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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)

BEDS Code	421800010040
School Name	Henninger High School
School Address	600 Robinson Street, Syracuse, NY 13206
District Name	Syracuse City School District
School Leader	Brian Kavanagh
Dates of Visit	January 17-19, 2018
Date of Return Visit	TBD
School Accountability Status	☒Priority School
Type of Visit	☒SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet for Henninger High School

School Configuration (*2017-18 data*)					
Grade Configuration	9-12	**Number of Students**	1,596	**Number of Teachers**	105

Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (*2017-18*)					
# Transitional Bilingual		0	# Dual Language	0	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	

Types and Number of Special Education Classes (*2017-18*)					
# Special Classes		4	# SETSS	4	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	0

School Composition (*most recent data*)			
% Title I Population	68.1	% Attendance Rate	86.5
% Free Lunch	66.5	% Reduced Lunch	1.6
% Limited English Proficient	22.7	% Students with Disabilities	16.8

Racial/Ethnic Origin (*most recent data*)			
% American Indian or Alaska Native	1.3	% Black or African American	43.6
% Hispanic or Latino	12.8	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	10.6
% White	28	% Multi-Racial	2.8

Personnel (*most recent data*)			
Years Principal Assigned to School	0.33	# of Assistant Principals	3
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	7.6	% Teaching Out of Certification	
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience	10.5	Average Teacher Absences	1.64

Student Performance for High Schools (*2016-17*)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	81.1	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	67.1
Global History Performance at levels 3 & 4	66.2	US History Performance at Levels 3&4	77.2
4 Year Graduation Rate	66.2	6 Year Graduation Rate	63.3
Regents Diploma w/ Advanced Designation	8.2		

Overall NYSED Accountability Status			
Priority School	X	Local Assistance Plan	
Focus School (indicate subgroups identified below)		In Good Standing	
Focus School Identified Subgroups	N/A		

SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:
1. None provided.

Purpose of the visit

This school was identified as needing additional support by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). As a result of this identification, NYSED arranged for an Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) to visit the school.

The purpose of this visit is to provide the school with feedback to assist the school in its improvement efforts 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. The areas of feedback may include the subgroups identified or they may be broader and cover additional subgroups or the entire school. NYSED recognizes that there are dedicated staff members at the school committed to the success of the students. The report below provides a critical lens to help the school best focus its efforts.

Information about the visit

- The visit was led by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from NYSED. The team also included a district representative, a priority school consultant, a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SESIS) representative, and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The team visited a total of 60 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited four classrooms with the school leader during the visit.
- Team members conducted focus groups with students, staff, and parents.
- Team members examined documents provided by the school, including curriculum maps, lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- In advance of the visit, 48 staff members (46 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.
- The school leader assumed his duties at the start of the 2017-18 school year.

SUCCESSES WITHIN THE SCHOOL THAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD BUILD UPON:
1. The school runs a successful journalism club that provides students with opportunities to develop journalistic skills as they work toward college and career readiness. For example, a current member of the club was recently accepted into the journalism program at the State University of New York at Oswego. The journalism club publishes the monthly school newsletter, *The Henninger Knight Life*, which is available for students and staff at school and mailed to all parents. The Empire State Scholastic Press Association recognized the high quality of students' work with first place gold awards, as well as silver and bronze awards. The journalism club also received an honorable mention from the Empire State School Press Association.
2. Most students who met with the IIT said they can talk to their teachers or other staff if they need help or support. These students stated that they feel safe and well cared for at school. During meetings with students, the IIT found that students were polite, welcoming, and able to confidently discuss details of their school. The IIT observed during classroom visits that relationships between students and between teachers and students were typically positive and mutually respectful, with few instances in which student behavior disrupted learning. As a result, students were usually learning in calm, ordered, and supportive environments.

3. School leaders continue to use the school's in-house teacher and student mentor program, Project 315, to track and support student progress toward graduation. During discussions with school leaders, staff, and students, the IIT learned that school leaders analyze academic data and graduation credits to identity students at risk of not graduating from the school and provide them with mentoring support. School data showed that while this program has been in place over the past five years the schools' graduation rate has increased from 53 percent to 66 percent.

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:

By Monday, February 5, 2018, school leaders should:

- develop a schedule and begin to conduct frequent and regular walkthrough lesson visits;

- use walkthrough classroom visits to monitor the quality of teachers' use of questioning to check the understanding of the content by individual students and to encourage higher-order thinking; and

- provide detailed and actionable feedback to teachers within 48 hours of the observation.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- During discussions with the school leader, teachers, and members of the student support team, the IIT learned there are few systems in place to monitor the quality of schoolwide practices. For example, the team learned that school leaders have not developed a schedule of classroom walkthroughs to ensure that school leaders regularly monitor the quality of learning and instruction across the school. In addition, the school leader reported that school leaders do not use a walkthrough tool to document and provide a common focus for the monitoring of teachers' instructional practices. A few teachers reported that they had received several classroom visits from school leaders. However, most teachers stated they had not yet had any visits from senior leaders. Interviewed teachers stated that when visits do occur, leaders provide them with little instructional feedback to help them improve the quality of their teaching. As a result, the IIT found that typically school leaders do not frequently or effectively monitor instruction or provide teachers with detailed, actionable feedback to help them improve aspects of their instructional practices, such as the quality of their questioning.

- During classroom visits the IIT observed that the quality of teachers' questioning of students was usually not adequate to ensure that all students were engaged in their learning. The IIT found that most teachers did not use questioning strategies as a check of student understanding to inform whether they should re-teach or move on to the next area of content. For example, teachers' questions often only required students to reply with brief answers that did not provide teachers with information about students' grasp of the lesson content. As a result, teachers' questions did not usually result in any re-teaching, further explanation, or modification of instruction during lessons. In addition, the IIT observed that teachers often did not ask questions of individual students or ask questions that would encourage student discussion and deeper thinking.

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:

By Monday February 5, 2018, school leaders should:

- re-visit, clarify, and communicate clear protocols that structure content area professional learning community (PLC) meetings to make sure that PLC meeting time is used effectively; and

- by Monday, February 12, 2018, develop a schedule for attending PLC meetings to monitor the implementation of agreed upon meeting protocols. School leaders should provide teachers with detailed, actionable feedback from PLC meetings before the next scheduled meeting.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- The school leader provides teachers with opportunities to discuss curriculum planning and to analyze student performance data at scheduled content area professional learning community (PLC) meetings. However, the IIT found that teachers typically do not effectively use PLC meeting time to analyze student performance data, identify curriculum adaptations, or modify instruction to meet the learning needs of various student groups. For example, during a PLC meeting observed by the IIT, teachers considered the results of a recent assessment and discussed some examples of questions that students had answered incorrectly or with insufficient detail. The IIT found that the meeting had little structure and did not follow any agreed upon protocols.   The IIT observed that there was no agenda or facilitator to guide the meeting content or discussion and no evidence of any recording of discussions and actions agreed upon by teachers. As a result, the team observed that the PLC meeting did not result in clear solutions or agreed upon instructional strategies other than the re-teaching of some specific content area skills.

- In discussions with teachers and school leaders, the IIT found that school leaders currently provide little support for PLC meetings.   For example, the IIT learned that school leaders do not typically attend meetings to provide teachers with support regarding the organization and content of the meeting or regularly monitor the effectiveness of teachers' use of PLC meeting time. Interviewed teachers did not know of any PLC protocols in place to help them to structure their meetings. Some teachers told the IIT that the most recent guidance they had received regarding PLC meeting time was professional development about PLC protocols that took place about four years ago. The school leader acknowledged that school leaders do not always attend or review minutes from content area and PLC meetings to enable them to monitor the quality of the content and outcomes of these meetings.

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:

By Monday, January 29, 2018, teachers should make sure that during lessons they direct questions to individual students, including students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs), so that they are able to check the understanding of each individual student and more effectively engage and encourage all students in their learning.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- During lessons, the IIT observed that teachers' questioning often only required students to recall brief, factual information. Teachers rarely asked questions of individual students, posed higher-order questions, or encouraged students to discuss possible answers to questions in pairs or small groups. The IIT observed many instances of teachers addressing general questions to the whole class. In these instances, a few students usually called out responses, while many other students did not respond. In most cases, teachers then moved on to the next aspect of the lesson without checking that all students had fully understood the content. Therefore, most teachers were not able to monitor individual student's levels of understanding and adjust instruction if necessary. The IIT found little evidence that teachers routinely asked follow-up questions to encourage students to explain their answers, explore their learning further, and develop higher-order thinking skills. During classroom visits, the IIT observed that most questioning of students by teachers did not result in students answering and asking questions that led to high levels of student engagement or rigorous and reflective thinking.
- Students who met with the IIT reported that when given opportunities they felt comfortable answering and asking questions during class. However, many of these students stated that teachers did not usually ask challenging questions or encourage them to ask questions or discuss their answers with peers.

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:

By Monday, March 5, 2018, school leaders and members of the student support team should complete a student social and emotional support program review to identify resources, agency responsibilities, and staff responsibilities and to evaluate how effectively these support services are working to support the social and emotional needs of all students

By Monday, April 2, 2018, school leaders and members of the student support team should share the results of the review with all members of the school community so that all staff, parents, students, and outside partners are aware of the supports and services available to students and know how to access them.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- During discussions with the IIT, the school leader acknowledged that there is no schoolwide vision or plan in place to guide and coordinate social and emotional support strategies for students. During interviews with the student support staff, the IIT learned that some students benefit from supports and services provided by school staff such as the school psychologist, the social worker, and the school nurse. However, student support team members stated that there is no collaboration or coordination between support personnel to make sure that the provided social and emotional support strategies are effective in supporting and developing all students' social and emotional skills. For example, members of the student support team reported that there is no scheduled formal meeting time provided for them to discuss and coordinate their work. As a result, support staff stated that they were not always aware of the roles and responsibilities of other support staff, the students that other staff may be working with, or the specific supports that other staff members are providing for students. As a result, the IIT found there are insufficient structures in place to coordinate the work of student support staff to ensure that the social and emotional needs of all students are being met.
- Parents who met with the IIT stated they were not clear about strategies the school uses to provide support for their children's social, emotional, and personal development needs. The school leader informed the IIT that the school uses a positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) program to establish a schoolwide system of behavioral expectations and rewards. However, most of the interviewed parents were not familiar with the school's PBIS program or ways in which it was supporting the academic and social development of their children. In addition, many students who met with the IIT were not able to describe the PBIS program or any associated behavioral expectations and rewards. Interviewed parents were also not aware of other social and emotional supports and services available for their children or how they could access them.

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:

Beginning Monday, January 29, 2018, school leaders, the school climate team, student council, and the school community engagement coordinator (CEC) should identify and implement strategies, using a range of different media, to regularly acknowledge and share positive school news with teachers, students, parents, and the wider school community.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- The IIT learned from documents and discussions with the school leader that parents receive a monthly mailed newsletter produced by the journalism club that includes positive reports about the school. However, the IIT found that the newsletter offers mostly basic information such as reminders and notices. The school leader and members of the student support team questioned whether the newsletter was an effective way of communicating with parents and acknowledged that they had not yet identified a method to monitor what proportion of parents read the newsletter.

- During the focus group discussion, a parent shared that she learned most information about the school from local newspapers rather than directly from the school. This parent stated that she felt she knew more about programs and initiatives at other schools in the area than she did about the school her children attend. For example, although the IIT learned about some recent school improvements such as improved graduation rates and increases in English language arts (ELA) performance index scores, most parents who met with the IIT were not aware of any recent improvements or positive developments at the school.
- The school leader told the IIT there were some in-school strategies to celebrate and publicize student successes such as the honor roll list, end of year academic awards, and limited use of Twitter and Facebook. However, the IIT learned that publicity and communications were not typically coordinated as part of a school-community engagement plan. The school leader acknowledged that the school could do more to celebrate and publicize positive outcomes and school improvements and to make sure that parents, staff, students, and the wider community were aware of positive school news. The IIT learned that the school leader and the new community engagement coordinator (CEC) have started discussing the creation of a community engagement plan that may include strategies for publicizing the positive achievements of the students and staff at the school.

ADDITIONAL AREAS TO ADDRESS

- An examination of lesson plans showed, and observations of general education classrooms confirmed, that teachers typically do not adapt instruction to support the learning needs of students with disabilities or English language learners (ELLs). The lesson plans reviewed by the IIT rarely included the use of instructional strategies proven effective for these students or provided details of data-driven instruction (DDI) strategies to meet the needs of students with disabilities or ELLs. As a result, during lesson observations, the team observed few instances of general education teachers using instructional practices that accommodated the specific needs of ELLs and students with disabilities through scaffolds, adaptations, or language objectives. During an observed grade-level team meeting and in interviews with teachers, the IIT learned that some special education teachers participate in PLC meetings, but English as a new language (ENL) teachers are not typically included because of scheduling conflicts. As a result, ENL teachers are not able to regularly analyze and share data and discuss support strategies for these students with other teachers. In the future, school leaders, special education staff, and ENL staff will need to make sure that general education teachers are identifying and meeting the specific learning the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities and are planning and delivering instruction that is accessible to all students, whatever their level of need.
- During discussions with members of the student support team, the IIT learned that the school leader had decided that guidance counselors would retain the same cohort of students in their caseloads as students move from grade to grade to allow students and counselors the opportunity to develop and sustain relationships. However, counselors reported that school leaders were not monitoring the impact of this new initiative. These staff also stated that they were not clear about the expectations associated with their new responsibilities and told the IIT they had received little guidance and support to help them carry out their roles successfully. A member of the support staff expressed the opinion that relationships between guidance counselors and students were not always positive and that counselors were not always successful in supporting the social and emotional needs of all students. Students who met with the IIT reported that many students did not know who their

counselor was, and some students stated they were not sure if they had ever met with a guidance counselor. In the future, school leaders will need to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of guidance counselors are clear, that all students know who their guidance counselors are, and that guidance counselors are providing a service that is meeting the social and emotional needs of the students.

- In discussions with the IIT, the school leader acknowledged that he has not yet articulated a clear vision for high quality instruction in the school. The school leader told the team that, at the beginning of the school year, he shared with teachers at faculty meetings that he expected high levels of student engagement in their learning. However, the leader reported that there has been little discussion to make sure that teachers understand what high levels of student engagement look like in practice or what instructional strategies they should use to support this goal. Teachers who met with the IIT reported that the school leader had not clearly shared his instructional expectations. In the future, school leaders will need to ensure that teachers understand the schoolwide expectations for high quality instruction and receive the supports required to help them develop the instructional skills necessary to meet these expectations.