New York State EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity

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	411800010015
School Name	John E. Joy Elementary School
School Address	8194 Bielby Road, Rome, NY 13440
District Name	Rome City School District
Principal	Andria Lacey
Dates of Visit	February 5-7, 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	N/A	1	2

John E. Joy Elementary School serves 350 students in grades Kindergarten through six.

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.
- The team visited a total of 21 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 schoolwide data and student work.
- In advance of the visit, 30 staff members (81 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 principal and staff introduced an initiative that enables students to develop a community garden where students learn to make raised beds and grow vegetables. Although this initiative is only in its first year, students and teachers spoke enthusiastically about the work done so far and what students had learned. Students spoke of using their math skills to measure wood to make raised beds to grow plants. Other students shared that they planted tomato, jalapeno, and basil to replicate a salad garden, a taco garden, and a pizza garden. Students indicated they had learned about growing vegetables, healthy eating, and the life cycles of insects and plants.

2. The school sponsors a weekly video broadcast on WJOY in which a group of students, together with their reading teacher, prepare a script that contains a morning greeting, the recitation of the American patriotic vow, information about students' birthdays, news about the weather, jokes, and interviews. This initiative is a continuing success and allows different students each year to take part in the experience of producing a video each week for the rest of the school year. These students told the team that they enjoy working on this video broadcast, and other interviewed students said that they look forward to watching the weekly broadcast. Parents shared that this project enables their children to develop their speaking and reading skills as well as their technology skills. The IIT watched one of these broadcasts live while the school watched on video. Students spoke confidently while reading auto queues they had made and supported each other as they worked together as a team.

3. To provide students with additional learning opportunities, school leaders introduced a Robotics Club for the 2018-19 school year that allows ten students to participate twice each week. Students shared that they value this opportunity because they enjoy learning about technology, especially when they learn how to build the program that enables robots to move. The principal stated that staff need to add an extra session for later in the school year because so many students want to be involved.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **School leaders need to develop a system that enables them to turn the school's key priorities into goals that are specific, measurable, ambitious, results-oriented, and timely (SMART), in order to measure progress towards school improvement efforts.** The IIT found that that the School Improvement Plan contains general areas that had been identified for further improvement with little emphasis on how specific actions could improve student learning and student progress over time. While activities are identified, there are no short-term benchmarks that allow school leaders to measure the progress the school is making towards meeting key priorities. In the future, systems will need to be established, such as those that check the quality of teachers' instructional practices, student learning, and student behavior, to identify strengths to celebrate and areas for development to feed into the School Improvement Plan.

- **The principal needs to develop and implement a whole school matrix system of behavioral expectations for different areas of the building that staff and students can consistently follow.** The IIT found during discussions with the principal, teachers, and students that whole school behavioral expectations that allow students to know how to behave in all parts of the school are not well established. Teachers and students

stated that teachers typically manage behavior differently. Students reported that in some classes they have to behave well while in others it is not so important. In the future, the principal should consider working with students and teachers to develop behavioral expectations for all areas of the school that are non-negotiable and followed by everyone.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The principal should analyze behavioral data that is collected from disciplinary referrals to identify trends and patterns or specific goals for school improvement.** The IIT found that although the school appears to have a calm learning environment most of the time, documentation indicates that suspension rates and disciplinary referrals are high. The team noted from information from the principal, parents, and students that there are issues regarding some students' disregard of instructions in class, compliance with safety rules, and behavior while traveling on the bus. In the future, the principal will need to ensure that the behavioral data are analyzed and used to allow staff to evaluate how successfully they manage student behavior in the school and improve the behavior of the small minority of students who misbehave.
- **The principal should consistently complete walkthroughs schoolwide to check teachers' instructional skills and identify teachers who need additional support.** During classroom visits, the IIT observed that teachers' instructional practice across the school varied, and there was not enough instruction that challenged students and promoted student learning. The team found that teachers who could benefit from additional support have not been identified, and teachers reported that they have not been provided with the support and guidance they need to improve their instructional practice.

Learning at the School

- **Teachers need to implement the practice of placing students into ability groups for guided reading on a more regular basis.** Teachers noted that the principal does not visit classrooms regularly to monitor how successful teachers are in planning and delivering guided reading and following any guidance that the school has provided. The team observed that when teachers grouped students into ability groups, students focused well on the activities they were provided because they matched their reading abilities and achievement levels. The principal also indicated that the quality of teaching and learning were variable because managing discipline issues often prevented regular classroom visits from happening. In the future, the principal will need to check, during focused walkthroughs, that all teachers are following the guidance they have been given for guided reading.
- **Teachers should consistently plan and deliver math lessons to meet the varied achievement levels of the students.** During discussions with the IIT, the principal and teachers spoke about moving away from whole class teaching in math and transferring the guided reading model of teaching in ability groups to math instruction. However, during classroom visits, the team observed mostly whole class math lessons. Interviewed students said that they wish there was more groupwork in math because   discussions with other students and their teacher in smaller groups make learning more successful.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Teachers, parents, and students reported that some student misbehavior in the cafeteria and during recess is not properly responded to by the monitors who are in charge during these times.** During discussions with the IIT, students and teachers shared that some students do not respond to the monitors' instructions, and that monitors are not consistent in the way they deal with behavioral issues. In addition, sometimes issues arising during lunch and recess get carried back into the classroom, which teachers reported can lead to wasted instructional time. Parents noted that their children have told them that there are incidents of misbehavior in the cafeteria and during recess.