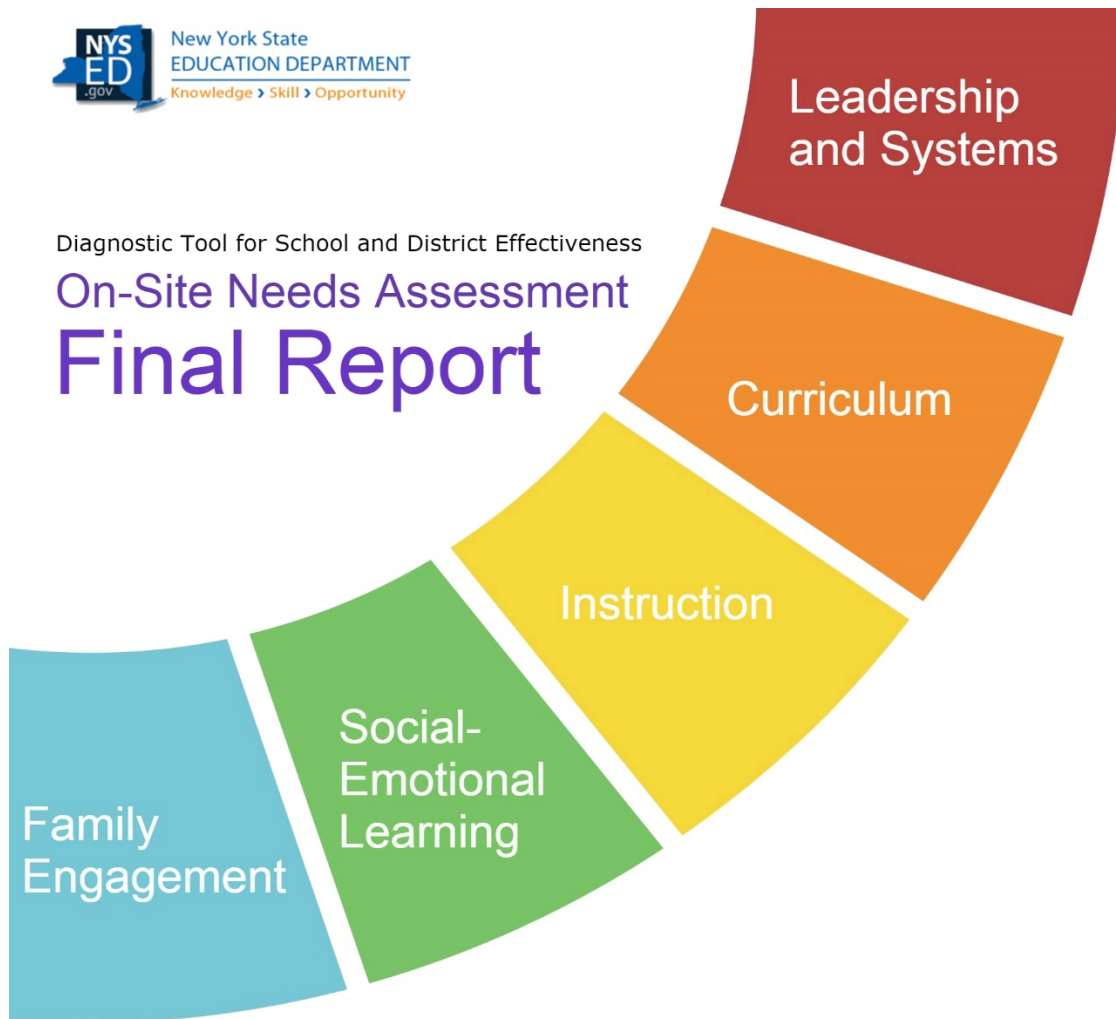


Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

Final Report



BEDS Code	321200011248
School Name	The Metropolitan High School
School Address	1180 Rev James A. Polite Avenue, Bronx, NY 10459
District Name	NYCDOE CSD 12
Principal	Dr. Latoya Key
Dates of Visit	February 6-8, 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:

High School Performance Indicators

4 Year Grad. Rate <67%	Composite Performance Achievement Level	Average of 4-, 5-, and 6-year Graduation Rate Levels	Combined Composite Performance Achievement and Graduation Rate Level	English Language Proficiency Level	Average ELA and Math Academic Progress Level	Chronic Absenteeism Level	College, Career, Civic, Readiness (CCCR) Level
No	1	1	1	2	1	2	1

The Metropolitan High School serves 352 students in grades nine through twelve.

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 36 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited nine 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 student survey that 164 students (43 percent) completed.
- In advance of the visit, the school provided results of a staff survey that 34 staff members (83 percent) completed.
- In advance of the visit, the school provided results of a parent survey that 41 parents (11 percent) completed.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. During the 2018-19 school year, the principal implemented remedial courses for students who had been unsuccessful in passing the Regents examinations. These remedial courses were embedded within the student schedules to allow students to receive additional support during the regular school day. One hundred percent of students who registered for the remedial Living Environment class successfully passed the Regents Examination in Living Environment in January 2019.
2. During the 2018-19 school year, the school obtained feedback from parents enrolled in the English as a new language (ENL) program regarding additional workshops that would be beneficial to families. In response to parent input, the principal added computer courses to the adult education programming for spring 2019. One hundred percent of parents interviewed expressed satisfaction with the addition of the computer courses.
3. The principal utilizes a distributive leadership model to build leadership capacity. During the 2017-18 school year, the principal appointed grade-team leaders. During the 2018-19 school year, the principal expanded the responsibilities of the grade-team leaders to include facilitating grade-team meetings, serving on the school leadership team, and turnkeying professional development within the school building. The expansion of grade-team leader responsibilities has led to increased collaboration and more sharing of instructional ideas and strategies between teachers.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **The activities described within the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) should have clearly defined timelines for completion and include interim benchmarks to monitor progress.** The principal stated that school leaders meet regularly to discuss action items included within the SCEP. While the principal has included numerous activities and strategies within the SCEP action plan, the plan does not include clear interim benchmarks to measure the success of each initiative. For example, one action plan indicates that school leaders will provide frequent and clear feedback to teachers using multiple formats, including informal and formal observations and one-to-one conversations. The timeline for this activity is September through June with no interim benchmarks to monitor progress. In the future, the principal should map out the incremental implementation steps for each action plan, including completion dates for each step, so that school leaders can determine if the school is making progress towards achieving the identified goals.
- **Academic supports need to be provided during the regular school day to allow more students to take advantage of them.** During meetings with the principal, students, parents, and staff, the IIT learned that although the school provides academic assistance to students through the after-school program and Saturday tutorials, student participation in these programs has been minimal. The principal explained that due to financial and family circumstances, many students have to work or care for family members which prevents them from attending tutorial sessions outside of the regular school day. Interviewed students stated that some teachers provide tutorial sessions during the lunch hour and that academic supports that are offered when they are already in school are the easiest for them to attend.
- **Teachers should have a clear understanding of the school's progress toward meeting its improvement goals.** While most interviewed teachers were able to identify the school's improvement goals, they were not aware

of the progress that had been made towards achieving those goals. Although the principal reported that she uses the Data Wise analysis of student performance to guide teacher conversations and inform decisions about instructional practices, she should establish student performance goals for individual teachers that are aligned to the schoolwide goals.

- **The school needs to develop strategies to increase student attendance.** The school has a system to improve student attendance that includes designated individuals on the attendance team and at each grade level who contact parents when their child is absent. However, the 2018-19 attendance rate is lower than the attendance rate for 2017-18. While the school provides individual incentives for attendance, teachers suggested that additional strategies, such as team incentives for the highest attendance, should be considered to increase student motivation and improve peer support for attendance.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **School leaders should engage all staff in decision-making for the school.** During interviews with teachers, the IIT learned that there is no formal system for staff to provide input and suggestions when decisions are made about school practices. Some teachers stated that all key decisions are made exclusively by school leadership and are then communicated to the staff either in professional development sessions or via email. While the teachers stated that they trust the principal's vision and the decisions that she makes, they do not always understand the logic behind her decisions or how they relate to the school's vision, mission, and core values.
- **The principal has introduced several strategies to improve teaching and learning, but teachers need additional support to implement the new strategies.** The principal shared that school leadership is working to provide teachers with numerous strategies that can be used to enhance student learning. School leaders share evidence-based instructional strategies with teachers during professional development sessions. However, some teachers reported that they are not always sure how to fully implement the strategies, and they need more follow-up support in the form of modeling within the classroom and coaching of new strategies. During class visits, although the team observed teachers attempting to implement strategies that school leaders expect to see, it was evident that some teachers need additional support to understand when and how to use these strategies. For example, students in one class were asked to use the think-pair-share strategy to contrast types of triangles. However, the differences between the triangles were obvious and therefore, the activity did not provide students with a meaningful application of the strategy. The principal shared that the school implemented a system of inter-visitation in 2017-18, but no decision had been made about implementing the inter-visitation process this academic year.
- **Many students need additional support to arrive to school on time.** During classroom observations and teacher interviews, the IIT found that few students were present when the school day began at 8:00 a.m., and the majority of students were not present until the end of the first class period. The principal shared that both the school and district leadership have noted that the current start time presents challenges for some students, and modifications are being considered for 2019-20.
- **The school should coordinate the assessment calendar to minimize the demands on students taking multiple exams.** During interviews with students, the IIT learned that some students were required to take the January 2019 Regents exams and final exams in the same week. Students reported that as a result, they experienced increased levels of anxiety and stress due to the demands of two different assessments. Interviewed students also shared that the administration of some school-based assessments overlapped with national assessments, such as the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT).

Learning at the School

- **Teachers should plan lessons that engage students in their learning and provide opportunities for students to collaborate with their peers.** In most classes visited, students were provided with work packets that included questions to guide the content of their writing. Although most students were compliant in completing the learning tasks, the IIT found that student interest and engagement was limited. Interviewed students stated that the packets were boring and limited their motivation to participate in lessons. Some students shared that they would like more opportunities to be active during lessons. While students in most Regents-level classes were given Regents-formatted test questions, a review of student work samples revealed that in some non-Regents classes, students were primarily provided with knowledge and comprehension-level activities. Although students in many classes were seated in groups during the work period, the IIT observed that most students worked independently to complete the tasks, with little collaboration or team work.
- **Teachers need to plan lessons and activities that are aligned to the learning standards.** In some classes visited, the IIT found that instruction, activities, and exit tickets were not aligned to the learning standards and daily learning targets. In a review of unit plans and teacher lesson plans, the IIT found that unit plans were not always used to write lesson plans that directly aligned the standards, learning targets, sequence of activities, and exit tickets. Going forward, the principal should utilize classroom observation data and feedback from teachers to determine which teachers need additional support in unpacking the curriculum standards and planning lessons and activities aligned to the standards. Subsequently, the principal should coordinate follow-up coaching support as necessary for each teacher.
- **Teachers should provide students with regular feedback that identifies strengths and includes specific next steps to improve their work.** During student interviews, the IIT learned that the frequency and quality of student feedback varies. In reviewing feedback on student work, the IIT found that some included rubric scores and grades while others included detailed student-specific feedback regarding strengths and strategies to enhance the work product. In the future, school leaders should ensure that all teachers provide students with feedback that identifies areas of strength and provides specific next steps to improve their work.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Families would like additional adult education classes.** While the school provides ENL classes and other workshops based on family need, some parents stated that they would like access to classes to assist them in obtaining their high school equivalency diploma.
- **Teachers and students expressed concerns regarding the school's disciplinary practices.** During conversations with teachers and students, the IIT learned that although the school uses after-school detention as a consequence for student misbehavior, some students complete their detention while others refuse and are not given a follow-up consequence. Teachers and students expressed displeasure with the lack of follow-through and stated that it is negatively affecting morale. In addition, students and teachers reported that the school does not have a process for returning students to school after they have been suspended. Both students and teachers suggested that having a formal process for reintegrating students into the school may reduce repeated suspensions.

- **Students would like more opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities.** Interviewed students reported that the school provides limited opportunities for students to engage in extra-curricular activities. Currently students have opportunities to be involved in activities such as the student government, art club, and yearbook club. Students expressed an interest in a number of new opportunities including sports, choir, drumline, band, home economics, and a mock trial club.