

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

Final Report



BEDS Code	450704040001
School Name	Holley Junior Senior High School
School Address	16848 Lynch Road, Holley, NY 14470
District Name	Holley Central School District
Principal	Susan Cory
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:

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	4

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	2	4	3	-	2	4	1

Holley Junior Senior High School serves 427 students in grades seven to 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 19 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited eight 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, 29 staff members (52 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. Recognizing the need to increase student participation on the New York State (NYS) English language arts (ELA) assessment, this school year the district and school leaders led an initiative to communicate its importance to parents by sending them a series of letters and emails. In addition, English teachers made personal phone calls to parents, emphasizing the importance of participating in the assessment. As a result of these efforts, student participation on the grades seven and eight ELA assessment increased from 70 percent in 2017-18 to 90 percent in 2018-19.
2. During the 2018-19 school year, the school demonstrated its ability to fundraise around a common cause. Earlier this school year, a student was diagnosed with a life-threatening disease. The school conducted three fundraising events and raised more than \$5,000 for the student's family to offset expenses resulting from the illness.
3. Students in the school's Geometry and Construction class built a barn. While the class has been offered for three years, the 2018-19 school year was the first time that students constructed a barn as its culminating activity. Parents noted that the construction of the barn provided students with an important opportunity to see a real-life application of the course's subject matter.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **School leaders should establish schoolwide benchmarks and academic targets to measure students' academic achievement and progress over time.** The principal reported that she has not established academic benchmarks or interim assessments for teachers to measure student performance on an ongoing basis. During class visits, the IIT did not see teachers utilizing academic data to make instructional decisions. For example, student data including data walls were not present in classrooms. Students reported that they did not always know how they were performing in their classes. Teachers noted that the school leaders did not provide them with feedback related to students' academic progress. Creating benchmarks would provide school leaders with the academic data needed to support data-informed decisions regarding staffing, professional development (PD) topics, and allocation of resources.
- **School leaders should work to ensure consistency in the enforcement of the code of conduct.** Through May 1, 2019, the school recorded 46 out-of-school suspensions and 107 in-school suspensions. According to school leaders, approximately 90 percent of the code of conduct violations during the 2018-19 school year were committed by fewer than 15 students. Parents, teachers, and students interviewed by the IIT expressed that different students do not always receive the same consequences for a given offense. In December 2018, a group of students initiated a petition to highlight perceived biases in how discipline is handled; more than 50 students signed the petition.

- **The new Response to Intervention committee should continue reviewing and clarifying the school's RtI process and begin developing a system to monitor RtI's impact on students.** The IIT observed students receiving services in the Response to Intervention (RtI) classroom. However, teachers stated that once students in grades seven and eight are identified to receive RtI supports, they remain in the RtI program for the remainder of the school year, and assessments are not used to track their academic progress. Monitoring the progress of students in RtI will help inform decisions about modifying or removing supports for students.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The assistant principal's role should be expanded to include select academic responsibilities.** The assistant principal stated that he is primarily responsible for schoolwide discipline, and he serves as the school's athletic director. Aside from conducting classroom observations as prescribed by the school's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process, the assistant principal noted that he is rarely included in discussions or activities related to the school's academic program. The principal acknowledged that she provides feedback to teachers only twice per year and that school leaders do not participate in meetings with teachers related to instructional programs. Including the assistant principal in academic discussions would give teachers an additional resource for instructional feedback.
- **The principal should consider revising the master schedule to include structured common planning time for teachers to collaborate and share instructional data.** The IIT's review of the school's master schedule revealed that it does not include common planning times for teachers to share instructional practices and analyze student academic data. The principal remarked that during the 2017-18 school year, she did not see teachers using common planning periods in ways that she considered most beneficial. As a result, the principal discontinued common planning periods. Teachers shared that they now feel isolated as they plan independently, and they said that having common planning periods would enable them to further develop their instructional capacities. To encourage strategic use of common planning time in the future, the principal should provide clear expectations and guidelines for use of the time.

Learning at the School

- **The principal should monitor teacher use of learning objectives in their lessons.** In seventeen of nineteen visited classrooms, the IIT did not observe a learning objective posted, nor did the teacher refer to a learning objective during the lesson. Teachers also did not incorporate assessments based on or aligned with a learning objective. The principal noted that teachers are expected to post learning objectives but acknowledged that she has not provided regular feedback to teachers related to instructional expectations.
- **Teachers should utilize instructional practices that include higher level questioning and more rigorous assignments.** In 16 of the 19 visited classrooms, the IIT observed the teacher leading lecture-style learning activities. These activities required students to provide short verbal answers and did not require students to write fully developed responses. In 11 of the 19 classes visited, the team observed students completing worksheets that included basic recall questions. Teachers acknowledged that the content covered in a typical class may not challenge the school's top performers, and the principal agreed that more rigorous assignments would improve the quality of the instructional program. Although students reported that discussions in social studies classes are engaging and rigorous, they noted that the workload in many of their classes could be

characterized as easy. Students and parents suggested that increasing the rigor of the coursework could help students become more prepared for college.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Students stated that they would like the school to expose them to post-high school opportunities.** Students reported that they take the initiative to research opportunities to pursue after graduation but would like more guidance in planning for their future. For example, students reported that they exchange information about colleges and majors because the school has not yet provided them with this type of information. They also reported that students interested in a career in the military would like opportunities to meet with military recruiters, and students interested in entering the workforce after graduation would like to attend job fairs hosted by the school or community.
- **Students reported that they would like to be recognized for strong academic performance and continuing good behavior.** Interviewed students noted that some recognition activities generally focus on students who do one or two commendable acts during the month, but that students who consistently earn good grades and demonstrate exemplary behaviors are rarely recognized. They cited as an example the recognition of a student who historically reported late to school but arrived early twice in one week.
- **Parents shared that they would like the school leaders to respond to their email communications in a timelier manner.** Parents noted that school leaders generally respond to emails within five to seven days. However, four interviewed parents identified at least one time when school leaders did not respond to their emails.
- **Students stated that they would like their teachers to be available to provide additional support to them during the school day.** Students reported that teachers are not always available when they need additional help. They noted that some teachers are occasionally available to provide support after school hours, but this often conflicts with students' sports activities.
- **Teachers expressed an interest in exploring the possibility of having some staff exclusively for students in seventh and eighth grade.** Teachers reported that some of them have to plan for as many as six courses across grades seven through twelve. They also noted that middle school students have distinct academic and social-emotional needs and suggested that having a few teachers dedicated to seventh and eighth grade students could provide greater opportunity to meet those needs.