



# City School District of the City of Niagara Falls

---

630 66<sup>th</sup> Street ◇ Niagara Falls, New York 14304  
(716) 286-4211 ◇ FAX: (716) 286-4283

July 28, 2017

To the Parent/Guardian of:

Dear Parent or Guardian:

You may be aware that Gaskill Preparatory School has been identified as a Focus school by the New York State Education Department. State standards, and curriculum and assessment expectations, have risen dramatically over the past few years. As a result, fewer students across New York State are scoring at proficient or advanced levels on State ELA and Math assessments. The Niagara Falls City School District believes all of our pupils are capable of meeting the higher standards, and is dedicated to providing the time and resources necessary to increase student achievement.

Once identified, schools must remain in Focus status for three consecutive school years. This designation is based on:

- Student achievement on State assessments
- Student growth, or improvement in test scores, over time
- Achievement by subgroups of students, as compared to their peers
- Formulas which predict if students are on track to graduate

The staff at Gaskill Preparatory has created an improvement plan, known as a School Comprehensive Education Plan, which outlines action steps for school leaders, teachers, counselors and other staff, which will result in improved achievement for all pupils. You may have already participated in this effort, by taking the *Parent Engagement Survey* our district administered in May and June. You can learn more about how Focus schools are identified and the supports they receive by visiting the New York State Education Department website at: <http://www.nysed.gov/>.

The Niagara Falls City School District has already taken several steps to improve student learning in all schools, including Gaskill Preparatory School. We have aligned all District curriculum to new State standards, increased training and professional development opportunities for teacher, and offered after school Booster classes for all pupils. As a result, our students are already showing accelerated growth in specific areas of ELA and Math. This school year, after school Booster classes will continue, and other programming to support students' social and emotional well-being will begin.

Students who attend a Focus school, may, if another option exists, transfer to a school within the district that is not in Focus status. Currently, both Gaskill Preparatory and LaSalle Preparatory are designated Focus Schools, therefore no transfer option is available at this time.

Please let me know if you have any questions about our District's efforts to improve or how parents can support those efforts. Thank you for all you do to support your child's learning and Gaskill Preparatory School.

Sincerely,

Sheila Smith  
Principal