New York State
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Leadership and Systems

Curriculum
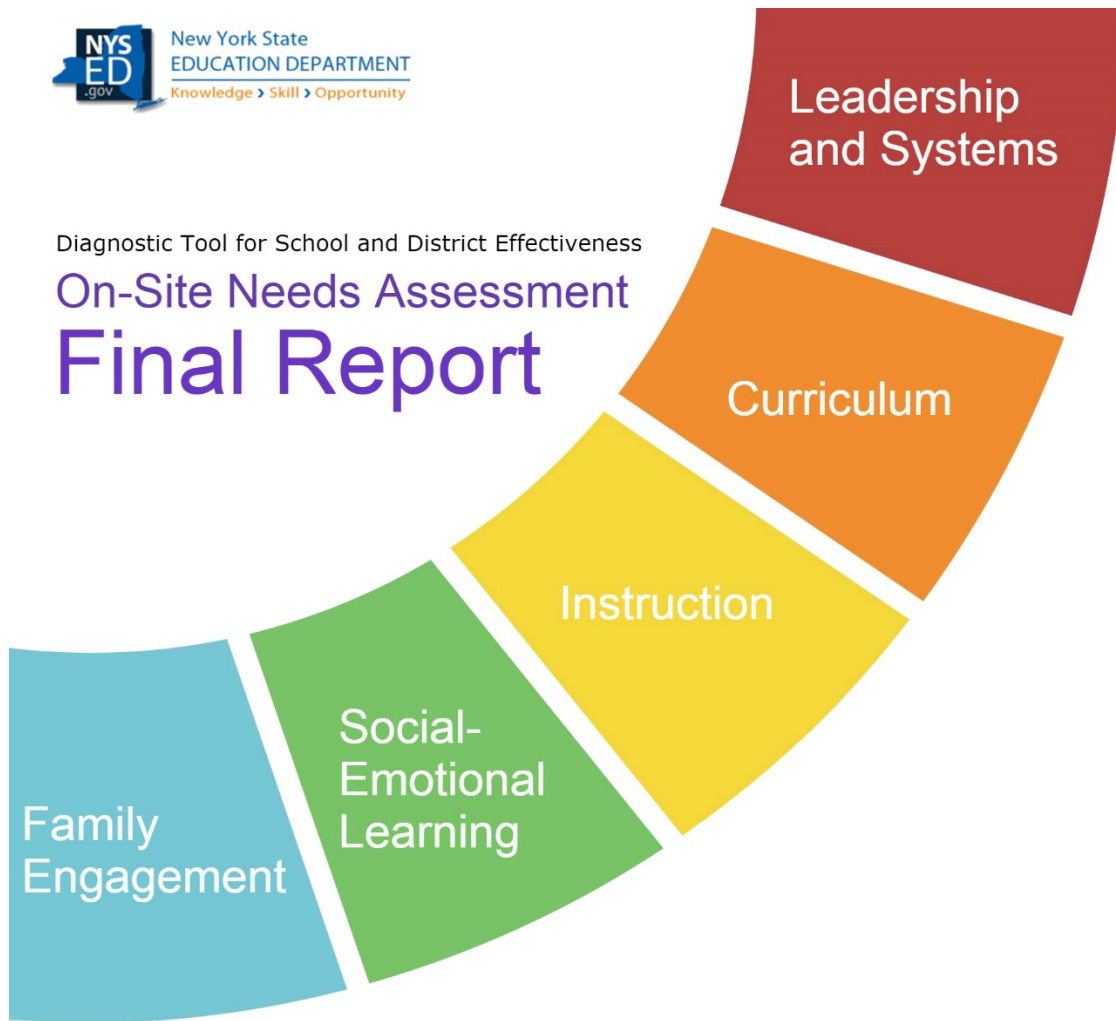
Instruction

Social-Emotional Learning

Family Engagement

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

# Final Report

| BEDS Code | 321000010054 |
|---|---|
| School Name | P.S./I.S. 54 |
| School Address | 2703 Webster Avenue, Bronx, NY 10458 |
| District Name | NYCDOE CSD 10 |
| Principal | Dr. Marybelle Ferreira |
| 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 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

P.S./I.S. 54 serves 473 students in pre-kindergarten through grade 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 conducted 58 visits to 28 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited eight 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 curriculum maps, lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- In advance of the visit, the school provided results of a staff survey that 58 staff members (100 percent) completed.
- In advance of the visit, the school provided results of a parent survey that 441 parents (74 percent) completed.
- In advance of the visit, 30 staff members (52 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

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

1. In October 2018, the school implemented monthly Family Fun Fridays as a way to increase family involvement. During these events, school staff share information with families about the school's character trait of the month, and the school provides families with a book about that character trait so that they can reinforce it at home. Interviewed parents reported that these experiences strengthen the home-school connection and provide opportunities for family members to share ideas with school staff and other families. The principal and parents stated that parent participation is strong at these events, ranging from five to 15 parents per classroom.

2. At the beginning of 2018-19, the Parent Association instituted a buddy system to help improve attendance, especially for students in the lower grades. This system provides parents who have challenges getting their children to school with assistance from other parents who are able to pick their children up and walk them to school. Interviewed parents reported a high level of trust within this system and noted that it is helping some students to improve their attendance.

3. In 2018-19, school staff began hosting book clubs with families and staff in an effort to build community and capacity. The principal is hosting a book club for parents on *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*. A teacher is working with families using the book *The 5 Love Languages for Children*. An assistant principal is hosting a book discussion for staff on Zaretta Hammond's *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain.* Although this work is just beginning, teachers and parents shared that they are enjoying these learning experiences.

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

## Systems for Improvement

- **School leaders need to develop a cohesive system for improving instruction.** Through discussions with the principal and teachers, the IIT learned that the school has many teams and individuals to support instruction, but there is no one team dedicated to instructional improvement. For example, the school currently has a math team, a professional development (PD) team, and a cabinet team, as well as coaches, model teachers, and assistant teachers who provide support in the classroom. However, a clear vision for instructional improvement has not been communicated to guide the work of these teams and individuals. In addition, the IIT found that the efforts of these teams and individuals is not coordinated to provide teachers with a common approach to teaching and learning. In the future, school leaders should establish an instructional improvement team to develop clear guidelines for teaching practices, learning activities, school leader feedback, and support for improvement.

## Leadership and Organization at the School

- **School leaders should work together as a cohesive unit**. School leaders reported that they do not meet regularly as a team. School leaders stated that they each have distinct areas of responsibility and that their roles do not overlap. They also acknowledged that there is no system for school leaders to regularly communicate with each other regarding instructional or other priorities. As a result, the IIT found that there is no shared understanding of the school's needs or a collaboratively developed plan for school improvement.

In the future, school leaders should meet on daily basis to collaborate, plan, and support each other in the implementation of a schoolwide approach to improvement.

- **Although school leaders have created a supportive culture for parents and students, they need to focus on creating a positive staff culture.** The principal shared that she has prioritized welcoming, assisting, and affirming students and parents so that they can be successful. However, teachers reported that they are not acknowledged with morning greetings and their efforts are not recognized consistently. One teacher suggested that school leaders should hold celebrations to recognize staff accomplishments, and that this would help to improve staff morale. In the future, the principal and assistant principals, together as a team, should meet with individual staff to learn about their ideas for improving staff morale.

- **School leaders should develop a system to provide teachers with consistent and positive feedback**. The principal and assistant principal reported that their classroom observation system has not been normed to ensure they are providing teachers with consistent expectations and support. School leaders reported that classrooms visits have not been conducted together to calibrate their feedback. Although school leaders and teachers shared that teachers are open to feedback, teachers stated that, outside of formal observations, they do not receive written feedback after their classrooms are visited. In addition, the principal and teachers reported that most of the feedback they receive is focused only on areas for improvement. Teachers shared that they would like school leaders to also provide them with feedback related to areas of strength.

- **School leaders need to communicate clear expectations for the use of data to inform instruction.** Interviewed teachers stated that they examine data periodically, but they have not been provided with clear expectations for which data they should be examining, how often they should be analyzing data, or the purpose of their data analysis. Although teachers use different protocols to examine data, such as the ATLAS protocol, some teachers stated that they need support in using these protocols to inform their instruction. Some teachers stated that they administer a multitude of assessments, but they are not always able to analyze the data and use it to inform instruction. Although students reported that they are grouped based on iReady assessment results, during class visits, the IIT observed many students sitting in groups but working on the same task. In the future, school leaders should develop a one-page document that identifies the data sets teachers should prioritize along with guidelines for using these data to inform instruction. School leaders should work with teachers to determine the professional learning supports needed to assist teachers in analyzing and using data to inform the planning and delivery of lessons that meet the learning needs of all students.

- **School leaders should provide teachers with more support in implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL).** School leaders reported that the implementation of UDL throughout all programming is one of the current instructional priorities. However, the IIT found that teachers do not have a shared understanding of UDL. For example, some teachers explained that UDL means that they should differentiate instruction, while other teachers defined UDL as small group instruction. Some teachers stated that they need more support to be able to provide differentiated instruction while still maintaining the pacing schedule. Some teachers shared that they are finding it difficult to implement UDL in addition to the many other school initiatives, such as Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP), Go Math!, Fundations, and Guided Reading. In the future, school leaders should consider writing one-page summaries of the key priorities and practices of each of the school's initiatives and distributing the summaries to all staff. School leaders should work with teachers to determine the level of support they need to implement the different initiatives and provide them with those supports.

## Learning at the School

- **The school needs to expand the scope and duration of math instruction.** During class visits, the IIT observed little math instruction being provided. The principal, teachers, and parents acknowledged that the math program is not being implemented with fidelity and needs to be strengthened to meet student needs. Some parents expressed concern that their children were not learning basic math concepts, such as multiplication and division. Interviewed teachers shared that they need more PD and in-class coaching to support their conceptual understanding and delivery of math instruction. The principal acknowledged that teachers' content-area knowledge in math needs to be strengthened. The principal shared that she is partnering with the district to begin providing teachers with math support and is identifying teacher leaders interested in developing their math instructional capacity.
- **Teachers should plan and deliver lessons that have a high level of rigor.** In most classes visited, the IIT saw few students engaged in high-level discussions. In many classes, students answered low-level questions that required a one-word or simple response. In most observed ELA classes, many questions revolved around literacy conventions, such as detail, text boxes, and genre, and questioning was not extended to encourage students to delve deeper into the lesson content. Although most students shared that they like school and they like learning, they said that their school work is easy and expressed an interest in more challenging activities. In the future, the school leaders should work with teachers to develop a schoolwide definition of rigor. School leaders should provide opportunities for teachers to support each other in planning rigorous lessons that include questions that elicit higher-order thinking and problem solving.
- **Teachers need to provide students with feedback that helps them to improve their work.** In a review of student work and during class visits, the IIT saw few examples of targeted feedback that would allow students to extend or improve their learning on their own. Although student rubrics were posted on the walls, the IIT did not observe them being used as part of classroom practice. In the future, school leaders should ensure that teachers are providing students with actionable feedback that includes next steps to improve their learning.

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

- **Parents and students stated that they would like the school to offer more afterschool activities**. A few parents stated that they would like the school to offer more afterschool activities, such as karate. Students shared that they would like an afterschool program where they could receive additional academic support.
- **Teachers would like more consistency in teaching assignments.** Teachers shared that the practice of having teachers stay with the same group of students for two years requires a great deal of change and restructuring. They stated that eliminating this practice would allow them to have more consistency in their planning and strengthen their implementation of grade-level strategies.
- **Parents reported that they would like the school to provide more resources for their children.** Several parents stated that they would like their children to have access to more extracurricular programs. Other parents stated that they would like the school to have printers available for student use.