

Learning Technology Grant Program Overview: Niagara Falls City School District

Award Years: 2021 – 2024

Using Technology to Implement Personalized Learning Plans for At-Risk High School Pupils

The Niagara Falls City School District (NFCSD) is using technology and blended instruction to help high school students recover missing credits and get back on track for graduation. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, District staff noted many high-risk students performed better in fully remote or blended learning/hybrid environments. Through the professional learning opportunities offered in this Learning Technology Grant project, teams of teachers will build their capacity to plan, create and manage virtual instruction, as well as build Personalized Learning Plans that engage hard to reach students and ensure their success.

NFCSD is a small city school district that serves 7,000 students in grades Pre-Kindergarten to 12. It is a high-needs district, with 73% of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. All schools are Title I eligible, and the District and two of its eleven schools are in Targeted Support and Improvement status. The NFCSD student population is 35% African American, 40% white, 13% multiracial, and 8 % Hispanic. Fewer than 2% are English Language Learners. The district has one, 2,000 pupil high school. Its four-year high school graduation rate for 2020 was 64%, over 20% below the statewide average.

NFCSD LTG project goals:

- Increase District capacity to implement Personalized Learning Plans using education technology
- Increase teacher competency to provide instruction in both in-person and virtual platforms to support PLPs
- Improve student achievement and engagement by implementing web-based PLPs for students not on track for graduation

NFCSD LTG strategies and methods:

- Participating teachers will be part of a Professional Learning Community which will build members' capacity to gather digital resources, design and build online classes, facilitate synchronous and asynchronous instruction, and support student achievement in blended and virtual coursework
- District Technology Integrators will prepare teachers to use the virtual courses created and provide push-in classroom coaching at all stages of implementation, as well as assist teachers outside of the PLC who wish to use modules from the online courses to provide credit recovery opportunities for their students

Prior to Year 2 of the project, NFCSD staff will identify approximately 75 at-risk students in grades 11 and 12 who could benefit from online credit recovery or accrual activities. The high school's student intervention and counseling teams will receive training on Personalized Learning Plans and create custom plans for all students in the cohort, to include the unique online modules or courses needed by each. The PLPs will be monitored and updated monthly. A second round of online courses will be created in Year 2, and by Year 3, with the additional courses, students in grades 9 – 12 will become eligible for online credit recovery and accrual opportunities.

Contact Information

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- NFCSD