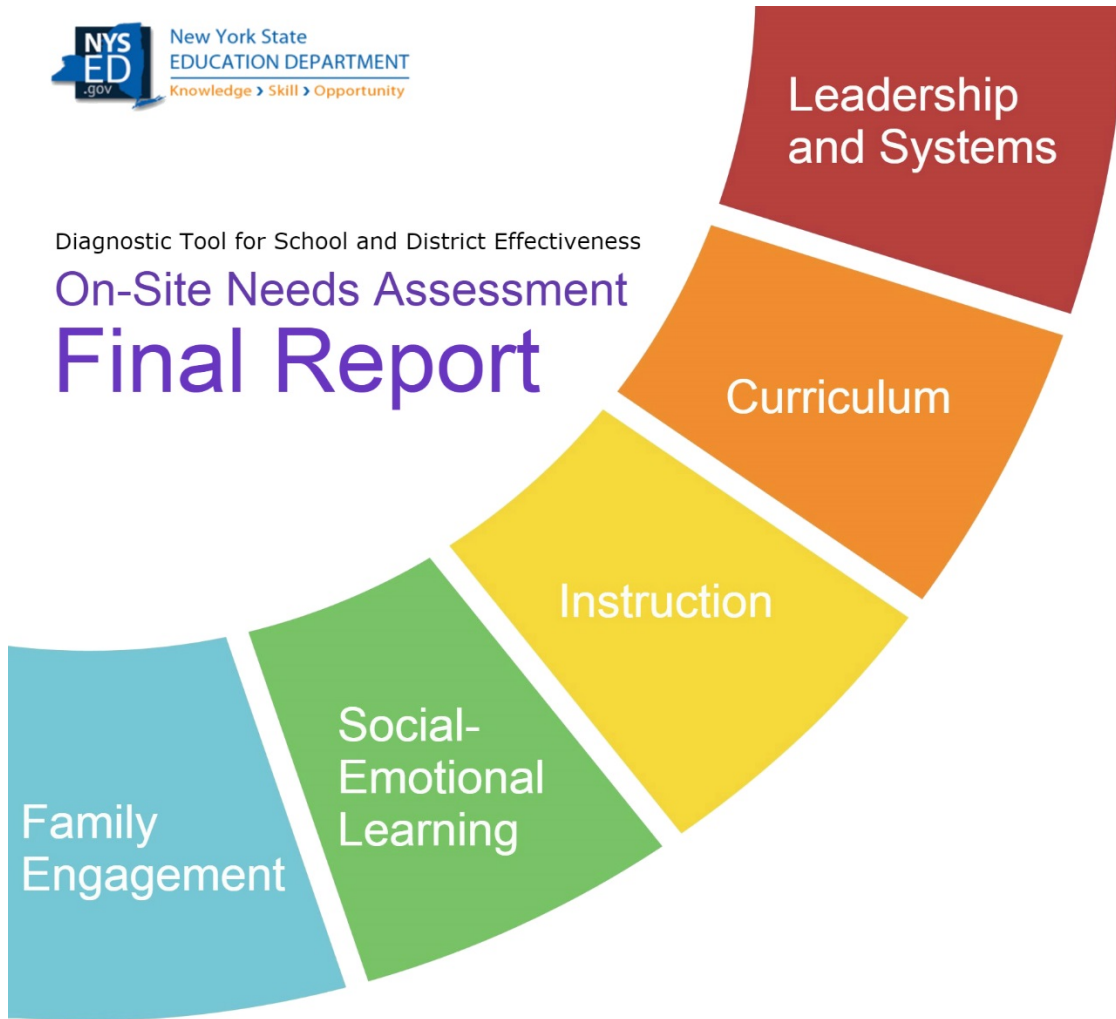


Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

# Final Report



<b>BEDS Code</b>	321000010246
<b>School Name</b>	P.S. 246 Poe Center
<b>School Address</b>	2641 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10468
<b>District Name</b>	NYCDOE CSD 10
<b>Principal</b>	Andrea Johnson
<b>Dates of Visit</b>	April 16-18, 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	2	1	2	1	2

P.S. 246 Poe Center serves 685 students in grades kindergarten to 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 representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The team visited a total of 40 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 table of organization, professional learning community cycle, walkthrough forms, professional development plan rubric, professional learning cycle bridge to practice rubrics, math data analysis chart, teacher lesson plans, letters to parents, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) manual and brochures, reciprocal teaching inter-visitation schedule, conferring notes, record keeping sheets, monthly conferring notes at a glance, PLC meeting minutes, coaching notes, small group reading plans, math journaling self-reflections, and curriculum maps.
- In advance of the visit, 48 staff members (77 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

## Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. This school year, the principal implemented professional learning communities (PLCs) that center around four specific areas of instruction: reciprocal teaching, advanced literacy, problem-solving with the five practices, and growth mindset feedback/conferencing. The principal shared with the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that the areas selected were based on teacher evaluation data and specific instructional priorities for implementation this school year. Interviewed teachers shared that they are enrolled in six-week cycles focused on each area, affording them the opportunity to learn and implement the strategies effectively in their classroom. Teachers stated that the PLCs have impacted how they provide instruction in the classroom and have helped them grow professionally.
2. The principal shared that the school was able to add three instructional coaches this school year to support classroom teachers with the implementation of the school's new initiatives. The principal reported there is now a math coach and a literacy coach for each grade band, kindergarten to grade two and grades three to five. Teachers stated that the coaches provide support in six-week cycles based on their evaluation data, and together they develop a coaching support plan and determine the outcomes they will accomplish, linked to professional development (PD) and student outcomes. Teachers, coaches, and school leaders indicated that as a result of coaching, teachers now can express the support they have received, discuss the instructional shifts that are taking place in the classroom, and construct next steps.
3. As part of the school's culture and climate initiative, the school implemented the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program this school year. The IIT observed schoolwide PBIS behavior expectation posters throughout the building and in each classroom. The team heard morning announcements that recognized students for doing something good, and interviewed students shared that they have monthly PBIS rallies to acknowledge students for meeting behavior expectations, where they cheer for each other. Students stated that they like the PBIS program and shared that each classroom earns a prize when their "Pom-Pom Jar" has been filled as a result of students in the class following instructions and staying on task. The principal reported that as result of PBIS implementation, office referrals have decreased from eight to ten students per day to one or two students per day. Interviewed teachers shared that the PBIS program has made a difference in the culture and climate of the building. The principal and teachers reported that there is a committee that focuses on PBIS that has developed PBIS guides and brochures for teachers and parents.
4. In an effort to provide students in kindergarten and first grade an opportunity for instructional play time, this school year, the school leaders created the Imagination Station room as a specials class. The IIT observed students interacting in a space that housed puppet stations, a sandbox, a reading library, building blocks, games, a kitchen, a laundry, and daily living centers. The principal shared that students visit this area once a week, and data are collected for each student on learning targets that address social skills and infuse specific academic skills.
5. The principal has created a culture where parents feel welcome and included as a part of the school. This school year, the principal continued to build upon that culture by increasing the efforts to get more parents involved through after-school math workshops for parents, and lap projects that parents and students complete and present together. The IIT observed the lap projects posted throughout the school on bulletin boards. Interviewed parents stated that they have seen noticeable positive changes in the school such as an

increase in activities, greater accessibility of the principal, and improvement in the quality of instruction, and they said that their children feel safe in the school and are excited come to school early and stay late.

## Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

### Systems for Improvement

- **School leaders will need to establish goals and benchmarks to measure progress toward the implementation of initiatives throughout the year.** The IIT found that goals and benchmarking to measure the impact of the initiatives on instruction are needed. Teachers shared that they were unsure of goals or benchmarks to measure the success of implemented initiatives. The IIT noted that the school initiatives were not directly aligned to the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP), and many of the goals in the 2018-19 SCEP were the same as from prior years. In the future, the school leaders should consider creating and communicating to staff explicit benchmarks and interim goals throughout the school year for achieving longer-term goals so that all staff are clear as to why a certain initiative is being implemented, what the intended impact is, and what the related expectations are. Such goals should be reviewed and monitored for progress throughout the school year.

### Leadership and Organization at the School

- **School leaders should work with teachers to create a shared understanding of initiatives and the school leader's expectations.** Teachers interviewed by the IIT shared that many initiatives began this school year, but they are uncertain of how these initiatives are selected. Teachers expressed a need for clearer expectations from school leaders, and that while they receive weekly emails from the principal, the information communicated does not always align to the initiatives or what they think the school leader's expectations are.

### Learning at the School

- **Teachers should differentiate activities to meet the varied needs of students.** The IIT noted strategic student groupings in some observed classrooms but of evidence of differentiated activities for students was limited. Although students worked in small groups, the team observed that the materials given to students were generally the same with minimal differentiation and scaffolding. Students were observed working individually on the same activities in each of the groups. Some interviewed teachers expressed that they need more support in differentiation and scaffolding.
- **Teachers in integrated co-teaching (ICT) classrooms should consider using multiple models of instruction and differentiating learning in order to meet the needs of students.** In ICT classrooms observed by the team, the regular education teacher and the special education teacher taught lessons with the same objectives to students in different parts of the room. However, the students in both groups received the same instruction with the same materials without any differentiation in either the planning or delivery of the lesson.
- **Teachers will need to provide students will engaging instruction.** The IIT observed that most lessons were teacher directed, and few students were able to independently engage in activities and speak clearly about their learning objectives. During class visits, the team observed many students sitting through instruction with nothing in front of them to help capture the learning being presented. Further, there were minimal

opportunities for students to practice and engage with each other through discussion. Formative assessments did not take place during most lessons, and the questions asked to students required them to recall information but did not yield opportunities for them to think critically and analytically. In some classrooms, the language objectives and target words were posted but not used in the lesson or in student conversation. In most observed classes, students did not use specific academic language as part of their responses.

- **Teachers should provide students with feedback on their progress.** Homework reviewed by the team did not include feedback to students. Further, the IIT saw minimal examples of student self-reflection during learning. In some classrooms, visuals were posted with examples of students reflecting on, or setting goals, but this was not typical. The principal shared that teachers are required to provide “glows” and “grows” on student work posted throughout the building; however, some teachers expressed that they are not always sure as to why it is necessary to publicly post feedback, such as on bulletin boards, when that practice does not feel like an authentic, useful tool for students, and the time used to write and rewrite feedback could be utilized more effectively. Interviewed students shared that they only know how well they are achieving by the grade on their report card or by what the teacher tells them.

## Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Students shared that they want to have fundraising opportunities.** Interviewed students stated that they would like to be provided more fundraising opportunities, with older students in charge, so that they can give to non-profit organizations or serve a need in the community.
- **Parents said they would like the school to offer more after-school and sports programming.** Parents shared that the Good Shepard Program is held after school, but there are limited slots for students to attend. They also shared that although enrichment activities are offered on Saturday as part of the tutoring program, they would like to see more after-school programs during the week. Parents also stated that they would like to see athletic offerings after school for their children because they currently must enroll their children in programs outside of the school for sports such as soccer or baseball.
- **Parents expressed frustration with the physical condition of the building.** The parents shared that they are frustrated with building issues such as lead in the water, construction, air conditioning, and tight space. Parents stated that the school should have a gym and that the new gym that is being proposed does not have facilities that can be used for parent meetings.
- **Parents said that they would like more consistency across the school.** Parents stated that areas such as homework requirements, the teaching of vocabulary and spelling, the weekly instructional class focus, PBIS practices, and teacher/parent communication are not consistent from class to class. Parents shared that they find it confusing and sometimes frustrating to have children in the same school, and at times the same grade, with different requirements, and they said that it would be beneficial if the school had a set policy for how these areas should be addressed.
- **School leaders will need to provide teachers will time to plan together.** Teachers shared that the time they have to plan with each other is limited and that they would like more time to plan as a grade level or team during the school day to create differentiation strategies and to unpack curriculum together. Interviewed teachers suggested that a committee be formed to look at the school’s schedule to determine if an adjustment can be made for common planning time.