and academic expectations. Each month, an attendance award is given to students who were not absent from school in a given month. This initiative is aligned to the school's focus on reducing the number of students who are chronically absent by celebrating students' successes in order to build a positive school culture and to motivate students to want to come to school. The school leader indicated that this practice has helped to increase student attendance.
2. To improve instructional practice and student achievement, the school revamped its teacher preparation schedule for the 2018-19 school year so that students in grades one and two receive more instructional assistance with the same team of teachers and intervention specialists during the school's literacy periods. Each grade-level team in grades one and two provides regular instructional support to students who have been identified for services based on teachers' running records and schoolwide assessment data. Teachers at these grade levels stated that they are working more cohesively and that grade one and two students' ability to independently read books on their level have increased as measured by teacher running records.
3. To improve communication with parents, at the beginning of the school year the principal introduced a monthly newsletter, which includes news and information about upcoming events and activities with parents. The newsletter is now accessible online, with copies sent home to parents who need a printed copy. In addition, the school sends email messages to parents' cell phones to ensure they receive the information. Parents stated that this practice has made communication with families more reciprocal and that as a result,

parents feel like they are part of the school again. Parents noted that this level of communication was lacking in the past because of the high turnover in principals over the past five years.

4. Since her arrival at the beginning of the current school year, the principal has focused on developing a positive, supportive climate to bring staff together, build morale, and unify the school, which was closed and then reconfigured through the merging of three schools. For example, the principal initiated a monthly staff breakfast, which is well attended, to foster staff relationships. The IIT observed high levels of collegiality and collaboration during classroom visits and a tour of the building. Teachers reported that the new principal has created a sense of purpose around the school's priorities as school leaders determine their next steps toward continual school improvement. Teachers also stated that the principal is approachable and that grade-level teams feel they can take instructional risks as they collectively problem-solve issues that are relevant to the school.

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

### Systems for Improvement

- **The principal should adjust the goals and objectives of the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) to address school needs as they evolve.** The principal reported that the school leaders had not been aware that the SCEP could be modified throughout the school year. As a result, the SCEP was not modified to represent timelines and activities that reflect the current circumstances of the school.
- **The principal should leverage the informal leadership structures to continue to gain staff buy-in around all schoolwide initiatives.** The principal stated that school leaders try to take on too much because they do not feel comfortable asking staff members to do more.
- **The principal needs to develop and implement a school-wide system for rolling out new initiatives or improving systems and structures that are already in place.** The principal shared that the school leaders' focus has been on building community and increasing schoolwide activities to establish a vibrant school culture. As a result, the creation of comprehensive systems for school improvement or the determination of the human resources they would utilize to foster continuous school improvement have not been prime focus areas.

### Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The principal needs to consistently set clear expectations related to the school's social-emotional developmental health program for all staff members.** Interviewed teachers shared that although the staff are executing the school's social and emotional development health program, there has been some confusion among staff, students, and parents about the implementation process and the misalignment of the themes between the Second Step program and the monthly character trait program.
- **School leaders should develop a look-for document that indicates the prioritized instructional practices.** The principal acknowledged that a look-for document would allow for a more targeted approach in prioritizing the instructional strategies observed by school leaders and those identified methodologies would have a greater impact in elevating pedagogical classroom practices. Interviewed teachers stated, for example, that this approach could help them focus on how to more effectively use centers or any other Jan Richardson research-based strategy to increase student achievement.

- **The principal should provide targeted feedback to teachers during walkthroughs as a way to improve pedagogical practices in the classroom.** The principal reported that school leaders are in classrooms every day; however, she acknowledged that school leaders’ focus has not been on providing targeted feedback during their walkthroughs in order to begin to have an impact on instructional practices. The principal stated that she has focused on student behavior and classroom environment during her initial classroom visits. Teachers reported that the feedback that they have received has focused more on program implementation rather than deepening pedagogical practice.

## Learning at the School

- **The school should create systems and structures in classrooms that allow students to receive instructional feedback from their teachers.** Teachers stated that although they conference with students to determine their “just right” reading levels, systems have not yet been created to empower students through student-centered dialogue, student check-in, and teacher guidance that assists students in taking ownership of their learning. Additionally, teachers acknowledged that creating an in-class structure to provide students feedback also includes having students set individual goals that may be academic, behavioral, or attendance related.
- **All teachers need to implement the school’s system of learning stations that provides students with opportunities for purposeful small group and individualized strategy-based instruction.** The team found that the implementation of the system by teachers varies schoolwide. The team’s interviews with the principal and teachers indicated that the school has moved away from whole group instruction and has designed a system of stations that provides students with small group and individualized learning opportunities based on strategies geared to each student’s needs that are informed by the student’s reading level. However, the IIT observed in class visits that not all of these stations were planned purposefully with activities that would enhance student learning outcomes.

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

- **Parents stated that the school does not provide workshops for parents on how to work with and help their children in learning the school curriculum.** Interviewed parents stated that they feel the school could do more in helping them understand the school’s curriculum so that they would be better able to help their children learn.
- **Parents reported that the school does not seek feedback from parents after events or activities.** Parents interviewed by the IIT suggested that the school should develop a mechanism that allows them to provide input about what is going on in the school.
- **Parents stated that although the school has an afterschool program that is administered by a community partner, this program is not inclusive of all children.** They suggested that the school should offer a more comprehensive extended day program that allows all students to participate and that the criteria for a child to participate be made clear.
- **Parents expressed the viewpoint that the school does not recognize teachers for their positive contributions to the school.** Parents interviewed by the team stated that they want teachers to be recognized for their positive contributions to the school.
- **Parents reported that although the school provides a new and more comprehensive report card to parents, the school does not give parents frequent updates on student mathematics process.** They suggested that

they would like frequent updates on their child's math process since parents are not well versed with the school's mathematics curriculum.