



# District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP)

*District-Level Systems for Supporting Schools Identified for Additional Support*

District	Superintendent
City School District of the City of Niagara Falls	Mark R. Laurie

## School Key Strategies

**What Instructional and Non-Instructional Key Strategies have the schools in the CSI, ATSI, and TSI support models identified on their SCEPs?**

Instructional Key Strategies	Schools
Review and evaluate ELA, writing assessments and math data collaboratively with teachers, using local assessments and universal screeners to guide instructional decisions, while focusing on the needs of at-risk students.	79 <sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School
Educate and proactively involve all students in their differentiated educational programs to include Academic and Personal SMART goal setting. Design and implement a school-wide continuous improvement plan for students with disabilities.	Harry F. Abate Elementary School
1. Science of Learning & Structured Literacy Use evidence-based strategies to engage students in purposeful learning. Apply data-driven instruction tailored to individual student needs in reading, writing, math, and interventions. Emphasize the 6 pillars of Structured Literacy, especially in second grade, to prepare students for state assessments. 2. Mathematics Instruction Focus on developing all strands of mathematical proficiency (e.g., reasoning, fluency, understanding). Use assessments to guide instruction and interventions during Math Block and AIS.	Bloneva Bond Primary School

## DCIP: District-Level Systems

Prioritize high-leverage math content to boost readiness for third-grade state assessments.	
Improve student achievement through targeted interventions and enrichment opportunities.	Cataract Elementary School
Implement principles of Explicit Instruction for the teaching of vocabulary and writing strategies across grade levels and disciplines.	Gaskill Preparatory School
<p>1. Empower students to establish personalized academic goals and actively track their progress towards meeting them.</p> <p>2. Develop targeted interventions and enrichment opportunities to elevate the academic performance of African American students underperforming on New York State Math and Reading assessments.</p>	Hyde Park Elementary School
<p>Key Strategy 1: We commit to delivering direct and explicit instruction in ELA utilizing the key pillars of the Science of Reading to attain student growth and achievement for all learners.</p> <p>Key Strategy 2: We commit to delivering direct and explicit instruction in Math utilizing iReady to attain student growth and achievement for all learners.</p>	Henry J. Kalfas Primary School
Vertical teacher-led ELA data review teams will be created to analyze student grade level fluency and progress monitoring data. In addition to analyzing data, the teams will plan targeted interventions, and track student progress over time. Teachers will adjust instructional strategies based on assessment results to meet individual students' needs.	Maple Avenue Elementary School
We will seek to improve student engagement, and therefore increase student achievement, by focusing on the use of collaborative learning strategies in the classroom.	Niagara Falls High School
Non-Instructional Key Strategies	Schools
Utilizing a proactive, holistic, and inclusive approach to address the diverse behavioral and social-emotional needs of the at-risk students within our school community.	79 <sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School
Design and implement a school-wide continuous improvement plan for students with disabilities.	Harry F. Abate Elementary School
<p>1. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): Continue and expand SEL initiatives to support students' personal well-being and emotional development.</p> <p>2. Diversity, Inclusion &amp; Community Engagement: Foster a respectful, inclusive school culture. Strengthen school-family communication and relationships. Build partnerships with community organizations to enhance student engagement and attendance.</p>	Bloneva Bond Primary School
We will promote and sustain social-emotional wellness through the creation and implementation of a comprehensive SEL curriculum that utilizes internal and external resources.	Cataract Elementary School
Institute Restorative Practices on a school-wide basis, to include staff training, student training and integration of existing supports such as PBIS and Tiered Interventions.	Gaskill Preparatory School

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We will use survey data to create a comprehensive plan which fosters strong, supportive connections between teachers, students, and families.	Hyde Park Elementary School
We commit to positively impacting the social, emotional and academic aspects of our students by creating an in-house team to systematically identify and track those students most at risk and support their diverse needs.	Henry J. Kalfas Primary School
Develop a framework of multi-tiered supports for students exhibiting behavioral or social/emotional difficulties that features before and after-school programming, the development of procedures for students experiencing on-going difficulties, and collaboration with external agencies.	Maple Avenue Elementary School
We seek to strengthen our ability to identify students who are underperforming and proactively support them with interventions (those that we currently have as well as newly developed) through a refined Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System.	Niagara Falls High School

## District Support

**What actions will the district lead to support improving teaching practices related to these key strategies?**

Action	Person Responsible	When
<b>District Level Instructional Action Steps</b>		

**1. ELA & Writing**

Goal: Improve student achievement in ELA and writing through data-driven, explicit instruction and collaborative strategies.

Actions:

- Use local assessments and universal screeners to review ELA and writing data collaboratively with teachers. (Monthly Grade level and/or individual teacher meetings with NFCSD ELA Coach and Principal.)
- A standardized monthly Data Meeting calendar and agenda will be created to ensure:
  - all available assessment data are reviewed
  - Action steps based on the data are determined
  - Goals are monitored
  - Professional learning needs are addressed
- Districtwide Data Meetings will be scheduled quarterly to ensure:
  - All available assessment data are reviewed
  - Building level academic progress is monitored
  - Building level needs are addressed
  - Professional learning needs are addressed
  - Opportunities for sharing resources and knowledge are identified

The district will add an additional .5 ELA content specialist to organize and facilitate District-wide Data Meetings and coordinate with building interventionists to implement Tiers 2 and 3 interventions.

- Monitor implementation of direct, explicit instruction aligned with the Science of Reading and the six pillars of Structured Literacy. The District will create a web-based tool and train

Richard Carella, Assistant  
Superintendent for  
Curriculum & Instruction  
(Principals, Instructional Coaches,  
ELA Teachers, Grade-Level  
Teams)

Ongoing throughout the  
academic year

## DCIP: District-Level Systems

<p>Administrators in conducting regular Administrative Walk-throughs that records alignment and provides teachers with timely feedback on the use of direct, explicit, Science of Reading aligned instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish building level vertical ELA data review teams to analyze fluency and progress monitoring data, plan interventions, and adjust instruction.</li><li>• Promote collaborative learning strategies to enhance engagement and achievement. Provide Professional Learning sessions throughout Summer 2025 and 2025-26 SY for teachers to develop knowledge in implementing best practices for student engagement.</li></ul>		
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## DCIP: District-Level Systems

### 2. Mathematics

Goal: Strengthen mathematical proficiency and readiness for state assessments through targeted instruction and interventions.

Actions:

- Strengthen all strands of mathematical proficiency: reasoning, fluency, and conceptual understanding via daily lessons using iReady Classroom (Mathematics) supports and materials.
- Use assessments to guide instruction and interventions during Math Block and AIS. (Monthly Grade level and/or individual teacher meetings with NFCSD Math Coach and Principal.)
- Prioritize high-leverage content to prepare students for NYS assessments. NFCSD Math Coaches will support teachers in analyzing student data to determine individual or small group goals.
- Promote collaborative learning strategies to enhance engagement and achievement. Provide Professional Learning sessions throughout Summer 2025 and 2025-26 SY for teachers to develop knowledge in implementing best practices for student engagement.

Richard Carella, Assistant  
Superintendent for Curriculum &  
Instruction  
(Principals, Instructional Coaches,  
Math Teachers, AIS Teachers,  
Grade-Level Teams)

Ongoing throughout the  
academic year

## DCIP: District-Level Systems

### 1. Principal Teacher Leader Development

Goal: Improve academic outcomes for students by supporting new and novice Principals' leadership skills in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and data analysis.

Actions:

- Engage with an outside service provider that specializes in professional development for Principals
- Provide mentoring and coaching in ELA and Math curriculum, teacher evaluation and feedback
- Provide coaching in effective communication skills

The district will add a Special Education Instructional Coach to provide support for special educators district-wide. Multiple schools have requested assistance for SPED department improvement plans focused on improvement in areas of both compliance and student proficiency.

Richard Carella, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction (Principals, Data Teams, Classroom Teachers, Interventionists)

Timeline: Begin in Q1, monitor progress monthly

SPED Instructional Coach –  
Appoint July 2025  
Training August 2025

### District Level Non-Instructional Action Steps

Non-instructional Key Strategy Support #1:

The majority of schools prioritized increasing family and community engagement by strengthening communication and hosting inclusive events. Plans also emphasize promoting equity and access through targeted outreach. Therefore, the district will create and implement a **Community Schools Plan** with the following features/action steps:

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<b>Host 8 Saturday Academies from October 2025 – May 2026</b>	<p>S. Wojton, Principal on Special Assignment</p>	<p>July – August 2025</p>
<b>Hire district staff to design and deliver programs for both Saturday Academies and evening programs</b>	<p>S. Wojton, Academy coordinator (TBN)</p>	<p>September 2025</p>
<b>Host quarterly evening programs with family-focused activities</b>	<p>S. Wojton, Academy coordinator (TBN) Select School principals Select District staff and vendors</p>	<p>October 2025 – May 2026</p>
<b>Assemble a cohort of “School to Community” Staff Liaisons to attend local community events and celebrations to distribute school and district information and connect parents in need of support with key school personnel</b>	<p>S. Wojton, Principal on Special Assignment T. Fisher, Teacher on Special Assignment</p>	<p>Ongoing – October 2025 – June 2026</p>
<p><b>Non-instructional Key Strategy Support #2:</b></p> <p>Many school SCEPs non-instructional strategies include actions aligned with Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, including development of robust behavioral and emotions supports, and use of comprehensive Social-Emotional Learning strategies, such as implementation of explicit curricula. Therefore, the district will build capacity of key school personnel to meet these goals by taking the following actions:</p>		



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Hold monthly MTSS Steering Committee meetings with representatives from all schools to oversee intervention services and supports district-wide, with standing agenda items such as Universal Behavioral Screening, SEL Programming and identification of at-risk students.	S. Wojton, Principal on Special Assignment T. Fisher, Teacher on Special Assignment	Monthly September 2025 – June 2026
Provide evidence-based training for Behavioral Threat Assessment (BTAM) for school counselors and social workers focused on assessing and managing potential threats.	S. Wojton, Principal on Special Assignment	August 2025
Allocate resources to engage school counselors and social workers in summer work to update school counseling plans, identify and launch early interventions with families of students at risk of chronic absenteeism and those out of compliance with immunization schedules.	S. Wojton, Principal on Special Assignment K. Burgess, Social Work Supervisor	July and August 2025
Facilitate two rounds of TIG (Consortium of Trauma Illness and Grief in Schools) training, following which participating school personnel will create a school-based Mental Health Crisis plan.	S. Wojton, Principal on Special Assignment K. Burgess, Social Work Supervisor	August 2025 – December 2025
Plan and implement a Professional Development Series/Consortium for school counselors, social workers, and psychologists. Topics covered will include Tier 3 mental health counseling, MTSS intervention progress monitoring and tracking tools, and refinement of school Pupil Service Team processes.	S. Wojton, Principal on Special Assignment K. Burgess, Social Work Supervisor C. Barstys, Teacher Resource Center Director	Monthly October 2025 – May 2026
<b>Non-instructional Key Strategy Support #3</b>  Many school SCEPs non-instructional strategies include actions related to the institution of early warning student monitoring and intervention protocols. The district will take the following actions to support those schools:		
Implement a software tool that integrates attendance, behavior, and course performance data. All schools will have access to a real-time dashboard with related tools and reporting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staggered staff training, beginning with secondary instructional staff followed by elementary instructional staff</li> </ul>	R. Granieri, Administrator for Information Services	October 2025 – March 2026

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Provide training for school counselors, administrators, and MTSS teams on interpreting early warning data and selecting appropriate interventions, including ongoing coaching from district technology integrators on data gathering and use.	E. Maynard and D. St. Onge, Technology Integrators	October 2025 – June 2026
Establish clear district-wide protocols for identifying at-risk students, assigning interventions and monitoring progress. Define roles and responsibilities for school-based teams, including counselors and social workers.	S. Wojton and District MTSS Steering Committee members	September 2025 – June 2026
Embed procedures and protocols above into the district's MTSS Handbook.	MTSS Steering Subcommittee members T. Fisher, Teacher on Special Assignment	January – June 2026

## Measuring Success

### What will the district look for as evidence of the success of the actions listed above?

Use the following sentence frame: "If we achieve [*Quantitative Data Target*] [*time reference of when you would want to see that*], then we will know we are making progress through these actions."

*Examples:*

- *If we achieve 85% of teachers using accountable talk stems within two weeks of the September PD, then we will know we are making progress through these actions."*
- *If we achieve more than 85% of students with 1 or 0 absences a month, then we know we are making progress through these actions."*
- *If we achieve 90% of students achieving more than 80% of the possible points from short constructed response questions on our mid-year assessment, then we will know we are making progress through these actions."*

*If 85% of staff respond favorably to the survey question 'Teachers at this school have the opportunity to provide feedback and influence decisions' on the end-of-the-year survey, then we know we are making progress through these actions."*

Quantitative Data Target	Time Reference of When You Would Want to See That
1. If every school (100%) establishes an ELA data review team to analyze fluency and progress monitoring data, plan interventions, and adjust instruction in response to achievement levels, our students will achieve improved ELA assessment scores.	Monthly ELA data meetings beginning in September 2025
2. If every school (100%) meets monthly to analyze student Math growth and teachers tailor instruction to meet their needs (including the use of explicit instruction), our students will achieve improved Math Assessment scores.	Monthly Math data meetings beginning in September 2025

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3. If the District level provides all (100%) new and novice (less than 5 years' experience in current role) Principals coaching and mentoring, we will know that we are making progress in supporting our Administrators.	Monthly coaching and/or mentoring sessions for identified Administrators
6. If we achieve a 5% increase in attendance over the previous year for 75% of pupils who attend one or more Saturday Academy then we will know they have been impactful.	June 2026
7. If we achieve 30% of participants attending more than one Saturday Academy, then we will know they have been impactful.	June 2026
8. Follow-up Surveys: If we achieve 75% of parents reporting that they received useful information or services and that their children benefited from the Saturday Academy activities offered, then we will know they have been impactful.	Monthly survey results: October - May
9. If 100% of School to Community Liaisons attend a minimum of 3 community events throughout the academic year, we will know the action has achieved initial impact.	Final report - June of 2026
10. BTAM - If we achieve 100% of school teams reporting the number of assessments conducted, response time to threats, and post-event staff confidence surveys, then we will know the system is functioning and has a data stream on which to base the next steps.	November/February and May
11. If 100% of schools report a 2 – 3 % reduction in chronic absenteeism rates by May of 2026, we will know that Tier 3 Student Supports have been impactful.	June 2026
12. If 80% of participating personnel report that they gained helpful information from the Professional Development Consortium, then we will know the activity has built staff capacity.	Monthly (post-session survey administered following each meeting)
13. If district MTSS Behavioral Tracking Tool input demonstrates regular and frequent entries, and an increase of 10% from spring to fall in the number of Tiers 2/3 interventions initiated, then we will know that the system has increased capacity.	Regularly scheduling auditing/reviews: November, February and May
14. If 95% of school instructional staff have participated in initial EWIMS software training, we will know that the district is on track to integrating the tool into its MTSS.	March 2026
15. If 80% of school instructional staff has participated in initial EWIMS protocol training then we will know that all schools may take initial steps to launch their internal systems	March 2026
16. If 50% of schools have a fully implemented EWIMS, then we will know that the system can be enacted in all schools.	May 2026
17. If more than 67.5% (May 2025 result) of respondents taking the School Performance Scan survey will agree with the prompt, "our school leaders	May 2026

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support staff in the application of new information, structures and strategies,” we will know that our Leadership support is working.	
18. If more than 53.6% (May 2025 result) of respondents taking the School Performance Scan survey will agree with the statement, “Our school leaders talk about the vision, mission and/or beliefs of our school,” we will know that our leadership support is working.	May 2026
19. If more than 30.1% (May 2025 result) of respondents taking the Student Voice Survey agrees with the statement, “Classes are interesting and keep my attention,” we will know that our teacher and leadership support is working.	May 2026
20. If more than 53.9% (May 2025 result) of respondents taking the Family Engagement Survey agree with the statement, “My teachers contact me, not just in times of concern,” we will know that our teacher and leadership support is working.	May 2026

## Coherence

The Key Strategies are intended to be drivers that will improve current results in schools that are in the CSI, ATSI, and TSI support models, rather than everything a school is doing to support instruction. In consideration of this, what is the district’s plan to ensure **coherence** in the upcoming year so that its support of the Key Strategies above is aligned to its own districtwide vision for instruction?

Implementation of the Key strategies remains closely connected to student learning outcomes; adjusting as needed based on evidence gathered throughout the year will be necessary. By fostering open channels of communication among school leaders, teachers, and district administrators, NFCSD will ensure that best practices are shared and applied uniformly. The district's plan also prioritizes the establishment of clear metrics for success and the use of data-driven decision-making at every stage. Through these efforts, NFCSD aims to create a cohesive and adaptive instructional environment where all schools advance towards a shared vision for improved student outcomes.

## Equitable Distribution of Resources

What is the district’s plan to review resource allocation in the upcoming year to ensure equitable distribution based on the needs of its schools?

To ensure equitable distribution of resources aligned with the needs of its schools, the district will implement a comprehensive review process in the upcoming year. This process will be guided by data-driven insights from school-level performance indicators, student demographics, and stakeholder feedback. The district will convene cross-functional teams—including instructional leaders, finance personnel, and community representatives—to evaluate current allocations and identify gaps in support.

NYS School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds will be strategically directed toward schools identified as needing intensive support, with a focus on evidence-based interventions that address academic achievement and school

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climate. These funds will also support professional development and leadership coaching to build sustainable capacity.

Federal ESSA funding, including Titles I, IIA, and IV, will be reviewed in consultation with both public and private school stakeholders. As outlined in internal guidance, allocations will be aligned with specific student needs, such as remediation services, family engagement, and supplemental instructional materials. The district will ensure that all expenditures meet federal guidelines and are documented in detailed FS-10 budgets.

Local funds will be used to complement state and federal resources, particularly in areas where flexibility is needed to address emerging needs. The district will maintain transparency through regular reporting and will adjust allocations mid-year if necessary to respond to shifting priorities.

This multi-tiered approach ensures that all students—regardless of school or background—have access to the resources they need to succeed.

What is the district's plan in the upcoming year to ensure that students in schools identified for CSI/ATSI/TSI have at least as much access to strong teachers as their peers in schools identified for LSI?

In the upcoming year, the Niagara Falls City School District is committed to ensuring that students in schools identified for Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI), and Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) have equitable access to strong, effective teachers—comparable to or exceeding that of students in schools identified for Local Support and Improvement (LSI).

The District will leverage federal ESSA funding to support instructional coaching and mentoring programs, while NYS SIG grant funds will be used to develop and retain top-tier educators through stipends and extended learning opportunities. Local funds will supplement these efforts by supporting school climate initiatives and wraparound services that help retain staff and improve student outcomes.

This approach ensures that staffing decisions are equity-driven and responsive to the unique needs of each school community.

## Stakeholder Participation

### Background

The DCIP must be developed in consultation with parents, school staff, and others in accordance with §100.11 of Commissioner's Regulations.

### Team Members

Use the space below to identify the members of the DCIP team, their role (e.g. principal, teacher, parent), and, when applicable, the school the individual represents.

Name	Role	School (if applicable)
Mark Laurrie	Superintendent	N/A
Richard Carella	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum	N/A
Maria Massaro	Administrator for Human Resources	N/A
Marcia Capone	Administrator for Assessment	N/A
Caroline Buchman	Principal on Special Assignment	N/A
Stanley Wojton	Principal on Special Assignment	N/A
Thomas Fisher	Teacher on Special Assignment	N/A
Cheryl Vilardo	Principal	Niagara Falls High School

## Meeting Dates

Use the table below to identify the dates and locations of DCIP planning meetings.

Meeting Date	Location
May 28, 2025	District Office
June 4, 2025	District Office
June 11, 2025	District Office
June 18, 2025	District Office
June 25, 2025	District Office

## Districts with Schools Identified for TSI/ATSI Support Only

Identify how the perspectives of stakeholders associated with the identified subgroup(s) have been incorporated.

Stakeholder group	How have the perspectives of this group been incorporated into the DCIP?
Teachers responsible for teaching each identified subgroup	<p><b>Teacher survey data</b> (Data Triangle SPS) – district-wide, all schools – Spring 2025 administration yielded 588 responses*</p> <p>*The annual survey is administered to students in grades 3 – 12, Parents/Guardians and instructional staff. It measures five constructs: Leadership Practices and Decisions, Curriculum, Teaching Practices and Decisions, Social Emotional Learning, and Family Engagement.</p>
Parents with children from each identified subgroup	<p>The <b>District Parent Committee</b> members (representatives from all schools) are briefed monthly on DCIP progress and are asked for feedback on District Priorities each spring. This year an online survey was shared with all District parent/guardians, and 40 responses were received.</p> <p><b>Parent survey data</b> (Data Triangle FES) was administered in March/April 2025, with 660 responses received.</p>
Secondary Schools: Students from each identified subgroup	<p><b>Student Survey data</b> (Student Voice A – Elementary School and Student Voice B, Secondary School) - Spring 2025 administration resulted in 2,753 student responses from grades 3 – 12.</p>

## Submission Assurances

### Directions

Place an "X" in the box next to each item prior to submission.

1. ☐ ☒ The District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP) has been developed in consultation with parents, school staff, and others in accordance with the requirements of Shared-Decision Making (CR 100.11) to provide a meaningful opportunity for stakeholders to participate in the development of the plan and comment on the plan before it is approved.
2. ☒ The DCIP will be implemented no later than the beginning of the first day of regular student attendance.
3. ☐ ☒ Professional development will be provided to teachers and school leaders that will fully support the strategic efforts described within this plan.
4. ☐ ☒ The DCIP will be posted on the district's website and easily accessible when navigating the website.
5. ☐ ☒ A comprehensive systems approach will be established to recruit, develop, retain, and equitably distribute effective teachers and school leaders as part of the implementation of the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) system required by Education Law §3012(c) and §3012(d).
6. ☐ ☒ Meaningful time for collaboration will be used to review and analyze data to inform and improve district policies, procedures, and instructional practices.

### Submission Instructions

**All Districts:** Submit this document to [DCIP@nysed.gov](mailto:DCIP@nysed.gov) by July 1, 2025.

The final plan must be approved by the Superintendent and the Board of Education (in New York City, the Chancellor or the Chancellor's designee).