

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

Final Report



BEDS Code	161501060011
School Name	Davis Elementary School
School Address	183 Webster Street, Malone, NY 12953
District Name	Malone Central School District
Principal	Michelle Bailey
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:

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	4

Davis Elementary School serves 596 students in grades pre-kindergarten through five.

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 45 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 schoolwide data.
- In advance of the visit, 55 staff members (85 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, the principal has prioritized student engagement in the form of increased student talk and discussions about what they are learning during lessons. The principal indicated that she tracks teacher practices during classroom visits and that the data shows that last school year, student talk was equal to or greater than teacher talk in only 25 percent of the classrooms. This school year, she reported that her data shows student talk is equal to or greater than teacher talk in 50 percent of the classrooms she has visited. The principal attributes this increase to her conversations with teachers during grade level team meetings in which she had stressed the importance of teachers providing opportunities for students to discuss their learning during lessons. Teachers stated that the principal has had conversations with them about student engagement, and this has led to more focus on this area.
2. The principal reported that the student participation rate for the New York State math and English language arts (ELA) assessments has increased this school year. The principal noted that last school year, 53 percent of students opted out of the State assessments, while this school year, only 27 percent opted out. The principal reported that she has communicated to families, the importance of students taking these assessments, as it allows the school to determine student academic needs and how the school can respond to meet these needs. Some families interviewed stated that this communication has led to a better understanding of why their child should take the New York State (NYS) assessments. The IIT found that the principal sends home newsletters, and some noted the importance of having students take the NYS assessments.
3. The principal reported that she recognized the need to decrease the school's chronic absence rate for the 2018-19 school year. The principal reported that there has been a decrease in chronic student absence over the past school year. During the 2017-18 school year, 20 percent of all students missed 18 or more school days, which was 10 percent or greater of the school year. The principal stated that for the 2018-19 school year, she had the Home School Coordinator send letters to all families showing the link between academic achievement and regular attendance. Additionally, the Home School Coordinator calls families whose child is absent on consecutive days to check in on them. As a result, the percentage of students who are chronically absent this school year thus far, has dropped to 5 percent. The principal showed the IIT school data, which indicated this decrease in chronic absenteeism.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **The school leadership and the Focus team should establish a process to regularly update and review data related to school-wide goals and action plans.** The team learned that the school has a Focus Team, which collects data related to the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) goals and action plan. The principal noted that although she scheduled the Focus Team to meet every month or two, it has been four months since they last met. She indicated that she and focus team members have been occupied with other duties and have not had an opportunity to meet and determine progress towards SCEP goals. When the team last met in January, they found the school was not on pace to meet some SCEP goals. The principal indicated that an update on progress towards many of these goals or goal-related activity plans is needed. As a result of these issues, it is difficult for the principal to determine if the school will achieve the 2018-19 school year goals, and if the actions taken by the Focus Team and school leadership are moving the school in the right direction.

- **The principal should use informal non-Annual Professional Performance review (APPR) teacher practice data to determine areas of improvement and to set goals.** The principal told the IIT that she visits classrooms informally and collects teacher practices data, but there is a need for this data to be used to measure improvement in areas of teaching, such as learning objectives. Additionally, this data needs to be used to determine if teachers implement identified schoolwide instructional initiatives, such as high cognitive engagement.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The principal will need to develop an Instructional Leadership Team to support her efforts to improve teaching and learning at the school.** In discussions with the principal and staff, the team learned that the school has multiple teams such as the School Improvement Team, the Focus Team, and other school and district teams and committees. However, the principal indicated that none of these teams are devoted solely to helping improve the quality of teaching schoolwide. As a result, there is limited capacity to support efforts to develop and implement the principal's instructional vision and plan school-specific, targeted, professional development (PD).
- **The principal should regularly communicate her instructional expectations to staff to improve teachers' professional practice** Many staff members stated that there is a need for more consistent communication about the principal's instructional expectations. For example, although teachers stated that they understand that the principal wants them to engage students during instruction, some teachers indicated that they were not sure what this would look like. In addition, although the principal regularly visits classrooms informally, post-visit feedback to teachers is needed. Some teachers assume that they have met her expectations, when in fact, they may not have.

Learning at the School

- **Teachers will need to instruct students at the level of rigor required to meet the New York State Next Generation Learning Standards.** In the majority of classrooms the IIT visited, students were provided with learning tasks at low cognitive levels, which only engaged students at the fact and comprehension levels. As a result, students were not asked to analyze what they were learning. In one class, for example, students were asked only to name the main characters and supporting details. They were not asked to predict or share their opinions on the characters or how they responded to situations in the story. Many students needed additional support and challenge to help them improve their work. In many classes, students were working with their peers in small groups, which allowed opportunities for student engagement. However, the work that many of the students were completing was in response to closed questions with only one correct answer, leading students to respond with brief facts and details they read in a text. The team observed that students typically were not required to analyze open-ended questions and material to formulate responses, which were complex and nuanced. For instance, the team observed a class where students were working together to complete a workbook in which they read a simple passage. They then only answered brief, factual, recall questions directly aligned to the text they just read, which only led to a comprehension of what they read.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Some parents and students stated that teachers did not regularly update them on student academic progress.** According to some families interviewed by the team, teachers did not always inform them about their child's progress. Students interviewed stated that they do not know their grade until they receive their report cards. In addition, although the school assesses students on the Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading (STAR) three times a year, parents noted that teachers did not always tell them their children's score.