

# NYSED District Needs Assessment

## District Survey for School-Based Leaders

### Background

The following District survey is organized around the four types of structures Districts will be supporting that are part of the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP):

1. Structures for Teacher Learning
2. Structures for Rigorous, Standards-Aligned Curriculum and Instruction
3. Structures so that Every Child Thrives
4. Structures for Attendance

The survey questions are centered around assessing the structures in a building to better understand the extent to which these exist. These questions are organized around the principles of Consistency, Coherence, and Belonging, three common features prioritized in trajectory-changing schools noted in [The Opportunity Makers](#).

### Participation

At a minimum, the district should issue this survey to **at least 5 school-based leaders** (principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, teacher leaders, etc.) **in schools identified for additional support**. Districts are welcome to issue the survey to staff at other schools but should be sure to separate the results to ensure that the school(s) identified for additional support informs what is written in the DCIP.

- Districts that have only one or two schools identified for additional support should determine the best way to incorporate school-level staff to ensure that at least five staff complete the survey. This does not necessarily mean issuing the survey to all staff, since school-level staff will already be completing a survey as part of the SCEP needs assessment. **Districts should prioritize issuing the survey to those that are instructional leaders in the building and who have roles that allow them to visit multiple classrooms.**
- School-based staff that are part of the DCIP development team should be among those asked to complete the survey.
- Districts with multiple identified schools should determine the best way to ensure that the voice of principals is heavily represented in the survey results. For example, a district with eight identified schools may opt to only conduct the survey with its principals.

### District Survey: School-Level Structures

### Directions

Districts will need to administer a survey to select school-based staff using **these exact questions** as part of their Needs Assessment process.

### Scale

Please use the scale below when administering the survey:

|                    | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | I don't know / I haven't seen this |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Statement 1</b> |                   |          |         |       |                |                                    |
| <b>Statement 2</b> |                   |          |         |       |                |                                    |

*If you haven't seen or experienced something described in a question, please choose "I don't know."*

## Teacher Learning

1. There are expectations that what occurs in district professional development is explored in more detail during teacher collaborative time and reinforced through coaching.
2. District professional learning focuses on a small number of instructional priorities that stay consistent long enough for teachers to improve their practice.
3. When teachers attend PD, the district ensures that they do so as a team so that they can unpack what was covered together.
4. The district provides clear expectations and guidance for how teacher team meetings should be structured and focused on instruction.
5. I see district support helping schools move teacher collaborative time beyond logistics and toward improving teaching and learning.
6. Teachers in my school(s) have access to instructional coaches or content experts who can support ambitious instruction.
7. District expectations protect coaching roles so that coaches can focus primarily on improving instruction rather than administrative or compliance tasks.
8. District systems ensure continuity in teacher learning to continue even when there is turnover in school leadership or staff.
9. The District provides ongoing training to those that lead teacher collaboration meetings.

## Rigorous, Standards-Aligned Curriculum and Instruction

*Purpose: Understand how district systems support consistent, high-quality instruction across schools.*

1. I am clear on the district's vision for high-quality instruction
2. The district provides clear instructional "look-fors" that help leadership teams develop shared understanding of strong instruction.

3. The instructional look-fors provided by the district prioritize student thinking and the district's vision for high-quality instruction, rather than superficial or compliance-oriented elements.
4. When I observe classrooms or review student work, district guidance helps me notice variation in rigor and curriculum use across classrooms or schools.
5. District monitoring helps us focus on improving instructional quality rather than simply checking for compliance.
6. District curriculum guidance supports deep learning and student thinking rather than pressure to rush through content.
7. District systems help ensure that students below grade level still have access to grade-level content, with appropriate support.
8. I experience alignment between district curriculum materials, assessments, and instructional messaging.
9. Instructional expectations and curriculum priorities remain stable even when school leadership changes.
10. Overall, district instructional systems help reduce differences in students' learning experiences based on school or classroom assignment.

## Every Child Thrives

*Purpose: Understand how district systems support consistent, equitable student experiences across schools.*

1. District expectations and staffing decisions help minimize pulling teachers from classrooms, and ensure students have access to high-quality substitutes when it does happen.
2. District data systems make it easier for schools to see patterns in student attendance, engagement, behavior, and learning over time.
3. I see district supports helping schools coordinate student services rather than operating in disconnected or duplicative ways.
4. District policies and staffing decisions support equitable access to counseling, mental health services, and student supports based on need.
5. District guidance helps schools ensure that interventions do not replace access to rigorous, grade-level learning.
6. Student support systems remain stable and effective even during leadership transitions or budget changes.
7. Overall, district systems help ensure that students' sense of belonging and support does not depend on which school they attend.

## Attendance

*Purpose: Understand how district systems promote consistent, supportive attendance practices across schools.*

1. District attendance guidance emphasizes understanding barriers and supporting students, not just enforcing rules.
2. District data systems help schools identify attendance concerns early, alongside academic and social indicators.
3. The district provides access to mental health and reengagement supports that schools cannot provide on their own.
4. District policies and procedures support welcoming, non-stigmatizing responses when students return after absences.
5. Transportation, scheduling, and policy decisions made at the district level reduce barriers to attendance for students and families.
6. District systems help ensure that attendance practices are consistent even when school leadership changes.
7. Overall, district attendance systems help students feel known, supported, and expected to be present.