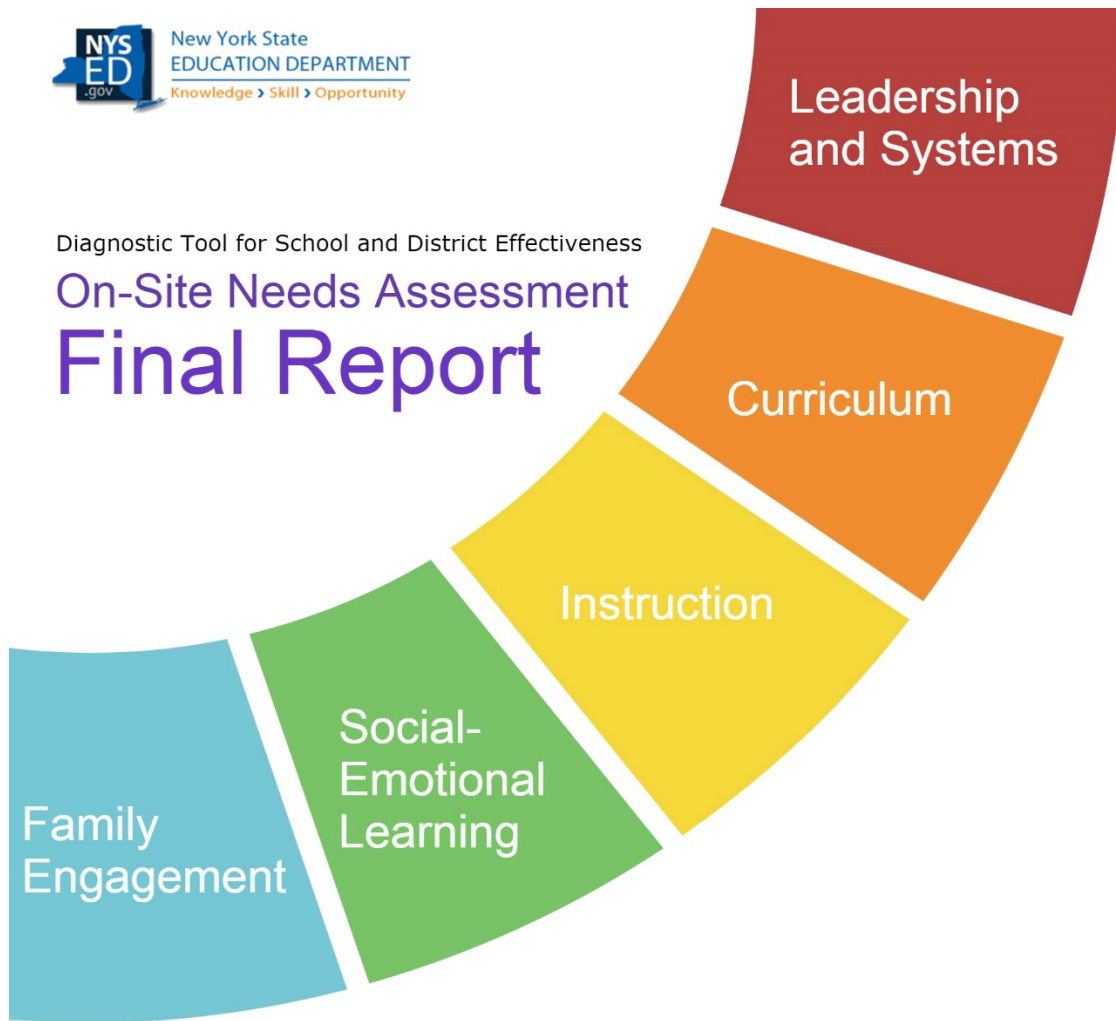


Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

# Final Report



<b>BEDS Code</b>	320900010070
<b>School Name</b>	PS 070 Max Schoenfeld School
<b>School Address</b>	1691 Weeks Ave, Bronx, NY. 10457
<b>District Name</b>	NYCDOE CSD 9
<b>Principal</b>	Kerry Castellano
<b>Dates of Visit</b>	May 28-30, 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
2	1	1	2	2	1

PS 70 Max Schoenfeld serves 1,282 students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 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 42 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited six classrooms with the principal during the visit.
- Team members conducted interviews with students, staff, and parents.
- Team members examined documents provided by the school that included: professional development plans, data binders, flyers, newsletters, observation, curriculum maps, lesson plans, schoolwide data, and student work.
- In advance of the visit, 42 staff members (46 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

## Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. For the 2018-19 school year, the school began holding weekly, instead of monthly attendance meetings, to address chronic absenteeism more rigorously. The school has developed strategies such as identifying student mentors and conducting home visits. Grade level and school wide attendance incentives were introduced to help increase attendance, particularly for those students who were identified as being chronically absent. The principal shared with the IIT that staff have tracked students who are chronically absent and have identified patterns of absences, targeted students on the cusp of chronic absenteeism, and put preventative monitoring measures in place to decrease absence. The principal stated that the impact has been a heightened awareness about attendance by teachers. Each grade level has instituted an attendance tracking mechanism, and the school has seen an attendance increase of between three and four percent.
2. The school instituted Focus Friday's for the 2018-19 school year to prepare students for the State assessment. The principal shared that the instructional coaches prepare slides and scripted lessons for teachers to implement each week. The principal stated that as a result of the implementation of these lessons, the students have, based on interim test outcomes, made significant growth. The number of students at level one has decreased, and the data indicates a ten percent literacy proficiency and a nine percent math proficiency.
3. The school reopened the library in February 2019. The principal shared that the school received a grant to renovate the school wide library space. Students now have an opportunity to visit the library on a rotating, weekly schedule. Teachers can also schedule their classes to use the area. The principal reported that the librarian instructs mini lessons for students during their library time, and students are able to check out books, which has increased the amount of time students spend reading for pleasure.
4. To increase communication to parents for the 2018-19 school year, the school instituted the use of Classroom Dojo school wide. The principal shared with the team that Classroom Dojo is also used as part of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program, with students earning points for exhibiting positive character traits. Parents interviewed by the IIT stated that the quality and quantity of the communication from teachers has increased, and they feel they have a better sense of what is happening with their child. Students shared they like receiving points for good behavior through Classroom Dojo and that their parents could now communicate with the teacher immediately if they have any questions or comments to make.

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

### Systems for Improvement

- **The principal and the school leadership team (SLT) need to identify incremental steps and benchmarks for annual goals to help measure the progress being made throughout the school year.** The IIT observed posters with school goals posted throughout the building and reviewed documents that showed activities and goals for the entire school year. However, the team could not identify any interim benchmarks for these annual goals. The principal shared with the ITT that growth benchmarks that are set for students in reading and math are based on the curriculum. However, there is a need for specific school wide benchmarks to measure if schoolwide goals are being achieved quarterly.
- **The principal should create a structure within the school day for teacher team meetings that allows teachers to meet across grade levels, content areas, and sub- groups to review student work, assess the effectiveness of instructional activities, and identify specific ways in which lessons might be improved.** Teachers interviewed by

the IIT reported that they meet with grade level bands and that vertical planning could be beneficial in helping them prepare students for the next grade levels. Coaches interviewed by the IIT discussed their grade level curriculum and instruction but provided limited information on instruction at the other grade levels. The principal shared that teachers meet in vertical teams a few times throughout the year, but the focus is primarily on grade level bands.

- **The principal should calendar interim review and reflection times throughout the year, as new curriculum initiatives are implemented, to ensure the fidelity of implementation and to adjust programs as required.** The IIT observed that consistent implementation of curriculum initiatives varies and that teachers are using parts of different curricula, which has resulted in some instructional gaps from grade level to grade level. The principal shared that the coaches use a variety of resources to create instructional packets for teachers to use in their classroom. In mathematics, for example, these packets focus on the five practices, rather than on the content of the Engage New York Curriculum. In a review of curriculum documents, the IIT found that there is a need for the material that is provided to students to be more closely aligned to grade level standards and to promote increased opportunities for students to think critically.
- **The principal needs to complete a review of the assessments being administered to students throughout the year and create a testing calendar to ensure that students are not given too many assessments at any one time.** The principal shared with the IIT that in addition to assessments required by the State and district, students are assessed using pre and post unit tests, running records, writing assessments, I-Ready assessments, and teacher made assessments. She shared with team that she had some concerns about the number of assessments given to students at similar times. The principal noted that student performance data is analyzed by school leaders and coaches and is then provided for teachers to use in their classroom to guide instruction and to form student groups. In the classrooms visited by the ITT, students were observed sitting in groups; however, there is a need for more of the groupings to be based on particular student performance data.
- **The principal should create a Response to Intervention (RTI) action plan to support the academic growth of specific groups of students.** The IIT found that there was a large number of English language learners (ELLs) at the expanding level, which is one level away from exiting out of the support program. However, the team learned that there were no specific plans to provide additional assistance to these students. When asked about programs used for Response to Intervention (RTI), the principal noted that interventions were conducted in the classroom by the teachers. The team found there was a need to identify specific groups of students for the focus of school wide interventions to ensure students are receiving support in areas of need.

## Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The principal should consider implementing topic based, professional learning communities (PLCs) to allow staff to have more specific and in-depth professional development (PD).** When interviewed by the IIT, teachers stated that they would like to have more targeted PD based on their individual professional needs and specific school initiatives. Instructional coaches interviewed by the IIT expressed that they have not had a lot of time to assist the teachers but that many teachers approach them for specific supports. The principal stated that while the school has a PD calendar, additional PD is required to deal with some issues that were identified by the school and are linked to the Danielson rubric.
- **The principal needs to consider creating a schoolwide inter-visitation schedule to allow teachers to learn from each other's practices.** The principal stated that inter-visitation had only been made available for a small number of teachers within the school. When interviewed by the team, teachers stated they need a formal structure and a

regular schedule for inter-visitation so that they could all learn from each other and share best practices. Instructional coaches agreed that this would be beneficial and that teachers would learn a great deal from observing each other.

- **The school leadership should provide informal feedback to teachers on a regular basis.** Teachers interviewed by the IIT stated that the school leaders complete the formal observations required by the teacher evaluation process. However, there is a need for regular informal observations with constructive feedback that would help teachers to improve their professional practice. The principal indicated that school leaders complete over 60 observations per year as part of the formal observation system. While school leaders often check in with teachers between those visits, these opportunities are not typically used to provide developmental feedback. The instructional coaches stated that although currently they teach classes and develop much of the curriculum for the teachers, they would welcome more time to provide teachers with additional coaching and support.
- **School leaders need to ensure that all teachers use the student performance data provided to them to group students more intentionally.** The IIT observed that in many classes the grouping of students by need is at the early stages, and many students work in groups that have been constructed based on their prior performance. The IIT reviewed teacher data binders, which included running records data that teachers stated are sometimes used for grouping. The principal indicated that the school leaders and coaches analyze most of the other school data and provide it to teachers in order to reduce the teachers' workloads. Students shared with the IIT that they are sometimes grouped according to behaviors and on who can provide assistance to others.

**School leaders should work with teachers to infuse language objectives within lessons in other content areas to increase the proficiency levels of ELLs in literacy.** In classes observed by the IIT, content standards were present, but language objectives were not typically posted. The teachers who were interviewed by the team stated the objectives are infused in the lessons they planned and presented but shared that they are not required to post the objectives in the classroom. The principal noted that the objectives are aligned with the standards and teachers need to address those standards in all classrooms. The IIT observed that many ELLs experienced difficulty in understanding information presented to them. In lesson plans reviewed by the IIT, language objectives were not always evident.

## Learning at the School

- **Teachers should provide students with increased opportunities to learn by discussing their work with their peers so that they gain a deeper understanding of the content and can develop higher level thinking skills.** In most classrooms observed by the team, questions were generally low level and required students to use basic recall to answer the questions. The IIT observed some discussions in classrooms. However, the discussions were typically teacher led, and there was a need for increased opportunities for students to reflect on the information presented and develop considered responses. Some students sitting in groups were working independently, with little interaction or discussion.
- **Teachers need to implement strategies to check how well students understand the content they are being taught and how effectively they are learning.** In the classes observed by the IIT, students were typically asked to indicate if they understood the content by showing a thumbs up or down signal. The IIT did not observe the use of other assessment strategies such as exit tickets or targeted questions to gauge the understanding of different groups of students of the information being presented. As a result, it is difficult for teachers to determine whether they should further reinforce, re-teach, or move on.

## Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Students reported that they would like to have the opportunity to use the Class Dojo points they earned to purchase items at a school store.** Students interviewed stated they enjoy earning Dojo points but that it takes a lot of points to save up for the school “Gotcha Jam” dance. Students told the IIT that they would like to be able to use Class Dojo points to purchase items in a school store.
- **Students and parents reported that they would like students to have more access to enrichment activities in the school.** Students and parents interviewed by the team stated that all students should have opportunities to participate in swimming. Presently, only students in grade two have opportunities to swim. Students stated that participation in the student council is presently only offered to students in grade five, and they feel that student council should be extended to include other grades.
- **Parents would like uniforms to be mandatory.** Parents stated that while the school has a uniform policy, it is not always enforced. Some parents stated they would like to see the uniform policy strictly enforced at the school and suggested that the uniform could become a part of the Classroom Dojo point system, whereby students would receive points for wearing their uniform.
- **Parents stated that they would like to have more activities for parental engagement.** Parents noted that they would like to be able to participate in more social activities at school, such as bake sales and bingo nights. Parents shared that they were pleased that the school has begun to offer some parent activities on Saturdays.
- **Teachers would like to provide feedback on in house PD.** Teachers interviewed by the IIT stated they would like to complete and submit an anonymous survey after each professional development session.