DCIP Cover Page



District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP)

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

2021-22 Summary of Priorities

In the space below, input the three to five District priorities for 2021-22 identified in this plan.

1	We prioritize effective instruction which emphasizes purposeful engagement and student ownership of learning.
2	We prioritize the implementation of innovative, differentiated instructional strategies to address student learning gaps.
3	We prioritize the creation of a District-wide Multi-Tiered System of Supports which emphasizes student social-emotional wellbeing and addresses barriers to success at all levels.
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PRIORITY I

Our Priority

 What will we prioritize to extend success in 2021-22? Why is this a priority? Things to potentially take into consideration when crafting this response: How does this commitment fit into the District's vision, values and aspirations? 	We prioritize effective instruction which emphasizes purposeful engagement and student ownership of learning. This was priority was informed by acknowledging two trends which emerged from student interviews and surveys. As students advance grade levels their perceptions of safety, sense of self, and satisfaction with the value and relevance of their education shifted dramatically. Younger students expressed general contentment, while intermediate and high school students indicated that classroom environments are not responsive to their
 Why did this emerge as something to prioritize? What makes this the right commitment to pursue? How does this fit into other commitments and the district's longterm plans? For Districts with identified schools: In what ways is this influenced by the "How Learning Happens" document? The Equity Self-Reflection? Student Interviews? In what ways does this support the SCEP commitments of your identified school(s)? 	identities or preferences, and that instructional strategies used do not motivate them to excel. Students at all levels reported feeling isolated, and wished for more opportunity to work with peers routinely. According to the Equity Self-Reflection the majority of District schools are at the emerging level for each practice of Principle 2, High Expectations and Rigorous Instruction. Many expressed frustration that progress made in this area prior to the pandemic has been lost or stymied as a result of uneven instruction and time on task over the past year. The District Team believes that in order to engage students in activities which enable them to grow as independent learners and critical, flexible thinkers, all teachers must demonstrate proficiency in a basic set of instructional practices that empower students to direct and gauge their own progress.

Key Strategies and Resources

STRATEGY	METHODS	GAUGING SUCCESS	RESOURCES
What strategies will we pursue as part of this Priority?	What does this strategy entail?	How will we know if this strategy is making a difference? Include points that will occur during the year that will be helpful in gauging success.	What resources (Schedule, Space, Money, Processes, Individuals) are necessary to support these strategies?
Emphasize strategies and tools which allow students to self- monitor and set improvement goals.	 Instructional Coaches will develop a Goal Setting protocol for elementary students following administration of the NWEA MAP baseline assessment: Flow chart with procedures – student and teacher versions Dialogue prompts for teacher/student goal setting conferences Principals will schedule department meetings for instructional coaches to present the protocols to teachers, starting with generating student assessment reports. All students will set at least one improvement/progress goal by November. Principals will create a plan for regular data analysis meetings for monitoring of student progress. The 	Use of the protocols will be observed during principal and District leader classroom walkthroughs. Students, when asked, can discuss their academic strengths/needs, and cite one improvement goal (may be fluency/words read per minute, RIT score growth from NWEA winter assessment, etc.). Principals will present to the Superintendent's cabinet three times per school year. Each will present their	Time must be allocated during the school day or within allowable after school department meeting windows. Funding may be allocated to provide remuneration to teachers who participate in training or data analysis outside of contractual hours.

	assessments by grade level, frequency of review, and expectations for instructional implications/follow up.	plan, challenges, successes and insights.	
	Principals will request dedicated instructional coach time to meet with designated teachers, individually or in small groups, to lead or support data analysis activities prioritized in their school plans.	Meeting minutes, and follow-up/next steps will be indicated.	
Provide professional development on strategies which support student ownership of learning.	Throughout the school year, professional development will be offered to build teachers' capacity to incorporate self-monitoring strategies and formative assessment into daily lessons. The District will engage consultants and its instructional coaches for the work, based in Leaders of Their Own Learning by R. Berger. Summary of Leaders of their own learning Ron Berger.pdf - Google Drive The District will support PLC Book Studies with Leaders of Their Own Learning, facilitated by faculty teacher leaders, at two elementary schools, one middle school, and the high school.	Classroom walkthroughs will reveal evidence of frequent, informal checks for understanding and student reflection opportunities embedded in lessons/student activities.	Time must be allocated during the school day or within allowable after school department meeting windows. Funding may be allocated to provide remuneration to teachers who participate in training or data analysis outside of contractual hours.

Develop and implement intentional protocols for teacher- led collaboration around engaging students.	Newly hired instructional staff will receive basic, entry-level training on use of Learning Targets and Checking for Understanding as part of New Teacher Orientation Week, August 23-26.	New teachers will incorporate Learning Targets into their daily lessons.	District funds will be dedicated to staffing, professional development and training costs.
	Select and train cross-disciplinary Pedagogy Coaches for each middle school to provide targeted professional development and assist teachers to transfer and replicate highly impactful strategies in their classrooms. School leaders will conduct initial classroom walkthroughs to identify and prioritize key instructional strategies that are lacking or in need of further development. The district will provide targeted staff development based on strategy needs identified at each school (onsite in TSI schools). Virtual sessions will be made available separately for remaining schools. The District will provide all school leaders and instructional coaches with training on protocols for Teacher-led Learning Walks. Learning Walks: Structured Observation for Teachers - Bing video	School principals will select teachers for improvement case studies, and assess the impact of pedagogy coaching on their practice.	

School leaders will identify faculty members who are proficient in select strategies and willing to serve as demonstration teachers for a Teacher-led Learning Walk. Each school will conduct a minimum of one Teacher-led Learning Walk per semester.	School leaders' walkthrough data will show increased evidence of the key instructional strategies they prioritized	

Measuring Success

What will success look like for this Priority, and how will the District know if success has been achieved?

Provide quantitative data and/or qualitative descriptions of where the district strives to be at the end of the 2021-22 school year.

• Principal Walk Through Reports (Microsoft Form) will demonstrate increased proficient use of one or more of the strategies targeted for improvement.

Spring 2022 District Stakeholder survey results will show:

- 70% or more of teachers will agree with the statement, "Students in this school have strategies to track their own learning." 8 point increase
- 58% of middle and high school students will agree with the statement, "Our school curriculum (work) is challenging."
 10 point increase
- 57% of middle and high school students will agree with the statement, "Teachers provide time for students to discuss topics and learn from each other." 10 point increase

PRIORITY 2

Our Priority

 What will we prioritize to extend success in 2021-22? Why is this a priority? Things to potentially take into consideration when crafting this response: How does this commitment fit into the District's vision, values and aspirations? Why did this emerge as something to prioritize? What makes this the right commitment to pursue? How does this fit into other commitments and the district's long-term plans? For Districts with identified schools: In what ways is this influenced by the "How Learning Happens" document? The Equity Self-Reflection? Student Interviews? In what ways does this support the SCEP commitments of your identified school(s)? 	We prioritize the implementation of innovative, differentiated instructional strategies to address student learning gaps. The District's philosophy is, "Learning For All, Whatever It Takes." Due to several factors, in recent years our options for remedial programming and student support services did not keep pace with demand. This has resulted, in part, in the District's graduation rate dropping below the State average. The DCIP Team is committed to ensuring all NFCSD pupils receive the support needed to graduate. We recognize that this is an equity issue that must be addressed. The <i>How Learning Happens Core Messaging Framework</i> describes how successful learning environments provide meaningful learning that intrinsically motivates pupils and embed intentional opportunities for students to build the skills needed for success later in life. These research-based insights resonated with the DCIP Team, and led to the conclusion that it is the District's responsibility to set each school and pupil up for success by providing programming and resources that place that goal within reach.
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Key Strategies and Resources

STRATEGY	METHODS	GAUGING SUCCESS	RESOURCES
What strategies will we pursue as part of this Priority?	What does this strategy entail?	How will we know if this strategy is making a difference? Include points that will occur during the year that will be helpful in gauging success.	What resources (Schedule, Space, Money, Processes, Individuals) are necessary to support these strategies?
Increase the quantity and quality of academic intervention services for elementary students	The Reading Recovery Program will be expanded to include all District elementary schools. Reading Recovery teachers will work collaboratively with classroom teachers to review all 1 st grade pupils' literacy screening data and group students for flexible, guided reading instruction. The District will create an Elementary Mathematics AIS program for students in grades Kindergarten through 5. Lead teachers and Teaching Assistants will deliver interventions daily. Mathematics Instructional coaches will create short, 3-5 question unit pre-assessments for all elementary units of study in grades K-5.	The RR teachers and the RR Regional Teacher Leader will track student progress and principals will review by pupil. Guided Reading instruction by both the classroom and RR teachers will occur daily in all 1 st grade classrooms. Whole and small group instruction will be in evidence in each classroom for a minimum of 60 minutes per week, during the designated Intervention Block. Lead teachers will engage all pupils in fluency-building activities and along with TAs deliver small group instruction to those students in need of Tier 2 or 3 intervention. Teachers will be able to explain what their students know, and what skills they must pre-teach prior to starting each grade level un	 Funding will be dedicated for: Summer training for Math AIS staff and Physical Education teachers Supplies – Bridges Math for small group instruction Math and Movement – materials and training for fluency activities School principals will designate Math AIS periods for each teacher K – 5 and facilitate scheduling

	Physical Education teachers will be receive materials and training to incorporate Mathematics literacy and fluency activities into PE class warm-up and cool down activities (Math and Movement). A committee of Math AIS teachers, instructional coaches, PE teachers and classroom teachers will create a Scope and Sequence by grade to guide PE teachers' integration of math literacy and fluency activities into PE classes.	Integrated Math activities will be evident in PE class walk throughs.	
Provide multiple opportunities for professional development aimed at building teacher capacity to differentiate instructional practice to meet students' needs	Middle school ELA teachers will facilitate grade level PD and work sessions in which teacher review SY 20-21 assessment data, identify priority Standards in need of improvement, and prepare lessons and resources to use during ELA "Flex" days. Reading Recovery Teachers and Literacy Instructional Coaches will institute a cycle of training and in- class support for planning and delivery of guided reading instruction in the primary grades (Kindergarten to Grade 2).	Pedagogy coaches will lead all work and publish plans and resources for grades 7 & 8 teachers to access. School principals will see "Flex" (review and remediation days) scheduled in teacher planning documents.	Funding will be provided for teachers' stipends for work outside of the regular school day

	 Each cycle to include: A Book Study: <u>The Next Step Forward in Guided Reading</u> by Jan Richardson Professional development sessions on using assessments, including Running Records, to assess student needs and group for instruction Components of effective guided reading lessons Instructional Coaches will schedule concentrated, week-long follow-up sessions in each participant's classroom to monitor progress and provide extra support for implementation. 	Teachers will maintain assessment portfolios for each student, to include evidence of progress. School principals will conduct Focus Walks to observe guided reading instruction and offer feedback to both classroom teachers and literacy coaches.	Funding will be dedicated to purchasing professional books for the Book Study and additional guided reading materials for classrooms – teachers will be incentivized to enroll by receiving a classroom set of <i>Literacy Footprints</i> materials at the conclusion of the training
Create multiple pathways for high school students to recover graduation credits	Create a team of high school personnel (counselor, social worker, pupil service assistant) to identify students who are not on track for graduation. Select a software package to track student interests and credit accrual beginning in middle school, and train all personnel in its use. Develop a school-wide system of interventions to assist at-risk pupils as early as 8 th grade, managed by the team above.	Students and counselors will begin building profiles and data sets fall of 2021, starting in 7 th and 9 th grade. The team will create guidance documents, communication flow charts, a system of in-house and community providers, and a plan for parent outreach.	Funding will be provided to hire additional staff, and remunerate teachers for additional course creation and student support/monitoring throughout the year.

Recruit teachers to design synchronous and asynchronous credit recovery courses for students, beginning with 11 th and 12 th grade courses for SY 21-22.	Course completion will be supported by a cadre of teachers via study hall and after school office hours. Bi-monthly reports will be prepared for high school administration and the Superintendent.	

Measuring Success

What will success look like for this Priority, and how will the District know if success has been achieved?

Provide quantitative data and/or qualitative descriptions of where the district strives to be at the end of the 2021-22 school year.

• The number of students who drop out of the current gr. 12 cohort will be reduced by 25% compared to 2020-2021 data.

Spring 2022 District Stakeholder survey results will show:

- A minimum of 60% of teachers will agree with the statement, "We have an effective Rtl Program which provides targeted assistance for students in need." 10 point increase
- A minimum of 67% of high school students will agree with the statement, "My teachers help me keep track of my learning and assess my progress." 10 point increase

PRIORITY 3

Our Priority

What will we prioritize to extend success in 2021-22?	We prioritize the creation of a District-wide Multi-Tiered System of Supports which emphasizes student social-emotional wellbeing and addresses barriers to success at all levels.
 Why is this a priority? Things to potentially take into consideration when crafting this response: How does this commitment fit into the District's vision, values and aspirations? Why did this emerge as something to prioritize? What makes this the right commitment to pursue? How does this fit into other commitments and the district's long-term plans? For Districts with identified schools: In what ways is this influenced by the "How Learning Happens" document? The Equity Self-Reflection? Student Interviews? In what ways does this support the SCEP commitments of your identified school(s)? 	Multiple data sources suggest the last fifteen months of fully remote or hybrid instruction has not only accentuated student achievement gaps but has increased many students' social anxiety. Student interview summaries show the need for SEL support and programming at all levels. High school students made numerous comments about feeling afraid to be themselves, not fitting in, academic stress, and reluctance to speak up and voice their needs or preferences to their teachers. Students at the middle and elementary levels expressed anxiety over returning to school in the fall. Many mentioned being uncertain if they could connect with peers and teachers and expressed the belief that they were behind academically and could not catch up. Results of the Equity Self-Reflection indicate most schools rated themselves at the "emerging" level for establishing a welcoming and affirming environment. All district schools selected commitments focused on improvement of school climate, therefore, the District Team feels it should take the lead by prioritizing the creation or extension of social-emotional learning programs, academic and behavioral interventions to address specific student needs, and provide the professional development and training necessary for all school staff to contribute to a positive climate while addressing barriers to student learning.

Key Strategies and Resources

STRATEGY	METHODS	GAUGING SUCCESS	RESOURCES
What strategies will we pursue as part of this Priority?	What does this strategy entail?	How will we know if this strategy is making a difference? Include points that will occur during the year that will be helpful in gauging success.	What resources (Schedule, Space, Money, Processes, Individuals) are necessary to support these strategies?
Identify students in need of behavioral and/or social- emotional support early and often.	The District will implement screening of all pupils, grades Kindergarten to 12, with the BASC-3 BESS (Behavioral and Emotional Screening System) within the first 8 weeks of the school year.	Screening windows by level will be included in the District Assessment Calendar.	Time for screening must be built into the secondary schools' schedules. Funding will be dedicated to acquiring the screening
	Teachers and support staff will receive professional development on the purpose, characteristics and administration of the screening tool matching the age/level of students they support. School Pupil Service Teams will be trained to generate and interpret reports for individual students and subgroups.	Meeting artifacts and sign-in or attendance rosters will be kept on file.	tool and supplemental interventions as needed. The District Attendance and SEL Steering Committee will dedicate a portion of their twice monthly meetings to monitoring of the screening initiative.
	School Pupils Service Teams will meet no later than December 1 to analyze student data and assign individual and group interventions as warranted.	Each school will forward meeting minutes and summary reports indicating numbers of pupils in each Tier, to include number scheduled to participate in an intervention.	

	The District Attendance and SEL Steering Committee will survey School Pupil Service Teams (fall/spring) to gauge fidelity to the screening process and determine if process modifications or additional training is needed. School Pupil Service Teams determine subsequent follow-up screening and progress monitoring timelines using guidance provided in the District MTSS Handbook.	Schools will report administration windows or dates, along with numbers of students requiring follow-up screening.	
Develop District guidance and protocols to analyze student behavior/SEL needs and assign appropriate interventions.	A District Multi-Tiered System of Supports Handbook will be drafted, reviewed and finalized by a representative committee of District staff prior to the start of the school year. School Principals and Pupil Service Team members from each school will participate in Turnkey training to become familiar with the guidance and protocols contained in the MTSS handbook. School principals will review the Handbook with their faculties using	The completed handbook will be posted on the District website. Each school will provide the date of their faculty meeting, along with	Time within the school day must be dedicated to Team meetings and scheduling/delivering interventions for students. Funding for training and intervention materials needed will be provided.
	Handbook with their faculties, using presentation materials provided by the District Attendance and SEL Steering Committee.	their faculty meeting, along with questions or concerns which resulted.	

	Each school principal will be responsible for establishing a new Team or designate an existing Team to assess, enhance and manage the school's core program of tiered interventions. For doing so, all schools will use the SWPBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory as a guide. <u>TFI.pdf (umaryland.edu)</u> The Attendance and SEL Steering Committee will survey principals and School Teams to gather feedback on the efficacy of the MTSS handbook's content, and to gauge areas in need of improvement.	School Teams will complete the SWPBIS TFI a minimum of three times per year (it may be completed as frequently as every six weeks). Progress checks will be embedded within Attendance and SEL Steering Committee monthly meeting agendas. The Attendance and SEL Steering Committee will compile school feedback and create a plan for enhancements to MTSS guidance and protocols for the 2022 – 2023 school year.	
Involve all employees in the creation and maintenance of welcoming and affirming environments across all District facilities.	 Hold 3-hour orientation events at each school to welcome students and families back into a fulltime, in- person instructional setting (August 24 – 31, date to vary by school). Newly hired instructional staff will receive basic, entry-level training on Trauma-Informed Practices as part of New Teacher Orientation Week, August 23-26. The District Trauma-Informed Champion Team will be expanded to include parent, student, and school leader representation. 	School agendas and parent/family attendance data will be provided to the Superintendent.	The District will dedicate funds to contract with the National Federation of Just Communities of Western New York, The Niagara Alliance for Restorative Practice, and the University at Buffalo Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care.

The UB Trauma Team will provide all district schools with resources for building a positive, trauma-informed school climate (dialogue facilitation kits, messaging packages including videos, templates for signage and handouts for staff meetings.	will reflect ongoing activities which
The District Champion Team will form two subcommittees to ensure that all schools can build and sustain welcoming and trauma-informed school climate: <i>Sustainability and</i> <i>Training</i>	The Sustainability subcommittee will provide a 3-year plan which includes systemic benchmarks and responsible staff to ensure welcoming and trauma sensitive initiatives are maintained after the district's work with the University at Buffalo. The Training subcommittee will create
	a multi-year plan for maintaining school climate to include training for non-instructional staff (paraprofessionals, food service, transportation, clerical, etc.) and indoctrination of new staff on an annual basis.
Facilitators from the UB ITTIC will facilitate monthly, virtual meetings with District and School Champion Team members to share information, progress, and challenges throughout the school year.	A calendar for joint Champion Team meetings will be published in September, to include meeting dates through May 2022.

	The National Federation for Just Communities and the Niagara Alliance for Restorative Practice will work with District staff to plan and facilitate professional development opportunities that build awareness of issues surrounding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Emphasis will be placed on how these issues manifest themselves within a school system and the implications for student success or failure.	District leaders, along with the partners mentioned, will produce an amendment to the District Professional Development Plan which addresses DEI and contains supporting activities through August 2022. Restorative practices will be evidenced in at least 50% of district schools.	

Measuring Success

What will success look like for this Priority, and how will the District know if success has been achieved?

Provide quantitative data and/or qualitative descriptions of where the district strives to be at the end of the 2021-22 school year.

- The number of out of school suspensions will not exceed the total from the 2019-2020 school year
- The midpoint evaluation survey and benchmark data on trauma-informed climate, procedures, and policies, compared to the 2020 baseline, will show that all subscale scores will increase by 5% above the baseline

Spring 2022 District Stakeholder survey results will show:

- A 10% increase in school staff agreeing with the statement, "Most students are emotionally healthy."
- A 10% increase in the number of middle and high school students who agree with the statement, "I am able to concentrate and focus on school."
- A 10% increase in the number of elementary students who agree with the statement, "Students do not make threats against each other or get in fights based upon background or ethnicity."

Our Team's Process

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)
Capone, Marcia	Chief Information Officer	
Carella, Richard	Administrator for Curriculum and Instruction	
Fisher, Thomas	TOSA – District Office	
Holody, Rebecca	Administrator for School Business Services	
Jones, Cynthia	District Principal	Niagara Falls High School
Laurrie, Mark	Superintendent	
Massaro, Maria	Human Resources Administrator	
Rotella, Valerie	TOSA – District Office	
Sullivan, Catherine	TOSA District Office	
Wojton, Stanley	Elementary Principal	Cataract Elementary School

Meeting Dates

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

Meeting Date	Location
June 21, 2021	District Office
June 28, 2021	District Office
July 17, 2021	District Office
July 28, 2021	District Office

Districts with TSI Schools Only

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

Stakeholder group	How the perspectives of this group have been incorporated into the DCIP?
Teachers responsible for teaching each identified subgroup	Staff/Teacher Stakeholder Survey
Parents with children from each identified subgroup	Parent and Family Engagement Survey, District Parent Focus Group, Interview with the parent of a struggling student: Mrs. Margot Stearns, 79 th Street Elementary
Secondary Schools: Students from each identified subgroup	Student Voice Surveys – Middle and High School

Submission Assurances

Directions

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

- 1. X 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. X The DCIP will be implemented no later than the beginning of the first day of regular student attendance.
- 3. X Professional development will be provided to teachers and school leaders that will fully support the strategic efforts described within this plan.
- 4. X The DCIP will be made widely available through public means, such as posting on the Internet, distribution through the media, and distribution through public agencies.
- 5. X 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. X Meaningful time for collaboration will be used to review and analyze data in order to inform and improve district policies, procedures, and instructional practices.

Submission Instructions

All Districts: Submit to <u>DCIP@nysed.gov</u> by July 30, 2021, the following documents:

- 1. DCIP Planning Document
- 2. DCIP

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).