



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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)



BEDS Code	441600010012
School Name	GAMS High Tech Magnet School
School Address	300 Gidney Avenue, Newburgh, NY 12550
District Name	Newburgh Enlarged City School District
School Leader	Timothy Bohlke
Dates of Review	January 17-19, 2017
School Accountability Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus School
Type of Review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District-led Review

School Information Sheet for GAMS High Tech Magnet School

School Configuration (2016-17 data)					
Grade Configuration	K-5	Total Enrollment	635	SIG Recipient	no
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2016-17)					
# Transitional Bilingual	130	# Dual Language	0	# Self-Contained English as a Second Language	0
Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2016-17)					
# Special Classes	4	# SETSS	1	# Integrated Collaborative Teaching	6
Types and Number of Special Classes (2016-17)					
# Visual Arts	29	# Music	58	# Drama	0
# Foreign Language	0	# Dance	0	# CTE	0
School Composition (2015-16)					
% Title I Population			89	% Attendance Rate	93
% Free Lunch			80	% Reduced Lunch	6
% Limited English Proficient			24	% Students with Disabilities	13
Racial/Ethnic Origin (2015-16)					
% American Indian or Alaska Native			0	% Black or African American	27
% Hispanic or Latino			60	% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2
% White			9	% Multi-Racial	2
Personnel (2016-17)					
Years Principal Assigned to School			1	# of Assistant Principals	1
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate			0	% Teaching Out of Certification	0
% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience			2	% Teacher Absences	7
Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2015-16)					
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4			14	Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	14
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)			80	Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)	NA
Overall NYSED Accountability Status					
Priority School				Local Assistance Plan	
Focus School (indicate subgroups identified below)			X	In Good Standing	
Focus School Identified Subgroups					
	Black				
	Hispanic	White			
	Students with Disabilities	Limited English Proficient			
	Economically Disadvantaged				
SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation of the Leader in Me Process 2. Create a School-wide Data Team 3. Develop protocols through SST to identify and support at-risk students 					

Purpose of the visit

Due to its accountability status as a focus school, GAMS High Tech Magnet School was required to participate in a District-led Review.

The purpose of this review is to provide the school with feedback regarding the practices across the school 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 and to help identify areas for improvement. These areas can address 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 review

- The review was co-led by two NYSED certified lead reviewers. The team also included a district representative from the Division of Exceptional Learners and a district representative from the Division of Student Services & District Accountability
- The review team visited a total of 29 classrooms during the two-day review.
- The assistant principal participated in classrooms visits throughout the review. The principal assigned to the building had recently resigned.
- Reviewers conducted focus groups with students, staff, and parents.
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including curriculum maps, lesson plans, school wide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- NYS assessment and teacher observation data was also examined.
- Survey data from 46 parents, 39 instructional staff and 178 students was reviewed.

The Review Team concluded that the school's current systems and practices most closely align with Stage 1 on the DTSDE Rubric.

SUCCESSSES WITHIN THE SCHOOL THAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD BUILD UPON:

The school has recently adopted and initiated the implementation of Leader in Me.

The school has recently hired an elementary school counselor to support the academic and social needs of the students.

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 February 13, 2017, the school leader should communicate the procedures by which individual teacher and grade level instructional feedback will be shared. The expectations should reflect, yet not be limited to the following:

- Lesson plan collection and provision of feedback relating to the writing of student friendly language to articulate the learning target, groupings of students based on data, and differentiation of tasks based on student needs.
- A school leadership team-developed learning walk process that will identify a weekly instructional focus that school leaders will conduct in all classrooms in order to provide individual and grade level feedback. Weekly instructional focus could include higher order questioning, communication of learning objectives, or targeted small group instruction for ELA and math.
- Peer reviews to share effective practices.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- Although a new school leadership team was assigned to the school in the summer of 2016, there was no intentional plan to outline priorities for the 2016-2017 academic year. Faculty members expressed confusion regarding the instructional focus for the school. However, one school-wide priority known by all is “Leader in Me”.
- School leaders expressed a desire to focus on faculty standards such as attendance and tardiness, while at the same time focusing on creating a more positive school climate. When asked what data the school leaders used to determine the school-wide focus, it was shared that referral data was presented at the summer leadership institute and they felt that discipline needed to be addressed. No further analysis took place. The previous principal decided to make discipline the main focus. Enforcement of the Code of Conduct was the main strategy to address discipline. When asked about provisions for classroom management supports, none had taken place.
- When asked what the instructional expectations were for the school and whether they were communicated to staff, it was shared that literacy was a priority and the staff received literacy framework training on the first day of school. It was shared that once the district provided the initial training, no follow up communication from the school leadership had been shared to reinforce literacy instructional expectations.
- School leaders did not request lesson plans for review until December and as of January 17, 2017 no feedback had been provided to the teachers.

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:

No later than the week of February 13, 2017, the school leader, the building leadership team and teacher volunteers should collaborate with representatives from Central Office Curriculum and Instruction to create and administer a survey to assess the implementation of the written curriculum. During the month of March, survey results should be analyzed and a curriculum plan developed with direct consultation with representatives from Curriculum and Instruction. No later than May 1, 2017, school leaders, the building leadership team and teacher representatives should collaborate with the Office of Curriculum and Instruction to address the technical assistance needs, professional development needs, and material/resource needs determined through the survey.

By February 13, 2017 the school leader should work with grade level teams to implement a CCLS aligned and research based strategy for the teaching of spelling and vocabulary development across all grade levels, inclusive of special education, bilingual and ESL.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- In conversations with teachers, no consistent answer was provided when asked what curriculum was being used to design instruction or what curriculum materials were being utilized. During conversations at the grade level and vertical team meeting, participants expressed confusion and a lack of clarity with what was expected.
- In primary grade classrooms visited, 20% demonstrated use of the district’s approved and provided curriculum materials, Core Knowledge Language Arts.
- Spelling and vocabulary instruction was predominantly taught in isolation of text based resources. The instructional materials and practices in a majority of classroom were not aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and in some cases pre-date the Common Core. Spelling and vocabulary lessons focused on the same list and assignment for the entire class, resulting in a lack of differentiation based on unique student needs.
- During the document review, no evidence was provided regarding unit plans documented on the district curriculum mapping platform, as recommended after the previous DTSDE review. Other than daily lesson plans, no long range curriculum planning or mapping was shared with reviewers.

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:

Beginning the week of February 20, 2017, the school leaders will present the data based inquiry model for the school (consider Bambrick model) during Professional Study Group. The model will include protocols for the analysis and required actions to positively impact increased student learning. Data sources currently available should be addressed immediately:

- NYS ELA/Math results disaggregated by question/standard for the building, grade level and classroom.

- NYS ELA/Math results analyzed and compared to similar schools, grade level and classroom across the district and county.
- iRead/iReady diagnostic and interim.
- Rigby/Teacher College Running Record.

At a minimum the analysis should generate school-wide actions that include:

- The development of initial grouping of students that then become fluid and reflective of the most current progress monitoring for every classroom in the school.
- Areas of reteaching or intensive support to address learning gaps identified through the data for every classroom in the school.
- AIS targeted groupings and interventions.
- Identification of schools or classrooms in the district or county where effective practices may exist.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- In conversations with the building leadership, when asked to share the analysis of the NYS Assessments from the summer, school leadership was unable to share the standards that were achieved and those that were not. It was stated that such data was shared at a very surface level with teachers. Teachers could only share the percent of students by level, they could not discuss the types of questions to focus on or the standards to target.
- During the document review, daily lesson plans reviewed failed to meet the school district’s superintendent’s basic expectations, as stated in a 2014 memo regarding lesson planning. No formalized expectations had been set forth by the building leadership detailing expectations for lesson planning. Plans reviewed evidenced no differentiation of tasks, no plans for small group instruction and no plans for center activities. Although iReady data was available, there was no systematized protocol or documentation of how data was used to inform or adapt instruction to meet student needs or to create fluid groupings of students.
- During classroom visits and student focus groups, a majority of students could not articulate the purpose or objective of the instruction or the task at hand.

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:

Beginning immediately, the school leader should expand the representation of school stakeholders to create and implement a three-year plan for student social and emotional developmental health that will define the following:

- The various internal resources and external resources available to support students and families.
- The vision, mission, core values and beliefs tied to full implementation of Leader in Me.
- A monitoring plan, aligned to the implementation plan for Leader in Me that will assess impact on systems and changes in student and adult behavior.
- A graphic that describes the individual and coordination of systems of support in the school, such as: Response to Intervention, Student Support Team, Family and Community Engagement Plan, and Tenet 5 action plan from the School Comprehensive Education Plan.

The design team will present the plan to the entire faculty at the March 2017 faculty meeting.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- Through discussions with building leadership and student support staff, it was evident that collective decision making is lacking and the responsibilities of students' social and emotional health development are not evenly distributed. The school guidance counselor had just initiated activities and assemblies for students in order to support the Leader in Me program, which is in its first few months of implementation. In addition to the Leader in Me program, an attendance protocol to address students who have a high rate of absenteeism was also recently initiated by the school guidance counselor.
- Though the Leader in Me program was to be rolled out at the beginning of the school year, document review, focus groups and classroom visits revealed inconsistencies with the program's implementation. An initial training for select staff was taking place the same day as the school review. No formalized schedule or plan for the program's building wide implementation was provided. Workbook materials, which were provided earlier in the school year, were beginning to be used in some classrooms, not at all in others. Few students spoken with could clearly articulate any of the seven habits, a main component of the Leader in Me. One student stated, "My teacher says we don't have time for that, we have too much other work to do." Parents spoken with had no knowledge of the program.
- While a structured Response to Intervention protocol has been established and is functioning, there was little evidence of other data being used to respond to students' social and emotional developmental health. Though the school had recently begun an attendance protocol to address chronic absenteeism, it was too early to analyze the effects of the initiative.

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 immediately, building leadership will develop school-wide communication systems that address regular communications to families while at the same time affording opportunities for family input regarding home/school concerns, initiatives the school is involved with, how families can support the academic and social-emotional developmental growth of their children, and provide a manner in which communication between home and school can be reciprocal and include strategies for increasing family involvement in school activities.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- Parents stated that there is no consistent formal communication method used by the building leadership. Some parents reported receiving periodic newsletters from teachers while others reported receiving none. Messages about parent involvement opportunities were heard during end-of-day announcements, though nothing formal was sent home.
- Teachers stated that there is no school-wide system or protocol defining expectations for teachers in regards to communicating regularly with students' families. There is also no formalized system set up which provides parents and families the opportunity to provide input or make inquiries about their child's academic and social-emotional development.
- Though the school has a Facebook page and Twitter account, postings are infrequent. It was stated that both platforms are voluntarily run by school staff. The school has a school specific website; eleven posts have been made since the beginning of the school year, with six of the eleven posts occurring in the first two months of school. Additionally, it was reported by staff that, although some teachers use

email as a tool to communicate with parents and families, there is no school-wide system or practice to gather and utilize emails of parents, providing opportunities for reciprocal communication.

ADDITIONAL AREAS TO ADDRESS

- Develop a shared understanding amongst all teaching staff and school administrators with regards to expectations for course, unit and daily lesson design for all content areas at each grade level.
- Adopt and embrace a school wide vision for student learning that defines core values and beliefs.
- Define, implement, support and monitor AIS.
- Formalize a process for data analysis expectations for grade level teams and individual teachers.