New York State EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
.gov Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment
Final Report

Leadership and Systems

Curriculum

Instruction

Social-Emotional Learning

Family Engagement
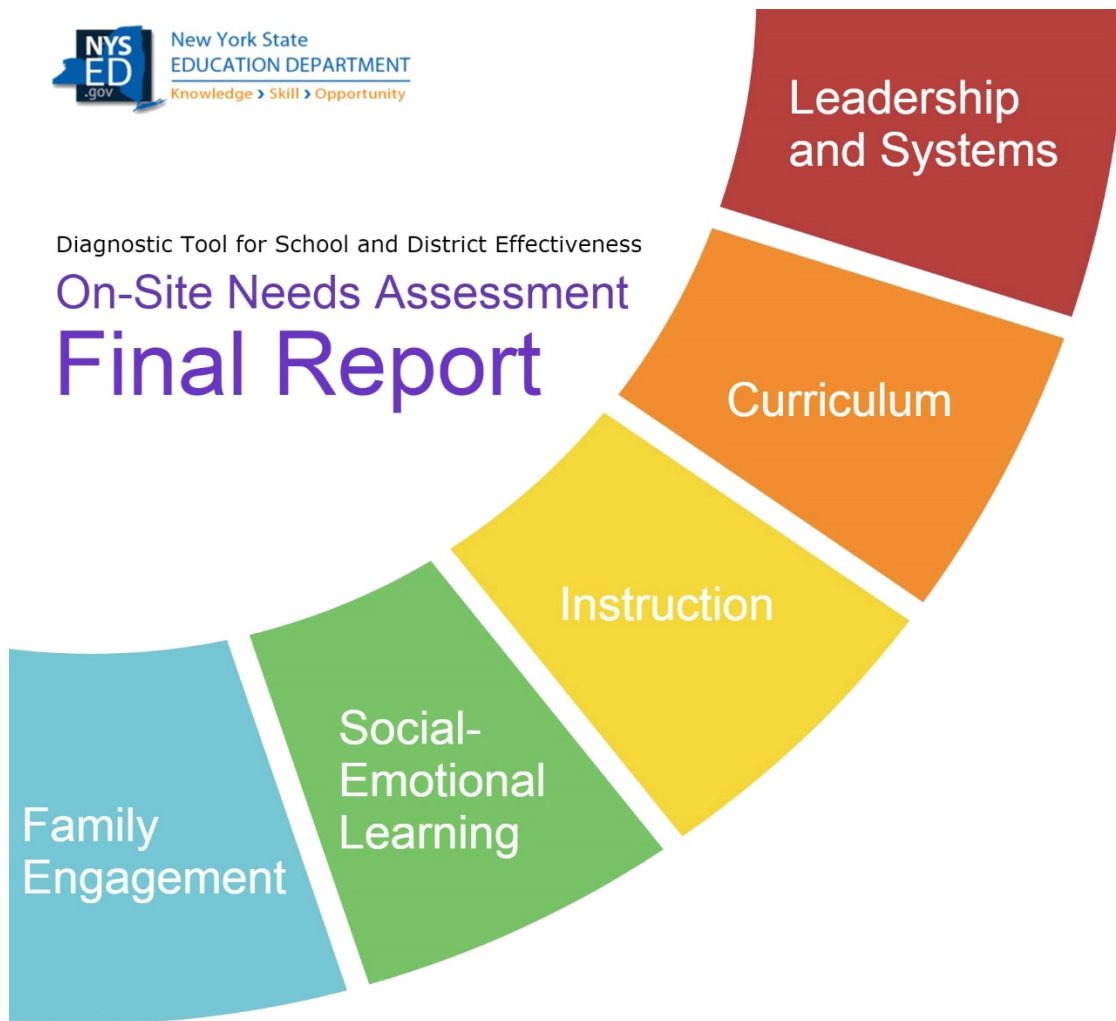
BEDS Code	321200010314
School Name	Fairmont Neighborhood School
School Address	1550 Vyse Avenue, Bronx, NY 10460
District Name	NYCDOE CSD 12
Principal	Monique Hibbert
Dates of Visit	February 12-14, 2019

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	2	2

Fairmont Neighborhood School serves 308 students in grades pre-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 19 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 lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- In advance of the visit, the school provided results of a student survey that zero students (zero percent) completed.
- In advance of the visit, the school provided results of a staff survey that 16 staff members (52 percent) completed.
- In advance of the visit, the school provided results of a parent survey 175 parents (73 percent) completed.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. To prioritize the importance of student behavior, during the month of February 2019, the principal collaborated with the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) team to implement a system of school-wide expectations for positive behavior. The principal reported that the system is being incrementally introduced and that the first component targets safety and includes an incentive system for students. Based on classroom observations and building walkthroughs, the team found that most students were well-behaved in classrooms, hallways, and in common areas. Students interviewed by the team were enthusiastic about the PBIS system and were able to articulate the school's expectations and rewards system.

2. The school offers a science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) enrichment class during the afterschool program that provides students at varying proficiency levels the opportunity to engage in hands-on activities, including robotics. The students who participated in this program during the 2018-19 school year, won second place in the FIRST Lego League competition. Staff, students, and other members of the school community reported that this accomplishment has been a source of celebration and pride for them.

3. The principal reported that she reinstituted the iReady computer lab during the 2018-19 school year to ensure that all students are provided with equitable access to the standards-based software program. Based on the results of the fall and winter administration of the iReady diagnostic assessment, the percentage of students who are two or more grade levels behind decreased from 47 percent to 37 percent.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **School leaders will need to develop specific benchmarks to assess progress of the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) goals and activities.** The principal reported that school leaders meet regularly to discuss action items and to monitor the progress made toward SCEP goals. She noted that the plan was submitted prior to her hire but that she had been permitted to adjust goals within the SCEP plan. The plan includes activities and strategies within the SCEP action plan. The team found that there needs to be interim benchmarks to measure the success of each initiative. The SCEP outlines, for example, that the school will provide professional development (PD) for kindergarten through grade five teachers, differentiating PD to increase the number of effective and highly effective teachers in Component 3b and 3d, by addressing the needs of individual teachers and their students. The timeline for this activity was set as ongoing, with no interim benchmarks included. In the future, the principal should map out the incremental implementation of steps for the action items that will be addressed by the school, along with completion dates for each step, so that the school can adequately progress monitor the school's action plan for school improvement.

- **School leaders should develop systems to track and monitor targeted interventions for students as part of the implementation of the iReady program.** The school has ensured that students are provided with adequate computer access time. The principal acknowledged that plans are still in the developmental stage for providing targeted interventions for all students based on their individual skill needs. Teachers noted that this has not been implemented as yet. Additional training is being discussed for how to effectively utilize all the features of the program and provide invention support to struggling students.

- **School leaders will need to implement a system of individual classroom growth goals to monitor cohort growth and proficiency from year to year.** The SCEP includes some goals related to increases in math proficiency and reading levels, and students have annual reading goals and interim reading, math, and writing goals aligned to the content standards. The data review indicated that teachers are analyzing their assessment data and creating action plans to address specific standards. The team found that classroom-level goals that track student growth from year to year need to be established. In the future, the principal should analyze student baseline data from the previous school year and collaborate with teachers and support staff to set classroom goals to promote staff investment and shared accountability for school improvement.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The principal should monitor teacher practices to ensure that instructional time is maximized.** Currently, the school provides breakfast in the classroom for all students. During classroom walkthroughs, the IIT observed that instruction did not begin until 8:45 a.m., which limits the amount of instruction allotted for the first instructional block. The IIT also observed instruction concluding prior to ten minutes before dismissal. Classroom schedules were posted in some classrooms, but instructional expectations during each component of the instructional schedule need to be clearer.

- **School leaders need to ensure that teachers understand how to use the data tracking system and are familiar with the data sources available to inform instruction for all students.** The IIT reviewed the data binder provided to them by the principal, which included interim assessment data disaggregated by standards. During conversations with the principal, the IIT learned that interim assessments are created at the school level and are hand-scored by teachers. In turn, teachers manually enter student assessment scores by hand. During interviews, teachers indicated that additional support is needed in the area of data analysis and effective use of the school's data tracker. The IIT also found that some teachers are unfamiliar with the data and strategies available to support English as a new language (ENL) students and to facilitate progression on the English proficiency assessment.

- **School leaders will need to implement common assessments for students in kindergarten through grade two.** The principal reported that she instituted common assessments for students in grades three through five during the 2018-19 school term. Common assessments for kindergarten through grade two students are accessible but not instituted in the lower grades. During conversations with teachers, the IIT learned that grade two instructional and assessment practices were needed to prepare students for the rigor of grade three content and assessments. During classroom visits, the IIT found that students in grades three through five were given the opportunity to complete activities, which were challenging and aligned to State assessments. However, this practice needs to be evident in kindergarten through grade two classrooms.

Learning at the School

- **Teachers should differentiate student activities based on performance data or provide students with opportunities to collaborate when completing tasks.** During classroom visits, the IIT found that students in some grades primarily complete the same task in the same manner in most classrooms. The IIT observed pre-identified groups in some classrooms while other student groups appeared to be randomly assigned at the conclusion of the whole group instructional lesson. The IIT found that although students were primarily seated in teams, students were either not required or encouraged to collaborate, and completed tasks independently.

An analysis of lesson plans showed limited planned opportunities for student collaboration. In the future, the principal should consider collaborating with the assistant principal to conduct focused classroom visits targeting student collaboration. These focused visits should provide teachers with feedback and strategies to create collaborative activities and to use data to inform student grouping decisions.

- **Teachers will need to use instructional blocks in a time sensitive manner.** The IIT found that teachers need increased urgency regarding instructional routines, time on task, and student accountability for the work period. For example, during classroom visits, the instructional blocks showed students receiving whole group instruction for extended periods of time in many classrooms. In addition, the IIT observed lengthy transition times between activities and between carpet time and student centers. In some classrooms, teachers needed to provide clear instructions prior to releasing students to the work period. As a result, while students were generally interested in the activities, the IIT found that students sometimes needed support to clearly articulate expectations for the task. In some classrooms, the IIT found that student centers, including independent reading, computer centers, and hands-on activities, provided too little accountability for student productivity.

- **Teachers should increase their use of instructional modeling to deepen students' understanding of the content standards.** During classroom observations, while the IIT found that lessons included I do, we do, and you do components, additional teacher modeling of the content was needed with regard to demonstrating multiple examples prior to moving to the we do part of the lesson. The IIT's review of teacher lesson plans showed minimal examples outlined for the modeling section of the lesson. The IIT found that work period activities needed alignment to the focus skill for the day in some classrooms and to provide students with enough opportunities to practice the focus skill with teacher guidance.

- **Teachers in integrated co-teaching classrooms (ICT) should develop their skills in parallel teaching.** While the principal communicated the expectation for ICT classrooms that teachers use parallel teaching during the lesson, the IIT found variations in the implementation of the ICT model within classrooms. Some classrooms conducted whole group lessons led by one teacher while the other teacher conducted small group lessons. These small group lessons provided students with scaffolds to meet the learning target. Review of lesson plans and interviews with teachers showed a practice of in-depth co-planning for lessons. However, in other classrooms, all students were engaged in a whole group lesson in which more teaching strategies were needed in order to maximize on the number of educators in the room.

- **All teachers will need to implement the school's core reading and writing program.** During teacher and principal interviews, the IIT learned that some staff would like to replace the current curriculum, as the rigor in instruction and student activities need to be more aligned to the State assessment. While some teachers implement the program as prescribed, teachers also shared that they supplement the prescribed lessons with additional activities to ensure students are exposed to the appropriate type of questioning. The principal and teachers communicated that the school is reviewing other ELA curricula but that a decision to eliminate the current program has not yet been finalized. The principal communicated that staff need to be held more accountable for implementation of the program with fidelity. In the interim, it is recommended that the principal designate the assistant principal to collaborate with the ELA curriculum coach and teachers to develop writing lessons directly aligned to the State standards and follow-up on implementation of the writing lessons during the next ELA coaching visit.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Parents reported that all students should be offered the opportunity to participate in academic support programs.** Parents noted that although the school provides test preparation classes for students in grades three through five, not all students are afforded the opportunity to benefit from this after school academic support. Parents requested that test preparation courses be provided as an option for all students in grades three through five and that afterschool support be provided for kindergarten students.

- **Parents stated that they are interested in the school reinstating programming designed to increase parent engagement and support adult learners**. They noted that the school previously engaged parents in a variety of activities such as yoga, cooking workshops, general equivalency diploma courses, Spanish lessons, and English as a new language (ENL) classes. In addition, parents stated that more timely notice regarding upcoming activities is required if parents are to attend school events in larger numbers. Parents reported that notices are often provided at the last minute and that an effort should be made to send written notices home for events at least ten days prior to the event.

- **Students and parents expressed a desire for more structured opportunities for physical activity for students.** Students shared that recess is sometimes used as a reward by the school aides and that recess is alternated with movies in the auditorium. Students and parents stated that they would like the school to provide daily physical activity for students. Both parents and students communicated that bullying occasionally occurs during recess and that more organized activities and access to more athletic equipment is needed.

- **Parents reported that they would like all teachers to provide regular correspondence on their child's progress and general classroom updates.** While the school provides parents with report cards and progress reports as well as weekly conference time afterschool, the parents interviewed shared that updates from classroom teachers on student progress are provided upon request and are typically verbal. Parents shared that updates are usually received from teachers once per month. Students noted that their assignments are not often sent home to parents and that they would like the opportunity to share the assignment they are most proud of with their parents.

- **Students expressed a need for a more desirable variety of food options within the cafeteria.** Students expressed dissatisfaction with the lunch menu and a desire for opportunities to have input on the lunch menu in addition to access to copies of the lunch menu in advance. Parents noted that some improvements had been realized with the parent teacher association (PTA) request at the beginning of the school year.

- **Teachers communicated a need for increased collaboration between faculty and paraprofessional staff.** Teachers stated that there is limited interaction between teaching staff and paraprofessional staff during professional development (PD) sessions and that students would benefit from teachers and paraprofessionals having a shared understanding of the content and instructional strategies. Teachers communicated the need for strategic activities during PD sessions to promote cohesion, collaboration, and collegiality across vertical and horizontal tiers.