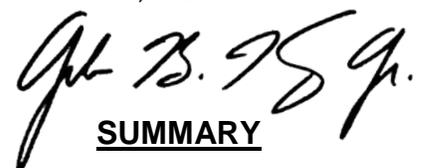




TO: P-12 Education Committee
FROM: Ken Slentz 
SUBJECT: Update on Implementation of the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness
DATE: October 11, 2013
AUTHORIZATION(S): 
SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

The purpose of this item is to provide the Board of Regents with an update on the Department's progress in implementing the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness, which is a key component of New York's approved Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Waiver and of New York's strategy for turning around low performing schools.

Reason(s) for Consideration

For information.

Proposed Handling

This item will come before the P-12 Education Committee for discussion at its October 2013 meeting.

Background Information

On May 29, 2012 the United States Department of Education (USDE) granted SED a waiver from specific provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). 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 the 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 quality indicators - the Six Tenets of School and District Effectiveness - are at the core of the DTSDE Rubric, and are closely aligned to the USDE Principles for School Turnaround (<http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility/documents/esea-flexibility-acc.doc>) The Tenets and the rubric were created through a collaborative effort of NYSED staff members, Regents Research Fellows, district and school leaders, and national experts. The six Tenets are:

- Tenet 1: District Leadership and Capacity
- Tenet 2: School Leader Practices and Decisions
- Tenet 3: Curriculum Development and Support
- Tenet 4: Teacher Practices and Decisions
- Tenet 5: Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health
- Tenet 6: Family and Community Engagement

The DTSDE process is one of the central pillars of New York State's theory of action regarding improvement of low performing schools. New York State's lowest-performing schools require targeted and specialized assistance in order to build school and district capacity to support sustainable school turnaround. If the assistance and support available to low performing schools are based upon the need; are driven by an assessment of the optimal conditions for learning as defined by research-based best practices; and are delivered in a manner that is high-quality and comprehensive then schools will have the necessary supports for effective turnaround. The DTSDE process and Rubric set the common standards and language for turnaround efforts.

Attachment A provides an overview of implementation of the DTSDE review process during the 2012-13 school year and changes that are being made to the process for the 2013-14 school year.

Next Steps

Later this school year, Department staff will arrange for representatives of Focus Districts to share with the Regents their experience in using the DTSDE.

Attachment A

DTSDE Implementation During the 2012-13 School Year

During the spring and summer of 2012, SED conducted pilot reviews in two districts (Albany and Rochester), held statewide webinars on the implementation of the DTSDE process, and reorganized the Office of Accountability to support full implementation of the DTSDE process during the 2012-13 school year. In November 2012, the Office of Accountability's newly organized School and District Review Team, the Regents Fellows for Innovation, staff from Focus Districts, representatives from the Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Centers (RSE-TASC), Regional Bilingual Education Resource Networks (RBE-RN), and Outside Educational Experts participated in a comprehensive four day orientation on the DTSDE process and rubric. The following additional trainings were conducted during the 2012-13 school year:

- December 2012 – Participants engaged in a simulated School Review, practicing interview events and discussing questioning techniques.
- January 2013 – Participants focused on Tenet 4: Teacher Practices and Decisions. Sessions were conducted to provide reviewers with practice in using the Classroom Observation tool and the Tri-State rubric.
- March 2013 – Participants were assigned to teams that conducted reviews of schools in Good Standing in New York City, focused on debriefing the School Visit, deconstructing Statements of Practice 4.4 and 4.5, and gathering low inference information. District representatives and Outside Educational Experts who participated in the March DTSDE professional development were surveyed. A review of the surveys from participants highlighted the relevance and quality of the professional development and detailed how the professional development allowed for norming among reviewers and sharing of best school review practices.
- May 2013 - Reviewers spent two days engaged in discussing topics that explore the connection between the needs of Students with Disabilities and English language learners (ELLs) and the DTSDE Review Process. Those topics included: District and School Level Leadership Systems that Support Students with Disabilities; Evidence-Based Instructional Practices for Students with Disabilities; Connecting with Families of Students with Disabilities; Understanding our English Language Learners; Teaching our ELLs; Understanding how the tenets relate to ELLs; The LEP/ELL Program Evaluation Toolkit (PET) and its connection to the DTSDE; and Writing Findings/Evidence/Impact Statements that Focus on the Needs of Students with Disabilities and English language learners.

In November 2012, the Department began conducting Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) visits to identified Focus Districts and to selected Focus and Priority Schools. The on-site visits conducted by the IIT were generally two days in length for district reviews, and two to three days in length for school reviews. IITs were led by SED staff who were assisted by Outside Educational Experts appointed by the district and

approved by the Department, and (based upon the reason for the school's identification and the availability of resources) Special Education School Improvement Specialists (SEIS) and staff from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Networks (RBE-RN). IIT reviews focused on collecting and assessing low-inference data (what is actually observed and heard, absent of added meaning, assumptions, conclusions and beliefs) to evaluate school and district practices based on the six Tenets. At the conclusion of the visit, the IIT developed debriefing statements for each of the Tenets that were shared with the district and school and came to consensus on the Rubric ratings for each Tenet. The SED lead was then responsible for collaborating with the members of the IIT to draft the final report to be sent to the district and school.

During the 2012-13 school year, the IITs conducted 132 school reviews and 39 district reviews. For schools designated as Focus or Priority that did not receive an IIT on-site review in 2012-13, the district was required to use the DTSDE process to either conduct a District-led Review or a School Review with District Oversight. The district was then required to submit its DTSDE report to SED. Across the state, 172 District-led Reviews were conducted in the Focus and Priority Schools using the DTSDE, and 59 School Reviews with District Oversight took place. In addition the New York City Department of Education used its Quality Review Process to visit an additional 291 Priority and Focus Schools.

There were similar patterns in the findings of both the IIT-led visits and the District-led DTSDE visits. Across the state, schools received higher ratings in the Statements of Practice (SOP) pertaining to how the leader uses resources, how the school develops partnerships to promote social and emotional health, and how the school creates an atmosphere that is welcoming to families. Both the IIT-led visits and the District-led visits found that schools had the most room for improvement in how instructional practices are linked to lesson plans and student goals, how teachers are using data to inform their instruction, and how schools are sharing student data with families.

In August, districts that had schools participate in IIT visits during the 2012-13 school year were provided with the ratings that the school received on each of the 20 Statements of Practice (SOP) within the Rubric. Each SOP was rated Ineffective, Developing, Effective, or Highly Effective. In addition, each school received one of these ratings for each Tenet.

DTSDE Reviewer Training for the 2013-14 school year began with a four day Institute in September attended by 300 participants. Returning reviewers explored the differences between "DTSDE 1.0 and DTSDE 2.0" while new reviewers were given an intensive introduction to the rubric. The three additional two-day Institutes scheduled for the 2013-14 school year will focus on providing a deeper understanding of how to evaluate school practices using the DTSDE rubric. First, the NYSED DTSDE and Curriculum teams will collaborate to teach reviewers how to determine if both the written and taught curriculum are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS.) Second, reviewers will learn how to collect evidence to differentiate between highly effective and effective practices for each of the Statements of Practice in the DTSDE

rubric. Finally, participants will have an opportunity to discuss and plan for the “so what, now what” aspect of school reviews. This session will enable participants to consider the action steps necessary to address the findings and recommendations identified through two years of DTSDE school reviews.

Impact of DTSDE Implementation

District Use of DTSDE as Part of Overall Improvement Strategy

Many Focus Districts have embraced the DTSDE and are using it to drive change in their districts. For example, the 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 session for the superintendent, deputy superintendents, chiefs of schools, district directors and all principals. In July 2013, the Kenmore-Tonawanda District presented to the annual New York Schools Data Analysis Technical Assistance Group (DATAG) conference on the district’s efforts to use the DTSDE to support systemic reform in the district’s two high schools and in September 2013, the Schenectady, Kingston, and Hudson City School Districts presented on their efforts at the September DTSDE Institute.

DCIP/SCEPs

Focus Districts are required to develop a single District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP) that articulates the district’s overall strategy for improving instruction within the district and addresses the identified needs of Priority and Focus schools. Priority and Focus Schools are required, in turn, to develop individual School Comprehensive Education Plans (SCEPs) that address each school’s identified needs and provide a plan for improving instruction. The supports and interventions detailed in the DCIP and the SCEPs must be aligned to the six Tenets of the DTSDE.

Within their Consolidated Applications, Focus Districts must demonstrate that they have set aside the equivalent of five to 15 percent 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 one percent of their Title I-A allocation for parent engagement activities. This amount is in addition to the required one percent set-aside for parent involvement activities. These set-asides ensure that resources are targeted to address needs identified within each of the six Tenet areas of the DTSDE.

District and school plans that have been aligned to the Tenets and 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, leading to improved academic outcomes.

Using the DTSDE Process to Assess Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) Implementation in Schools and Districts

The DTSDE Process and Rubric have been designed to assess school and district implementation of two major areas of the Regents Reform Agenda: the implementation of the CCLS, and the APPR, as required by Education Law 3012-c. There are several Statements of Practice that directly relate to each area:

- CCLS:
 - Statement of Practice 3.2: The school leader ensures and supports the quality implementation of a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.
 - Statement of Practice 3.3: Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans used include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.
 - Statement of Practice 4.3: Teachers provide coherent, and appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students.
- APPR:
 - Statement of Practice 2.4: The school leader has a fully functional system in place aligned to the district's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) to conduct targeted and frequent observations and track progress of teacher practices based on student data and feedback.

The IIT measures school and district effectiveness with these statements of practice through such means as examination of curricular materials using the Tri-State Rubric; interviews with school leaders, teachers and students; and through classroom observations.

Revisions to DTSDE Process and Implementation for 2013-2014 School Year

After a full year of implementation experience, and with feedback from school and district staff, the Department has moved forward to revise both the DTSDE process and the Rubric. The following is a summary of the changes that have been made and will be implemented during the 2013-2014 school year:

1. In June 2013, the Department released a Request for Proposals (RFP) - Implementation of the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness. Through this RFP, SED sought proposals from vendors with demonstrated knowledge, expertise, and the capacity to conduct IIT reviews. The vendor will provide persons to serve as the Outside Educational Experts on IIT reviews. Additionally, the vendor reviewers will draft the DTSDE reports, instead of SED

staff. This contract will greatly increase the capacity of SED to oversee the implementation of timely, quality IIT reviews.

2. The DTSDE Rubric has been revised to be more intuitive for reviewers and school communities. Additionally, each Statement of Practice now has an impact associated with it. The impact statement provides the school community with an understanding of the positive impact they can expect to see if a particular practice is effectively implemented in schools. The revised rubric can be found at the following website: <http://p1232.nysed.gov/accountability/diagnostic-tool-institute/documents/2013-2014DTSDErubric.pdf>.
3. An additional day has been scheduled for each visit, in order to provide the IIT with more time to craft purposeful debriefing statements and to provide additional time to work on the report. This additional day will also allow the IIT to have more time to conduct their review.
4. The classroom observation visitation tool, as well as the interview protocols and questions have been revised.
5. In September, the Department notified all schools and districts of the 2013-14 IIT visit schedule. The schedule has been prepared for the entire year to give all participants advanced notice of IIT visits and sufficient time to prepare and ask clarifying questions.
6. School Leaders will be invited to participate in a DTSDE orientation webinar and conference call prior to the IIT visit. Additionally, districts will have the option of sending School Leaders to DTSDE Institutes.
7. Professional development for SED and vendor staff and other IIT members will continue to be refined to ensure quality implementation. This summer, SED entered into an MOU with SUNY Albany to provide additional professional development to persons participating in the DTSDE process. SED will either enter into a new MOU with SUNY Albany, or will contract with vendors to provide comprehensive professional development for the 2013-14 school year. SED will supplement in-person training with online modules.
8. Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, the DTSDE process and rubric will be modified for use with Priority Schools that have not improved in the three years since identification. The School and District Review Team, in collaboration with the Office of Innovation, will conduct on-site reviews of these “out of time” schools, and will use the modified DTSDE to gather information to support high stakes decisions about the future of these schools.
9. A DTSDE Professional Learning Community (PLC) is being created for interested Focus Districts to allow them to address specific topics aligned with the DTSDE. The PLC will address different components of the school and district review process with the goal of helping districts develop strategies for how to successfully adopt organizational systems.
10. A DTSDE Certification Program will launch in October with the intent of building the capacity of staff within Focus Districts in the DTSDE review process. Selected candidates will participate in monthly professional development during the 2013-14 school year. Upon completion of the DTSDE Certification Program in May, participants will be able to implement their District’s DTSDE capacity plan, write a high-quality DTSDE report, deliver quality professional development aligned to the DTSDE, and serve as a co-lead of a DTSDE review.