

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

Final Report



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| BEDS Code | 251101040003 |
| School Name | Madison Central School |
| School Address | 7303 Hwy 20, Madison, NY 13402 |
| District Name | Madison Central School District |
| Principal | Larry Nichols |
| Dates of Visit | May 14-16, 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 | 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 | 3 | 3 | - | 1 | 4 | 4 |

Madison Central School serves 456 students in grades Kindergarten through 12.

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, who was the school's building principal.
- The team visited a total of 20 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited eight classrooms with the building principal during the visit.
- Team members conducted interviews with students, staff, and parents.
- Team members examined documents provided by the school, including schoolwide data and student work.
- In advance of the visit, 24 staff members (49 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. In the 2018-19 school year, an accelerated math program was introduced for students in grades seven and eight. In discussions, the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) found that staff used students' previous performance mathematics data to identify a few grade seven students who moved from their classes and worked with grade eight students during math lessons. A few grade eight students also moved from their classes to work with students in grade nine on algebra lessons. Teachers reported that this system will continue during the 2019-20 school year. Students stated that they like working in their accelerated mathematics classes because they enjoyed the challenging work.
2. In the 2018-19 school year, school leaders reported that the percentage of students who did not opt out of English language arts (ELA) tests has increased, as school leaders worked to raise teacher and student expectations. For example, in grade five, the percentage of students who took the test this year was 86 percent in ELA, compared with 79 percent in 2017/18. In math this year, the percentage of students who took the test was 85 percent compared with 65 percent in 2017/18. The IIT found that whole school data is generally showing an improving picture, and fewer students are opting out of the ELA tests.
3. The school, which is a relatively small Kindergarten through grade 12 school, offers a wide range of dual credit courses. The IIT found that school data for the last two years shows that a large number of students in each of the last two cohorts have achieved college credits for English, math, biology, chemistry, music theory, Spanish, and astronomy. The school also offers a variety of classes that allow students to take part in distance learning courses. These classes include sociology, psychology, accounting, principles of business, business law, and US government. All of these courses help to prepare students for College and Career Readiness, and students reported that they appreciate them.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **The building principal, elementary principal, and counselors will need to devise a system that identifies students with the most urgent social and emotional learning needs, who gives them additional support, and how staff store student information.** The IIT found during discussions with the principals and counselors that the school is in need of a formal record that indicates how many students are most in need of social and emotional support. During discussions, staff stated that currently they keep their own records. The IIT found

that there is no system where staff can keep confidential students' notes centrally or where records are kept securely. In the future, school leaders should make sure that staff store confidential information in a secure place and that information is only available for those who need to look at it. The principals should also enable the team of adults who work with individual students to liaise regularly to share information and strategies they have found successful and add appropriate documentation to students' individual files.

- **The building principal and the elementary principal should work with the counselors to develop and implement a system to ensure that students with particular emotional and social learning needs are able to talk to an identified adult.** During discussions with counselors, students, and the building principal, the IIT learned that there is a need for students with social and emotional learning concerns to be able to go to an adult of their choice with whom they can connect if they have a problem. Counselors, students, and the principals agreed that this would be helpful. In the future the principals should ensure that this system is extended to all students.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The building principal and elementary principal should identify three instructional strategies for all teachers to include when planning and delivering instruction.** The IIT found that there was a need for school leaders to provide teachers with instructional expectations to improve the quality of teaching such as starting and finishing lessons on time and using exit tickets to allow teachers to collect student data to inform their next lesson. In many observed classes, lessons did not start or finish on time, and teachers typically did not check student understanding at the end of lessons. In addition, many lessons were teacher-led, and students were not often provided with the opportunity to talk about their learning.
- **The building principal and elementary principal will need to establish a process that enables them to check teachers' implementation of identified instructional expectations and provide teachers with actionable feedback.** Many teachers reported that they need the school leaders to regularly visit classrooms and give them targeted, actionable feedback so that they could improve their practices. In the future, school leaders should check how well teachers use the instructional expectations in lessons and make sure that teachers receive actionable feedback to improve their teaching so that all students learn well.
- **The building principal and the elementary principal should begin to analyze discipline and attendance data to identify trends and patterns.** In examining behavioral and attendance information, the IIT found that a recent analysis of behavioral or attendance data had not been completed. Discussions with teachers and students about behavior and positive relationships indicated a somewhat confusing picture of the issues. Staff, for example, said they typically have positive relationships with students, but student behavior and order are areas of concern to them. Some students reported relationships with teachers were not all positive and that the behavior of a few students sometimes interferes with their learning. In the future, school leaders should analyze behavioral and attendance data and link identified trends and patterns with how well students are achieving both academically and socially.

Learning at the School

- **All teachers should provide lessons that promote student engagement and student ownership of their learning.** The IIT found from classroom observations and discussions with the principals and teachers that in grades six through twelve, instruction was typically teacher led and students sat and listened and were not

always fully focused on learning. The team typically found that student engagement was best in grades Kindergarten through five, when students worked on the same themes, such as writing story beginnings, and teachers adjusted activities to suit students' different reading levels. Elementary students were observed showing positive levels of engagement when working in this way

- **All teachers need to take into account the different achievement levels of the students in their classes when they plan and deliver instruction.** The IIT found from visiting classrooms and in discussions with teachers, that teachers were aware of the range of different achievement levels of students in their classes. However, the IIT found that many students, especially in grades six to twelve, reported that they were not provided with work that was sufficiently challenging while others indicated that the work was too difficult. Some parents with children in all grades, reported that their children were not sufficiently challenged while others stated that their children struggled with their learning and needed to have more support from teachers.
- **Teachers should check student understanding during and at the end of each lesson.** The IIT found that during lessons, particularly the ones that are teacher-led, where students sit and listen for long periods, there was a need for teachers to consistently check student understanding. During lessons, the IIT found that many students throughout the school were not clear about what they were learning. During discussions, older students typically stated that they sometimes leave lessons confused and are not sure what they had been learning. In the future, the principals should consider ensuring that teachers check student understanding at least twice during each lesson so that they know how well each student has understood the learning intention by the end of the lesson.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Parents and students stated that they feel teachers do not handle behavioral issues consistently in classrooms.** Students stated that in some classes, when students misbehave, teachers handle the situation appropriately. However, students and parents stated that sometimes teachers ignored poor behavior from some students that interrupted learning.
- **Parents stated that they would like school leaders to inform all parents when the next Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting is due to take place.** Parents stated that they have not received information about the date of the next PTO meeting although they have asked for this information. A few parents stated that they did not think there had been a PTO meeting for a while and that they were anxious to know when the next PTO meeting was because they wanted to be part of this organization.
- **Parents shared that teachers should inform parents when their children are falling behind with their academic work.** Parents stated that communication links between school and home varied between individual teachers. A few parents commented that although some teachers inform them that their children are not doing as well as they should, other teachers do not inform parents. Parents stated that in order to help their children, they need to know as soon as their children start to fall behind with their work.