New York State
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
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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	512300010009
School Name	Ogdensburg Free Academy
School Address	1100 State Street, Ogdensburg, NY 13669
District Name	Ogdensburg City School District
Principals	Cynthia Tuttle and David Price
Dates of Visit	April 9-11, 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	-	1	1

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	3	3	3	-	3	2	4

Ogdensburg Free Academy serves 731 students in grades seven 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 district consultant.
- The team visited a total of 26 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited five classrooms with the middle school principal during the visit.
- The NYSED representative visited five classrooms with the high school 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, and student work.
- In advance of the visit 55 staff members (81 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. Students, teachers, and parents spoke positively about the wide range of Advanced Placement (AP) courses that are offered to students who have already completed all course requirements. These options include English literature, English language and composition, European history, US history, biology, chemistry, calculus, and statistics. A review of data from the previous two years showed an increase in student participation and scores in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, especially for calculus.

2. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including athletics, clubs, musical performances, and art shows. The school also promotes student artwork and has allocated space for a permanent art gallery that showcases student work throughout the year. Interviewed students stated that they appreciate the many extra-curricular opportunities offered at the school.

3. School staff and students have developed a pantry that provides students in need with items such as clothing, shoes, personal hygiene products, and food. School staff support the pantry by frequently replenishing it. Students are able to earn community service credit by volunteering to work in the pantry.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **Although school leaders have identified school priorities, they need to develop specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely (SMART) goals, action plans, and benchmarks to guide school improvement efforts.** School leaders have identified student attendance, student engagement, and meeting the social and emotional needs of students as school priorities. However, SMART goals, action plans, and interim benchmarks based on these priorities have not been developed to guide school improvement efforts and monitor the school's progress. School leaders acknowledged that, at this point in the school year, the school has not made the expected amount of progress in these areas.

- **School leaders should develop an effective system to monitor and improve student attendance.** Although school leaders are able to easily access student attendance data, the school does not have an attendance committee or a system of analyzing attendance data to identify trends and plan interventions to improve attendance. Currently parents are notified by robocall when their child is absent, and after three absences, someone from the guidance office calls the home. For some students, letters are sent home and meetings with the student's parents are scheduled. However, the school has not specified the number of absences that result in a letter being sent home or a parent meeting being scheduled. Although student attendance has not improved, the IIT found no evidence of a schoolwide initiative to encourage students to come to school. In the future, school leaders will need to review, refine, and monitor their system for improving student attendance.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **School leaders need to establish a system of regularly scheduled class visits to monitor instruction.** Interviewed teachers reported that outside of formal Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) observations, their classrooms are rarely visited. Some teachers stated that if they request it, school leaders will come into their classroom to observe a lesson, but regular walkthroughs are not conducted. School leaders acknowledged that classrooms are not visited regularly to monitor the quality of instruction. In the future, school leaders should establish a schedule of regular classroom visits to systematically collect teacher practice data that allows them to have a clear, whole-school picture of how effectively teachers are meeting instructional expectations.

- **School leaders should provide teachers with feedback to improve their instructional practices.** Interviewed teachers reported that school leaders are often present in the hallways, but that classrooms are not often visited to provide teachers with feedback and next steps to improve their practice. In the future school leaders should make regular visits to classrooms and provide teachers with actionable feedback and clear guidance to help them improve their professional practice.

- **School leaders should utilize data to inform school improvement decisions.** Although school leaders have access to multiple data points related to student behavior and attendance, there is no system to analyze these data to inform school improvement decisions. The IIT found that school leaders are able to talk anecdotally about the data that is collected, but data is not used to identify trends and patterns, develop school improvement strategies, or monitor the impact of school improvement initiatives.

Learning at the School

- **Teachers must have access to student performance data to inform planning and delivery of instruction.** Discussions with teachers revealed that they do not have access to student performance data and as a result, some teachers were not aware of their students' reading levels. School leaders acknowledged that most classes included students who were reading below grade level. However, during class visits, the IIT found that most students completed the same task with no differentiation based on student learning needs. In the future, school leaders should ensure that all teachers have access to student performance data. School leaders should monitor the planning and delivery of lessons to ensure that teachers are using this data to provide instruction that meets the learning needs of all students.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Parents, teachers, and students stated that not all adults treat students with respect.** During discussions with the IIT, parents stated that consequences for misbehaviors are not always the same for all students. Parents stated that this does not send the right message to students. Interviewed students reported that some adults treat students differently based on their different backgrounds and that they see this as unfair. Interviewed teachers acknowledged that some of their colleagues sometimes make disrespectful comments to some students.
- **Students and teachers reported that instruction is sometimes disrupted by negative student behavior.** Interviewed students shared that different teachers deal with student behavior differently. For example, students explained that some teachers send students who misbehave out of the classroom while other teachers address the behavior within the classroom. Students explained that in both instances, instruction is interrupted. Students stated that this is frustrating because they want to learn. Teachers confirmed that student behavior sometimes interferes with learning.