

The University of the State of New York  
The State Education Department

**DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)**



2017-2018 School Year

**School Report Written to the Tenet Level**

<b>BEDS Code</b>	421800010035	
<b>School Name</b>	Grant Middle School	
<b>School Address</b>	2400 Grant Blvd, Syracuse, NY 13208	
<b>District Name</b>	Syracuse School District	
<b>School Leader</b>	Bruno Primerano	
<b>Dates of Review</b>	March 21-22, 2018	
<b>School Accountability Status</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority School <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus School	
<b>Type of Review</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District-led Review	
<b>Review Team</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation/Title</b>
<b>Representative for the District responsible for the quality of the report and the adherence to DTSDE protocols</b>	Melinda Baiza	<input type="checkbox"/> District Employee <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District Outside Educational Expert
<b>Additional members</b>		
Mandi Sanchez	Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SEIS) Representative	
Robert DiFlorio	Executive Director of Early Childhood and Elementary Schools	
Jennifer Harris	AVID Coordinator	
Irastina Reid	Assistant Director of Special Education	
Matthew Williams	Assistant Director of Special Education	
Rhonda Zajac	Director of English Language Arts	
Ray Stazzone	Coordinator of Data Management	
Dan Burton	Project Coordinator	

### School Information Sheet for Grant Middle School

School Configuration (2017-18 data)					
Grade Configuration	6-8	Number of Students	674	Number of Teachers	58
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2017-18)					
# Transitional Bilingual	0	# Dual Language	0	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	5
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2017-18)					
# Special Classes	4	# SETSS	6	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	0
School Composition (most recent data)					
% Title I Population		73.7	% Attendance Rate		88.4
% Free Lunch		71.7	% Reduced Lunch		2.1
% Limited English Proficient		25.7	% Students with Disabilities		21.2
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native		1.0	% Black or African American		40.4
% Hispanic or Latino		11.1	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		14.5
% White		27.0	% Multi-Racial		5.6
Personnel (most recent data)					
Years Principal Assigned to School		1	# of Assistant Principals		2
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate		13.8	% Teaching Out of Certification		1.7
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience		19.0	Average Teacher Absences		4.0
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2016-17)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		15.5	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		7.1
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)		NA	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)		8.1
Student Performance for High Schools (2016-17)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		NA	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		NA
Global History Performance at levels 3 & 4		NA	US History Performance at Levels 3&4		NA
4 Year Graduation Rate		NA	6 Year Graduation Rate		NA
Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Designation		NA			
Overall NYSED Accountability Status					
Priority School			Local Assistance Plan		
Focus School (indicate subgroups identified below)		√	In Good Standing		
Focus School Identified Subgroups		Black			
Hispanic		White			
Economically Disadvantaged					
Identify the school's top priorities (no more than 5) based on the school's comprehensive plans (SCEP, SIG, DIP, etc.): <b>SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. AVID Schoolwide</li> <li>2. Data Driven Instruction</li> <li>3. Personalized Learning</li> <li>4. Restorative Practices</li> <li>5. We are in the beginning stages of No Nonsense Nurturing</li> </ol>					

## Purpose of the visit

This school was visited because of its identification as a Priority or Focus School. The purpose of this review is to provide the school with feedback regarding the practices across the school and to provide a number of actionable recommendations to direct the school's work in the immediate future.

This report is being provided as a feedback tool to assist the school and to help identify areas for improvement. These areas can address the subgroups identified or they may be broader and cover additional subgroups or the entire school. The report below provides a critical lens to help the school best focus its efforts.

## Information about the review

- The review was led by Melinda Baiza. The team also included Dan Burton – Project Coordinator; Shared Accountability, Mandi Sanchez- Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SEIS) Representative, Robert DiFlorio - Executive Director of Early Childhood and Elementary Schools, Jennifer Harris- AVID Coordinator, Irastina Reid- Assistant Director of Special Education, Matthew Williams- Assistant Director of Special Education, Rhonda Zajac- Director of English Language Arts, and Ray Stazzone- Coordinator of Data Management.
- The review team visited a total of 53 classrooms during the two-day review.
- The lead reviewer visited five classrooms with the Principal during the review
- Reviewers conducted focus groups with students, staff and parents
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including curriculum maps, lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.

### SUCCESSSES WITHIN THE SCHOOL THAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD BUILD UPON:

1. The school is implementing AVID and Personalized Learning (PL). The school has various levels of implementation with opportunities for teachers to serve as "lab" classrooms to deepen both the AVID strategies and PL. Students are beginning to own their own learning through the use of goal setting and possession of binders that include past tasks and goals that serve as a resource for reviewing material as needed.
2. Social emotional developmental health needs are being met in both a proactive and reactive manner. Structures are in place to support identified students with a coach as determined in the fall via data so that students have a safety net from the start of the school year. Additionally, an active School Intervention Team (SIT), meets regularly to support any student in a current need as identified or recommended by teachers.
3. The school visit team identified a positive culture within the school. This culture has led to students' readiness to learn as evidenced in classroom observations. Students were compliant and followed classroom rituals and traditions. Hallways were clean and staff was friendly which indicates a strong level of pride at Grant Middle School.

**Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions:** Visionary leaders create a school community and culture that lead to success, well-being, and high academic outcomes for all students via systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement.

**Recommendation for Tenet 2 – School Leader Practices and Decisions:**

The school leader has supported the existing instructional practices as a new leader at the school. This has allowed for continued school improvement efforts and smooth transitioning. To support the current instructional practices and embed the school leader’s own instructional vision it will be necessary to develop and share the vision. **Therefore, it is recommended that by July 1, 2018, the school leader and culture team will develop and share his instructional vision that all stakeholders can articulate and support to ensure students attain academic success.**

- **Consider developing 3-4 instructional priorities with measurable outcomes**
- **Utilize administrative team and coaches to monitor and support planning and delivery of success criteria in classrooms**

**Rationale:**

The school leader and the teacher team interviewed shared they are implementing Personalized Learning (PL) and AVID strategies for the path to improvement efforts and student success. The leader shared they are fully implementing PL practices. Those staff members needing support are paired with an instructional coach or MCL teacher.

Parents interviewed were not able to articulate the school’s vision for improvement efforts although felt the staff were doing everything to support their child’s success. Parents shared they can easily email teachers if their child is needed support.

The Principal shared that he has not developed or relayed his own instructional vision and sees this as an important next step. The principal shared there are many great instructional practices currently happening and he will soon be able to enhance the instructional vision with his own.

Teachers shared they feel they have an abundance of resources to support their lesson planning and instructional delivery. Resources mentioned include: ANet, district coaches, district curriculum, teacher assistants, Syracuse Interns, and teaching fellows.

To monitor instructional practices, the school leader and his administrative team have developed a walk-through tool with identified “Look Fors” to guide teacher support and build teacher capacity. This is a practice that is done regularly.

**Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support:** The school has rigorous and coherent curricula and assessments that are appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for all students and are modified for identified subgroups in order to maximize teacher instructional practices and student-learning outcomes.

**Recommendation for Tenet 3 – Curriculum Development and Support:**

The School Leadership Team has implemented systems to ensure the delivery of effective instruction that will result in a rigorous curricula. It is important to monitor and evaluate the impact of these systems to measure their impact on student learning. **Therefore, it is recommended that by June 4, 2018, the school leaders including coaches and MCLs will support teachers in the development of success criteria to ensure students learned the material, mastered the standard, and yielded high levels of achievement.**

- **Professional development will be provided to teachers on writing success criteria**
- **Teachers will plan for success criteria during meeting times**
- **Consider revisiting lesson plan template to allow for success criteria to be documented**

**Rationale:**

Teachers shared team planning happens every day but not content area planning. Teams are mixed, which makes it difficult to plan with various team members and to include Special Education teachers plans. The focus of team meetings is not solely instructional focused, but is also focused on student support needs and available support.

Staff utilizes the district provided curriculum to develop lesson plans with identified lesson plan components that may include: big ideas, teaching points, CODE vocabulary, AVID strategies, framing, teacher directed, and small group settings. Further, the Principal shared there is an expectation for completing and uploading lesson plans although there may be a need to revisit the process for providing feedback with frequency.

Teachers shared they feel they have adequate resources and realize they have more than other schools although worry about how the digital technology will be maintained as well as strengthening the bandwidth. The instructional coach and one MCL meet weekly with content teachers individually to review curriculum (unit unpacking), code vocabulary, and data analysis.

Typically, lesson plans did not reflect planning for modifications for diverse learners. In classrooms observed, during small group instruction, students were seen performing the same tasks. Lesson plans do not allow for success criteria to be embedded to ensure students are mastering the content.

Students possess a binder (AVID driven) that includes all work from the content areas. Students articulated that the information in the binders was used to draw from past learning, as a study guide for tests, and to keep tasks organized. Binders also revealed (primarily in 6<sup>th</sup> grade) an AVID journal for goal setting, reflecting, and self-assessing. Some students interviewed shared they have trouble maintaining the organization required to meet the expectations and would prefer some flexibility.

**Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions:** Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn, so that all students and pertinent subgroups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking, and achievement.

**Recommendation for Tenet 4 – Teacher Practices and Decisions:**

The school has implemented personalized learning and AVID strategies school wide. This practice has led to staff planning and supporting each other to ensure they are implemented with fidelity. **Therefore, it is recommended that by June 4, 2018, the school leaders will ensure teachers instructional practices include rotation stations that are differentiated based on current data analysis to target student needs.**

- **Teachers will differentiate at least 1 station rotation based on student needs**
- **Success criteria should support student mastery of the standards**

**Rationale:**

Classrooms observed indicate evidence of rotation stations with pockets of classrooms that incorporate individualized support within the stations. Some higher-level tasks were observed, but scaffolding to meet the needs of diverse learners was not consistently observed.

Teachers shared that digital content allows for individualized student support, though this was not consistently observed. There are opportunities to increase data driven instruction at the individual level, including student reflection and goal setting.

Data is being utilized at some level to create small groups and rotations although there was little evidence that teachers were using current and ongoing data to improve achievement or high levels of engagement. Some tasks seemed compliance driven.

The majority of classroom observed were compliant and provided a safe learning environment.

**Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health:** The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.

**Recommendation for Tenet 5 – Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health:**

The school has worked closely with all members of the school community and external organizations to provide a system which will support the social and emotional learning needs of all students and allow them to succeed.

**Therefore, it is recommended that by March 28, 2018, the school leaders will develop and implement a positive incentive plan which connects behavior and academics for a comprehensive approach to school wide systems.**

- **SIT and academic teams collaborate to define criteria for incentive plan**
- **Identify lead or team to monitor the positive incentive plan**

**Rationale:**

There are multiple measures in place to support students’ social emotional needs that include:

- Promote teachers to do restorative circles at tier 1 implementation
- Support staff meet regularly with students to revisit supports and monitor student needs
- Approximately 300 students have a coach if needed
- Behavior Intervention Center is in place with two social workers in the classroom to support social emotional needs
- Active school intervention team (SIT) in place that meets weekly
- External supports such as Community based FSSS- family support services, Hillside for academics, Promise Zone, Peaceful Schools provide support as needed

There are many modes of collecting data to help identify supports for students such as coaches connected with students. Additionally, the SIT team uses multiple measures of data such as behavior, attendance, and grades (BAG) to ensure the right supports are in place for students.

There are no incentive criteria implemented consistently schoolwide, though there is a school wide positive incentive program to support student academic and behavioral growth.

The school has adopted the no-nonsense nurturing model and is in the initial stages of implementation.

Support team interviewed shared there is a dedicated administrator present at meetings who also serves as the “go to” person for decisions to be made. They also shared the team meeting structure to identify student needs and supports as successful and effective and has resulted in improved behavior.

**Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement:** The school creates a culture of partnership where families, community members, and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being.

**Recommendation for Tenet 6 – Family and Community Engagement:**

The school continues to build structures to create a culture of shared responsibility for student academic progress and social emotional growth. **Therefore, it is recommended that by April 4, 2018, the school leaders, will develop a systematic approach to engage parents and community via the following modes:**

- **Communication guide for parents to access school information**
- **Utilize email to communicate school events, student information, etc.**
- **Develop a school year calendar for parents to plan for school events**

**Rationale:**

Principal and teachers shared that communication is sent to parents via Robo calls, texts, letters although parents shared they don’t always receive Robo calls and letters.

Parents shared they would like to see emails as a regular means of communication efforts in addition to the

Robo calls and letters. Additionally, parents would like to see more family events with a couple of weeks notice for planning purposes. The parents mentioned they are getting notification either too late or a couple of days before the school events which does not allow for planning.

Parents stated they receive training at open house on digital content and the eSchool home access center, but would like a reminder tool or resource on how to access the information shared once they are home.

Parents shared other than state testing, they are not aware of other data that could be shared, such as ANet, STAR and other benchmark data.



### Report Quality Assurance from the District

I certify that I have led this review on behalf of the district and assert that this District-led Review aligns with NYSED expectations and protocols.

School Reviewed	Grant Middle School
Name of Lead Reviewer	Melinda Baiza
Title	Focus District Consultant (OEE)
2016-17 District Lead Credential status  (choose one)	<input type="checkbox"/> Issued by NYSED on _____  <input type="checkbox"/> Pending -- The requirements have been fulfilled, but I have yet to receive word from NYSED  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pending -- I have not yet fulfilled the requirements, but plan on doing so by the June 30, 2017. I will be applying for: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> an Initial Credential ( I have received initial approval and when the assessment is available I will complete that requirement) <input type="checkbox"/> a Renewal Credential  <input type="checkbox"/> N/A This is the only District-led review I am responsible for.