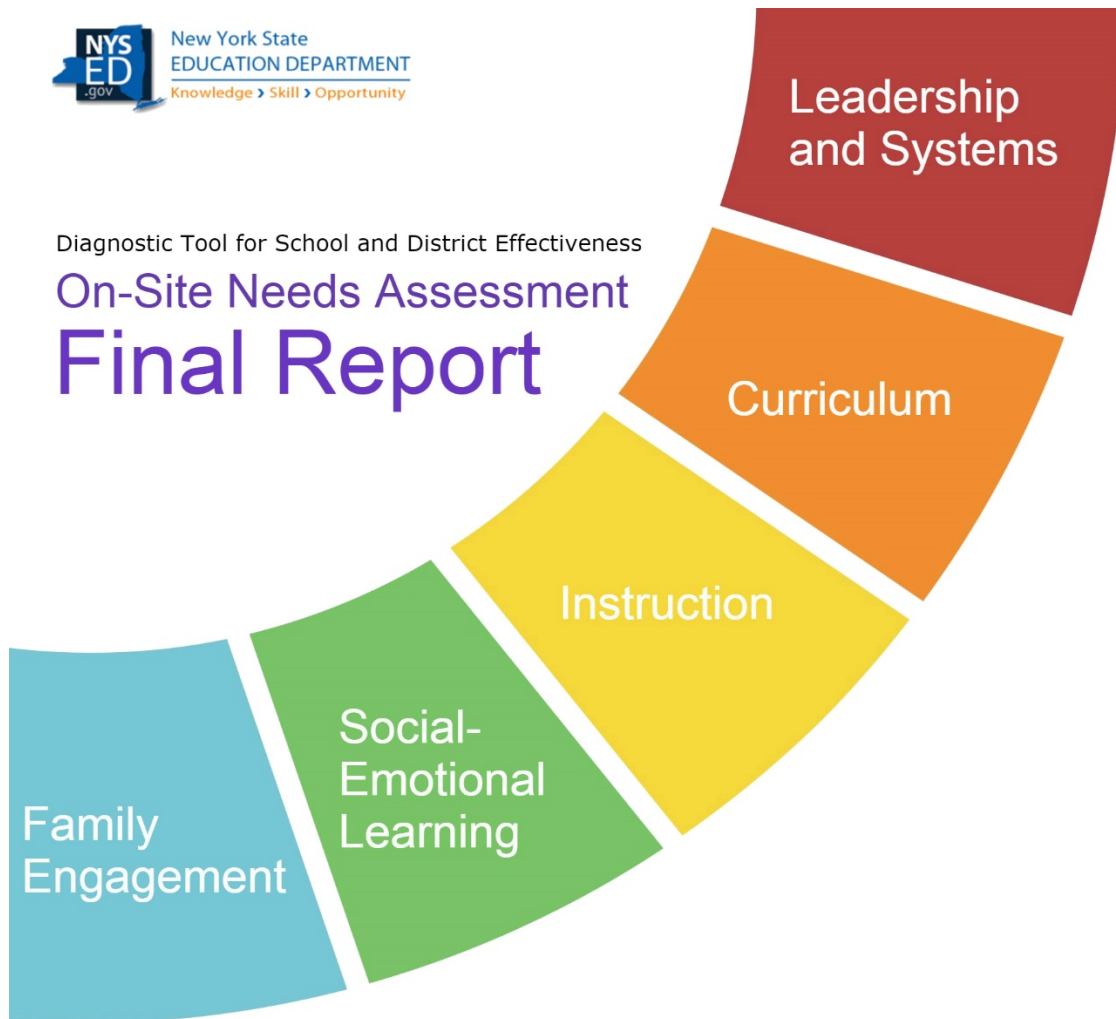


Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

Final Report



BEDS Code	261600010012
School Name	Anna Murray-Douglass Academy School No. 12
School Address	999 South Avenue, Rochester, NY 14608
District Name	Rochester City School District
Principal	Vicki Gouveia
Dates of Visit	November 27-29, 2018



Purpose Of The Visit

A team organized by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) visited the school to help the school identify areas of need that are making long-term success a challenge and provide actionable recommendations to direct the school's work in the immediate future.

The report provides a critical lens to help the school best focus its efforts.

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, a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SESIS) representative, and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The team visited a total of 68 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited 14 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 cabinet meeting minutes, grade-level team meeting minutes, lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- In advance of the visit, 30 staff members (34 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.
- Anna Murray-Douglass Academy School No. 12 serves 827 students in grades kindergarten through eight.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. The principal has recognized the need to prepare grade six students to transition to some of the school's behavioral expectations for middle school students. For the 2018-19 school year, she has moved the supervision of grade six students to the assistant principal for grades seven and eight to ensure continuity for students when they begin their grade seven year. To facilitate this process, grade six classes are now on the same floor as grade seven and eight classes although the grade six classrooms are in a separate hallway. The principal also noted that grade six students have been given lockers and more freedom than students in kindergarten to grade five but less than grade seven and eight students. Grade six students told the IIT that they recognize they have more freedom to move around their designated hallway to different classes than they did in the lower grades. They stated that being closer to the grade seven and eight classes and teachers makes them feel more secure in their move to grade seven next year.
2. The principal has emphasized the importance of developing a positive school climate and effective routines for students. The team observed that staff know the students' names, and teachers reported that they understand their roles and carry out their responsibilities in a consistent manner. Parents interviewed by the IIT commented on the effectiveness and efficiency of these routines. They explained that their children know what is expected of them at school, such as how to behave in the cafeteria and the procedure for an orderly dismissal. Parents noted that the consistency of these expectations helps their children feel secure and positive about their time at school.
3. To address students' health needs and readiness to learn this school year, the school has implemented an efficient system for the delivery and distribution of breakfasts that ensures each child collects his/her breakfast from a cart in each corridor, proceeds immediately to the classroom, and has his/her meal in a quiet and well-organized way.

The IIT observed that when breakfast is completed and food and containers are put away, students know the school day begins. The routine and unwavering process leads to a calm start to the day.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **The school leadership should implement and monitor the priority goals and activities identified in the 2018-19 School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP).** The SCEP for the 2018-19 year is similar to the goals and activities identified in the 2017-18 SCEP, which was developed by the previous principal. The IIT found that the school needs to follow the steps in the action plan of the SCEP to ensure that the goals are being met. For example, there was little growth in closing the achievement gap, especially in math, and the proposed 85 percent of teachers need to implement problem-based learning. Also, the SCEP calls for 50 percent of the teachers to participate in establishing social-emotional learning zones of regulation; however, movement towards this goal is just beginning. A previous recommendation around social-emotional learning stated that the school should focus on a curriculum that supported students' social and emotional developmental health. Although this curriculum had been agreed upon by teachers, the team found that there is a need for consistent schoolwide implementation of the required lessons 20 minutes twice a week.
- **The school's processes and procedures for Response to Intervention (RtI) need to be well delineated and in place systemwide to enable change to occur.** The team found that the school needs to consider factors that have prevented the school from improving student progress and to provide a consistent step by step process for support. Parents stated that once the series of interventions for their child has been exhausted, there is a lack of clarity on or support for next steps. Teachers noted the need for additional time to address the behavioral needs of students in Tiers 2 and 3. In the future, school leaders should review the procedures for implementation of RtI and revise as needed. They also should ensure that they communicate the steps of the procedures to parents and offer continued support as necessary.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **School leaders need to conduct regular classroom walkthroughs and provide teachers feedback on their instructional practices.** A walkthrough tool is available; however, walkthroughs need to be prioritized. The IIT found that there is a need for developing a set schedule for class visits and debriefing with teachers afterwards. While the team observed some evidence of best practices, professional practices and skills varied schoolwide and additional feedback and support are needed.
- **Part of The master schedule needs to be adjusted to allow for uninterrupted learning time.** The master schedule has some classes for which instructional blocks are truncated for specials or recess, and some co-teaching is scheduled to happen while other co-teaching is already going on with the same class.

Learning at the School

- **Teachers need to increase opportunities for student participation in their learning.** The team found that skills in instructional practices and classroom management vary, particularly in grades seven and eight, with many teachers new to the teaching field. During classroom visits, the IIT noted that lesson plans for grades seven

and eight identified learning standards but there was a need to identify activities for students. The IIT observed that not all students were engaged in the lesson, and the team saw limited evidence of the use of total participation techniques to ensure that all students were taking an active role in their learning. Many of the classes were teacher-centered, with limited opportunities for students to take control of their own learning by working on projects individually or in groups. Students also stated that misbehavior in grades seven and eight, in particular, sometimes interrupted their learning and that teachers varied in the ways in which they handled discipline matters.

- **Teachers should provide students with additional opportunities to collaborate with their peers to promote student engagement, higher level thinking, and student ownership of their learning.** During classroom visits, the IIT observed that in most cases students spent most of their time taking notes from teacher lectures or completing worksheets. There was a need for additional opportunities for students to work together to problem solve with a partner or in groups. Students interviewed by the team stated that they enjoy working on projects during which they can set goals, discuss a topic or solutions to a problem they are researching, and share learning with their partners and/or groups. Students also reported they discussions with peers even about academic questions are not always encouraged.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Students stated that they do not often have the opportunity to be active in their learning.** They shared that they take too many notes and that teachers typically do most of the talking during class. Students in the upper grades, in particular, told the IIT that they felt teachers did not provide opportunities for students to work together or to engage in activities around the content they were learning in ways that were meaningful or challenging to them.
- **Parents expressed the viewpoint that some teachers have a negative attitude towards students in their classes.** Parents expressed concern that some teachers have low expectations for the students. Students also shared that some teachers can be negative and not very supportive when communicating with them.