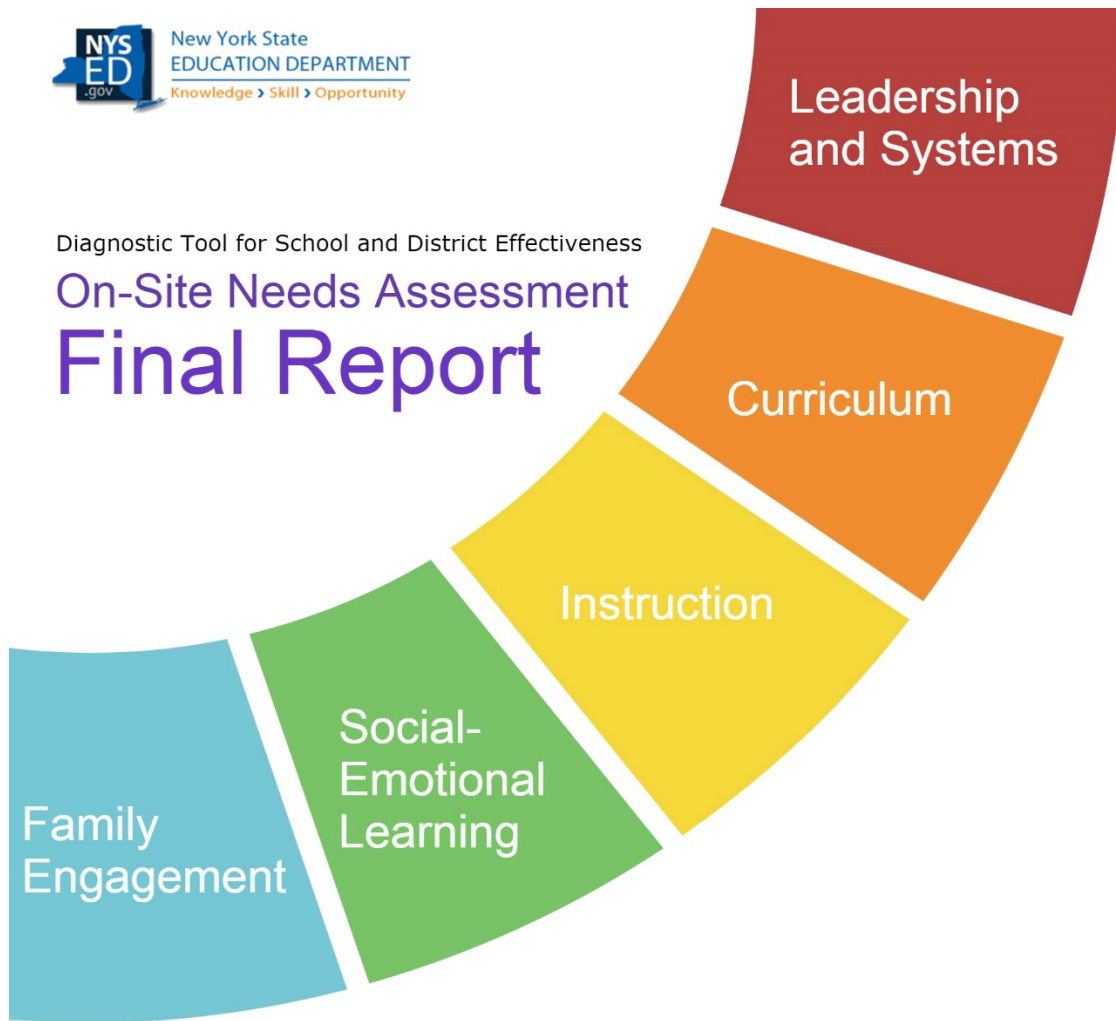


Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

Final Report



BEDS Code	63080104000
School Name	Hadley-Luzerne Junior/Senior High School
School Address	273 Lake Avenue, Lake Luzerne, NY 12846
District Name	Hadley-Luzerne Central School District
Principal	Burgess N. Ovitt
Dates of Visit	May 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.

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:

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	2

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	3	2	2	-	2	2	4

Hadley-Luzerne Junior/Senior High School serves 350 students in grades seven through 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 17 classrooms during the visit, primarily focusing on the junior high school.
- The OEE visited ten classrooms with the principal during the visit.

- Team members conducted interviews with students, staff, and parents.
- In advance of the visit, 29 staff members (72.5 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. The principal reported that in July 2018, teachers and school leaders created a period ten in the schedule to provide time for students to receive extra help with their coursework on Monday through Thursday of each week during the 2018-19 school year. Teachers are available after school to support students with missing assignments and make-up work and to answer questions about areas of concern. To support this effort, the school also arranged for an additional bus route so that students have the necessary transportation to get home. Some students shared that they regularly take advantage of the after-school support. Teachers, students, and the principal noted that while some students are participating in the extended learning time, all of the teachers do not have students with them every single day after school.
2. Recognizing the need to address the issue of chronic absenteeism, the principal reported that he hired a dean of students at the beginning of the 2018-19 school year, which has contributed to a reduction in chronic absenteeism. The dean of students tracks attendance daily by analyzing reports to identify patterns of absenteeism. Once a pattern of absenteeism is flagged, the dean of students first calls the student's family, and a letter is subsequently mailed to the student's home. When the absenteeism continues, the dean of students and principal make home visits and have attendance meetings with the parents. The principal and teachers reported an increase in attendance at the school, and students and parents interviewed by the IIT said they are aware that the attendance expectation is being enforced.
3. School leaders reported that during the 2018-19 school year, they implemented a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model at the junior high school to address the high number of behavioral referrals. The school established a team to monitor the implementation of PBIS and to support staff with the implementation. The PBIS team indicated that they have been reviewing behavioral data and based on the data that have been collected thus far, this model has been important in reducing the number of behavioral referrals. Staff, students, and parents reported initial success with this program because disciplinary referrals and bullying incidents have decreased, classroom expectations have been established, and students are now acknowledged for positive behavioral choices. Some students and staff reported they now have a better understanding of classroom behavioral expectations.
4. To promote the importance of academic achievement, school leaders reported that they established a Junior Honor Society this school year. Students in the junior high school indicated that the honor society has helped to set a positive tone for students who are doing well academically and encourages more students to participate by promoting their efforts to succeed. The principal reported that forty-seven students in grades eight and nine, and 18 new grade seven students, were recently inducted during an evening ceremony that recognized students for positive academic accomplishments. Students reported that they appreciated being inducted, noted that it would help them build their resumes and transcripts for college applications, and shared that they felt honored for making good academic progress.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **The principal should form a team comprised of staff from the core subject areas to help him make strategic decisions about the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) regarding curricular and instructional improvements.** The IIT found that there was a need for the school leadership to identify and implement priority goals for the school's improvement efforts. The principal reported that there is a need for teacher leaders in certain key priority areas with appropriate experience and content area knowledge. Some teachers reported to the IIT that they do not think their ideas are sufficiently considered by the principal and that they would like to have a greater voice in decisions related to curriculum and instruction at the school. In the future, the principal should consider selecting SCEP team members who are best suited to collectively lend their expertise in collaboratively developing, implementing, and leading the ongoing improvement efforts outlined in the SCEP.
- **School leadership will need to clarify expectations and increase collaborative relationships between staff and school leaders in order to move the school forward.** Some staff reported to the IIT that the lines of communication with the school leaders are not always open and that they are not often asked for their input on topics to be discussed at staff meetings. The principal indicated that at times he has found it difficult to accept some staff input and feedback because some of it has been negative without suggested alternatives. Some staff noted that they were transferred to new assignments without an explanation for the change or appropriate support for the new assignment. In the future, the principal should consider methods for gathering constructive information and feedback from staff, encourage ideas from staff that are solely designed to benefit student learning, and provide necessary supports to the newly reassigned staff.
- **The principal should create a team to collaborate with parents and the community to establish a Parent Teacher Student Association (PSTA).** The principal and teachers reported that a limited number of parents are engaged with the school. Several teachers indicated that only a small number of parents attend Report Card Day, and those who do, are the parents of students with whom they regularly talk. Some parents told the IIT that the school provides limited opportunities to connect with the school. The principal, school leaders, and the dean of students reported that they make home visits for attendance and behavioral problems. However, the IIT found that the school needs to establish a formal means to support or engage families and the community with the school.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **School leadership will need to provide teachers with focused professional development (PD) opportunities to learn and collaborate during the designated Superintendent PD sessions.** The principal reported that teacher leaders, who were identified by district leaders, are responsible for the planning and facilitation of the designated Superintendent PD for the school. The principal indicated that teacher leaders are given direction by the district to lead the PD and that the PD has not always been designed around the specific needs of the school's staff. Teachers interviewed by the IIT reported the need for more PD that is aligned with their specific needs. The principal noted that teacher leaders attended the Next Generation Learning Standards (NGLS) training in fall 2018 and were responsible for bringing the information back to the school to train the teachers.

Some teachers at the school reported attending the NGLS PD but noted that there is a need for follow-up. The IIT found that there is a sense of urgency at the school for the provision of timely and appropriate PD.

- **The principal should reevaluate the use of period ten to provide teachers with time for planning and collaboration by grade-level and content area while also allowing teachers to continue to support students with extra help.** Teachers at the school are expected to stay for an additional hour on Monday through Thursday to support students after school. Students told the IIT that although their teachers are available during these times, they do not access the support every day. The principal and teachers also noted that there are some days when students do not stay after school, and the time could be better utilized. Teachers indicated that collaboration among teachers takes place in an ad hoc manner, and there are no dedicated times for teachers to meet and collaborate. Teachers stated that when they need to communicate about curricular content or other matters, they usually reach out to individual colleagues informally rather than to grade-level or content area teams. Teachers from the junior and senior high schools noted the need to collaborate at grade-level and content area meetings to discuss curriculum alignment across the two schools. Some teachers also reported that opportunities to collaborate and discuss data with other grade levels was done in past years and was helpful. To provide teachers with organized planning and collaboration time, the core subject area teachers could meet together once each week on a chosen day, with different departments meeting on different days so that students can continue to receive the support they need from the other teachers.
- **The principal should reexamine the master schedule to make decisions about what is taught and when.** The IIT's review of the school schedule indicated that in grades seven and eight, the specials, such as art, gym, music, and study hall are all taught during period one, and core classes are not scheduled during that time. Some students stated that they do not like having specials during period one and that they sometimes come to school late because the classes are not often challenging. Many teachers told the team that they would prefer to teach core classes first thing in the morning when the students are focused and prepared to learn. The principal indicated that the schedule was created without his input and that he would prefer to have core classes taught in the morning.
- **The principal should put a team in place to select evidence-based school curriculum for each content area.** The IIT learned that the junior high school teachers are using curriculum and materials that are not up to date. Junior high school teachers reported using the Teachers Pay Teachers website for curriculum, and they stated that math, English language arts (ELA), and social studies courses do not have a set curriculum in place. The principal noted that teachers are not expected to teach an assigned curriculum and that they can teach a curriculum of their choice. Some teachers reported they are using curriculum that they developed several years ago. Most high school teachers reported that they have some curriculum in place but primarily teach the Regents curriculum. Moving forward, the principal should consider supporting the selection of evidence-based core curriculum and ensure that teachers are supported by teacher leaders with appropriate PD and planning time.
- **The principal should reexamine the role of the teacher leaders in supporting teachers through PD as they identify, develop, and implement the new curriculum needed at the school.** The principal reported to the IIT that the current teacher leader structure is not supportive of the content areas that require the most support. The teacher leaders are currently represented by one math, one special education, and one Spanish teacher. School leadership reported that there is a need for teacher leaders who can create PD that supports content area teachers. The IIT also found that there were differences in understanding about the role and responsibilities of teacher leaders. Some teachers reported that although teacher leaders are available to provide them with support at the school, they do not have time to share information with content area teachers. The principal

reported that although the teacher leaders attend Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) trainings with the expectation they bring information back to other teachers, this has only happened a few times in the last two years and has not translated into changes in the classroom. In the future, the principal may want to consider selecting teacher leaders who are representative of the core content areas and have the ability to provide teachers with ongoing PD to implement the new school curriculum.

Learning at the School

- **The principal should schedule time for staff to examine evidence-based curriculum and practices regarding student social-emotional learning (SEL), identify a new SEL curriculum, and develop PD to support its implementation.** School leaders and staff reported that the school needs to adopt an identified SEL curriculum and establish supports for students. In fall 2018, the school leaders implemented the PBIS model in the junior high school, and they are planning to implement it in the high school in the 2019-20 school year. Most junior high school students reported that they like PBIS because they know what is expected of them when they enter a classroom. Some parents indicated that bullying has decreased in the junior high school since PBIS was implemented. Most teachers reported that while some behavior concerns have been addressed through PBIS and it represents a good starting point, there needs to be a systematic means of providing all students with SEL support to teach students how to handle emotions and anger. The school social workers and the school counselor reported that there is an increased need for an evidence based schoolwide SEL curriculum that teaches students how to build self-confidence and develop positive relationships with adults and other students. The social worker and the school counselor suggested that they would like to implement some common practices throughout the school during the school day, potentially pushing in to classes on a regular basis to provide students with ongoing support by teaching them to self-regulate their emotions.
- **Teachers will need to develop lessons that promote student engagement and adapt instructional strategies to meet students' various needs.** During classroom visits, the IIT observed that the majority of lessons were teacher-led lectures and that there was a need to plan lessons to promote student engagement and maximize student learning. The team also found that there was a need for checks for understanding of student learning during lessons, such as synthesizing information and asking students to tell what they are learning. In most visited classes, the emphasis was on the delivery of content instead of consideration of adaptation to the various learning needs of the group of students in the class. During most lessons, students copied notes from the board, or the notes were handed to them already complete, or they were presented on the computer.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Students stated that they would like their teachers to slow down and check in with them to see that they understand what is being taught.** Interviewed students shared that their teachers often move quickly through course material and do not stop to check for understanding before moving on. Students reported that they often feel like they are expected to understand everything on the first try and keep up with the pace that the teacher sets. Students reported that sometimes they do not understand but just move on and do not ask for clarification.
- **Students shared that they like to be given more hands-on activities.** Students reported that most of the time they are expected to sit quietly, take notes, and complete worksheets. Some students said they thought students would want to come to class more if the lessons were more interesting.

- **Parents and students raised questions about the rigor of the junior high school curriculum.** Some grade seven students reported that the difference between grade six and grade seven is the amount of homework they are required to complete. Some students shared that they do not see a great deal of difference between the academic rigor of the two grade levels. Parents and students both reported that they would like grade seven expectations to be more rigorous than those for grade six, so they can better understand the difference between elementary school and junior high school.
- **Junior high school students shared that they would like to participate in activities that are similar to those at the senior high school.** Students reported that senior high school students are able to participate in a Spirit Day, but junior high school students are excluded from this fun experience, and they do not have a comparable event of their own. Junior high students shared that they would feel more welcome and encouraged to come to school and that unity between the junior high school and senior high school would be built, if they had events such as this one to look forward to.
- **Staff reported that they would like greater transparency between the school leaders and staff.** Teachers reported that they would like to know what is being discussed in committee work, be involved in decision-making, and be informed of events that affect the attendance of their students. They suggested that school leaders send meeting minutes that already exist to all staff, allow staff to share their ideas on how to improve the school experience for students, and notify staff one week in advance when students will miss class for a field trip or athletic event.