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

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)

BEDS Code	441600010005
School Name	Gardnertown Fundamental Magnet School
School Address	6 Plattekill Turnpike, Newburgh, NY 12550
District Name	Newburgh Enlarged City School District
School Leader	Lillian Torres
Dates of Review	January 10-11, 2017
Date of Return Visit	April 6, 2017
School Accountability Status	☐ Priority School ☒ Focus School
Type of Review	☒ SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

School Information Sheet for Gardnertown Fundamental Magnet School

School Configuration (*2015-16 data*)					
Grade Configuration	K-5	**Total Enrollment**	603	**SIG Recipient**	?

Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (*2016-17*)					
# Transitional Bilingual	4	**# Dual Language**	0	**# Self-Contained English as a Second Language**	0

Types and Number of Special Education Classes (*2016-17*)					
# Special Classes	4	**# SETSS**	NA	**# Integrated Collaborative Teaching**	5

Types and Number of Special Classes (*2015-2016*)					
# Visual Arts	1	**# Music**	1	**# Drama**	NA
# Foreign Language	NA	**# Dance**	NA	**# CTE**	NA

School Composition (*2015-2016*)			
% Title I Population	69%	**% Attendance Rate**	93%
% Free Lunch	63%	**% Reduced Lunch**	6%
% Limited English Proficient	22%	**% Students with Disabilities**	21%

Racial/Ethnic Origin (*2015-2016*)			
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	**% Black or African American**	16%
% Hispanic or Latino	52%	**% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander**	1%
% White	25%	**% Multi-Racial**	7%

Personnel (*2016-2017*)			
Years Principal Assigned to School	4	**# 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	**Average Teacher Absences**	13.7

Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (*2015-16*)			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	31%	**Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4**	30%
Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (4th Grade)	95%	**Science Performance at levels 3 & 4 (8th Grade)**	NA

Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2015-2016)			
Priority School		**Local Assistance Plan**	X
Focus School (indicate subgroups identified below)	X	**In Good Standing**	
Focus School Identified Subgroups	Students with Disabilities		

SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:

1. The school will focus on all subgroups that did not meet AYP in ELA and Math during the 2015-16 school year. iReady data will be used to analyze, plan and execute targeted and explicit instruction for all students. Level 1 students will have the opportunity to participate in an Extended Day (After School) program from January-March 2017.

Purpose of the visit

This school was visited by the State Education Department Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) because of its low performance.

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 an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from the New York State Education Department. The team also included a district representative, a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SESIS) representative, and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The review team visited a total of 43 classrooms during the two-day review.
- The OEE visited six classrooms with the Principal during the review.
- Reviewers conducted focus groups with students, staff, and parents.
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including curriculum maps, lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- In advance of the review, the school provided results of a student survey that 190 students (95 percent) completed.
- In advance of the review, the school provided results of a staff survey that 24 staff members (46 percent) completed.
- In advance of the review, the school provided results of a parent survey that 37 parents (6 percent) completed.
- In advance of the review, 22 staff members (43 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-review survey conducted by NYSED.

The Review Team concluded that the school's current systems and practices are a generally aligned with Stage Two or Stage One on the DTSDE Rubric, with the majority of Statements of Practice aligning with Stage Two.

SUCCESSES WITHIN THE SCHOOL THAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD BUILD UPON:
1. To support a positive learning environment, school leaders are establishing behavioral expectations and are supporting staff in implementing these expectations. The review team observed that relationships between students and between teachers and students were typically positive and that students were well behaved and considerate of each other.

2. Recognizing the need to support students' social and emotional developmental health, the school leader is in the process of implementing The Leader in Me philosophy and program, which is based on *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey.   The school leader reported that there have been no out-of-school suspensions thus far during the 2016-17 school year and   few bus behavior referrals. During classroom visits, the IIT observed that students were typically attentive and cooperative.

3. The school leader worked with the school-based support team to develop a referral system so that staff are able to raise concerns about individual students' academic achievement and well-being.During interviews and through examination of documents, reviewers found that the referral system is well established and staff make referrals to the school-based support team to identify appropriate support strategies for individual students, which has improved behavior of individual 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 January 26, 2017, the school leader should identify a team that will work to develop a plan that by February 10, 2017 will result in:

- clear, agreed upon instructional expectations for high quality teaching in the school;
- shared expectations among all stakeholders so that there is an established whole-school vision for instruction and learning for all students and specifically for students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs);
- monitoring implementation of instructional expectations and providing individual teachers with specific, actionable feedback to help them improve their practice; and
- collected and analyzed instructional monitoring data to ensure there is a clear view of the quality of instruction across the school and to identify areas for improvement.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- In interviews with the school leader and with teachers, the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) found that the school leader has not established a clear, whole-school vision for the quality of instruction that staff, parents, and students share and understand. The school leader acknowledged that she needs to reinforce her instructional expectations and that her discussions with teachers about her expectations has not always addressed key elements of high quality instruction such as student-friendly learning objectives, higher-order questioning, or formative assessment. In interviews, teachers were not able to articulate the school leader's vision or expectations for high quality instruction. The IIT found there is no whole-school view of what the quality of instruction looks like.   During classroom visits, the review team observed that instruction typically did not include effective use of learning objectives, higher-order questioning, varied learning tasks for different student needs, formative assessment strategies, or timely feedback for students. In addition, the team found little evidence in observed lessons to show that teachers recognized or accommodated the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs by providing, for example, learning scaffolds for individual students or word charts in different languages.

- The school leader reported that her monitoring of instruction is typically based on informal observations and that the feedback she provides to teachers after walk-throughs is mostly verbal. Teachers stated during interviews that they receive little specific, actionable feedback from informal classroom walk-throughs. Documents examined by the review team showed that feedback to teachers about the quality of their teaching typically included general comments and did not provide specific guidance to help them improve their instructional practice. Teachers also reported that school leaders do not always check to make sure that individual teachers had implemented the feedback that was provided to them. The limited monitoring of instruction and lack of specific, actionable feedback to teachers minimize efforts to improve teachers' instructional practice that promote increased student achievement.

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:

- At the next faculty meeting on February 7, 2017, the school leader should establish and share clear expectations that all teachers' planning and delivery of instruction include accommodations to meet the learning needs of all students and particularly students with disabilities and ELLs. Beginning February 21, 2017, school leaders should use existing monitoring procedures to monitor implementation of these expectations and should provide detailed, written actionable feedback to individual teachers within 48 hours.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- During the on-site review, the IIT observed that teachers used published curricular plans that aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS); however, these plans did not typically take account of varied student learning needs. Teachers usually followed published plans without including adaptations or accommodations to meet the needs of all students, especially students with disabilities and ELLs. The review team observed many classes where learning tasks did not provide different groups of students with a variety of ways to engage in their learning.
- During classroom visitations, reviewers found that all students experienced the same planned learning content at the same level, using the same materials because there was no adaptation of plans to make sure that there was a variety of learning activities in lessons. Although teachers planned for and used a learning centers strategy to structure their lessons, they did not consistently plan centers with clear learning objectives or activities to meet the needs of the various groups of learners. As a result, although students typically rotated around the centers, all students completed the same tasks. Reviewers found that planned learning tasks often lacked rigor and relevance to match the needs of different learners and that planned instruction did not typically support the needs of all groups including higher performing students, ELLs, and students with disabilities. For example, during classroom visits the IIT observed students with disabilities and ELLs completing the same tasks as other students without modifications in keeping with their needs.
- While the school leader noted that she verbally expressed an expectation for teachers to adapt curricular plans, during interviews, teachers were not able to describe the school leaders' expectations for

curricular planning and reported that they do not usually receive actionable feedback from school leaders about the quality of their plans.

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 21, 2017, all teachers should make sure that lessons include student-friendly learning objectives that will support English and non-English speaking students and students with disabilities to understand the focus, purpose, and relevance of their learning in lessons. Teachers should make sure they share and discuss learning objectives with students, check students' understanding of the learning objectives, and reference objectives during lessons.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- The IIT observed that teachers usually followed curricular plans that were from commercial sources such as Planbook.com. These plans include generic learning objectives that teachers typically used as written, without planning adaptations that would make the objectives understandable for different groups of learners.Learning objectives that the IIT observed during classroom visits were not typically written in student-friendly language, shared and discussed with students, or effective, particularly for ELLs and students with disabilities, in helping students understand the focus of their learning and why it is important and useful.   Reviewers observed few examples where teachers checked all students' understanding of the learning objectives or referred to objectives during the lesson. For example, the IIT observed ELLs copying learning objectives from the whiteboard that according to students' discussions with reviewers, included words students did not know and were not able to read or words they could read but did not understand.
- In observed classrooms, students were often able to describe what they were doing, but they were not able to explain what they were learning or why it was important and useful.   Reviewers found that typically teachers did not ensure that all students could access their learning at appropriate levels and that teachers' use of learning objectives did not support the needs of all students and help them to raise their achievement levels.

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 February 14, 2017, the school-based support team should work to:
- identify suitable community organizations and agencies that may offer support for students' social and emotional development needs; and

- plan how to contact these organizations and agencies with a view to establishing partnerships that will supplement and enhance the school's own work to support students' social and emotional development.

Beginning February 21, 2017, the school-based support team should monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of partnerships and organizations in supporting student social and emotional needs and share outcomes from monitoring and evaluation with relevant stakeholders.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- Although the school has adopted The Leader in Me philosophy and program to provide support for students' social and emotional developmental health needs and to develop their personal skills, school leaders have established few formal partnerships with community organizations to provide additional support for students' social-emotional health. In addition, reviewers found in interviews with the school leader that she has not established a formal plan to coordinate the work of the existing partnerships that the school has.   There is little in place to structure, guide, and monitor these additional supports for student social and emotional development to ensure they enhance and complement the existing Leader in Me program.
- The school-based support team reported that the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) offers an early morning program at the school, and Northwestern Human Services is the conduit for family social services referrals. However, although individual members of the support team noted some other outside agencies, not all members were aware of the same agencies. The school leader reported she was not aware of community agencies and organizations that work with the school, and teachers noted that they were not sure what, if any, community partnerships and organizations work to support and enhance student social- emotional development.

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:

By February 21, 2017, the school leadership team should:
- review and revise the existing district parental engagement plan to make sure that it meets the needs of the school;
- ensure that the plan identifies specific actionable strategies designed to improve the engagement of the parents and families of students with disabilities; and
- monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of planned parental engagement strategies.

Rationale that led to the recommendation:

- The school leader reported that she works with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and the teachers to plan family events and   that increasing parental engagement is a priority identified in the 2016-17 School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP). However, although the school leader reported that the school had adopted the district parental engagement policy, the IIT found little evidence in interviews and documents of a detailed school-specific plan to drive and structure parental engagement strategies.

The IIT learned in discussions with the school leader and with parents that the PTO drives most parental engagement efforts.

- The school uses a range of strategies to communicate with parents and families, including emails, telephone calls, and newsletters. However, parents told the reviewers that they would like additional opportunities to learn about their child's progress through such means as more frequent parent conferences. Parents stated that they are not aware of any learning goals for their children and that they receive little help from the school to enable them to support their children at home.

- The school leader reported that recent events such as the   evening event for families of ELLs in November 2016 had resulted in those parents and families who attended becoming more involved with the school by attending more events and being in the school more frequently. However, the school leader expressed the perspective that engaging parents and families of students with disabilities remained a significant challenge. The school leader reported that although she monitors attendance at parent events, she does not formally monitor the effectiveness and impact of parental engagement strategies. For example, she told the review team that she knew teachers made expected telephone calls to parents, because she heard teachers making calls in the conference room.

ADDITIONAL AREAS TO ADDRESS

- The review team found in discussions and through an observed grade-level meeting, that teachers are in the early stages of using iReady student assessment data to inform planning and instruction. Teachers' curriculum plans did not typically include data-driven adaptations, and learning tasks in classrooms did not usually match student learning needs. In the future, the school leader will need to work with and support teachers so that they are better able to use student assessment data to plan instruction that meets the learning needs of all groups of students, particularly students with disabilities and ELLs.

- Reviewers noted that student workbooks typically lacked evidence of review by teachers and did not include specific, actionable feedback for students. The IIT found that any feedback in student workbooks and on completed tasks was often a cross or a check, and comments were of a general nature such as "Good." In the future, the school leader will need to work with teachers to make sure they review students' work and provide students with feedback that will help them to understand their learning levels and how to improve their achievement levels.

- Students reported that apart from using the iReady assessment program, they have few opportunities to use computers in classrooms. The IIT observed that students did not use the integrated collaborative teaching (ICT) laboratory during the on-site review. In addition, staff reported that there is no formal schedule for students to use the computer laboratory and that teachers mainly use the laboratory to improve their own practice. In the future, the school leaders will need to continue work to improve teachers' skills and confidence in using computers in their instruction so that students have more opportunities to learn how to use technology to enhance their learning.

RETURN VISIT
Gardnertown Magnet School

An Outside Education Expert (OEE) returned to the school on April 6, 2017, twelve weeks after the review. The OEE reviewed the school's progress toward the recommendations and provided further guidance regarding what the school should do next.

PROGRESS TOWARD RECOMMENDATIONS
Tenet 2 Update: The school leader explained to the OEE that she convened the school leadership team, which includes representatives from every grade as well as parents, to identify quality instruction indicators. She shared the documentation that went to all teachers and staff outlining those indicators, such as student-friendly learning objectives and differentiation of instruction, including small group work. The school leaders are monitoring the implementation of these indicators during their walk- throughs, and the school leader reports that all teachers are now posting "I can" statements in class and referring to them during the lesson. **Tenet 2 Next Steps:** The school leader reported that she is taking advantage of opportunities to provide verbal feedback and keeps her own notes on what she has observed in classrooms. The school leader and OEE discussed the plan to provide written feedback to teachers as the next step going forward.
Tenet 3 Update: The school leader told the OEE that during faculty meetings and informal conversations with teachers, she has been reiterating her expectations that teachers take into account accommodations for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities as they plan their instruction. The school leader reported that the school leaders have been observing planned lessons as they visit classrooms during their walk- throughs. **Tenet 3 Next Steps:** The school leader shared that many teachers are using learning target charts to help students understand why they are learning what they are learning. The school leaders' next steps are to ensure that all teachers are using some form of learning target chart to show their intentionality in planning lessons.
Tenet 4 Update: The school leader shared with the OEE that teachers are using "I can" statements for each of their lessons and explaining to their students the reasons behind the lessons and how they connect to other learning experiences. She has seen many examples of teachers referring to the learning targets throughout the lessons and as they conclude the lessons. The school leader shared that students can more clearly explain their learning and are monitoring the teacher in some cases, by referring to the learning targets and questioning the connections to the lessons. **Tenet 4 Next Steps:**

The school leader will continue to expect teachers to discuss learning objectives with the students and to pay special attention to ensuring that special efforts are made to support ELLs in understanding the learning.

Tenet 5 Update:

The school leader shared with the OEE a list of community organizations that had already been contacted by the school-based support team. The annotated list included notes on requests for meetings, arrangements for speakers to meet with staff, and plans for discussions on partnering with the organizations to help support students and families in the school community. The team is meeting to determine ways to best monitor the effectiveness of the partnerships and services offered.

Tenet 5 Next Steps:

The school leader explained that the first idea the student-based support team has agreed on is to develop a parent survey to determine needs and if parents have engaged the services of any of the agencies, to determine their level of satisfaction and support.

Tenet 6 Update:

The school leader explained that the leadership team is in the process of revisiting the existing district parental engagement plan and identifying areas that can be revised and made more relevant to the parents in the school.

Tenet 6 Next Steps:

The leadership team will continue to review the plan and will investigate the parent component of the Leader in Me program that is currently being successfully implemented with students in the school to determine how appropriate it would be to offer to the parents.