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Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment
Final Report

Leadership and Systems

Curriculum

Instruction

Social-Emotional Learning

Family Engagement
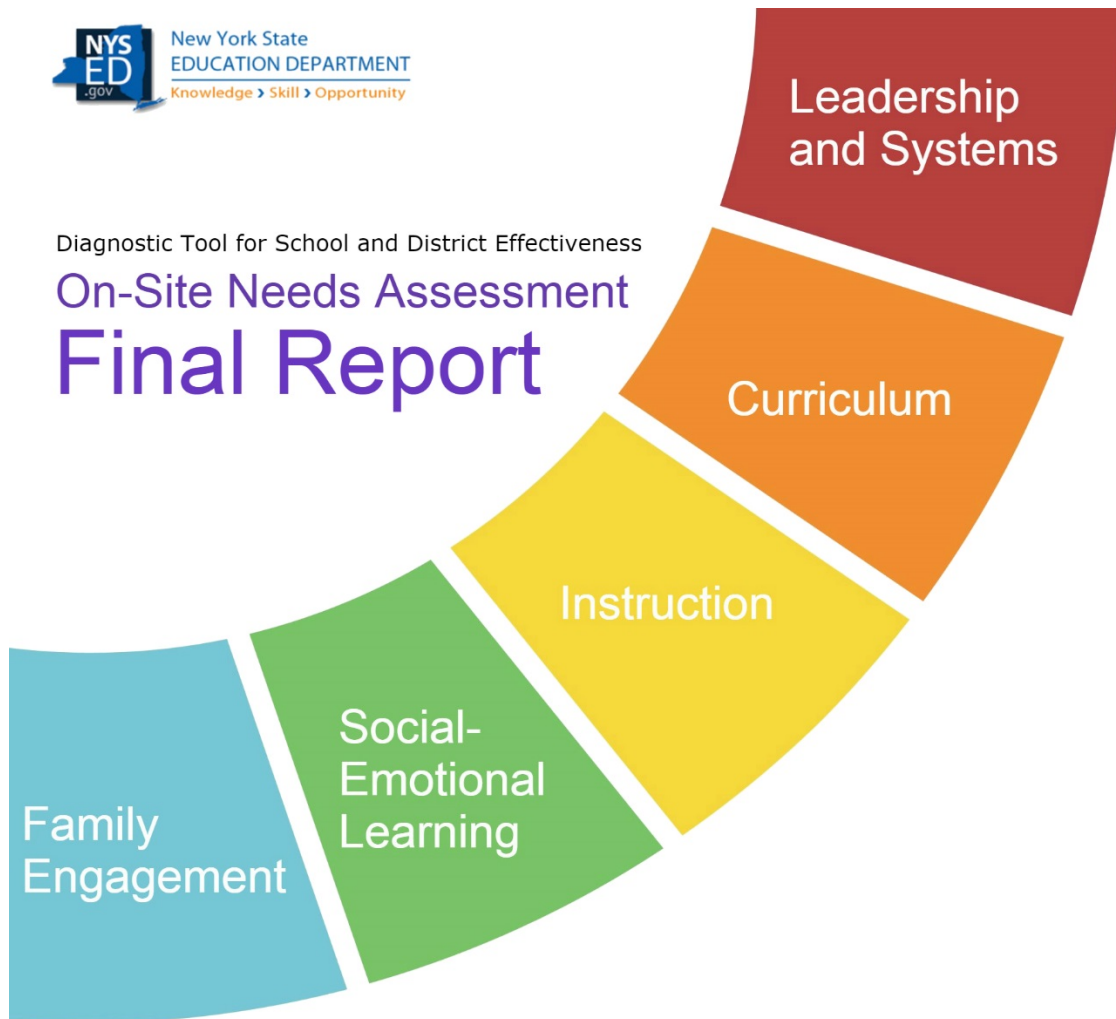
BEDS Code	320900011517
School Name	**Frederick Douglass Academy III Secondary School**
School Address	**3630 3rd Avenue, Bronx, NY 10456**
District Name	**NYCDOE CSD 9**
Principal	**Jumel Carlos**
Dates of Visit	**April 2-4, 2019**

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 Yr 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	1	1

Frederick Douglass Academy III Secondary School serves 400 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 45 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited seven 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, 27 staff members (87 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. Students, parents, and staff all noted improvements in the overall school climate and explained that the school now has a family atmosphere. Parents, students, and staff reported that the principal interacts frequently with students and that his engaging and calm presence in the hallways helps to prevent possible conflicts. All interviewed students reported that there is at least one adult in the building that they trust to offer support when they are encountering difficulties. As a result of the improved climate and culture in the school, the principal reported that the number of suspensions and behavior infractions have decreased. The number of suspensions between September 2018 and April 2019 was 17 compared to 25 suspensions during the same period in 2017-18. There have been 44 reported behavior infractions in 2018-19 compared to 63 for the same period in 2017-18.

2. For the 2018-19 school year, school leaders expanded and re-structured the parent resource center to better address the needs of families and students. The center continues to provide resources to families, and students can now receive supports through the center as well. Parents and students reported that they utilize the center to access resources, such as clothing, hygiene products, and community referral information. Parents and students reported that the center is a safe and confidential space for them to obtain basic necessities when needed, and it has been a positive addition to the school community.

3. In 2018-19, in an effort to better prepare students for the New York State Regents Examinations, instructional leaders implemented a Regents Intensive Care Unit (ICU) program in addition to after-school tutoring and one-on-one support on Saturdays. Instructional leaders reported increases in student scores on the January 2019 Regents Examinations in Global History and Geography, English Language Arts, US History and Government, and Living Environment. Nine of the eleven students participating in the Regents ICU program passed their exams with an average score of 70.

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

Systems for Improvement

- **The school needs to develop a comprehensive system to improve student attendance.** School leaders implemented several activities and initiatives in 2018-19 to improve student attendance, including a Passport process in which every student whose attendance is between 65 and 90 percent is assigned an adult mentor. The school provides celebratory acknowledgements for students with good attendance, teachers conduct weekly grade-level meetings focused on attendance, and the principal purchased the Kinvolved attendance management software as a tool to communicate with families about student attendance. Despite these efforts, student attendance rates decreased for the targeted students in grades nine and eleven, while attendance rates for students in grade ten remained the same. School leaders and teachers reported that the school does not have a system to monitor the impact of these activities and does not have a process to identify and address the root causes of absence for chronically absent students, such as child care, health care, employment, immigration, and housing issues. In the future, school leaders will need to ensure that all attendance programs are monitored for effectiveness and that students with attendance needs beyond the school's capacity receive external or community-based support.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **School leaders need to ensure that professional development (PD) activities meet the needs of all teachers.** A review of teacher observation forms revealed that school leaders' written and verbal feedback to teachers is concise and focused on the school's PD initiatives. Additionally, during class visits, the IIT found that the majority of teachers demonstrated proficiency in implementing the school's PD priorities of annotation and explicit teacher modeling. However, the IIT found that many teachers struggled to fully implement the third PD initiative concerning the use of interim assessment data to drive instruction. Interviewed teachers stated that they have not received consistent training on using data to inform instruction. Teachers explained that PD blocks are often used for teacher team meetings leaving few opportunities for targeted instructional cycles of PD. In addition, teachers shared that all teachers receive the same PD, and the PD is not always aligned to the school's instructional priorities or their individual professional needs. School and instructional leaders reported that previously, trends and patterns identified through teacher observations have not been used to inform PD activities. However, school and instructional leaders stated that they are beginning to use some observational data to norm and identify instructional gaps to target future PD activities.

- **School leaders should develop a system of using data to inform instructional decisions.** Lesson plans revealed that some teachers are beginning to use interim and Regents assessment data to inform their instruction. However, the school does not have a system or protocols for teachers and grade-level teams to analyze data and use that analysis to plan, teach, assess, and develop next steps for instruction. In the future, school leaders will need to create a structured process for teachers to analyze student data and use that information to plan lessons and activities that are matched to the learning needs of all students. This process may include designated co-planning times, support from instructional leaders and the district, and timely feedback with suggestions for improvement.

- **School leaders should ensure that all teachers regularly enter student grades into PupilPath to allow families and students to monitor student progress.** The school uses the PupilPath system to allow parents and students to access information about student performance. However, parents, students, and support staff reported that grades are not always entered into the PupilPath system in a timely manner. As a result, students and families are not able to monitor student performance throughout the marking period to identify when additional assistance is needed. School leaders acknowledged that clear expectations for how often teachers should enter grades into the system have not been communicated and teacher use of the system is not monitored to ensure that student grades are up to date. In the future, school leaders should ensure that all teachers regularly enter student grades into the PupilPath system so that students and parents can monitor academic progress and seek academic assistance if needed.

Learning at the School

- **The school needs to develop a cohesive and aligned curriculum for every content area.** During the 2018-19 school year, teachers have been working to further develop the curriculum with support from department leads and the district. They have begun to analyze unit plans, learning activities, and assessment results to determine gaps, and they have made some modifications and improvements. However, instructional leaders and teachers confirmed that the curriculum, including activities, resources, and content for each subject area, is still in the development stage. Teachers explained that common planning times do not provide sufficient time for them to complete this work, and the current schedule makes it difficult for content-area and grade-

level teachers to collaborate to align the curriculum. While some departments have begun to work on a cohesive approach to curriculum development by focusing on common skills, such as finding the main idea, compare and contrast, and document analysis, other departments have not. In the future, the school and instructional leaders should ensure that each department and grade level has the dedicated time and resources needed to create a cohesive and aligned curriculum that addresses the learning needs of all students.

- **Teachers must plan instruction that meets the learning needs of English language learners (ELLs).** Lesson plans reviewed by the IIT did not include language objectives for ELL students. Teachers reported that they do not have access to student New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSELAT) scores to use in planning and delivering appropriate strategies and learning activities to help ELL students increase their language proficiency levels. In the future, the principal will need to ensure that teachers have access to NYSESLAT data and provide teachers with support in using this data to inform the planning and delivery of learning activities for ELL students.

- **Teachers should plan lessons that include opportunities for student discussion.** Interviewed students shared that they would like more opportunities to participate in class discussions that explore topics in more depth. During class visits, the IIT observed few opportunities for student discussion. Although some teachers asked probing questions to promote critical thinking, the IIT observed many classes in which students were asked numerous questions that required one word or close-ended responses. In some classes, although students were seated in groups, most students worked independently, and student discussions primarily focused on how to complete the assignment.

- **Teachers must plan lessons and activities that meet the learning needs of all students.** Although the principal stated that teachers should be adjusting their instruction based on formative and interim assessment data, the IIT saw few instructional plans or activities being modified to address the learning needs of individual students. In addition, a review of lesson plans revealed that most activities were not differentiated based on student skill levels. In most classes visited, all students completed the same task. While the team saw students in some classes highly engaged in the activity and teachers providing students with one-on-one support, team members also saw students with their heads down or texting on their phones. Some students reported that some of their classes are boring because they don't find the material to be relevant, the work is too easy, and once they have completed the task, they don't have anything else to do.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **English as a New Language (ENL) teachers would like scheduled time to co-plan with content-area teachers**. ENL teachers reported that they do not have a designated time in their schedule to co-plan and collaborate with content-area teachers. ENL teachers said that having time to co-plan would allow them to assist content-area teachers in using NYSESLAT data to plan activities and strategies to help ELL students improve their language proficiency. Both ENL and content-area teachers stated that having scheduled co-planning time would also allow them to structure learning activities that promote interactions between ELLs and their English-speaking peers.

- **Students feel that they should take more responsibility for their own learning.** Students and teachers stated that the school provides multiple incentives to increase student motivation and develop student confidence. Some students stated that the multiple safety nets offered by the school allow them to avoid taking responsibility for their own learning. For example, some students explained that they arrive late for first period because they know that they will have multiple opportunities to make up work at a later time. They suggested

that school leaders should raise their expectations for students so that students will begin to take greater responsibility for their learning.

- **Parents and students would like more information about services and special programs offered at the school.** Parents stated that they received information during parent-teacher conferences and by mail about the clinic in the school building. However, some parents were unaware of other services that are offered at the school. For example, some parents did not know that the school offers advanced placement classes and were not familiar with the Regents ICU program. Some students shared that many of their classmates do not know or understand how to enroll in advanced placement classes and may be missing opportunities to earn college credits while in high school.