

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

Final Report



| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| BEDS Code | 320700010030 |
| School Name | P.S. 30 Wilton |
| School Address | 510 East 141st Street, Bronx, NY 10454 |
| District Name | NYCDOE CSD 7 |
| Principal | Debra Michaux |
| Dates of Visit | 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:

| 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 |
|---|----------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

P.S. 30 Wilton serves 562 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 37 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 lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- In advance of the visit, 39 staff members (90 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. Every Tuesday, parents have the opportunity to meet face to face with their child’s teacher to discuss his/her learning and behavior. Both parents and teachers shared that they value the Tuesday parent engagement time and stated that these meetings are highly attended. Parents said that they love the face-to-face communication and support from the teacher. The IIT found high levels of parent involvement in the school, as more than 40 parents participated in the team’s parent interview sessions.

2. During the 2018-19 school year, the school implemented several strategies to increase student attendance. They offered incentives for good attendance, such as dances, parties, and in-school shopping sprees. School staff made phone calls to parents of students who were absent from school and visited the homes of students identified as chronically absent. In addition, the school informed families of the school attendance policy and posted signs throughout the school to encourage good attendance. As a result of these efforts, 48 students who were previously identified as chronically absent improved their attendance and no longer meet the criteria for that identification.
3. During 2018-19, teachers have volunteered to provide students with enrichment clubs, such as Zumba, chorus, track, violin, and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Teachers told the IIT that they are proud to offer the additional activities, and interviewed students said they enjoy participating in the events. Both teachers and students shared that the enrichment clubs foster a positive culture throughout the building.
4. For 2018-19, the principal added a music class focused on Latin jazz and other Latin music. The music teacher shared that the class is culturally relevant to students, and students enrolled in the class are able to connect to the Latin music. Also during 2018-19, the music teacher was able to secure a donation of musical instruments from Carnegie Hall to support the school's music program.
5. Teachers and paraprofessionals meet daily before the school day begins, and teachers write station cards to provide paraprofessionals with guidance for supporting students in the classroom. The teachers shared that meeting with paraprofessionals is extremely helpful in planning the activities and lessons for the week. During class visits, the IIT observed paraprofessionals providing support to students and actively leading small group instruction.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **School leaders need to develop a shared vision for high-quality instruction and a system to provide teachers with consistent feedback.** Through a review of the school's teacher evaluation process and discussions with the principal and teachers, the IIT learned that teachers do not receive consistent feedback on instructional practices. School leaders do not have a norming system that they use to evaluate the consistency of the various leaders' informal and formal observations of teachers. In reviewing teacher observation reports, the IIT found that different school leaders rated teachers differently and sometimes provided teachers with conflicting feedback. Some teachers stated that they received mixed messages in their evaluations and feedback from school leaders, and the differences caused them to be confused about school leaders' expectations. In the future, school leaders should cross reference their evaluation findings with each other to ensure that they are providing teachers with consistent feedback.
- **School leaders should provide more training and follow-up monitoring when implementing new initiatives.** Over the past year, school leaders have introduced multiple new instructional initiatives, including the myON and Wonders literacy programs, the Maravillas Spanish language arts program, and the 4Cs program that focuses on Critical thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity. Although school leaders provided staff with initial training when these initiatives were implemented, the IIT found that teachers have received very little follow-up training to support them in building capacity for each of the programs. Additionally, the

team learned in discussions with school leaders and interviews with teachers that the implementation of these programs has not been consistently monitored. For example, the Maravillas program was implemented prior to the supervisor and teachers receiving training, and there is no system in place to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the program.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The principal should monitor the use of cluster teachers to ensure they are being used strategically and effectively to provide high-quality instruction that is aligned with New York State (NYS) learning standards.** The school currently has cluster teachers who rotate through different classrooms to provide science and social studies instruction. However, the cluster teachers and school leaders stated that science and social studies lessons are not monitored to determine the quality of instruction and ensure that lessons are aligned to NYS learning standards. Through discussions with teachers and school leaders, the IIT also learned that often when substitute teachers are not available, the cluster teachers are utilized to provide full-day classroom coverage.
- **Teachers and some school leaders need additional training and support in using data to inform instruction.** The assistant principal provides teachers with State assessment data and some student benchmark data. Teachers explained that they are expected to use the data to inform instruction but stated that they do not fully understand the data or how they should use it to ensure they are meeting the instructional needs of all students. The assistant principal maintains and organizes all student data, and the IIT learned that not all school leaders have access to the data. Some school leaders stated that they were not familiar with how to use the multiple streams of data to assist teachers in planning and delivering instruction. Although the district provides teachers with training on how to organize and use student data, the assistant principal acknowledged that teachers need more guidance and support to be able to effectively use data to inform instruction.

Learning at the School

- **School leaders and teachers need more training to develop a deep conceptual understanding of math.** School leaders and most teachers stated that they have a deeper understanding of English language arts than of math. Teachers reported that most instructional staff use the GO Math! program as the primary curriculum and follow the book directly without differentiating or instructing beyond the text. School leaders and some teachers stated that the lack of a deeper understanding of math concepts prevents teachers from challenging students at a level that would produce significant gains. The IIT's review of student math work samples showed that most math instruction was provided at a basic level and emphasized procedural and routine math. The principal stated that the school leaders' lack of understanding of math concepts prevents them from effectively monitoring the quality of math lessons and providing teachers with suggestions for improvement.
- **Teachers should utilize more supports and instructional strategies to assist English language learners (ELLs) in improving their English language proficiency.** During class visits, the IIT found that most ELL students were either being read to by the teacher or were reading silently on their own. The IIT did not observe opportunities for ELLs to read aloud in order to strengthen their English language acquisition and proficiency. Some ELLs were directed to seek help from their peers rather than receiving additional supports from the teacher. Additionally, the IIT saw few books in the classrooms that were written in the students' home languages. Through discussions with teachers and a review of the school's professional development (PD) history, the IIT

learned that general education teachers have received little training in the use of instructional strategies to support ELL students.

- **School leaders need to increase monitoring and support for the implementation of reading programs.** Within the past two years, the school has introduced the Wonders and Maravillas reading programs. However, the IIT found that teachers are struggling to implement the programs. Teachers stated that they do not have a clear understanding of the scope and sequence of the programs and as a result, they are unsure how to plan lessons in the order that provides students with the most effective instruction. The IIT's review of teacher lesson plans, classroom visits, and discussions with teachers revealed that teachers find it difficult to modify the programs to meet the learning needs of students with disabilities and ELL students. The IIT found that because teachers do not understand how to fully implement the programs, many teachers were not using the programs and were using past practices and online resources instead. During class visits, the IIT noted that some of the materials teachers had acquired from other sources were not aligned to NYS learning standards and did not challenge the students.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Parents would like the school to provide more opportunities for families to learn how to support their children's learning.** Many interviewed parents stated that they were unfamiliar with the work their children are bringing home. They explained that they did not understand the process their children are using to solve problems in math and did not know what they could do to help their children improve their writing skills. Parents stated they are very happy with the opportunity to talk with teachers during the scheduled Tuesday after-school parent meeting time, but they would like the school to provide opportunities to help them understand what their children are learning and how families can support their children's learning at home.
- **Teachers would like more opportunities participate in decision-making and schoolwide initiatives.** Interviewed teachers stated that they do not feel heard by the school leaders. Teachers stated that they would like school leaders to include them in discussions when schoolwide initiatives are being considered and implemented. Additionally, some teachers stated that they would like opportunities to assist with delivering PD.
- **Parents would like the school to notify them in a timely manner when emergency events occur at the school.** Interviewed parents explained that a community emergency occurred near the school in early April 2019, and the school went into a partial lock-down as a security measure. Parents reported that following the emergency, the school did not contact parents to notify them of what had happened and assure them that all children were safe. Parents stated that they were frustrated that they had to learn about the event from other sources rather than from the school.