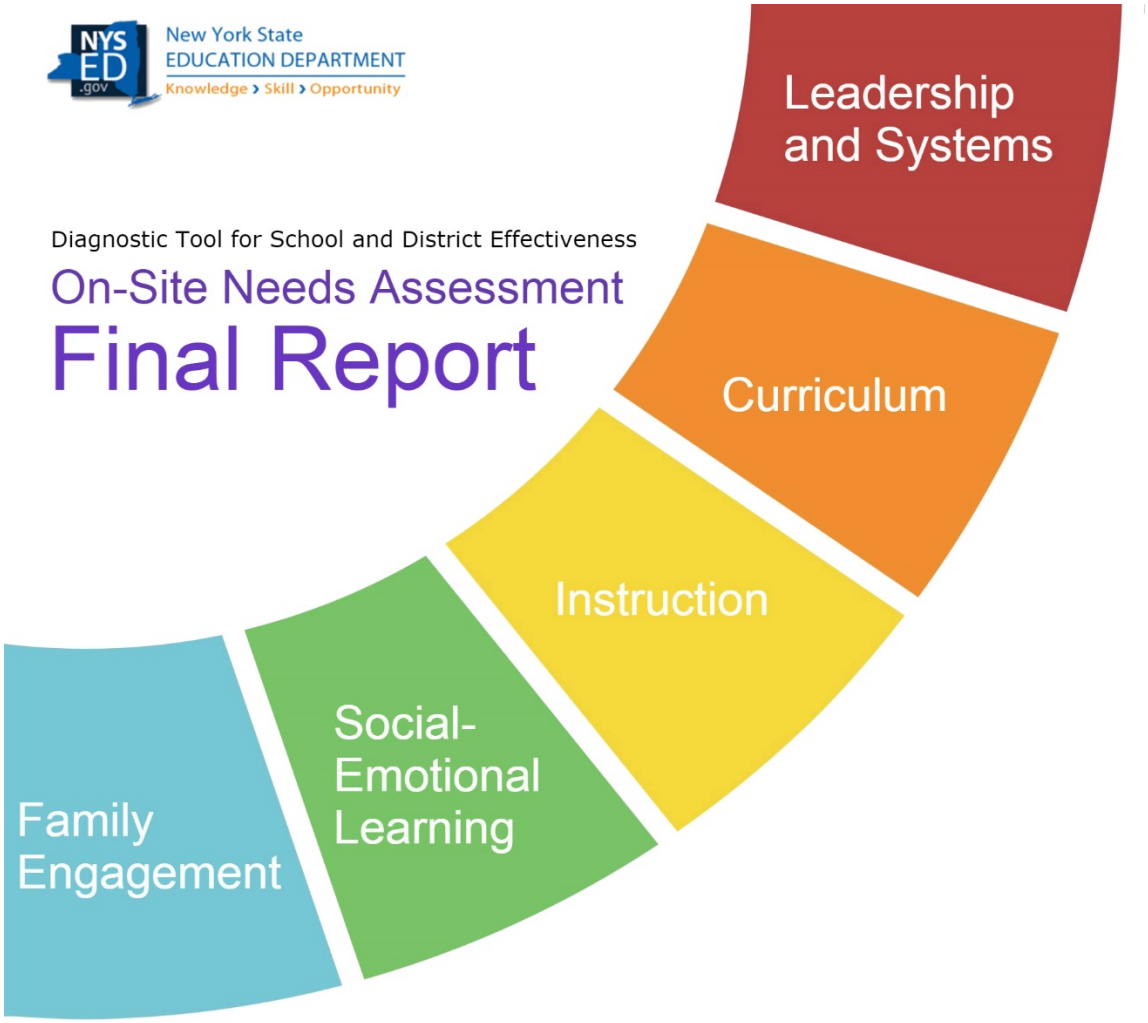
New York State EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Knowledge › Skill › Opportunity

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment
Final Report



BEDS Code	580224030003
School Name	Bay Elementary School
School Address	114 Bay Avenue, Patchogue, NY 11772
District Name	Patchogue-Medford Union Free School District
Principal	Rui Mendes
Dates of Visit	May 20 – 22, 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
1	1	1	2	1	4

Bay Elementary School serves 341 students in grades 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 made 42 visits to 32 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited ten 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, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- In advance of the visit, 22 staff members (69 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. During the past two years, the school has successfully grown its dual language program from one class per grade that receives instruction in English and Spanish from one teacher, to two classes per grade who receive instruction in English and Spanish on alternating days from two different teachers. The Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) observed Spanish-speaking students being challenged to expand their use of English, while English-speaking students were challenged to do the same in Spanish. The two-teacher dual language model now encompasses kindergarten through grade three and will grow over the next two years to include grades four and five. Students and parents spoke highly of the dual language program, and students were proud of their progress learning a new language. Dual-language teachers use the Evaluación del Nivel Independiente de Lectura program to teach and assess students' Spanish language learning in real time and adjust their lessons based on their assessment of students' performance.

2. Over the past two years, as the school expanded its dual language program, about a third of the staff has turned over. The team learned that new teachers were easily integrated into the staff because of the school's open and nurturing environment. Students, teachers, and parents all shared that the school is like their second family. Students shared that they have at least one adult they feel comfortable approaching in a time of need. The principal added that his priority has been to build trusting relationships with the staff, and teachers confirmed that he has succeeded. Consequently, the school has a strong foundation on which to build its efforts for school improvement.

3. Over the past two years, the principal expanded the school's use of technology and trains school and district staff on the use of online programs. The IIT found that the principal implemented an online SharePoint where teachers communicate with each other and post lesson plans for other teachers to use. For example, teachers posted science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) lessons online for staff members to use when utilizing the STEAM room. Teachers shared that the online SharePoint has facilitated staff collaboration. All classrooms contain interactive white boards, and many classes have sets of notebook computers for students to use.

4. The processes used by the instructional support team to serve at-risk students were fine-tuned this year. The team, which comprises the principal, school psychologist, reading teacher, and English as a new language (ENL) teacher, meets monthly to discuss students who have been referred for additional support. The team assigns a case manager to all referred students, who monitors the student's progress and reports back to the team. Based on the student's academic and social emotional performance, the team determines if additional interventions or other adjustments in services need to be made. The principal and school psychologist shared that in general, referred students have made good progress.

5. In 2018-19, the school formed three teacher-led committees with all teachers volunteering to serve on one of the three committees. The committees have three distinct charges that include Building Culture, Mindfulness and Movement, and STEAM. The principal shared that the teams are autonomous, and he does not interfere in their work. The Building Culture group are working to expand the school's positive environment. For example, they held celebratory events showcasing student and teacher accomplishments. In addition to other activities, the Mindfulness and Movement and STEAM teams posted lessons on the school's online SharePoint for teachers to adapt for use with their classes.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **The school needs to develop clear goals and action plans for improvement.** While the school leader shared that the school did not previously complete a School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP), he did share that they wrote a Local Assistance Plan (LAP) for the 2017-18 school year. The IIT found that many of the goals needed to be addressed more fully and to be monitored for progress. Going forward, the school leader should consider developing action plans with interim benchmarks to assess progress toward reaching goals and make any necessary adjustments based his analysis.
- **The school leader needs to create structures for collecting and analyzing data in order to evaluate the effectiveness of school practices.** The IIT found that there are some systems in place to support student learning. For example, the Instructional Support Team functions with a clear structure for providing additional support to referred students and monitoring their progress. The Instructional Support Team shared that they continually monitor students' progress and makes adjustments based on their analysis. However, there is a need for similar systems to collect data around pedagogy, school initiatives, and programs and then to analyze these data to measure the impact of school practices on student achievement.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The principal should expand his role as an instructional leader.** Teachers shared that they respect the principal's educational knowledge and look forward to his visits to their classrooms, which he visits at least once a week. The IIT reviewed a random sample of formal observation reports that included comprehensive and teacher-specific suggestions. Teachers stated that they would welcome written feedback following classroom walkthroughs. As a next step, written records of classroom walkthroughs will help the school leader identify instructional trends among teachers and provide targeted support. In addition, teachers should be provided with feedback on their lesson planning. Feedback on both walkthrough visits and lesson plans will help teachers improve their instructional practices.
- **The principal should ensure that the staff effectively make use of common planning time.** The IIT learned that teachers have 25 minutes at the beginning of the day, 8:30 – 8:55 a.m., which are meant to be utilized for common planning on three days each week, and to provide student support the other two days a week. Further, staff stated that teachers at each grade level have a daily common preparation period, which they may utilize for grade team meetings if they choose. While meeting during the daily common preparation periods is voluntary, meeting during the morning period, which is designated as a professional development (PD) period, is not. However, the IIT did not observe teachers meeting during either time.

Learning at the School

- **Teachers should modify curriculum and lesson plans in order to successfully meet the diverse needs of students.** Currently, adaptations of the curriculum and leveled teaching practices that provide activities matched to the students' proficiency levels, are provided by specialists, such as reading teachers and coaches. During classroom visits, all students typically worked on the same material, completed the same tasks, and produced the same products. The team observed a few notable exceptions, such as purposeful grouping, leveled text, and small group guided reading activities taking place in a few classrooms; however, this was not typical across classrooms.

- **Teachers should plan for and ask higher-order questions during instruction in order to develop student thinking.** During class visits, students did not typically have opportunities to explain and share their ideas or to develop their thinking skills based on high level questions. Most questions typically provided little challenge for students because they often only required brief, one-word answers or to recall facts. Additionally, questions were typically asked whole-group and only a few students responded to questions.
- **Teachers will need to check student understanding during lessons and provide on-going feedback to students to support their achievement.** While some teachers asked students to give thumbs-up signals in class, these were typically used to indicate if students had completed their work, rather than to check their understanding. In one dual language lesson, a team member observed the teacher using Evaluación del Nivel Independiente de Lectura to teach and assess students' Spanish language learning in real time and adjust her lesson based on her assessment of the students' performance. Team members also observed some teachers moving around the room and talking to students. However, most conversations were about making sure students knew how to complete tasks. Students shared that although they know their reading levels, they are not clear what specifically they need to do to become better learners. A review of student work contained mostly general statements such as "very good." Teachers will need to consider ways to assess student learning in an on-going manner, such as through conversations, and then provide students with specific feedback to help improve their work and also adapt instruction based on this assessment. In addition, teachers should assess student mastery of learning objectives at the conclusion of lessons to determine next steps.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Parents stated that students should be assigned homework on a more frequent basis across the school.** Some parents stated that a lack of homework diminishes their children's sense of responsibility for completing schoolwork and does not adequately prepare them for middle school. Parents suggested that students be assigned nightly homework that increases by grade level.
- **Teachers shared that they are not always aware of events taking place in the school.** Teachers stated that events taking place in the school and in individual classrooms could be publicized online or in a central location. They suggested that teachers use the online calendar to publicize class events to all staff members. They stated that this will encourage teachers and classes to attend other classes' events to learn about and share unique classroom experiences.
- **Parents shared that they would like greater communication between school and families.** Parents stated that communication varied depending on which teacher their child has. Parents said that staff members are responsive when parents initiate communication and they appreciate communication via the ClassDojo app, but also want to know what their children are studying in each subject. Parents suggested that teachers send home a monthly calendar indicating what units their children's classes will be studying in the coming month. Further, they suggested that the school hold a parent workshop with an open dialogue about the pros and cons of opting out of State assessments. Parents stated that the school should make additional efforts to communicate with Spanish-speaking parents and integrate them into school life. For example, they suggested that the school create a buddy system that partners a Spanish-speaking family with a family more familiar with school expectations and the two families communicate frequently throughout the school year.
- **Students stated that they sometimes waste a lot of time arguing about roles when they work in groups.** Students shared that often when they work in groups, they spend a lot of time arguing about which roles students play in the group, such as recorder, facilitator, and reporter. They suggested that teachers assign

roles to students or set a time limit for groups to assign roles themselves, after which the teacher would assign the roles.