



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

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



<b>BEDS Code</b>	091402060000
<b>District</b>	Saranac Central School District
<b>District Address</b>	32 Emmons Street, Dannemora, NY 12929
<b>Superintendent</b>	Kenneth O. Cringle
<b>Date(s) of Review</b>	June 5, 2014
<b>Schools Discussed in this Report</b>	Saranac Middle School

District Information Sheet											
District Grade Configuration	K-12	Total Student Enrollment	1,533	Title 1 Population	37%	Attendance Rate	95.8%				
Free Lunch	29%	Reduced Lunch	7.5%	Student Sustainability	96%	Limited English Proficient	0%	Students with Disabilities	15.1%		
Racial/Ethnic Origin of District Student Population											
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.07%	Black or African American	0.7%	Hispanic or Latino	0%	Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	0.35%	White	98.77%	Multi-racial	0.13%
Personnel											
Number Years Superintendent Assigned/Appointed to District	9	Number of Deputy Superintendents	0	Average Years Dep. Superintendents in Role in the District	N/A	# of Directors of Programs	1				
% 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	10.6%	Average Teacher Absences in District	9.48				
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
District in Good Standing		Focus District	X	Number of Focus School Identified by District	1	Number of SIG Recipient Schools	3	Number of Schools in Status	1		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	27%	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	20%	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	92.5%	4 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	84.5%	6 yr. Graduation Rate (for HS only)	87%		

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

#	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 leadership has a comprehensive and explicit theory of action about school culture that communicates high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents.			X	
1.3	The district is organized and allocates resources (financial, staff support, materials, etc.) in a way that aligns appropriate levels of support for schools based on the needs of the school community.		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		
	<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 1:</b>		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(s) to ensure CCLS curriculum that provide 21st Century and College and Career Readiness skills in all content areas and provides fiscal and human resources for implementation.		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
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4.1	The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for teachers to develop strategies and practices and addresses effective planning and account for student data, needs, goals, and levels of engagement.			X	
<b>Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health:</b> 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	
<b>Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement:</b> 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 – Findings, Evidence, Impact and Recommendations:**

<p><b>Tenet 1 - District Leadership and Capacity:</b> 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><b>Overall Tenet Rating</b></p>	<p><b>E</b></p>
<p><b>Statement of Practice 1.1:</b> 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><b>Tenet Rating</b></p>	<p><b>E</b></p>
<p><b><u>Debriefing Statement:</u></b> The district has clear policies and structures that ensure the recruitment of high quality personnel. Additionally, district staff have well established external partnerships with local universities and teacher training colleges that provide students for participation in the Mentor Teacher Internship Program. The district has a well-defined Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) system for evaluating all staff. The district communicates this system clearly to school leaders, and fully supports school leaders in program implementation and monitoring. The district has a comprehensive plan focused on support, motivation, and retention of all staff.</p> <p><b><u>Strengths:</u></b></p> <p><b>Overall Finding:</b> The district has a comprehensive approach in place for recruiting, evaluating, and sustaining personnel to meet the needs of the community.</p> <p><b>Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The district advertises statewide for teaching and administrative openings in newspapers and professional publications. District leaders also post open positions at local universities and colleges. District partnerships with teacher education programs at local universities and colleges have provided students for participation in the Mentor Teacher Internship Program, which has reportedly been of great benefit to the schools in terms of bringing new ideas and enthusiasm. During an interview with school leaders from the four Saranac Schools, the school leaders stated that whenever vacancies occur a large number of highly qualified candidates apply for positions within the district.</li> <li>• The district’s Professional Development Planning Committee, which is comprised of leaders, teachers, and a higher education representative, developed a comprehensive APPR plan for teachers and leaders. School leaders stated that the district has communicated the plan clearly to schools and fully supported school leaders in implementation and monitoring procedures.</li> <li>• The district is successful in sustaining high-quality personnel and as a result, has a low turnover of teaching and administrative staff. The district supports staff retention in a number of ways, which</li> </ul>		

includes offering a mentor-intern program, supporting teachers participating in the New York State (NYS) Master Teacher Program, and providing monetary incentives for staff pursuing graduate courses and in-service credits. Through document review and interviews, reviewers found that the appointment of a curriculum and professional development (PD) coordinator had resulted in increased teacher motivation and retention; this coordinator has ensured that PD offerings more closely match teacher requests and needs.

**Impact Statement:**

The district ensures that the schools have adequate personnel to address student needs.

**Statement of Practice 1.2.:** The district leadership has a comprehensive and explicit theory of action about school culture that communicates high expectations for addressing the needs of all constituents.

**Tenet Rating**

**D**

**Debriefing Statement:** The district leader, all school leaders, and the newly appointed Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education work as a close-knit team to coordinate all district policies and initiatives. The district mission statement sets out high expectations, and district staff communicate these expectations widely. Policies and initiatives address constituents’ needs; however, they are not yet consistently leading to student success when measured against NYS assessments.

**Areas for Improvement:**

**Overall Finding:**

The district leader, all school leaders, and the newly appointed Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education work as a close-knit team to coordinate all district policies and initiatives. The district mission statement sets out high expectations; however, they do not yet consistently lead to success for all groups of students.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- Discussions with district staff showed established structures that allow stakeholders the opportunity to review the district’s theory of action and annual goals biennially through school- and district-level shared decision making committees and Board of Education (BOE) meetings. Schools then develop their own specific goals within the framework of the district’s theory of action.
- The district widely circulates its mission and goals through the website, district newsletters, school communications, and public meetings held throughout the school year. District leaders also gather information from district and school surveys and an annual analysis of student test data to guide and develop district goals and identify student learning areas in need of improvement. However, reviewers found limited documented evidence that district initiatives related to improving student learning and achievement are leading to increased student success. Other than an increase in the high school graduation rate, and the optimism projected by school leaders about the anticipated

results of the recently administered NYS assessments, the success of district initiatives is undocumented.

**Impact Statement:**

The district theory of action does not uniformly translate into improvements in the quality of instruction, or student learning and achievement.

**Recommendation:**

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Ensure that all schools have as one of their top priorities achieving success on the NYS assessments.
- Provide an explicit plan for annually increasing student performance that addresses the needs of identified subgroups through comprehensive instructional programs and services, as well as a plan to enhance teacher and leader effectiveness.

**Statement of Practice 1.3:** The district is organized and allocates resources (financial, staff support, materials, etc.) in a way that aligns appropriate levels of support for schools based on the needs of the school community.

**Tenet Rating**

**E**

**Debriefing Statement:** The district has well developed structures to assess the needs of schools and to deploy resources to meet student, staff, and family needs. The district leader supports school leaders well in their leadership roles. The collegial partnership of the school leaders facilitates resource sharing, which benefits student learning. Thoughtful resource allocation is leading to improvement in some areas, such as teacher practices, implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), technology use, and student behavior.

**Strengths:**

**Overall Finding:** The district effectively allocates resources to meet the needs of the school communities it serves.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The district business manager explained that the district makes fiscal decisions collaboratively with school leaders and according to jointly agreed upon needs. School leaders submit proposals to the business manager, who then makes adjustments after consultation with all school leaders depending on the budget and tax cap. The business leader stated that school leaders work well together and even share funding at the end of a school year, if a school encounters an unexpected need. When interviewed by the review team, school leaders confirmed a collaborative atmosphere.

- The district leader, the business manager, and the school leaders all stated that funding allocations are reflective of the district’s vision and goals; school and district stakeholder committees review and evaluate the vision and goals annually. The business manager reported a big increase in spending on technology in the 2013-14 school year, which is one of the district’s top priorities. Additionally, the district increased spending on PD because of district’s goals and the needs of schools as identified by survey.
- Evidence from discussions and a review of documents showed that the district allocates resources to support the implementation of Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) programs. Despite cutbacks in some areas, the district has maintained funding for sports and the arts. The business manager commented, “We have separate budgets for music and the arts. There is a fantastic music program here. In addition, we have retained Advanced Placement (AP) classes and drama.” District leaders reported that the district pays 19 advisors to staff clubs and summer school for all students who desire or need such programs, and both elementary schools have tutoring services available at the end of the day; the district provides transportation to support these additional activities.

**Impact Statement:**

The organization and administration of district resources effectively supports schools.

**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.

**Tenet Rating**

**E**

**Debriefing Statement:** The district has developed a PD plan aligned to the identified needs of schools and targeted to increase teacher effectiveness and support the CCLS. The district communicates a detailed calendar of PD opportunities to schools and teachers, and provides follow-up and coaching, as required.

**Strengths:**

**Overall Finding:** The district provides PD that is adaptive and tailored to the needs of schools and stakeholders.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- According to district leaders, the district goals and identified teaching and learning needs direct the district’s planned PD offerings. District staff reported that they reviewed student test data and gathered teacher input through surveys and various school committees to determine PD needs. NYS assessment data was used to identify curricular areas in need of improvement.
- There is a district-level PD committee with wide staff representation that reviews all PD proposals, and plans the final PD schedule after taking into account academic needs, test and assessment

results, and requests from individual schools. The district ensures that PD targets specific areas of weakness or identified need; for example, the district reacted responsively to requests from schools to provide training in mathematical problem solving and the integration of non-fiction text into CCLS lessons. Reviewers also found that the district communicates a detailed calendar of additional PD opportunities, and provides follow-up and coaching as required.

**Impact Statement:**

The district’s PD provision aligns with the identified needs of schools, which supports increased 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.

**Tenet Rating**

**E**

**Debriefing Statement:** The district promotes a data-driven culture by providing strategies connected to best practices. All staff members and school communities are accountable for the implementation of these strategies.

**Strengths:**

**Overall Finding:** Using data to drive instruction with the intention of improving student achievement is an established feature of the district’s expectations.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- District plans and procedures are in place that support expectations for school data use. These plans provide an outline of expectations, which include the use of best data practices, an emphasis on raising student achievement, and the use of data to drive instruction. The district communicates the plans to all stakeholders, and reinforces understanding and awareness through communications and meetings with school leaders and other stakeholders.
- The district uses student assessment data to identify areas of academic strength and areas in need of improvement to set the data driven priorities in specific content areas. In addition, the district considers community viewpoints and surveys of school, student, and staff needs.
- The district has established a school based data inquiry team to identify and discuss trends in assessment data gathered from Kindergarten through grade five. Reviewers found that this team discusses and shares NYS assessment data with school leaders and other stakeholders, and identifies academic performance trends in the two elementary schools and for specific identified subgroups. Leaders then use this information to identify specific areas for improvement based on the data analysis results. In particular, district leaders reported organizing district and school grade-level meetings at the elementary level, and department meetings for general and special education

staff at the middle and high school levels to clarify expectations for how identified academic weaknesses should be addressed.

**Impact Statement:**

District efforts to impress on schools the importance of using data to improve student achievement and drive instruction increase the chances of student academic success.

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

<p><b>Statement of Practice 2.1 - School Leader Practices and Decisions:</b> 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><b>Tenet Rating</b></p>	<p><b>E</b></p>
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**Strengths:**

**Overall Finding:** The district has worked in close collaboration with staff at the Saranac Middle School and has supported the new school leader well; this has allowed the school leader to make significant school culture changes in a short time.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The school leader, teachers, and other personnel of Saranac Middle School reported close and supportive relationships with the district. The school leader stated, “The relationship with the district leader is excellent and I feel well supported when having to make tough decisions, such as enforcing a dress code created by the shared decision-making committee that had not been enforced in the past.” She continued, “The superintendent supported me fully when parents challenged the enforcement of the dress code.” The school leader also commented that the district leader was very helpful in dealing with difficult staffing issues.
- The school leader reported regular contact with the district leader who possesses an awareness of what was happening in classrooms. She spoke positively about her own APPR evaluation by the district leader. It was evident from discussions with the school leader that the district leader has gone the extra mile to encourage her to consult and engage with the district about staff recruitment, staff retention, and PD, and has also been ready to discuss issues of concern, such as academic achievement.
- The school leader stated that the district continues to be supportive of her efforts to improve student achievement and instructional quality. The school leader added that district leaders worked closely with her to develop a vision for school improvement and meet the needs of the school community. Evidence from discussions, as well a review of documents, showed that the district

leadership has provided support in monitoring the quality of instruction and CCLS implementation. The new school leader offered positive commentary about the two mentors provided to her in the early stages of her leadership role.

**Impact Statement:**

District staff work collaboratively with schools to provide opportunities and supports for school leaders to create, develop, and nurture a school environment that is responsive to the needs of the whole school community.

**Statement of Practice 3.1 - Curriculum Development and Support:** The district works collaboratively with the school(s) to ensure CCLS curriculum that provide 21st Century and College and Career Readiness skills in all content areas and provides fiscal and human resources for implementation.

**Tenet Rating**

**E**

**Strengths:**

**Overall Finding:** The district has worked closely with the school to ensure staff readiness to implement the CCLS. The district staff ensure that schools have access to the fiscal and human resources needed to support the implementation of the CCLS.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The district appointed a Director of Curriculum and Instruction to coordinate the curriculum between grades and across phases. The school leader and teachers spoke positively about the impact of this new appointment, which staff described as the “glue which binds everything together.” The school leader and teachers reported that the district approach to CCLS implementation was realistic, in that the district allowed teachers to do a minimum of one module in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics during the 2013-14 school year in order to gain experience with the common core. According to the school leader, the district’s short-term plan is “to get the CCLS modules into teachers’ hands, so they can experience it, and the long-term plan is to support its full implementation.” One strategy in place to achieve this goal was the creation of summer workshops dedicated to developing written aspects of the curriculum identified as areas of weakness, which was welcomed by the school leader and staff.
- The school leader stated that the district has provided both resources and PD tailored to support the implementation of the CCLS. This support has included PD, on-site guidance from a district curriculum coordinator and instructional resources in classrooms. Teachers stated that ongoing PD has thwarted the feeling of isolation that may have occurred once the initial push for CCLS implementation passed. The school leader has welcomed district efforts to support her in monitoring CCLS implementation and its effect on student learning and engagement. Through working together, the school and district were able to identify aspects of implementation in need of adjustment or improvement.

**Impact Statement:**

District policies, practices, and supports allow school leaders and teachers to develop confidence in their ability to implement the CCLS.

**Statement of Practice 4.1 - Teacher Practices and Decisions:** The district works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and supports for teachers to develop strategies and practices and addresses effective planning and account for student data, needs, goals, and levels of engagement.

**Tenet Rating**

**D**

**Strengths:**

**Overall Finding:** The district works collaboratively with schools to provide supports for teachers. However, not all initiatives are fully adopted or established, which limits their impact on driving up the quality of instruction or significantly raising academic achievement.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The school leader indicated that two teachers on her staff had the opportunity to train as master teachers, which provides new teachers with additional avenues for assistance in improving instructional practices. Additionally, the district offers individualized support, such as follow-up coaching to staff who request it after PD. This support is beginning to impact positively on instructional practices; however, improvements are recent and not yet having a sustained impact on raising student achievement.
- The district leader recently appointed a district Director of Curriculum and Instruction and PD. The school leader stated that the director’s support of staff is beginning to have an impact on strategies and practices related to instructional planning and student data use to improve levels of engagement and more accurately target student needs and goals. The school leader recognized that this is only the start of the journey to building and sustaining trends of improvement across all grades and content areas, and that raising student achievement levels is a work in progress.
- The district-level curriculum director also has responsibility for providing curriculum related PD. Teachers spoke positively about the high quality of district provided PD and stated that it was in direct response to their stated needs; teachers also reported that PD offered them skills and strategies they could put into practice in the classroom. Special education teachers also expressed their satisfaction with the support they were receiving both in the classroom and through PD.

**Impact Statement:**

District initiatives have started to have an impact on raising teacher effectiveness in the classroom, but improvements have yet to result in improved student academic achievement.

**Recommendation:**

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Provide PD opportunities addressing instructional practices and strategies for teachers based on identified teacher needs, and school and student data; expand PD offerings to include consistently all groups of teachers.
- Use student performance data to monitor and evaluate teacher implementation of PD; design follow-up support, such as coaching, to build on recent observed improvements in instructional practices and based on identified areas of instructional weakness.

**Statement of Practice 5.1 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health:**

The district creates policy and works collaboratively with the school to provide opportunities and resources that positively support students' social and emotional developmental health.

**Tenet Rating**

**D**

**Areas for improvement:**

**Overall Finding:** The district has introduced a Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program into schools to support the social and emotional well-being of students; however, it is not fully embedded in the middle school, which results in inconsistent implementation and limited support of students.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The school leader stated that the district has a policy for supporting schools in meeting the social and emotional developmental health needs of all students. The district has provided funding and training to introduce a PBIS program in all schools; however, although schools have been asked to adapt the PBIS model to meet school specific needs, the school leader stated that interest in PBIS at the Saranac Middle School was not comprehensive, and not all teachers consistently use the program. According to the school leader, she is working with the district to provide further PD in PBIS, and build staff capacity to address student needs. However, interviews with district and school staff demonstrated that more work is needed in this area to ensure all staff can respond to students' social and emotional health needs.
- The school leader stated that the district made funding available for after-school activities to address students' social and emotional developmental health needs; however, according to staff, only a small number of students regularly participate, which limits impact.

**Impact Statement:**

The district has adopted programs, such as PBIS, to address students' social and emotional developmental health needs; however, the district has not ensured that all schools implement the programs with fidelity, which limits opportunities for students to consistently receive supports that address their needs.

**Recommendation:**

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the

district should:

- Develop and implement a policy addressing the provision of supports for the social and emotional developmental health of all students district-wide.
- Collaborate with school staff and community organizations to deliver PD that addresses the alignment of students' social and emotional health to academic success; include PD that supports full implementation of the district PBIS program across all schools. Provide regular monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up tailored to individual schools that builds school-level staff capacity and program consistency.

**Statement of Practice 6.1 - Family and Community Engagement:** 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.

**Tenet Rating**

**D**

**Strengths:**

**Overall Finding:** Although the district has initiated some strategies to communicate with parents, district leaders have no comprehensive policy for engaging parents in school life.

**Evidence/Information that Lead to this Finding:**

- The school leader reported that the district was trying to engage parents in a variety of ways, but was meeting with only limited success. She said it was difficult to involve parents because of the inherent transportation issues common to rural areas and because of parents' work and social commitments. The district has developed a Facebook page to communicate with parents, and has mailed home hard copies of newsletters and other correspondence for parents who have not signed up to receive email communications. The district contacts parents through robocalls, and frequently updates its website to include pertinent district and school information. The district also supports parent forums run by the schools; however, the school leader stated that these efforts in parental outreach and engagement were not proving uniformly successful.
- Reviewers found that although the district supports events such as meetings, open houses, and band concerts for parents, there is no formalized policy for engaging parents and identifying and addressing their needs. School leaders reported informally canvassing parents, and other school leaders, to obtain their views and ideas for better involving parents and families at district and school meetings. The district does not have protocols in place that encourage the district or schools to evaluate the effectiveness of current strategies for engaging parents, nor is PD provided for school personnel on how to build and sustain strong working partnerships with parents and families. Reviewers also found that the district did not provide school personnel with PD on how to engage

parents.

**Impact Statement:**

While the district employs informal strategies for communicating with parents, the lack of a comprehensive family engagement plan results in inconsistent parental engagement in schools, which limits student achievement.

**Recommendation:**

In order for the district's strategy and practices to align with the Effective rating on the DTSDE rubric, the district should:

- Collaboratively develop, through a forum such as the District-Wide Shared Decision Making Committee, and implement a district policy addressing the district's commitment to establishing partnerships with families and community organizations.
- Provide staff with training on ways to build partnerships, increase parental participation in student and school related events, and identify supports to meet the needs of students and their families; provide follow-up PD to continually increase and improve staff capacity to meet student and family needs.
- Monitor family involvement in district and school events through feedback; adjust strategies, as needed, to encourage increases and interest in parental involvement in their child's academic achievement.