



TO: P-12 Education Committee
FROM: Ken Slentz
SUBJECT: Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness
DATE: October 2, 2012
AUTHORIZATION(S):

John B. Slentz
SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

This item provides the Board of Regents with an update on the Department's progress in development and implementation of the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness, which is a key component of New York's Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver.

Proposed Handling

This item will come before the P-12 Education Committee for discussion at its October 2012 meeting.

Background Information

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On May 29, 2012, USDOE granted SED a waiver from specific provisions of No Child Left Behind (also known as ESEA — the Elementary & Secondary School Education Act). One of the primary focuses of the Department's successful waiver submission was to create a new, common, and robust school and district review process. This process compares school and district practices to the optimal conditions of learning, as defined by the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) rubric.

Section 100.18 of Commissioner's Regulations codifies this provision of the waiver by requiring that each Focus District participate annually in a review using a diagnostic tool of quality indicators as prescribed by the Commissioner that shall focus

on the accountability group(s) for each accountability performance criterion for which the school district and its schools have been identified as Priority and/or Focus. The six tenets reflect the core concepts of an effective school previously identified by the Board of Regents¹ and were further developed into a cohesive, interdependent rubric through a collaborative effort of a group of 25 educators, which included NYSED staff members, district and school administrators, and four national experts. (See Attachment A for the “Big Ideas” regarding effective schools that are embodied within the six tenets, which are district leadership and capacity, school leadership practices and decisions, curriculum development and support, teacher practices and decisions, student social and emotional developmental health, and family and community engagement.)

The national experts on the DTSDE think tank team were:

- Dr. Ron Ferguson, an economist and Senior Research Associate at Harvard’s Weiner Center for Social Policy who has taught at Harvard University since 1983. Dr. Ferguson is the founder and director of the Tripod Project for School Improvement and is also the Faculty Co-Chair and Director of the Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University.
- Dr. Karen Mapp, a lecturer on education at Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her research and practice expertise is in the areas of educational leadership and educational partnerships among schools, families, and community members. Dr. Mapp is currently an advisor to the United States Department of Education on policies for increasing family and community engagement in schools.
- Dr. Brian Perkins, Director of the Urban Education Leadership Program at Columbia University Teachers College Department of Organization and Leadership. Previously, Dr. Perkins was formerly a member of the research faculty at the Yale University School of Medicine. Previously, he served for four years on the Board of Directors of the National School Boards Association, two terms as national chair for CUBE: Council of Urban Boards of Education, and chair of the National Black Caucus of School Board Members.
- Dr. Craig Richards, past Chair of the Department of Organization and Leadership at Teachers College, Columbia University. Professor Richards, a former school principal and founder of two alternative schools, has had a long-standing research interest in public school finance, incentive systems and data-driven school accountability strategies. He has consulted widely on leadership development both nationally and internationally and has authored numerous research articles and books in finance, accountability and incentives.

In May and June 2012, SED conducted five pilot reviews in Albany and Rochester School Districts and provided overviews of the process during regularly scheduled check-ins with districts that were implementing 1003(g) School Improvement Grants in 2011-12. During the pilot reviews, schools were engaged in the protocols of the review process and debriefing sessions were held with the staff and district

¹ In March 2012, the Board of Regents identified six focused tenets as the guiding principles of effective schools and districts. These tenets are at the core of the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness and are closely aligned to the Federal Principles for School Turnaround.

administrators. As a result of sharing the DTSDE process with districts, there have been numerous requests from districts for professional development and mentoring on the six tenets of the rubric. In particular, Rochester School District has announced that all schools will be engaging in robust training aligned to the tenets and recently arranged for a full-day professional development for the superintendent, deputy superintendents, chiefs of schools, district directors and all principals. Also, the Chicago Public School District has sought to partner with SED as the Chicago Public Schools seek to implement the DTSDE as a high-stakes evaluation for public charter schools as well as expand use of the DTSDE to other schools within the district in the near future.

SED conducted a Statewide Webinar on Friday, August 17, 2012 to provide information on the Tool and its roll out to districts and schools. A second webinar was conducted on Monday, September 24, 2012. All SED staff who will serve as lead reviewers of Integrated Intervention Teams received four days of training in the DTSDE protocol. Kickoff training for Outside Educational Experts and district staff who will serve on Integrated Intervention Teams is scheduled for mid-November and will be followed by additional monthly training throughout the school year for selected reviewers.

SED is planning to award Section 1003(a) School Improvement Grants to Title I Focus and Priority Schools to support implementation of the DTSTE. Focus Districts will also be able to use 1003(a) to support development and implementation of their required DCIP and Priority and Focus Schools' SCEPs. The Department anticipates that each Focus District will receive an allocation of approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000 for each Title I Priority and Focus School in the district.

Established new support structures and streamlined existing ones to better support low-performing schools.

Moving into 2012-13 and each year forward, the Commissioner will appoint an Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) to conduct an on-site diagnostic district review, including visits to selected Priority and/or Focus Schools, using the DTSDE. The results of these reviews will inform the development of the DCIP and SCEPs. For schools designated as Focus and Priority in the years in which an IIT does not conduct an on-site diagnostic review, the school district will be required to annually use the diagnostic tool, in the form prescribed by the Commissioner, to inform the development of the DCIP and SCEPs. An overview of the visit protocol can be found in Appendix B.

Through a Department reorganization that occurred in July, all school/district review activities have now been consolidated within the School and District Review Unit under the Office of Accountability. Using the DTSDE, this team will be responsible for site visits to each of the 70 Focus Districts in the State as well as selected Priority and Focus Schools within each district². It is believed that this reorganization will provide for a more streamlined school review process and more substantive and immediate feedback for districts to use in planning.

² In New York City, the School and District Review Team will visit at least one Focus and/or Priority School in each of the 31 community school districts that received a Focus designation.

Alignment of the DTSDE and the District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP), and the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP)

Focus Districts are required to develop a single DCIP, which addresses the district's overall plan for improving instruction within the district and the identified needs of Priority and Focus Schools. Priority and Focus Schools are required, in turn, to develop individual SCEPs that address each school's identified needs and provide a plan for improving instruction. The supports and interventions detailed in the DCIP and SCEPs must be aligned to the six tenets of the DTSDE.

Within their Consolidated Applications, Focus Districts must set aside the equivalent of 5-15% of their Title I, II and, if identified for performance of English language learners, Title III funds to be used to support implementation of approved programs and services in Priority and Focus Schools. Districts must also set aside an amount equal to 1% of their Title I-A allocation for parent engagement activities. This amount is in addition to the required 1% set aside for parent involvement activities. This set aside assures that resources are targeted to address needs identified within each of the six tenet areas of the DTSDE.

It is expected that the combination of district and school plans that have been aligned to the tenets of the diagnostic tool and that are supported by funding set aside to implement an approved menu of program and services in Priority and Focus Schools should greatly strengthen the "plan, implement, adjust" process in Focus Districts, leading to improved academic outcomes.

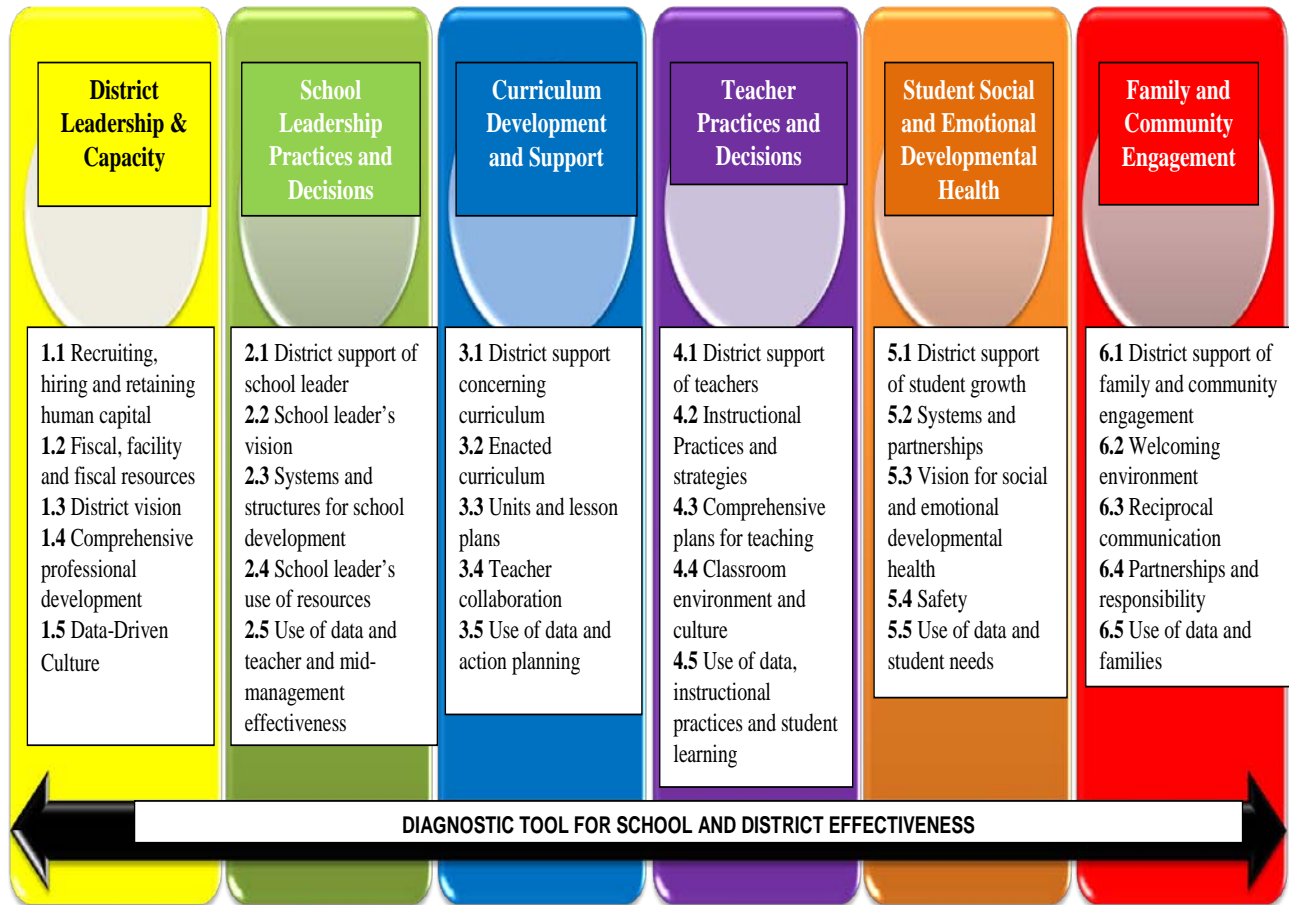
Next steps

In order to further support district school improvement efforts in the lowest performing schools through implementation of the Diagnostic Tool, in the coming months SED staff will:

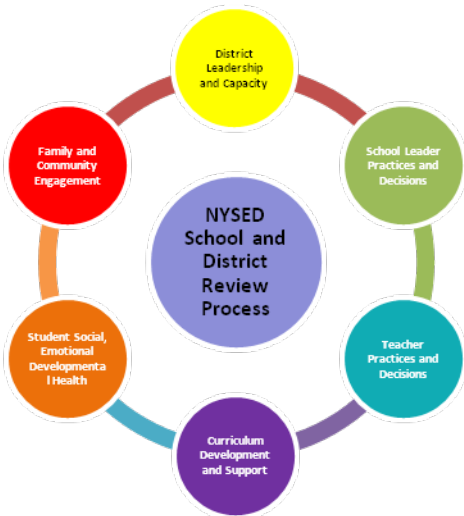
- Provide a four day professional development session to approximately 300 participants in November 2012.
- Following the November Kickoff training, provide monthly professional development sessions to all NYSED staff, district, and outside educational expert reviewers in the areas of calibration, school effectiveness and writing reports aligned to the concepts in the rubric.
- Develop a protocol to evaluate the upcoming DCIP and SCEP plans to ensure that they are closely aligned to the DTSDE six tenets.



SIX TENETS: BIG IDEAS



ATTACHMENT B



ALL ABOUT THE DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS

On May 29, 2012, the United States Education Department granted the New York State Education Department (NYSED) a waiver from specific provisions of No Child Left Behind (also known as ESEA—the Elementary & Secondary School Education Act). One of the primary focuses of NYSED’s successful waiver submission was to create a new, common, and robust school and district review process. This process compares school and district practices to the optimal conditions of learning, as defined by the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) rubric.

On-site School Review Process

The review will be carried out by an IIT composed of NYSED reviewers and/or consultant reviewers over a period of one, two, or three days. In addition, the team has a district representative and an Outside Educational Expert selected by the district and approved by NYSED. The length of the review will depend on the accountability identification status and the size of the school. The review consists of six steps. The following is a summary of the essential components of the review that take place throughout the on-site review process:

- **Step 1: Pre-Review of Documentation**
 - Prior to the school review, the team will conduct a review of several documents, including but not limited to the school’s assessment data, teacher schedules, Comprehensive Educational Plan (or any other improvement plan that may be guiding the school’s goals) and the school’s completed *School Self-Assessment* document.
- **Step 2: Surveys**
 - Approximately six weeks before the IIT visits a school, members of the school community — specifically, students, teachers and parents — will respond to a survey. Reviewers will use the results of the surveys to understand the perceptions the respondents have about the school community. The survey results may be used to corroborate evidence of school findings gathered during the review process, but will not be used to make isolated conclusions about the school.

➤ **Step 3: School Site Process**

- Principal interview and check-ins will be conducted throughout the review process.
- Focus group interviews take place with students in both a large group setting (representing all grades in the school) and a small group with no more than five students (which may represent a subgroup of students that the State has identified as performing poorly). Students in the small group meeting will bring their work folders or portfolios to the meeting;
- Teachers and Student Support Staff group interviews;
- Interviews of student family members;
- Observation of a grade/subject-level teacher meeting focused on student work where teachers discuss findings and create an action plan to address their findings; and,
- Classroom visitations (each reviewer will conduct seven to ten class visits).

After the School Review

The school review ends with a structured 60-minute debriefing session facilitated by the lead reviewer(s). The debriefing session is an opportunity for the school leadership, district or support representatives, and reviewers to meet and discuss the preliminary findings for the school. At this point in the process schools will not be informed of the ratings for individual tenets or be provided with an overall statement of practice ratings. This should be viewed as an opportunity to get a sense of the initial perceptions of the school. As demonstrated below, all formal school reports must go through a vetting stage and be approved by the Calibration Assurance Team (CAT). The specific components of this section of the review are:

➤ **Step 4: School Effectiveness Report and Calibration Assurance Process**

- Using the HEDI scoring framework, the IIT will complete the score for each tenet statement of practice that will ultimately lead to an overall rating for a tenet that is either Highly Effective, Effective, Developing or Ineffective. Following the visit, the reviewer is responsible for producing a written report. Evidence or lack of evidence to support findings will be included for each of the tenets and the school will receive an overall rating for each tenet section. There is a calibration assurance process that must take place before any school or district community is informed of pending ratings. All reviewers will leave the school with five bullet points that align to the preliminary school overall tenet ratings.

➤ **Step 5: School Verification**

- The report is forwarded to the school for verification of factual information. The verification process is not an opportunity for a school to appeal a rating, finding statement or recommendation the team has made to the school. Instead, the school leader can verify the *School Information* sheet and other factual information that appears in the report about the school.

➤ **Step 6: Final Publishing of Report**

- Once the verification process takes place at the school level, the report is returned to the CAT for a final approval before being published on the NYSED website.

On-site District Review Process

The review will be carried out by an IIT composed of NYSED reviewers over a period of one, two or three days. The length of the review will depend on the accountability identification status and the size of the district. The review consists of six steps. The following is a summary of the essential components of the review that take place throughout the on-site review process:

➤ **Step 1: Pre-Review of Documentation**

- Prior to the district review, the team will conduct a review of several documents, including but not limited to the district's assessment data, District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (or any other improvement plan that may be guiding the district's goals) and the district's completed *District Self-Assessment* document.

➤ **Step 2: District Site Process**

- Superintendent interview at the beginning of the first day to inquire about the vision for the district along with subsequent check-ins to clarify any information emerging from district events.
- District cabinet focus group interview takes place with senior management so that they can convey how the district works collaboratively to support schools, students and parents.
- Various interviews with staff in the following areas:
 - Human resources,
 - Fiscal management,
 - Student support,
 - Curriculum and instruction, and
 - Professional development.

After the District Review

The school review ends with a structured 60-minute debriefing session facilitated by the lead reviewer(s). The debriefing session is an opportunity for the school leadership, district or support representatives, and reviewers to meet and discuss the preliminary findings for the school. At this point in the process, schools will not be informed of the ratings for individual tenets or be provided with an overall statement of practice ratings. This should be viewed as an opportunity to get a sense of the initial perceptions of the school. As demonstrated below, all formal school reports must go through a vetting stage and be approved by the Calibration Assurance Team (CAT). The specific components of this section of the review are:

➤ **Step 3: Synthesis of School Findings**

- The lead reviewer, along with other reviewers who conducted the district review will synthesize the major findings of strengths and

recommendations of the schools reviewed within the district. The reviewers will also include the synthesis of the schools' staff perceptions of how the district supports efforts to address student needs across each of the tenets.

➤ **Step 4: District Effectiveness Report and Calibration Assurance Process**

- Using the HEDI scoring framework, the IIT will complete the score for each tenet statement of practice that will ultimately lead to an overall rating for a tenet that is either Highly Effective, Effective, Developing or Ineffective. Following the visit, the lead reviewer is responsible for producing a written report. Evidence or lack of evidence to support findings will be included for each of the tenets and the district will receive an overall rating for each tenet section. There is a calibration assurance process that must take place before any district community is informed of pending ratings. All reviewers will leave the district with six bullet points that align to the preliminary district overall tenet ratings.

➤ **Step 5: District Verification**

- The report is forwarded to the district for verification of factual information. The verification process is not an opportunity for a district to appeal a rating, finding statement or recommendation the team has made to the district. Instead, the district leader can verify the *District Information* sheet and other factual information that appears in the report about the district.

➤ **Step 6: Final Publishing of Report**

- Once the verification process takes place at the district level, the report is returned to the CAT for a final approval before being published on the NYSED website.