

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

Final Report



BEDS Code	650101060001
School Name	Perkins Elementary School
School Address	439 West Maple Ave, Newark, NY 14513
District Name	Newark Central School District
Principal	Susan Achille
Dates of Visit	March 19-21, 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	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	1

Perkins School serves 328 students in grades pre-kindergarten to two.

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 23 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited five 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, 26 staff members (74 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. Staff, at the direction of the principal, have made a concerted effort this year to implement and highlight the school's social-emotional learning focus, which is aligned to Sean Covey's "7 Habits of a Happy Kid, The Leader in Me." Teachers, students, and parents shared with the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that this year the building is more welcoming, and the environment is more conducive for teaching and learning. There were pledges, positive affirmations, and students' drawings displayed throughout the building and the IIT observed confident students explaining why and how they arrived at answers. Students told the team that the "7 Habits" help them do what their teachers expect of them throughout the school day.
2. The principal redefined the role of teaching assistants this school year and provided them with more training on how to support students. The assistants now provide some additional instructional support to struggling students and as a result, the academic intervention services (AIS) teachers are now able to provide sustained support to students with greater academic needs.
3. This school year, the instructional leadership team focused on teachers using multiple methods to guide students to self-assess their progress toward meeting learning targets. In all classes observed by the IIT, students used thumbs up or down to indicate their level of progress, made the connect symbol to demonstrate understanding during math lessons, or turned and talked with partners to share what they did well and what it was, related to the target, that they needed to focus on more for the future.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **School leaders and staff should develop an effective structured system to support students who need tier two or tier three academic interventions.** The school's schedule should reflect dedicated timeslots for tier two and three interventions. While some teachers have created intervention times within their schedules, and teaching assistants provide some tier two instruction in grades one and two, the creation of dedicated intervention time for tier two and three students is not a schoolwide practice and the teaching assistants are often required to pull students from their tier one instruction to provide them with the support they need. The principal, instructional coaches, and teachers agreed that a robust and clearly structured intervention system is needed to support tier two and three learners at every grade level.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **School leaders should develop a systematized plan to improve attendance.** The principal and support staff reported that the school needs to have a clear plan that targets and supports chronically absent students and their families. The principal and support staff told the IIT that while there is an attendance team, they have yet to meet to collaborate or to coordinate their efforts. The IIT learned that while a member of the attendance team has made visits to the homes of at least three chronically absent students this school year, the team has

yet to monitor whether the students' attendance have improved as a result of this intervention. In the future, the school leaders will need to develop and implement a plan to decrease the percent of students who are chronically absent by creating a monitoring system to identify students, implementing a process to notify and support families, and involving classroom teachers to provide academic support as needed.

Learning at the School

- **The school's Composite Performance Achievement Level and the Combined Composite and Student Growth Level scores indicate that there is a need to work on vertical alignment across grade levels.** The instructional leaders and teachers shared with the IIT that there is a need to develop vertical alignment across grade levels. While there is some alignment within the English language arts (ELA) curriculum through the use of grade level standards and the continuous development of content and skills across and between units, there is still much work to be done to align the math curriculum and to further align the ELA curriculum across all grade levels. Several teachers interviewed by the IIT shared that they would like to meet with the teachers responsible for the grade levels above and below their own grade level to get a better understanding of what students should know and be able to do in the next grade level and to agree on grade level expectations. They also expressed a need to have vertically aligned curriculum documents in place as a reference point to help staff prepare students for the next grade level.
- **Success criteria included in lesson plans should align with essential outcomes.** The principal reviews lesson plans and provides feedback on content and the quality of the learning targets and success criteria. The principal indicated, and the IIT confirmed through a review of lesson plans, that some success criteria seemed to be global, and not specific to what students should learn or be able to do based on their academic needs. For example, one lesson plan identified a success criterion as "listen to a poem," which is not a specific or essential outcome, while another lesson plan explicitly required students to share what they wonder about snails. In the future, instructional leaders will need to provide teachers with supports, through modeling and coaching, on how to develop success criteria that encourage students to demonstrate their learning of a skill or concept.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **There is not an opportunity for all teachers to participate in collaborative planning meetings.** Classroom teachers have scheduled times to participate in collaborative planning meetings, but special area subject teachers, such as the art and physical education teachers, are not always included in these professional learning communities. Some teachers expressed that the special subject area teachers are an important part of the instructional staff and that they should attend some collaborative planning meetings to help teachers integrate subject area activities and materials into the curriculum.
- **Some parents do not understand the school's instructional approach to teaching spelling.** Interviewed parents shared that they are pleased with what and how their children are learning at the school. They expressed that they understood that the ELA block is based on the Center for Collaborative Classroom's methodology of being a reader, being a writer, and making meaning, but do not understand when or if their children will start to work on the conventions of spelling in addition to writing whole sentences. Parents said that they would like an opportunity to better understand what spelling looks like at the school and how they can use the strategies taught in class at home with their children.
- **While parents believe that their children are prepared for moving on to Kelley School in third grade, they would also like opportunities to be provided to assist their children in making that transition.** Parents

indicated that they would like opportunities to visit Kelley School prior to the end of the summer, specifically to visit before the end of the school year, to relieve some anxiety and familiarize themselves as well as their children with the environment. They also said visiting the school and establishing a relationship with the Kelly School staff could ease some of the tension that they and their children have around entering a new school.