

Equity Walk Report:

School

Bethlehem Central School District

Delmar, New York

October 2019

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Introduction

Overview of the School District

The Bethlehem Central School District (BCSD) is located in the Capital Region of New York State and was formed in 1930. Currently, the district serves 4500 students who reside in the Town of Bethlehem and part of the Town of New Scotland in Albany County. The average class size is between 22-24 students as BCSD seeks to provide “a safe and respectful learning environment that promotes academic rigor, embraces technology, and responds to students’ individual abilities”.

BCSD is comprised of seven (7) in the following configuration:

- Eagle, Elsmere, Glenmont, Hamagrael, Slingerlands Elementary Schools
- Bethlehem Central Middle School
- Bethlehem Central Middle School

The district is led by School Superintendent, Jody Monroe and Assistant Superintendent, David Hurst. The district’s administrative and instructional staff members are comprised of professionals who are “well respected for their competency and contributions to education.” District administrators also credit members of their educational support teams for the smooth implementations of their operational goals and praise them for their commitment serving.

The mission of the Bethlehem Central School District is to *educate and prepare all students to reach their potential, discover their purpose, and be engaged members of the community*. Stakeholders believe this goal can be accomplished by focusing on the following tenants:

- Academics: Instructional and assessment practices that are aligned to a strong and relevant curriculum.
- Character: Positive character traits are essential to becoming contributing members of society.
- Community: Strengthening family, school and community partnerships through transparent communication.
- Wellness: Enhancing social-emotional wellness and balance for students and staff by supporting active, healthy lifestyles and promoting positive behavior.

According to the information gathered from district officials and the New York Education Department website, the districts demographics and test scores are as follows:

Total Enrollment: **4515 Students**

Enrollment by Gender

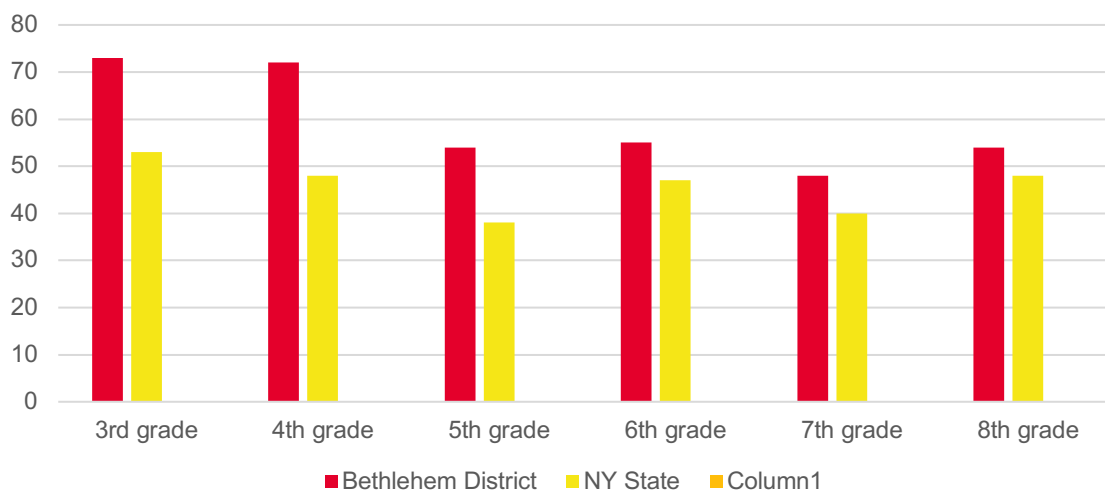
49.5 % Male

50.5 % Female

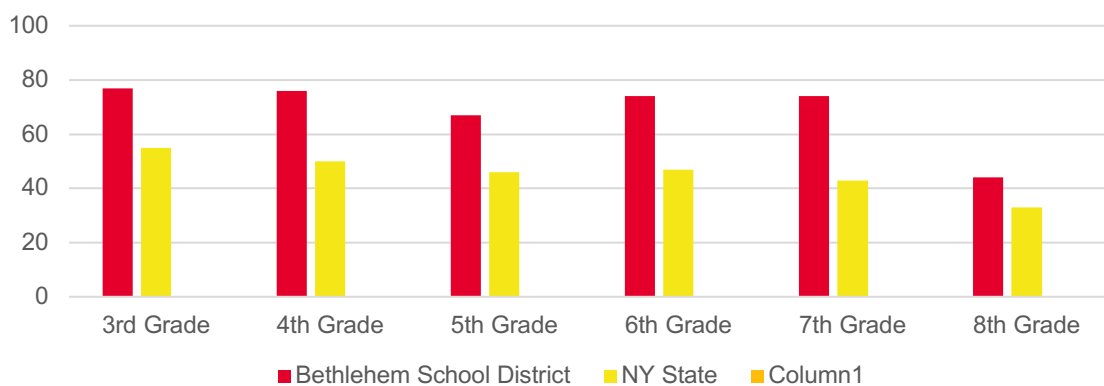
Demographics

< 1 % American Indian or Alaskan Native
2% Black/African American
3 % Hispanic/Latino
7 % Asian/Native/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
84% White
2 % Multiracial
2 % English Language Learners
13 % Students with Disabilities
14 % Economically Disadvantaged

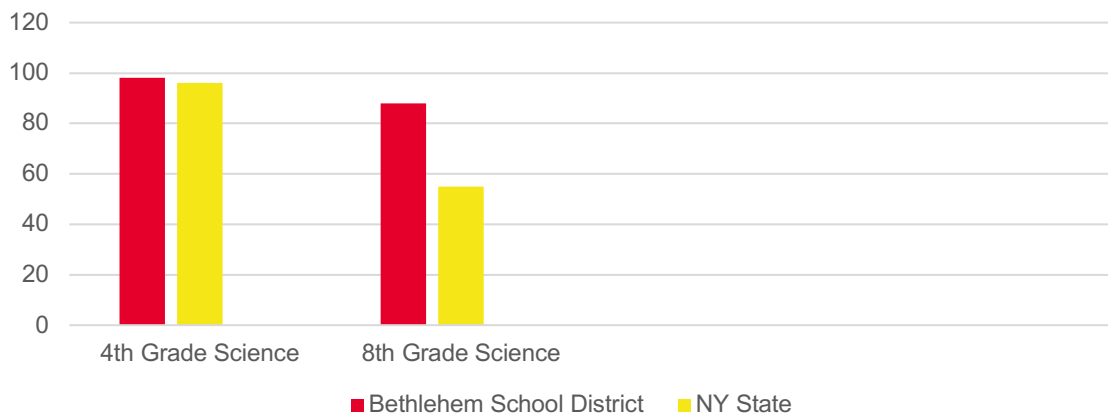
Bethlehem Central School District
ELA Proficient Test Scores 2018-2019



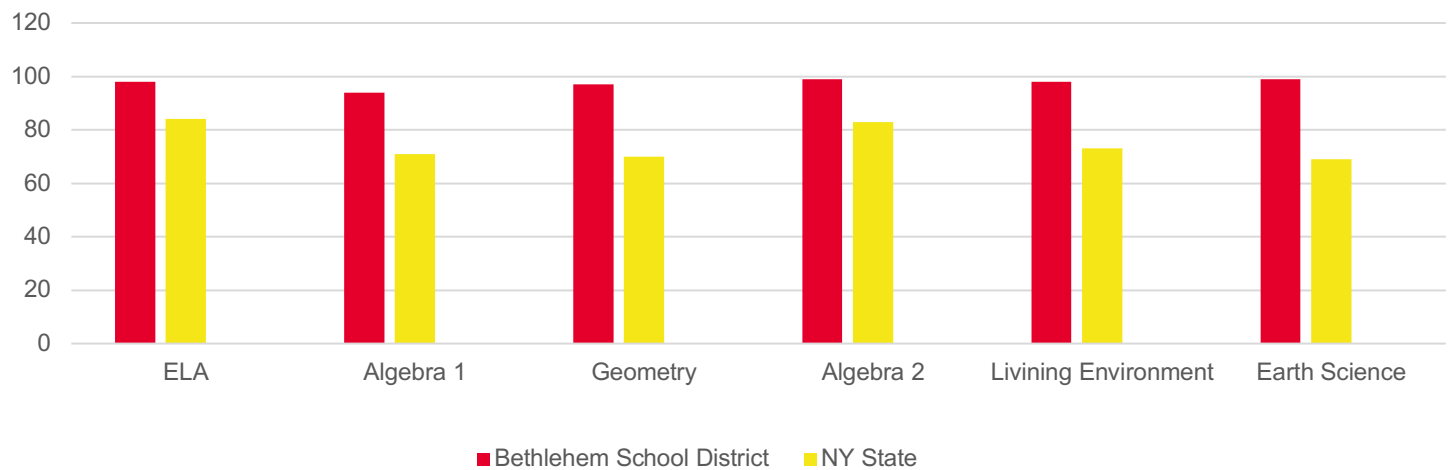
Bethlehem Central School District
Mathematic Proficient Test Scores 2018-2019



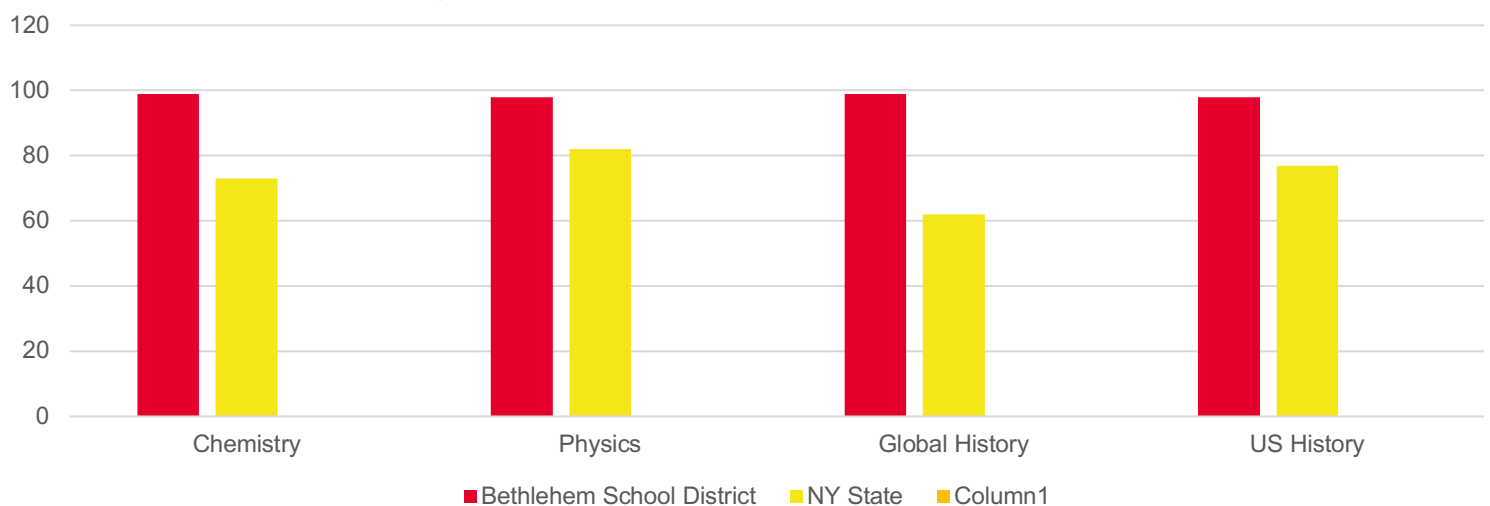
Bethlehem Central School District
Science Proficient Test Scores 2018-2019



Bethlehem Central School District Proficient Regents Test Scores 2018-2019



Bethlehem Central School District Proficient Regents Test Scores 2018-2019



Context for Walk

In order to collect baseline data for the district's work with *Cultural Proficiency*, an *Equity Walk* was conducted from October 21st through October 28th, 2019. This baseline data will assist the members of the Bethlehem Central School District and Generation Ready in determining essential elements needed to support the school's and school district as this institution moves forward to becoming a *Culturally Proficient* instructional organization.

The consultant conducted half and whole day school visits beginning with a meeting with the building Principals and taking a tour of the schools. The consultants observed a total of 129 classes in grades K- 12 at intervals of 10-20 minutes. The visits concluded with a debriefing conversation with the building Principals and members of the administrative teams to discuss the day, ask and clarify questions as well as gather additional general information.

In addition, focus groups were conducted at both the middle and high schools in order to allow students the opportunity to share their perspectives.

Information Sources

This report was written based on accountability and demographic data provided by the school district and/or downloaded from the New York State Education website in conjunction with qualitative data gathered prior to and during the site visits.

Information sources include:

1. Equity Walk Data Collection Tool
2. Conversations with Principal/Administrative Team
Members/Students/Teachers/Staff Members
3. School Documentation:
 - a. Administrators' biographies
 - b. School mission/vision statement
 - c. School master schedule/floor plans
 - d. Students performance data

- e. Student attendance rates
- f. School demographic data

The support of participants in providing workspaces creating schedules, providing requested documentation, participating in the *Equity Walk* and being available to have pre/post conversations was greatly appreciated.

Equity Walk Process

An *Equity Walk* is conducted during a whole day school visit using The **Equity Walk Data Collection Tool**. This tool was created based on Generation Ready's *Culturally Responsive Classroom Observation Teaching Continuum* and is used during the assessment of each classroom visited in order to provide a snapshot of:

- Lessons
- Questioning
- Academic Language
- Use of Technology
- Students Engagement and Discourse
- Differentiation, Assessment & Feedback
- Cultural Sensitivity and Competence
- School/Classroom Environment
- Classroom Climate

With the aid of this tool, the observer(s) collects data in order to estimates the nature of the following:

1. A Culture and Climate that Promotes Learning

The consultant(s) assesses the

- school environment
- classroom climate
- level of inclusion of diverse members of the community through the images, messages, attitudes presented.

- presence and level of rigorous, culturally responsive teaching practices as well teachers' levels of efforts towards:
 - establishing/increasing their knowledge of students' ethnic and cultural background
 - encouraging student effort and discourse
 - displaying cultural sensitivity to students' background
 - creating opportunities to promote/enhance student learning.

2. The Use of a Rigorous (Standards-Aligned) Curriculum and Effective/Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices in Every Classroom

The consultant collects evidence of

- engaging/coherent curricula in all subjects
- the accessibility of said curricula for all learners through multiple entry points
- lesson designs, projects and learning materials that are culturally responsive to and inclusive of the diversity of the students and school community.
- teachers' incorporation of their knowledge regarding students' ethnic and cultural background and practices into lesson content.
- teachers' creation of opportunities for students' interest, backgrounds ethnic/cultural) prior knowledge and/or perspectives to be incorporated into lessons.

3. The School's Organizational Structure and Its Efforts Promote/Encourage Learning.

The consultant seeks to ascertain:

- The schools' level of promotion of professional collaborations in order to improve student learning outcomes.
- the use of various and differentiated formative/summative assessments (school wide) that allows student to demonstrate levels of knowledge.

4. Cultural Sensitivity and Competence

The consultant estimates

- The school's awareness and acknowledge of awareness of cultural differences and similarities;
- The behaviors, attitudes, and policies that enables/effect interactions.

- The degree to which students' cultural, social, ethnic perspectives are authentically included in aspects of the academic content.

A numeral value of 1-4 is awarded in each of above-named categories and the collected information is then rated as

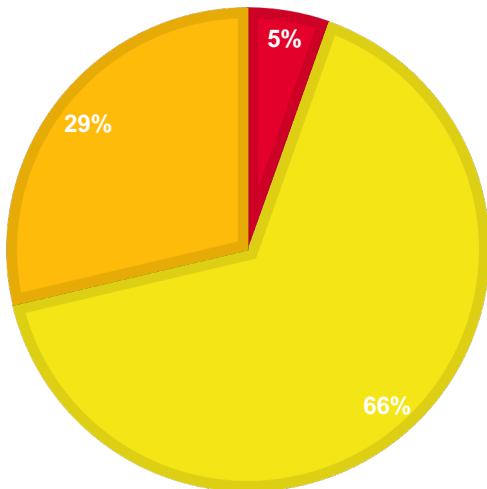
Developing (1) Approaching Effective (2) Effective (3) or Highly Effective (4).

The overall goal of the *Equity Walk* is to provide a “snapshot” of information to encourage conversations and support actionable next steps towards educational equity. Using the information provided, each school and the district will be able to inclusively establish their starting point along the Cultural Proficiency Continuum as well as identify the people and resources needed to support the transformational process. The following information is a “snapshot” of the findings, impact, supporting evidence, area(s) of celebration and suggested area(s) of focus taken during the time of the *Equity Walks* conducted in the Bethlehem Central School District.

District Designation: **Culturally Blind**

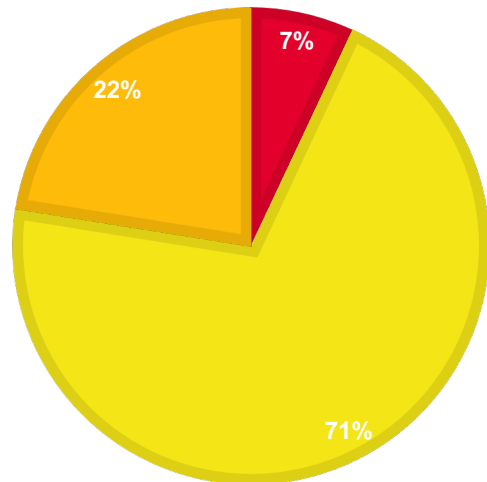
LESSONS

■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4



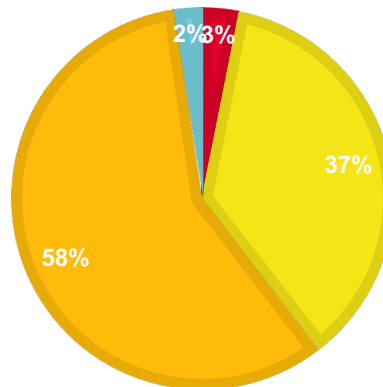
QUESTIONINGS

■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4



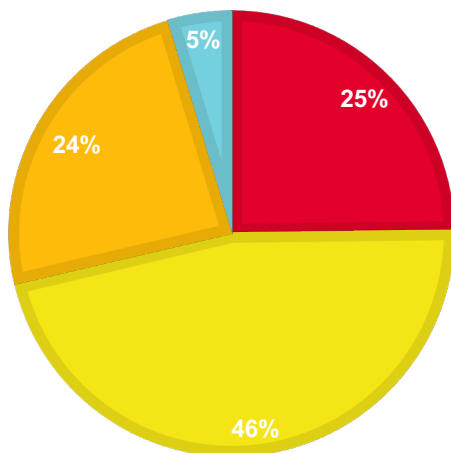
ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4



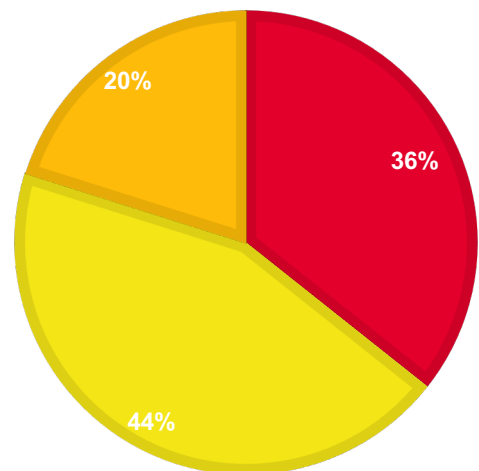
CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND COMPETENCE

■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4



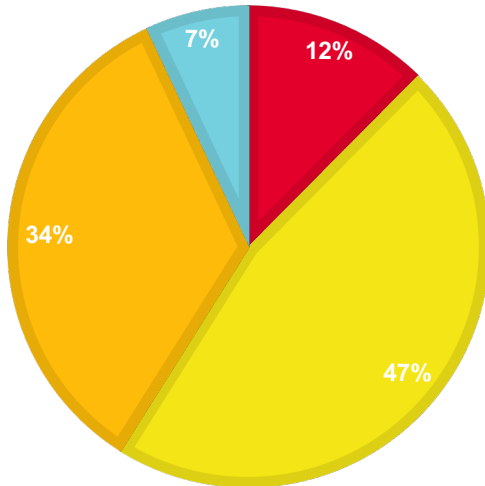
USE OF TECHNOLOGY

■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4



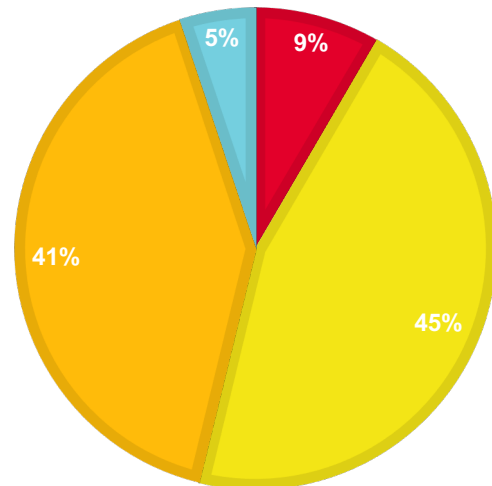
DIFFERENTIATION, ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4



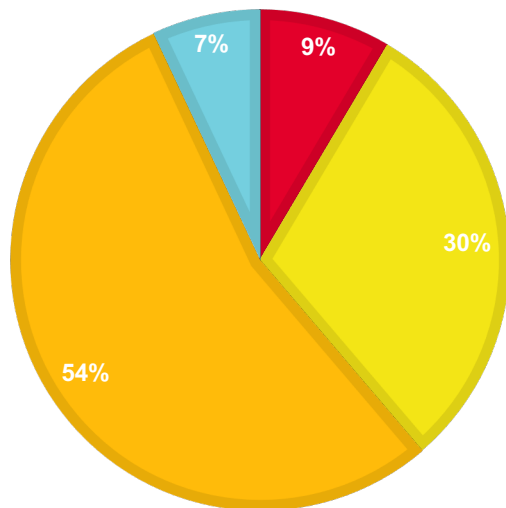
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND DISCOURSE

■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4



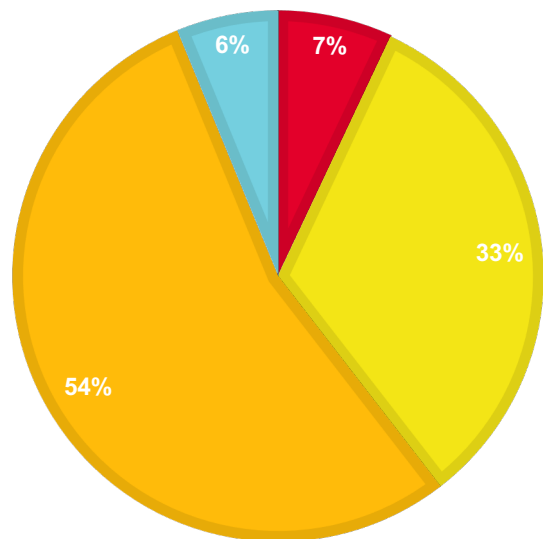
CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4



CLASSROOM CLIMATE

■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4



Equity Walk Summary/Review

1. A Culture and Climate that Promotes Learning

The school has a shared vision and an established culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, providing supports to achieve those expectations.

The vision includes a stated commitment to diversity.

Effective

2. A Rigorous Standards-Aligned Curriculum

There is engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners through multiple entry points and aligned to Common Core State Standards and/or content standards. **The curriculum is culturally responsive to the diversity of the students and community.**

Developing

3. Effective Teaching in Every Classroom

The school develops teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts, aligned to the curricula, and meets the needs of all learners. **The teaching incorporates knowledge of students' ethnic and cultural background and practices into the lesson's content.**

Developing

4. Organizational Structures that Promote and Encourage Learning

There are structures in place that allow professional collaborations using an inquiry approach that **focuses on improving (all) student learning**

Approaching
Effective

5. Cultural Sensitivity and Competence

There is an awareness of the cultural differences and similarities between people supported congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that enables effective interactions.

Developing

Areas of Celebration

A Culture and Climate that Promotes Learning

The district has a shared vision and an established culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, providing supports to achieve those expectations. The vision includes a stated commitment to diversity.

Findings:

- ✓ The district's vision and values are clearly articulated, collaboratively developed and includes a stated commitment to diversity.
- ✓ A climate of inclusion, respect, connection, and caring is fostered in the schools and learning community cultures have been developed.
- ✓ The schools' missions are reflected in their practices and stated goals.
- ✓ There are clear expectations that goals will be achieved and supported through well defined, collaborative processes

Impact:

The culture and climate of the districts' schools echoes a common vision thus creating a solid foundation for productive learning communities. There is a clear belief in all students as scholars and the message that community is valued adds strength to the schools' missions and the district's vision.

Supporting Evidence:

During the site visits, the consultant observed/experienced

1. A welcoming, positive and comfortable tone in all the school environment visited.
2. Distinctively unique (mostly elementary) classrooms with inviting personality; adored by a combination of student work and (in most cases) artifacts relative to the subject being taught.
3. Evidence of the enforcement of common classroom/buildings routines to support positive discipline and encourage students to take ownership for their behavior.
4. Students who appeared confident in the classrooms' visited and tended to engage in cheerful banter with one another during passing periods.
5. There is an obvious effort to include the ideas and viewpoints of diverse students in the adornments around the school buildings through the district.

Areas of Focus

Effective Instruction in Every Classroom

The district develops teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts, aligned to the curricula, and meets the needs of all learners. The teaching incorporates knowledge of students' ethnic and cultural background and practices into lesson content.

Findings

- ✓ Instruction is primarily teacher driven
- ✓ Teachers' approaches vary across the school(s) and disciplines.
- ✓ The district/ schools are developing a consistent belief about effective instruction.

Impact

Both school and district administrators have a clear vision and expectation for instruction. However, the current strategies being utilized by the majority of the teaching staff do not always deliver on the articulated instructional goals. Thus, effective instruction was not observable in all classrooms visited. The use of culturally relevant teaching practices and materials was inconsistent (even in the same subject) and/ or was not always easily identified in the classrooms visited.

Supporting Evidence

It was observed that teachers were focused on content delivery at the risk of facilitating student discourse and engagement. Even in classrooms where it was observed that teachers had created lessons with engaging activities, students were mainly involved in recalling of specific information reflecting the learning of the moment rather than discussions that allowed them to make broader connections, activate prior knowledge and/or apply and transfer knowledge/skills to new situations.

During the site visits, the consultant observed:

1. Missed opportunities for students to engage in authentic discourse.
2. Instructional activities that were not always student centered. Many did not include opportunities for students to see themselves in the material being studied.
3. Learning opportunities that were not always maximized by learning activities.
4. Technology primarily used for whole class instruction.
5. Limited use of assessments and differentiation to support individual students' development or inform instruction.
6. Limited exposure to instructional materials students believed was informative as well as relevant to their lives.
7. Little to no use of diverse/culturally relevant instructional practices observed.
8. Limited use of cultural relevant instructional materials.
9. Large number of lessons and questioning at Level 2.

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