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Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment
Final Report

Leadership and Systems

Curriculum

Instruction

Social-Emotional Learning

Family Engagement
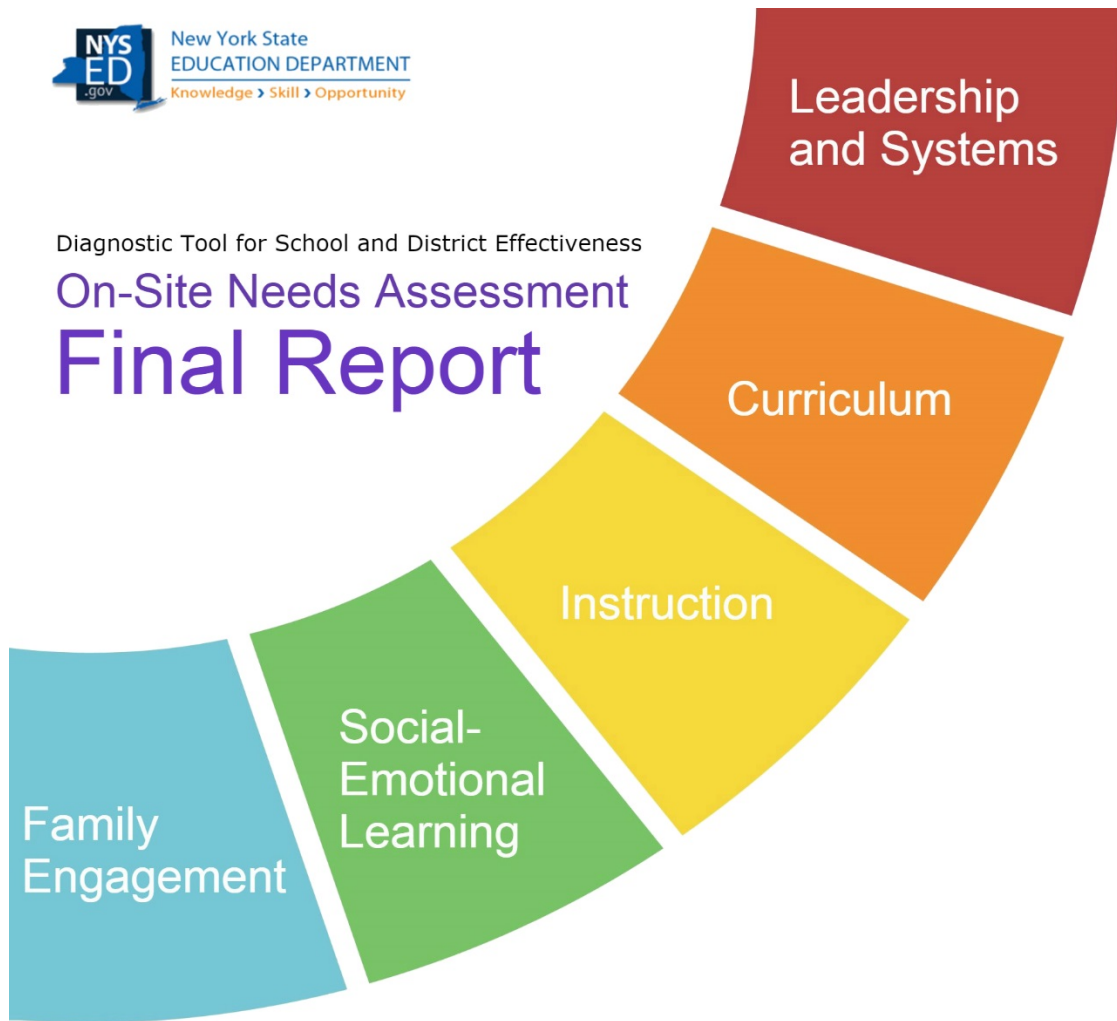
BEDS Code	650101060002
School Name	Norman R. Kelley Intermediate School
School Address	316 West Miller Street, Newark, NY 14513
District Name	Newark Central School District
Principal	Jeffery Hamelinck
Dates of Visit	January 29-31, 2013

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

- Norman R. Kelley Intermediate School serves 514 students in grades three through five.
- 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 45 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited 14 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 lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- In advance of the visit, 40 staff members (78 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. Over the last 18 months, the principal has worked with staff to create a robust data system. The school began using the system in 2018-19 to collect and maintain student data which staff can use to determine the needs of individual students and provide them with targeted supports. The principal shared that this targeted data analysis is beginning to have a positive impact on student academic performance, noting an increase in student English language arts (ELA) achievement scores.

2. School leaders have made purposeful efforts to create a school environment where staff demonstrate a positive attitude about school improvement and all members of the school community are working together to ensure continued growth. In 2018-19, school leaders revised the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system, increased the tracking of student achievement and progress, and provided targeted professional development for teachers. Interviewed parents and students noted improvements in the school climate and culture and stated that they were pleased with the changes that have been made.

3. In response to an increase in the number of office referrals from September 2018 to October 2018, the principal implemented additional supports for student behavior, such as increasing the number of staff on buses, utilizing restorative circles, and introducing PBIS awards. As a result, the principal shared that the number of referrals has decreased every month for the past three months.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **The School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) should include specific, measurable, ambitious, results-oriented, and timely (SMART) goals and short-term benchmarks to track progress.** The IIT noted that many of the goals in the 2018-19 SCEP were similar to those found in the 2017-18 SCEP, and the team found little evidence that previous targets had been fully met. In addition, The IIT noted that most 2018-19 action plans covered the entire school year and did not include interim benchmarks or clear success criteria that school leaders can use to determine whether the school is on track to attain the goals.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **School leaders need to increase monitoring of teacher use of instructional time.** A master schedule for the school has not been established and instead, teachers design their own individual class schedules. The IIT observed that most classes were not well organized at the beginning of the day, and frequently academic instruction did not commence until more than an hour after students entered the building. Although the principal reported that there are specific times designated for morning activities, the team noted that these schedules were not always adhered to. For example, while the principal stated that morning meetings should begin at 9:15 a.m., the IIT observed that several did not commence until 9:25 a.m. School leaders suggested that all teachers should coordinate their morning schedules so that the first period of instruction starts at the same time at all grade levels.

- **School leaders need to coordinate their schedules so that informal walkthroughs can be conducted regularly.** Although school leaders have developed a schedule for informal walkthroughs, the principal reported that few walkthroughs have been completed since October 2018. The principal explained that urgent administrative issues, such as behavior incidents, unexpected parent visits, and phone calls, often require immediate attention and interfere with his ability to conduct walkthroughs as scheduled. Some interviewed teachers reported that they had only been visited once in 2018-19. Interviewed staff suggested that the walkthrough calendar be revised so that one school leader is on-call to deal with emergencies while the other carries out the scheduled walkthroughs.

- **School leaders should provide teachers with actionable feedback to help them improve their instructional practices.** Teachers reported that most of the feedback they receive is in the form of questions for them to consider rather than actions they could take to improve their practice. A review of teacher feedback from school leaders confirmed that this was the case, and the principal acknowledged that this is the usual practice. The principal acknowledged that some teachers may need more explicit feedback and guidance in order to improve their instruction.

- **School leaders need to develop a process to follow up on feedback to teachers.** Interviewed teachers stated that they rarely receive follow-up on the feedback they receive after walkthroughs. Some teachers stated that they would appreciate follow-up to ensure that they have correctly implemented changes to their practice in response to the feedback they received.

- **The school should develop a system that allows staff to easily view student performance data.** In discussions with teachers and school leaders, the IIT learned that the school does not have a system that allows staff to quickly view student performance levels. Interviewed staff suggested creating a data wall that includes a visual

representation of student data so that school leaders and teachers can quickly identify student proficiency levels.

- **School leaders should establish clear protocols for the use of the two rooms used to support students' social-emotional needs.** The school currently has two rooms dedicated to supporting student social-emotional needs, the red room and the work room. The principal reported that the red room is a place for students to deescalate when a behavior incident occurs. However, teachers stated that they are not clear about what happens when a student is sent to the red room. The principal explained that the work room is used for students who need a quiet space to work, but teachers stated that it is often used for students who have been suspended from class. Teachers suggested that school leaders develop a protocol that explains the purpose of the two rooms and distribute it to all staff.

Learning at the School

- **School leaders and teachers should create a schedule that includes opportunities for teachers to collaborate on planning and instruction.** Currently, most classrooms operate on different schedules, making it difficult for teachers to collaborate on planning and instruction. The principal reported that for 2018-19, teachers were responsible for designing their own class schedules. This resulted in a proliferation of individual schedules that are not aligned with each other, making it difficult for teachers to collaborate. As an exception, the IIT observed two teachers in one grade level who had coordinated their schedules to allow them to work collaboratively, with one taking all the students for mathematics and the other for ELA. The principal reported that students in these classes were out-performing students at other grade levels. Teachers shared that they would like to revise their schedules to build in more opportunities for collaborative teaching.

- **Teachers should develop protocols for student discussion.** The principal stated that the new literacy curriculum includes a number of opportunities for student discussion. However, during class visits, the IIT observed few lessons that included student discussion. Going forward, teachers should use the curriculum to develop protocols for student discussion that can be posted in their classrooms and used as a basis for developing student discussion skills.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Parents stated that communication between parents and teachers needs improvement.** Interviewed parents reported that they do not receive regular communications from teachers. Parents also reported that different teachers use different methods to communicate with them, which can be confusing. Teachers acknowledged that the school currently uses several different portals to communicate with families. Some teachers suggested that the See Saw system should become the standardized communication tool, as it provides the most comprehensive system for home-school communication.

- **Parents and students expressed concerns regarding bullying in the school.** Some parents reported that their children were distressed because other students had been harassing them. Some students reported that physical bullying was occurring in the building, especially in the bathrooms.

- **The school does not have a protocol for returning students to class after they have been sent to meet with support staff.** Interviewed teachers stated that often when a student returns to class after being sent to meet with support staff, no one communicates with the teacher to let them know what actions support staff have

taken to deal with the student's issues. Support staff confirmed that there are no established protocols for communication when a student returns to class.