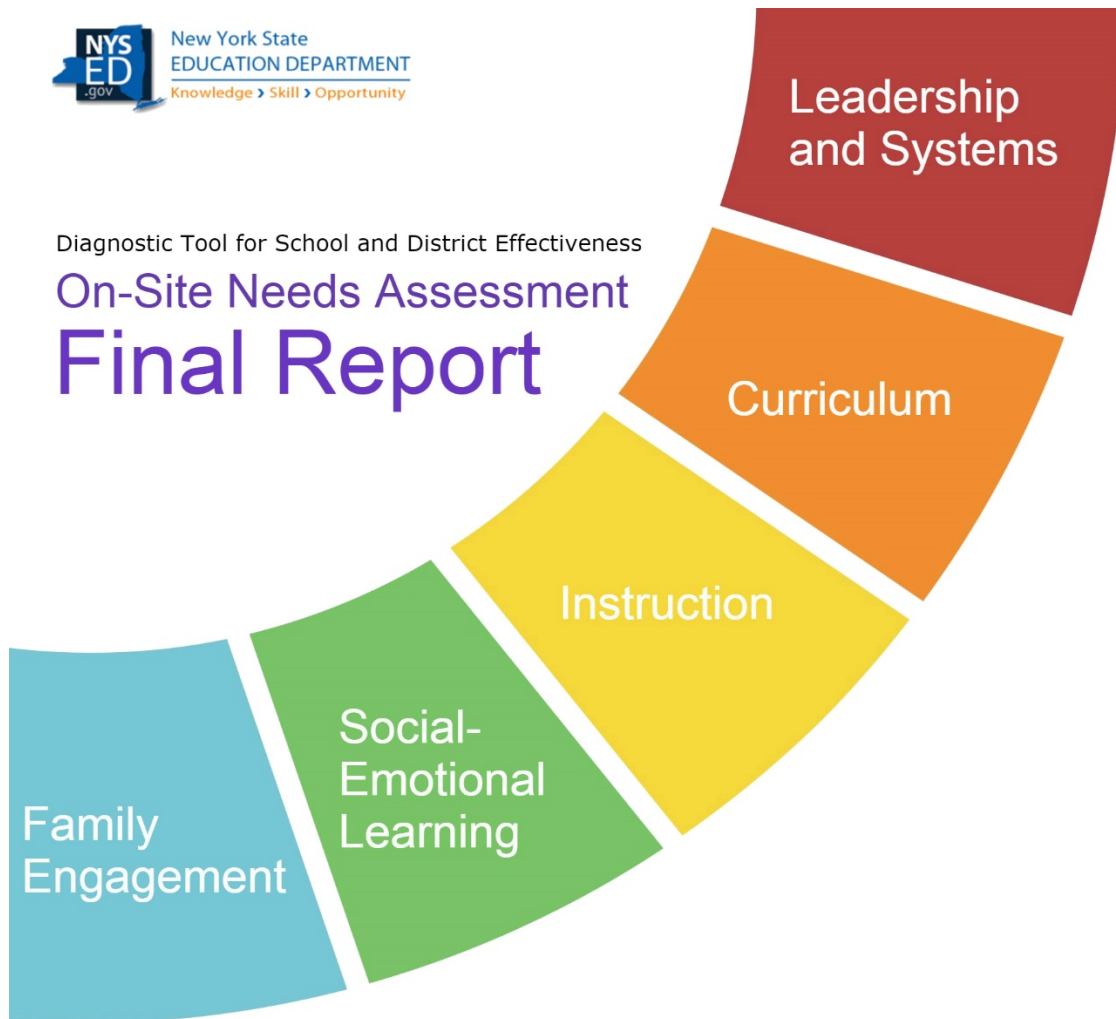


Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

Final Report



BEDS Code	333200010377
School Name	Alejandrina B. De Gautier
School Address	200 Woodbine Street, Brooklyn, NY 11221
District Name	NYCDOE CSD 32
Principal	Dominic Zagami
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	2	1	3	1	1

P.S. 377 Alejandrina B. De Gautier serves 161 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 visited a total of 31 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, the school provided results of a student survey that 126 students (99 percent) completed.
- In advance of the visit, the school provided results of a staff survey that 18 staff members (62 percent) completed.
- In advance of the visit, the school provided results of a parent survey that 161 parents (66 percent) completed.
- In advance of the visit, one staff member (.06 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. The school began using ClassDojo in 2018-19, and it is currently being used schoolwide. Interviewed parents reported that teachers use the platform to share information about their children's behaviors and class activities. Parents stated that they have been provided with images of their child's work and that some teachers have videotaped portions of their lessons to share with families. Parents also stated that ClassDojo translates communications for non-English speaking parents which has significantly improved home-school communication. Parents reported that ClassDojo has increased teachers' accessibility as parents are now able to communicate with teachers during the evening and early in the morning, not just during school hours.
2. The principal created a science cluster position in September 2018 and acquired grant funding from the New York Sun Works Greenhouse Project to open a greenhouse at the school. Students in every grade are learning about sustainable gardening and hydroponics and are participating in hands-on science investigations twice per week using the Amplify Science curriculum. Interviewed students shared that they are excited about science and enjoy working with their classmates to complete experiments.
3. The principal has actively sought out grants to supplement the budget and ensure that students have access to additional resources. The school received a technology grant for 2018-19 from the Brooklyn Borough president to increase the number of laptops available to students. In addition, a grant from the Trust for Public Lands has enabled students across grades to work with professional architects to design a new school yard. Student-generated designs informed the blueprints for the play area, and construction is scheduled to begin in spring 2019. Interviewed students proudly shared their ideas and contributions with the IIT.

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

Systems for Improvement

- **School leaders should develop a system for behavior management that is understood and implemented by all stakeholders.** While the principal reported that the school uses the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework to reward positive behaviors, the IIT found that it is not being implemented consistently throughout the school. Students reported that they receive PBIS rewards tickets from the principal, but they rarely receive tickets in the classroom. Some students stated that their teachers use ClassDojo rather than PBIS to track student behavior. In addition, formal structures have not been developed for dealing with challenging behaviors. Interviews with students and parents revealed that bullying and outbursts of aggressive behavior are commonplace. Interviewed teachers stated that responses are generally reactive rather than proactive when dealing with difficult behaviors. In the future, school leaders should create a team that includes administrators, teachers, and support staff to develop a progressive schoolwide behavior management plan that includes interventions, rewards, and consequences and addresses the concerns of students, parents, and teachers.
- **The principal needs to develop systems to routinely collect and analyze data to inform schoolwide decisions.** The principal presented the IIT with summative reports of New York State English language arts (ELA) and math assessment data. However, the team saw little evidence of data being used to effectively inform schoolwide initiatives. Although the principal reported that the school adopted main idea as its instructional focus in response to the data findings, the IIT saw little evidence of a strategic plan focusing on main idea to significantly

impact student achievement. The school does not have a data team to regularly review, compare, and analyze data from multiple sources, such as Fountas & Pinnell or iReady, to track student progress or assess the impact of the school's literacy or math curricula. Additionally, the IIT found no systems in place to collect or review social-emotional data to assess the effectiveness of adopted interventions or supports, such as PBIS, the Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialist (SAPIS), or Stanford Harmony.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **School leaders should conduct regularly scheduled walkthroughs to monitor the implementation of initiatives and support the growth of instructional practices.** The IIT found no evidence of an established walkthrough procedure. While the IIT learned that school leaders occasionally visit classrooms to greet students and address student behavior, teachers reported that they rarely receive actionable written feedback about their pedagogy separate from Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) observations. Teachers reported that, without regular monitoring and feedback, programs such as Passport, ReadyGEN, PBIS, and Stanford Harmony are not being implemented consistently across all grades. During class visits, the IIT found that flow-of-the-day charts rarely included Passport social studies lessons, and students and teachers confirmed that social studies is not taught in most grades. Teachers reported that although the school has adopted ReadyGEN as the official ELA curriculum, many teachers find that the curriculum is not accessible for most students and therefore they only use it sporadically. In the future, school leaders should create a calendar of weekly focused walkthroughs and provide teachers with short, written feedback by the end of the school day. Leaders should meet each week to share observation findings and feedback, identify schoolwide trends, and use this information to plan professional development (PD) and coaching support.
- **The principal needs to create a coherent professional development (PD) plan that supports a clear instructional focus.** While the principal reported that last year's PD committee created a calendar for the 2018-19 school year, the PD calendar has not been implemented. The teachers who developed the calendar and were responsible for the delivery of the workshops are not currently working at the school. A new PD committee has not been established, and teachers reported that PD for 2018-19 has consisted of a series of unrelated presentations. A review of 2018-19 weekly PD agendas confirmed that there is no overarching instructional focus reflected in the PD. Teachers reported that PD lacks consistency and does not deeply support the school's curriculum choices. For example, Math Stories was introduced this school year and some workshops were presented in the fall of 2018. However, when the assistant principal who was supporting the implementation of this program left in November 2018, PD for Math Stories was discontinued. As a result, teachers stated that they were only introduced to the first phase of the program. Interviewed teachers stated that the expectations for the implementation of strategies presented during PD were unclear and stated that consequently, they decide which strategies to implement in their classroom.
- **Support staff should be used more strategically to maximize supports and services for all students.** Support staff have not been provided with clearly defined expectations, job descriptions, or schedules. Interviews with the principal and a review of staff programs revealed that the school guidance counselor and SAPIS worker created their own schedules, and the principal stated that he provides little input into how they organize their time. The IIT noted that the guidance counselor's weekly schedule included seven periods of mandated counseling for students with disabilities, with no other activities scheduled. Although the principal stated that the guidance counselor spends time visiting classrooms, teacher and student interviews revealed that the counselor has little interaction with upper-grade students. Lower-grade teachers stated that the counselor

occasionally visits their classes but not on a regular schedule. A review of the SAPIS worker's schedule indicated that she visits classrooms to provide presentations to students throughout the week. However, the IIT did not observe the delivery of any SAPIS lessons during the visit and did not see any SAPIS presentations on class flow-of-the-day charts. The principal reported that neither the guidance counselor nor the SAPIS worker is available to support at-risk students or address students in crisis and, as a result, the school leaders handle all behavioral incidents.

- **The principal needs to increase monitoring of teachers' learning objectives to ensure that teachers are meeting his expectations.** The principal has provided teachers with PD on writing learning objectives, and teachers confirmed that the principal has communicated his expectations regarding the use of clear learning objectives for every lesson. However, lessons observed by the team did not reflect the principal's stated expectation. Most learning objectives posted were not standards-based and often failed to articulate how students would demonstrate their learning. For example, in many classrooms the IIT saw posted learning objectives such as, "I can find the meanings of words and use them correctly," or "I can demonstrate progress in math by working in iReady." In multi-grade bridge classes, often one learning objective was posted for all students.

Learning at the School

- **Teachers must plan lessons that consistently include scaffolds and multiple entry points.** Most observed lessons were not differentiated to meet the needs of diverse learners. The IIT found little use of visual supports, such as images or graphic organizers, for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. The IIT observed few instances in which students were provided with sentence frames or manipulatives. Without additional supports, students in some observed classes were unable to successfully complete assignments or participate in lessons.
- **Teachers need to provide students with support during independent work.** In several classes visited, the team observed students working independently with little support or oversight. Teachers use iReady as an instructional tool for reading and math, and the IIT observed some class schedules that included an hour and a half of iReady activities each day. During iReady periods, the IIT observed few checks for understanding or efforts to clarify misconceptions. Students were not provided with additional supports to explicitly address reading or math deficiencies and scaffolds were not provided to support learning. For example, while using iReady, one early-grade child struggled with one-to-one correlation and was unable to identify groups of items that contained seven, eight, and nine items. While manipulatives in a baggie were available on the desk, they were not used to provide a concrete representation of the numbers for the child. The child continued to work independently, making incorrect responses, and waiting for iReady to show her the correct answers.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Parents reported that bullying is a serious problem at the school.** Parents and students shared that incidents of bullying occur regularly in unstructured settings, such as the cafeteria, school yard, and gym. Parents stated that they bring their concerns to the school leaders, but they are never notified about how issues are resolved. Parents said that they would like the school to create a transparent behavior plan that articulates the school's behavioral expectations and consequences for infractions.

- **Parents and students would like the school to include additional coursework in social studies, art, and music.** Parents and students reported, and teachers confirmed that social studies is not taught at all in some grades. While the after-school program provides some arts-related activities, arts and music instruction are not provided to students at any grade level during the school day. Parents stated that not all students attend the after-school program, and they would like the school to provide opportunities during the school day for their children to explore their interests and talents and develop their creativity as well as their intellect.
- **Teachers would like the school to select coherent curricula and provide teachers with ongoing support to improve their capacity to use curriculum with consistency and fidelity.** Teachers stated that the school changes curriculum frequently, but they could not articulate how curricula are selected or how different literacy or math programs align to each other. Teachers also stated that when new programs, such as Math Stories, are added, they are not provided with the support needed to fully implement the new curriculum. Teachers reported that the school's official ELA curriculum is ReadyGEN but teachers at different grade levels use elements from different programs for literacy instruction. Teachers stated that they use separate writing and vocabulary programs as well as iReady, and early grade teachers also use Foundations. Teachers expressed concern that the lack of a coherent curricula is negatively impacting student progress.
- **Students reported that guidance services are not accessible to all students.** Upper-grade students stated that they would like more access to the school guidance counselor. These students reported that the guidance counselor rarely visits their classes, does not provide group lessons, and does not deal with troubled students in their class. They stated that it is very difficult to schedule time to meet with her and that she was not available to help them with the middle school choice process.
- **Students would like teachers to display a chart of students' ClassDojo points to encourage students to improve their behavior.** Students reported that they receive points for good behavior and have points removed for poor conduct. Teachers use ClassDojo to track the number of points students have earned, and students reported that when their class reaches a certain number of points, they are given a pizza party. Students reported that they like the system, but they are never certain how many more points their class needs to receive the reward. Students suggested that making points visible would provide classmates with an incentive to improve their behaviors.
- **Students would like the opportunity to use the new school library.** While the library renovation was completed in January 2019, students reported that they are not yet allowed to access this space. The principal explained that the school still needs to purchase additional books and books that have been purchased have not yet been catalogued. Some students stated that they would like to use the space to read quietly during their lunch periods instead of going out to the school yard, even if they have to bring their independent reading books from their classroom.