



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	620600010000
District	Kingston City School District
District Address	61 Crown Street Kingston, NY 12401
Superintendent	Dr. Paul J. Paladino
Date(s) of Review	June 19, 2013
Schools Discussed in this Report	George Washington Elementary School Kingston High School

District Information Sheet											
District Grade Configuration	PreK-12	Total Student Enrollment	6639	% Title 1 Population	66%	% Attendance Rate	93%				
% Free Lunch	38%	% Reduced Lunch	8%	% Student Sustainability	5%	% Limited English Proficient	3%	% Students with Disabilities	17.6%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
% American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	% Black or African American	18%	% Hispanic or Latino	12%	% Asian, Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	2%	% White	65%	% Multi-racial	2%
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/ Appointed to District	1	Number of Deputy Superintendents	4	Average Years Deputy Superintendents in Role in the District	4	# of Directors of Programs	6 4- C&I 2-SPED				
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate in District	0	% Teaching Out of Certification in District	0	% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp. in District	4	Average Teacher Absences in District	9				
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
District in Good Standing		Focus District	X	Number of Focus Schools Identified by District	8	Number of SIG (a) Recipient Schools		Number of Schools in Status	8		
						Number of SIG (g) Recipient Schools					
% ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	51.6%	% Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	55.9%	% Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	86.4%	% 4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	73%	% 6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	76.3%		

Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA			
	American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American
X	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
	White		Multi-racial
X	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
	Economically Disadvantaged		
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics			
	American Indian or Alaska Native	X	Black or African American
X	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
X	White		Multi-racial
X	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
X	Economically Disadvantaged		
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science			
	American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American
	Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
	White		Multi-racial
	Students with Disabilities		Limited English Proficient
	Economically Disadvantaged		
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective			
	Limited English Proficiency		

Tenet 1 - District Leadership and Capacity: The district examines school systems and makes intentional decisions to identify and provide critical expectations, supports and structures in all areas of need so that schools are able to respond to their community and ensure that all students are successful.

Mark an "X" in the box below the appropriate designation for each statement of practice (SOP), and indicate in the **OVERALL RATING** row the final designation for the overall tenet rating.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
1.1	The district has a comprehensive approach for recruiting, evaluating and sustaining high-quality personnel that affords schools the ability to ensure success by addressing the needs of their community.		X		
1.2	The district is organized and allocates resources (financial, staff support, materials, etc.) in a way that leads to appropriate levels of support for schools based on the needs of the school community, which promotes school improvement and success.		X		
1.3	The district leadership has a comprehensive explicit theory of action about school culture that robustly communicates high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents.		X		
1.4	The district has a comprehensive plan to create, deliver and monitor professional development in all pertinent areas that is adaptive and tailored to the needs of individual schools.		X		
1.5	The district promotes a data-driven culture by providing strategies connected to best practices that all staff members and school communities are expected to be held accountable for implementing.			X	
OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 1:			E		

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.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
2.1	The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for the school leader to create, develop and nurture a school environment that is responsive to the needs of the entire school community.			X	

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.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
3.1	The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports that are connected to the implementation of a comprehensive curriculum appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and are inclusive of the arts, technology and other enrichment subjects in a data-driven culture.			X	

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.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
4.1	The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for teachers to develop strategies and practices that lead to			X	

	effective planning and account for student data, needs, goals, and levels of engagement.				
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.					
#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
5.1	The district creates policy and works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and resources that positively support students' social and emotional developmental health.			X	
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.					
#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
6.1	The district has a comprehensive family and community engagement strategic plan that states the expectations around creating and sustaining a welcoming environment for families, reciprocal communication, and establishing partnerships with community organizations and families.			X	

District Review Narrative:

<p>Tenet 1 - District Leadership and Capacity: The district examines school systems and makes intentional decisions to identify and provide critical expectations, supports and structures in all areas of need so that schools are able to respond to their community and ensure that all students are successful.</p>	<p>Overall Tenet Rating</p>	<p>E</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 1.1: The district has a comprehensive approach for recruiting, evaluating and sustaining high-quality personnel that affords schools the ability to ensure success by addressing the needs of their community.</p>	<p>SOP Rating</p>	<p>E</p>
<p>Debriefing Statement: The district has recruitment strategies and structures inclusive of external partnerships that have led to adequate personnel in all schools. In response to the loss of 150 positions in the past two years, the district has been creative in determining the most effective placement of remaining personnel. The district’s comprehensive plan for supporting school leaders leads to an understanding of staff evaluation and professional development (PD) that results in practices to sustain quality staff.</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district has employed recruitment strategies, such as collaborating with the State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz during job fairs. However, budget constraints have led to the closing of four elementary schools and the elimination of 150 positions within the past two years. Based on district staff interviews and documents reviewed, the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) learned that the district reacted creatively to personnel challenges by excessing of staff and strategically placing the remaining personnel, which was accomplished through management of the employment eligibility list. All leadership personnel completed training in the use of the Danielson Framework rubric and formed professional learning communities (PLCs) to support district protocol on the use of the Teachscape program. All leaders were required to pass the Teachscape evaluator assessment to demonstrate initial proficiency in the use of the rubric. The district will continue to provide ongoing training at summer leadership institutes to build capacity and reliability among evaluators. The district provides opportunities for advancement, often opting to promote leaders from within the district. For example, three current school leaders previously taught within the district. The district provides annual retreats for its leaders to sustain the culture of growth and develop the professional development (PD) plan for the next school year. Topics have included Danielson’s Domain 4 - Professional Responsibilities, the response to intervention (RTI) model, data-driven instruction (DDI), the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), health, and safety plans, special education delivery models, technology plans, day-to-day operations, and embedding PD and enrichment within the school day. District leaders reported that the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process was viewed as a tool to improve instruction and retain quality staff. The district’s recruitment, support, and retention strategies lead to schools that have quality personnel to successfully meet student needs. 		

Statement of Practice 1.2: The district is organized and allocates resources (financial, staff support, materials, etc.) in a way that leads to appropriate levels of support for schools based on the needs of the school community, which promotes school improvement and success.	SOP Rating	E
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Debriefing Statement: The district has a structure for deploying resources that begins with building leaders completing a needs assessment, followed by a presentation to the district cabinet. Building leaders advocate for requests and are required to demonstrate how requests will positively affect student learning. Through this practice, the district ensures equitable and adequate resource allocations throughout the district to meet the needs of students, staff, and families.

Strengths:

- The district and its schools are committed to a process of continuous improvement dedicated to meeting the learning needs of all students. In addition, district leaders reported that the district has developed a multi-year school improvement plan that hinges on a commitment to continuous school improvement and outlines specific programming and staffing requirements, for which schools need district support; Title I schools present annual program proposals to request additional resources. Each building plan was presented to the district leader and cabinet for review and feedback, and a portion of each building principal’s annual evaluation was based on their ability to meet the goals and targets identified in the school’s plan. The district’s approach to staff allocation involves a similar process based on goals established by the Comprehensive District Education Plan (CDEP) committee. Some district funds are distributed on a census basis, while the district leader described George Washington Elementary School, a public Montessori, as having different needs. As such, district staff reported that the district empowers principals to manage their own buildings. School leaders have access to some discretionary funds, and Title II monies are earmarked for staff development. Based on documents reviewed and staff interviews, the IIT found that the district has focused on providing building principals with trainings and supports that facilitate the creation of productive building leadership teams formed to utilize best practices, such as DuFour’s Professional Learning Community (PLC) model. Building leadership team (BLT) members attend leadership retreats, charged with the task of aligning building plans with district goals. While not quite site-based management, assistant district leaders play a large role in the support system. Leaders in consolidated buildings have integrated building leadership teams and school improvement plans. District resource allocation processes are aligned to match support to school need, which promotes school improvement and student success.

Statement of Practice 1.3: The district leadership has a comprehensive explicit theory of action about school culture that robustly communicates high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents.	SOP Rating	E
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Debriefing Statement: The district has developed a theory of action based on high expectations for student

achievement, which is communicated in a timely and organized manner through a variety of methods. This has resulted in the theory of action being readily accessible to all constituents.

Strengths:

- District and building level missions and visions are reviewed on an annual basis; once reviewed and finalized, school improvement goals, objectives, and action plans are developed and communicated to advance the district’s theory of action. The district is currently working on Race to the Top (RttT) initiatives focused on the CCLS, APPR, DDI, establishing a culture of differentiation, and the district’s newly developed RTI plan. The district leader reported that communication has been a priority; therefore, the website was updated, and Facebook, Twitter, Vine, and a YouTube Channel added. Parents can sign up for instant email and instant text to receive pertinent communications from the district. English and Spanish are the predominant languages spoken within the district, so every communication that goes home was available in both languages. In addition, each school’s website features a dropdown menu to provide additional translations. The district leader stated that the district had to be the first and best source of information about the Kingston City School District. As such, the IIT found that a link to the district’s website was included at the bottom of every communication. District leaders clearly communicate a theory of action reflecting high expectations for meeting the needs of the school community, which supports student growth and success.

Statement of Practice 1.4: The district has a comprehensive plan to create, deliver and monitor professional development in all pertinent areas that is adaptive and tailored to the needs of individual schools.

SOP Rating

E

Debriefing Statement: The district’s PD Plan provides staff with opportunities for PD throughout the year during conference days, and through summer trainings. The district has a calendar of PD offerings based on assessments of school need. The district has an established mechanism for providing responsive follow-up support to staff members in individual schools.

Strengths:

- The district’s has a PD Committee and Professional Practices Committee that have developed a multi-year PD Plan. Based on interviews and documents reviewed, these committees identify the targeted PD focus each school year, and staff reviewed it annually. While the plan was reflective of what each school identified as an area of need for training, as established in school improvement plans, school staff reported that challenges arose due to the lack of recognition for the Montessori certification and training programs. The district and schools’ PD process consists of gathering and analyzing data, establishing district- and building-level priorities, and developing multi-year improvement plans. PLCs are used to provide PD for participants to collaborate, plan, and co-learn. District leaders reported that they encourage the use of a PLC model that is consistent, targeted to needs, and assure sustained and embedded implementation of learned strategies. In addition, faculty meetings are used for PD with the most time allocated to DDI, CCLS, and APPR discussions. Elementary schools are focusing on

a more inclusionary co-teaching model, an 82-minute block schedule for Project-Based Learning (PBL), and the high school was focusing on developing the ninth grade academy. Additionally, the district created five instructional coaching positions at the elementary level and four at the middle school level, to assist in providing and sustaining embedded PD to maximize staff's ability to carry effective strategies into the classroom. The district has created and implemented a plan to deliver comprehensive PD, which supports an increase in teacher effectiveness.

Statement of Practice 1.5: The district promotes a data-driven culture by providing strategies connected to best practices that all staff members and school communities are expected to be held accountable for implementing.

SOP Rating

D

Debriefing Statement: The district has communicated the expectation that data was to be used by staff for instruction, support, and establishing goals for students and schools. The district had just begun to train staff to use data. Consequently, the inconsistent use of data to drive instruction limits staff accountability across buildings.

Areas for Improvement:

- District leaders reported that DDI was a district-wide focus. District leaders reported that district and school-based inquiry teams were developed to engage in root cause analysis by grade and department level, as reflected in school improvement plans. The district gathers perceptual, behavioral, and academic data from sources such as surveys and assessments, and distributes the results to staff through grade level and department meetings. School leaders and staff review the data, which includes the results of state assessments, STAR assessments, Developmental Reading assessments (DRAs), Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) outcomes, and survey results. District leaders reported that they collect and distribute a large amount of potentially useful data; however, at the time of the review, not all staff had received training, and therefore staff did not yet have the ability to make the most of that data. While the district promotes a culture of data use, the staff are not able to fully analyze and interpret the data available to them, which limits student achievement.

This section provides a narrative that communicates how school communities perceive the support provided by the district.

<p>Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions Statement of Practice (SOP) 2.1: The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for the school leader to create, develop and nurture a school environment that is responsive to the needs of the entire school community.</p>	<p>SOP Rating</p>	<p>D</p>
<p><u>Areas for Improvement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> District leaders reported that they are forging a relationship with school leaders to encourage engagement with the district. In addition, district leaders reported holding small leadership meetings to offer school leaders a forum to speak out comfortably. School leaders reported that they meet monthly, for an hour, with the district leader and cabinet members. The district leader reported meeting with each school leader three times annually. District staff reported responding promptly when school leaders reach out for personnel, student support, and PD. School leaders shared that due to district-wide staff reductions, teachers were transferred to the schools without being knowledgeable of school programs and culture. School leaders reported that, at times, there was reciprocal communication around district initiatives, although communication was not always clear, such as with issues regarding the reporting of data from <i>eSchoolData</i>. In addition, at the time of the visit, some school leaders reported that there was limited exchange with the district about specific fiscal allocations. For example, Title I funds were disseminated by the district with little school involvement and no consideration of the unique school programming in the decision making process. Collaboration between the district and school staff was inconsistent, which limits the school communities' ability to maximize resources toward increasing student achievement. 		
<p>Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support Statement of Practice (SOP) 3.1: The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports that are connected to the implementation of a comprehensive curriculum appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and are inclusive of the arts, technology and other enrichment subjects in a data-driven culture.</p>	<p>SOP Rating</p>	<p>D</p>
<p><u>Areas for Improvement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School leaders reported that the district provides limited support around CCLS-aligned curricula development. In addition, school staff reported that communication from the district was not always related to what or how students need to learn and know. According to school and district leaders, the district provided funding for writing curriculum to align George Washington Elementary School's Montessori program to the CCLS; however, at the time of the visit, this initiative had just started. In addition, although for the first three years, the district supported the public Montessori program, according to school staff the support has waned, as there is a focus on ensuring equitable 		

programming across all schools. The district hired a staff person to manage the technology of the schools and district. However, although school leaders reported that a district technology plan existed, they explained that the school staff had no input in developing the plan. The inconsistent implementation of a district-wide CCLS aligned curriculum, limits opportunities for student achievement in the arts, technology, and other enrichment subjects.

Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions

Statement of Practice (SOP) 4.1: The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for teachers to develop strategies and practices that lead to effective planning and account for student data, needs, goals, and levels of engagement.

SOP Rating

D

Areas for Improvement:

- School leaders reported that the district provides workshops twice yearly on conference days, where teachers cycle through two to three workshops that are “one shot deals.” In addition, school leaders reported that the district provides a three-day June leadership academy, a two-day workshop in August, a one-hour workshop on student data, and 40 hours of PLCs throughout the year. Based on documents reviewed, the IIT found that the district had limited follow-up support for the PD offered, and indicated that lead teachers are expected to do the follow-up themselves. School leaders stated that each teacher and department uses a spreadsheet to monitor at-risk students, keeps a list of interventions, and conducts a mid-year check to see if regression or improvement has occurred. However, a school staff reported having trouble with generating reports from the *eSchoolData* management system; and explained that school leaders only received a five-minute tutorial on how to use it. At the time of the visit, special education was the only department where the data management system was fully embedded. School leaders reported that they have had the services of a special education consultant for the past three years. However, there was inconsistent use of the data management system across the district. As a result, the uneven PD that the district offers impedes staff ability to use resources consistently and to provide students with rigorous learning opportunities.

Tenet 5- Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health

Statement of Practice (SOP) 5.1: The district creates policy and works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and resources that positively support students’ social and emotional developmental health.

SOP Rating

D

Areas for Improvement:

- School leaders stated that there is no cohesive district policy on the social and emotional development, health for student; and the district determines supports by the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA). The district has provided DASA training. While individual schools address the social and emotional needs of students at their discretion, at the time of the visit, there was no comprehensive

district plan for doing so. For example, district and school leaders reported that they recognize that the students in the middle school have a greater struggle because of their transition to high school. However, at the time of the visit, the district was still working with the school to plan and implement the ninth grade academy that includes an advisory component. As such, part of the district plan was to have a primary focus on the high school’s program for social and emotional development. The lack of a district’s policy addressing students’ social and emotional health needs and supports, hinders school improvement efforts to meet the needs of all students.

Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement

Statement of Practice (SOP) 6.1: The district has a comprehensive family and community engagement strategic plan that states the expectations around creating and sustaining a welcoming environment for families, reciprocal communication, and establishing partnerships with community organizations and families.

SOP Rating

D

Areas for Improvement:

- The district’s mission states it has a commitment to a collaborative partnership with students, staff, families and community partners, which the district staff believed to be critical for educational success for all. As such, the district requires parent or guardian representation on district level and building-based committees. Parents stated that they get information sent home in English and Spanish; and if they speak another language, they get information from the school and district in a language they can understand. When needed, the high school uses bilingual staff for translation services and hired translators to provide services at special education meetings. However, these services are school-based rather than district-wide, as there was no district-wide plan for family engagement, at the time of the visit. School staff reported that parents sign up to receive pertinent communications from the district via email and text; however, family-school relationships are encouraged through school-based Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTOs). School leaders stated that a brief introductory workshop on navigating and using the district’s website and the online parent resource, called the Parent Portal, had been offered to families; however, at the time of the visit, the locked Parent Portal was not accessible to families. The lack of a strategic district-level plan addressing expectations for family and community engagement impedes the schools’ ability to sustain improvements in student achievement.

DISTRICT LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Tenet 1 – District Leadership and Capacity

In order for the district's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 1, the district should:

- 1.5: Provide PD for school leaders and staff to analyze and interpret data, set goals, develop school policies and practices that will lead to the improvement of instruction, increased student achievement and overall school improvement.

Tenet 2 – School Leader Practices and Decisions

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 2, the district should:

- 2.1: Support school leaders to embed the practice of using a school-wide data-driven system that is used by the entire faculty. Provide PD, resources, and ongoing support to all staff to use summative, interim, and formative assessment data to inform instruction, examine student work to develop next steps of instruction, and develop student ownership and accountability for their learning. Monitor the implementation of interconnected data practices at the school level to ensure consistency and understanding by all staff.

Tenet 3 – Curriculum Development and Support

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 3, the district should:

- 3.1: Ensure that all curricula support the CCLS across the district, school, and grade levels. Ensure that curriculum maps align vertically and horizontally, in terms of content, skills, and assessment, for effective instruction. Provide PD, resources, and ongoing supports to ensure school staff are able to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to develop and implement rigorous CCLS-aligned curricula across all grades and subjects.

Tenet 4: Teacher Practices and Decisions

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 4, the district should:

- 4.1: Develop and provide a PD calendar for schools to self-select PD targeted to the needs of the individual schools in the district. Support school leaders to look for and monitor instruction that provides clear and

multiple points of entry and intervention supports for all students to acquire the skills, knowledge, and understanding required to master the CCLS. Provide school staff with PD, resources, and ongoing support to plan and implement CCLS-aligned instructional strategies that identify and address the unique school needs and target student goals.

Tenet 5: Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 5, the district should:

- 5.1: Institute an overarching strategic plan to address the social and emotional developmental health needs of all students to serve as a model for school leaders to develop plans around the district and school visions to improve students' social and emotional developmental health. Provide PD for all school leaders and staff to develop adult capacity at the school level to support all students social and emotional developmental health needs. Provide training for school leaders and staff to use data to identify areas of need and cultivate partnerships that support the social and emotional developmental health of all students.

Tenet 6: Family and Community Engagement

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of Tenet 6, the district should:

- 6.1: Create and implement a district-level family engagement plan. Provide data in an easy to understand format, appropriate to each group of stakeholders; and use data to identify next steps for support. Provide a wide range of learning opportunities for families, school staff, and students to elevate their understanding of student data and its implications for student success.