



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

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



2016-17 District-Led Review

<b>BEDS Code</b>	421800010052
<b>School Name</b>	Dr. Weeks Elementary School
<b>School Address</b>	710 Hawley Ave, Syracuse NY 13203
<b>District Name</b>	Syracuse City School District
<b>School Leader</b>	Carin Reeve-Larham
<b>Dates of Review</b>	November 9-10, 2016
<b>Lead Reviewer</b>	Alejandra Rice
<b>School Accountability Status</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Priority School <input type="checkbox"/> Focus School
<b>Type of Review</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District-led Review
<b>Review Team Member Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Daniel Burton	Project Coordinator, Office of Shared Accountability
Irastina Reid	Assistant Director, Special Education
Sara Peters	Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network Representative
Silvia Vergara	Parent Liaison
Marie Fay	Assistant Superintendent
Nicolle Haynes	Director of School Culture and Climate
Sharon Melfi	District Representative
Manami Tezuka	Supervisor of Libraries
Elaine Burt	AVID District Coordinator
Alejandra Rice	District Outside Educational Expert, Insight Education Group

**School Information Sheet for Dr. Weeks ES**

School Configuration (2016-17 data)					
Grade Configuration	PK-5	Total Enrollment	800	SIG Recipient	YES
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2016-17)					
# Transitional Bilingual	0	# Dual Language	0	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	15
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2016-17)					
# Special Classes	2	# SETSS	6	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	-
Types and Number of Special Classes (2016-17)					
# Visual Arts	1	# Music	1.5	# Drama	-
# Foreign Language	-	# Dance	-	# CTE	-
School Composition (most recent data)					
% Title I Population		72.3	% Attendance Rate		93.3
% Free Lunch		71.6	% Reduced Lunch		0.6
% Limited English Proficient		24.6	% Students with Disabilities		15.5
Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native		0.8	% Black or African American		46.4
% Hispanic or Latino		15.3	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		8.5
% White		19.5	% Multi-Racial		9.6
Personnel (most recent data)					
Years Principal Assigned to School		3	# of Assistant Principals		2
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate		5.9	% Teaching Out of Certification		0
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience		34.6	Average Teacher Absences		0.74
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2015-16)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		7.0	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		10.4
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)		45.0	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)		NA
Student Performance for High Schools (2015-16)					
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	NA				
	NA				
	NA				
<p>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></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase student achievement on NYS Assessments in ELA and Mathematics</li> </ol>					

## **Purpose of the visit**

This school was visited because of its identification as a Priority 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 Alejandra Rice, Outside Education Expert. The team also included Daniel Burton, Project Coordinator, Office of Shared Accountability; Irastina Reid, Assistant Director, Special Education; Sara Peters, Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network Representative; Silvia Vergara, Parent Liaison; Marie Fay, Assistant Superintendent; Nicolle Haynes, Director of School Culture and Climate; Sharon Melfi, District Representative; Manami Tezuka, Supervisor of Libraries; Elaine Burt, AVID District Coordinator
- The review team visited a total of 43 classrooms during the two-day review.
- The lead reviewer visited 2 classrooms with the Principal during the review.
- Reviewers conducted focus groups with students, staff and parents.
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including unit lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.

The Review Team concluded that the school's current systems and practices predominantly align with Stage Three on the DTSDE Rubric, with limited practices aligned with Stage Two.

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

1. Dr. Weeks has used data to identify that, in Math, students needed to become problem solvers. The data showed that students were participating in mathematics but not mastering the content being taught. Teachers have implemented manipulatives within lessons to best support mastery.
2. The faculty and staff, with the leadership of the principal, have created a solid culture of learning moving towards a culture of achievement.
3. Teacher practice is equally important as the school moves towards a culture of achievement. Dr. Weeks has implemented protected time for teacher collaboration. The 50-minute team planning time has built strong teacher collaboration; as a result, the leadership is seeing that more teachers are self-directed in their own growth and, independently seek learning opportunities. The school leader has provided multiple opportunities to train teachers as leaders in an effort to build future leaders.

**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:**

It is recommended that the School Leader collaboratively develop a handbook by May 2017 that outlines school structures and processes for teachers and leadership team members in order to empower all staff to be equal partners in the turn around process at Dr. Weeks. With the support of the leadership team and other partners, this comprehensive handbook can be created and utilized for the on-boarding process.

### **Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- The school leader articulated the vision for the school as, “Every Child, Every Day, College and Career ready.” The vision is not just posted in the building- but is actualized in practice. The small student group stated that they understand the vision of the school to ‘be good at learning.’
- Dr. Weeks has three specific SMART Goals: Strong and vibrant school culture, Strong C3 core instruction, and Student attendance. It is evident to anyone who spends time in the building that administration, staff and students alike have worked hard to create a strong and vibrant school culture. This is evident through the different opportunities for students to reset within a classroom, parents feeling welcome and incorporating room parents as a way of becoming an inclusive community. The school leader shared how shifting the lens of attendance from students attending 95% of the school year to students missing 9 days of instruction has supported parental understanding of the urgency for student attendance.
- The school leader has incorporated collaborative planning into the master schedule. During this time teachers may review data, identify gaps and plan accordingly, discuss academic success and share how

it was reached with colleagues.

- The School Leader and teachers alike mentioned how all teachers are ENL teachers. All teachers have had the opportunity to attend professional development on second language acquisition. It is evident that the school has embraced all cultures present, however, classroom observations showed how ENL services within the classroom are not inclusive but rather students are receiving separate instruction from the rest of the class.
- The School Leader holds teachers accountable through the walkthrough process. The school leader and teacher leaders utilize a protocol for providing feedback as part of the process. Teacher leaders who do walkthroughs alongside the school leader, have protocol for how they need to provide feedback. Teachers and the school leader shared how sometimes, as the teacher leaders are preparing for feedback; they identify strategies/practices that they can incorporate into their own classrooms. Coaching cycles are based on needs identified through walkthroughs.
- The school leader has worked hard at building leadership capacity within the building. Due to turnover in leadership, she has a plan to develop and build capacity within her teachers in order to develop future teacher leaders.

**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 Leadership Team at Dr. Weeks is encouraged to create a lesson plan structure that incorporates personalized learning, which encourages student ownership, and supports the transition from a culture of learning to a culture of achievement. This structure should be developed in collaboration with teachers representing a variety of grade levels and subjects taught.

### **Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- Dr. Weeks has set a foundation for teaching and learning. This is evident through the use of the pacing calendars for all grades, which include testing windows and action plans for interim assessments. The school uses ANET for interim assessments, which is standards-driven. Also aligned with CCLS, the lower grades are using CKLA, which has been aligned with the social studies curriculum. All teachers are expected to implement this with fidelity. Classroom observations showed teachers using CKLA during the school-wide set time.
- The master schedule has allowed for collaborative teacher planning time. Teachers referred to cross-content alignments such as when a teacher observed during a classroom visit stated, “this is what we were talking about in Science.” During the vertical teacher focus group, multiple members spoke to the benefits of collaborative planning time.
- The School Leader spoke to how Enrichment has been aligned to NextGen Science Standards. Based on evidence shared by the school leader for review, the curriculum for Enrichment has been rewritten in order to connect it to science standards.

- During the teacher meeting, the team captured evidence of teachers analyzing student data and discussed the next steps for improvement based on student need. Each teacher developed next steps and were asked to create five new lesson plans to meet the identified needs.
- The team was able to gather pieces of evidence that structures are in place for coherent curricula and assessment that are modified for identified needs, such as lesson plans showing evidence of groupings being based on data from assessments, action plans developed based on ANET data as well as AIS; however, there was limited evidence of student ownership of learning.

**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:**

As teachers continue to collaborate as a team, it is recommended that they use a personalized learning lens to increase rigor and ensure all students can access the general education curriculum.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- The team saw evidence of teacher planning and collaboration through both the classroom observations as well as focus group input. In all classrooms, each student has his or her own goals, based on where he or she is and where he or she needs to go. When asked, students were aware of where they were in reference to their goal attainment. Students participating in focus groups had data binders and knew what their goals were; most of them said they set their own goals; however, when discussing grades and assignments, students could not necessarily articulate why they may have gotten a question wrong, if they were off the mark or what the next step was. Students did not seem to have examples where they received explicit written feedback.
- Classroom structures encouraged student ownership. During classroom observations, students were comfortable redirecting and supporting each other with classwork. Classroom observations showed student discourse- 'I disagree because page X says this', students citing evidence and showing that they are comfortable talking in academic language. Although, most students seemed engaged during classroom observations, the assigned tasks were not challenging student learning.
- Classrooms, as well as the school as a whole, allow students to feel physically and in some cases intellectually safe. For example, students re-directing other students were observed in classrooms. However, there was limited evidence that the environment promotes intellectual discovery and rigorous thinking. In most classrooms, students were working on same assignment, and in one room, students that had completed work simply sat quietly until it was time to transition. In classrooms where students were working in small groups, instruction was specific to student need but there was no evidence of differentiation within the group. It was also recorded that specially designed instruction for Special Education students was missing in inclusion classrooms, as well as, ENL students in mainstream classroom were not incorporated into what was being taught to the other students. Instruction was not differentiated or scaffolded for ENL students unless the ENL teacher was in the classroom; however, in several classrooms it was observed that the ENL teacher was working with ENL

students on a separate task from what the rest of the class was learning.

**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 Review team recommends that the Leadership Team at Dr. Weeks create a system of accountability using the existing district protocols to develop, implement, and progress monitor behavior intervention plans for tier 3 students based on data.

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- The school year began with an 8-week plan shared by the school leader. The team members noted evidence of this 8-week plan. It is evident that the school as a whole is considered a safe learning environment. Each classroom has common language around academic and behavioral expectations such as: SWAG, Wildcat Ready, Cool Down Corner, Classroom Dojo and Check-In, Checkout. Wildcat Report Card goes home.
- Aside from students and staff, parents spoke to all adults in the building being supportive of students, not just their classroom teacher. Students stated that they feel like they belong in the school, no matter who they are.
- Based on Dr. Weeks’ Preventative Strategies Plan, professional development opportunities have been provided to support social and emotional development health. Some training opportunities include: Responsive Classrooms, De-escalation Strategies, PAX-Good Behavior Game, and Engaging Schools among others.
- Parents, as well as teachers, spoke to how students have a mentor (faculty or staff member) who supports the social and emotional growth of their mentee.
- Student Support Staff meeting and documents show “Every Child, Every Day” and how this is actualized. Dr. Weeks is using a whole school approach to build social and emotional skills. This, along with school-wide non-negotiables, has provided a transparent plan for supporting “Every Child, Every Day.” Non-negotiables observed include: compliment chain, vision, morning circle, cool down corner, voice levels, Doc’s deeds and Doc’s Compliments
- Multiple members of the school spoke to how BIC room data was being utilized to develop individual plans based on individual student needs. The team documented multiple pieces of evidence of collaboration between BIC room and ISS staff and teachers. One example is how the BIC room and ISS staff work proactively when it comes to concerned behaviors. The staff has a presence in classrooms where anticipated issues are noted. Teachers and student support staff also spoke to how student support staff takes part in re-entry circles and stay and support the student after the circle.
- In the large student group, students stated that they are helping other kids not bully and feel good about each other. Students stated that there was someone in the building they could talk to if they had

an issue.

- Student support staff stated they don't yet have a way to report out to parents about social and emotional needs and still struggle with communicating to teachers what support services were provided to students.

**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 Leadership team should consider prioritizing the parent and community engagement activities based on the data and the impact they are having on family involvement and improved student outcomes. If not already in place, how will you evaluate the success of each event?

**Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- Dr. Weeks has partnered with North East Community Center, which in turn has enhanced the community connection. The North East Community Center has provided many resources to Dr. Weeks' families such as, having a team in place to help parents sign-up for Community Health Center. Developing as a Community School, Community Engagement Team, contains director of North East Community Center
- The Leadership Team has provided a plethora of opportunities for family and community engagement. The parents spoke about session the school held with the Math teacher to assist parents in better understanding how their children are being taught Math as well as the "Coffee with the Principal", while the school leader shared about the adult education classes held for ENL parents. This year, the school leader has Room Parents with the intent to foster communication with other parents of students in the class.
- Multiple family events scheduled throughout the year as evidenced by the Family Events calendar for 2015-2016. Some examples include: Curriculum Night, Kindergarten Orientation, and International Day- where parents were able to present about their culture. In addition, the school has open classroom in the morning; parents are welcome to go into the classroom for 15-20 minutes at the beginning of the school day. Support Staff indicated that this is a way to generate reciprocal communication between parents and the school. Other than the multiple opportunities to be involved during family events, parents stated that they feel welcome coming into the building and can go to teachers or administrators with concerns and that these will be addressed. Parents stated that 'this is not a school, this is a community.'
- Dr. Weeks represents many cultures and languages. In an effort to communicate with all families, communication around Receivership was sent in multiple languages, interpreters were present at Curriculum Night and are available and present at other family events. Principal uses a variety of means and modes to communicate with families in their home language.
- Although Dr. Weeks has worked hard to provide an array of community and family involvement, they are not using data from the events to drive the following events, or plan future events.



## SUBGROUP SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Recommendation for English Language Learners:**

The school leader and ENL staff should reevaluate the services provided to ENL students. It is recommended that ENL services revisit the SCSD goals to better align services within the classroom.

### **Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- ENL students in mainstream classroom were not incorporated into what was being taught to the other students. Instruction was not differentiated or scaffolded for ENL students unless the ENL teacher was in the classroom.
- The School Leader and teachers commented that all teachers are ENL teachers and have been provided PD for language acquisition.
- Mainstream inclusion students were isolated during instruction.

### **Recommendation for Students with Disabilities:**

The school leader and Special Education staff should reevaluate the services provided to students. It is recommended that data be reviewed (both qualitative and quantitative) and services be outlined based on individual student especially during inclusion time.

### **Rationale that led to the recommendation:**

- Specially designed instruction for Special Education students was missing in inclusion classrooms.

## ADDITIONAL AREAS TO ADDRESS

- Develop Social and Emotional learning goals beginning with students that go through SIT so that they understand the impact.
- Make connections more explicit to students through questioning and feedback during class time. In the future, the school leader will need to address lesson plans under **Questioning** to ensure that “high level questions are promoting higher level of thinking and promoting independent learning” and support teachers in understanding the impact feedback has on student understanding.

### 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.

Name	Alejandra Rice
Title	Specialist Consultant
2016-17 District Lead Credential status (choose one)	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Issued by NYSED on _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pending -- The requirements have been fulfilled, but I have yet to receive word from NYSED</p> <p><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:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> an Initial Credential</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><input type="checkbox"/> a Renewal Credential</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> N/A This is the only District-led review I am responsible for.</p>