New York State
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Knowledge › Skill › Opportunity

District Comprehensive Improvement Plan

2026-27

District	Superintendent
Waterloo Central School District	Ms. Sarah Cupelli

Section 1: Building a Shared Understanding for Teaching and Learning

Purpose: Ground the plan and support coherence and consistency by clarifying the district's shared understanding of what high-quality Tier 1 instruction looks like.

High-Quality, Tier 1 Instruction: *What is the District's vision for what we expect high-quality, equitable and adaptive Tier 1 instruction to look and feel like in every classroom?*	*At Waterloo Central School District, high-quality Tier 1 instruction is the foundation of academic success and ensures all students experience rigorous, engaging, and equitable learning every day. Instruction is standards-aligned, relationship-centered, and responsive to student needs through ongoing assessment, adaptive instruction, and differentiated support without reducing rigor. Classrooms emphasize active learning, critical thinking, collaboration, and culturally responsive practices that support and empower learners. Educators utilize PLC and MTSS processes to continuously refine instruction and improve student outcomes. Our classrooms should look purposeful and engaging while feeling inclusive, supportive, and focused on growth for every student.*

Section 2: District Actions to Support Structures

This section of the DCIP is devoted toward actions the **DISTRICT WILL DO** to support the strengthening of the same structures schools are strengthening in their SCEPs.

District Actions to Support Teacher Learning Core Structures

Districts have specific roles and responsibilities separate from the school to ensure that their schools have strong structures for Teacher Learning:

- **Fund and staff instructional coaching positions**, including ratios that allow coaches to work deeply with teachers rather than being spread thin across too many schools or roles.
- **Invest in content expertise** by hiring or contracting subject-matter specialists who can support coaches and schools in high-leverage content areas, especially where internal capacity is uneven.
- **Build districtwide learning communities for instructional coaches**, providing ongoing training in facilitation, reflective questioning, adult learning, and content-specific pedagogy.
- **Provide training, ongoing support, and role clarity for instructional coaches**, ensuring they have content expertise aligned to district instructional priorities and strong skills in supporting adult learning through questioning, facilitation, data analysis, and reflection.
- **Fund and protect coaching roles** by limiting non-instructional assignments and compliance work that dilute their impact.
- **Create access** to instructional experts, demonstration classrooms, and shared resources for schools without in-house coaching capacity.
- **Provide substitute coverage or release time** so teachers can participate in learning cycles, peer observations, lesson study, or coaching without disrupting instruction.
- **Develop shared tools and protocols** for collaborative planning, student work analysis, and coaching cycles, reducing the burden on schools to invent their own systems.
- **Align master scheduling guidance and staffing allocations** to protect collaborative planning time during the instructional day.
- I**nvest in multi-year professional learning** tied to a small set of instructional priorities rather than rotating annual initiatives.
- **Provide shared district tools, protocols, and learning resources** that anchor teacher learning in daily instructional work rather than stand-alone trainings.

What specific activities will the district pursue to strengthen the Teacher Learning Structures around Teacher Collaborative Time and Teacher Access to Experts?

DISTRICT ACTION	METHODS	SUCCESS CRITERIA
What activity will we pursue?	What does this district level support/action entail? What will implementation look like in our district?	What is our goal for doing this? What data will we collect and review to determine if we are on track to meet this goal? What improvements do we hope to see if we have met this goal?
Provide shared district tools, protocols, and learning resources that anchor teacher learning	District-level support for teacher learning will focus on creating coherent, job-embedded professional learning structures	By June 2027, all four buildings will strengthen teacher learning and high-quality Tier 1 instruction through consistent

in daily instructional work rather than stand-alone trainings.	that strengthen high-quality Tier 1 instruction across all four buildings. • The district will establish common instructional expectations while providing building-specific, personalized professional development aligned to student data, school needs, and district priorities. • The District Professional Development Plan will intentionally embed higher-order thinking skills and strategies, higher-order questioning and discussion, productive struggle, accountable talk, standards-based vertical academic expectations, explicit instructional routines for high-quality Tier 1 instruction, student engagement strategies, and Panorama Playbook resources. • Building-level collaboration teams and structured colleague protocols will support educators in analyzing data, identifying common problems of practice, sharing successful strategies, and refining instruction through PLC and MTSS processes. • District leadership will revise the Monthly Expectations Chart and embed standing instructional learning agenda items into faculty meetings to strengthen consistency, reflection, collaboration, and continuous instructional improvement district-wide. **Evidence-Based Support** • Implement instructional coaching, peer observation, and lesson study cycles focused on reflective practice and high-quality Tier 1 instruction aligned to NYS Teaching Standard 3.4. • Utilize PLC and instructional leadership team protocols to analyze walkthrough trends, student engagement, and instructional practices to identify strengths and next steps.	use of inquiry, reflection, and collaborative instructional improvement practices. As measured through walkthrough data aligned to NYS Teaching Standard 3.4 and staff feedback data, the district will increase evidence of varied instructional approaches, resources, technologies, student engagement strategies, and differentiated practices across classrooms, while achieving a staff response rate of 75% or higher on the statement: “I engage in inquiry and reflection routines (e.g., peer observation, lesson study, short-cycle tests of change) to improve my practice.”

	• Provide ongoing, job-embedded professional learning with collaborative application time during faculty meetings, PLCs, and district professional development days.	

District Actions to Support Rigorous, Standards-Aligned Instruction

Districts have specific roles and responsibilities separate from the school to ensure that their schools have strong structures for Rigorous, Standards-Aligned Instruction:

- **Adopt and maintain high-quality instructional materials** and invest in training, curriculum mapping, and implementation supports so schools are not left to interpret standards independently.
- **Ensure teachers have access to low-floor, high-ceiling tasks** that are capable of stretching student thinking.
- **Fund curriculum implementation supports**, including unit planning guidance, assessment systems, and task banks aligned to district expectations for rigor.
- **Build leadership capacity** so principals and leadership teams understand instructional priorities deeply enough to support, monitor, and reinforce them without reverting to compliance-driven practices.
- **Fund district-level instructional expertise** to steward task quality, curriculum use, and grade-level rigor over time, not just during adoption cycles.
- **Provide districtwide data systems** that allow leadership teams to examine instructional patterns across classrooms and schools.
- **Coordinate central office roles** (curriculum, assessment, special education, multilingual learners) to ensure guidance to schools reinforces a single instructional vision.
- **Provide tools, protocols, and exemplars** that instructional leadership teams can use to examine curriculum use, task quality, student work, and patterns of instruction.
- **Protect schools from initiative overload** by prioritizing a limited number of instructional commitments and sunsetting low-impact or competing demands.

What specific activities will the district pursue to strengthen the Instructional Leadership Team Core Structures around Rigorous, Standards-Aligned Instruction?

DISTRICT ACTION	METHODS	SUCCESS CRITERIA
What activity will we pursue?	What does this district level support/action entail? What will implementation look like in our district?	What is our goal for doing this? What data will we collect and review to determine if we are on track to meet this goal? What improvements do we hope to see if we have met this goal?
Provide tools, protocols, and exemplars that instructional leadership teams can use to examine curriculum use, task quality,	District-level support for rigorous, standards-aligned instruction will provide instructional leadership teams with common tools, protocols, and exemplars to examine curriculum implementation, task quality,	By June 2027, instructional leadership teams and teachers across all four buildings will consistently implement rigorous, standards-aligned

student work, and patterns of instruction.	student work, and instructional practices across all buildings. • The district will implement common walkthrough data review protocols to identify trends, strengthen alignment, and support data-informed instructional decisions. • District leadership will prioritize coherence by protecting staff from initiative overload and maintaining focus on high-impact Tier 1 instructional practices. • Instructional leadership team meetings will intentionally model components of high-quality Tier 1 instruction, including higher-order questioning, student discourse, productive struggle, and standards-aligned learning tasks. **Evidence-Based Support:** • Common walkthrough "look-fors" aligned to district Tier 1 instructional expectations. • PLC and leadership team protocols for analyzing student work, rigor, and instructional patterns. • Calibration opportunities for administrators and teacher leaders to strengthen consistency in feedback and instructional expectations	Tier 1 instructional practices through the use of high-quality low-floor/high-ceiling tasks, common instructional protocols, walkthrough tools, and collaborative analysis of curriculum, student work, and instructional practices. As measured through walkthrough data, PLC and leadership team artifacts, student work analysis, and district benchmark assessments, the district will increase evidence of higher-order thinking, productive struggle, student discourse, and cognitively rigorous learning tasks in classrooms by at least 20% from Fall 2026 baseline data. This work will strengthen instructional consistency, equitable access to grade-level learning, and student engagement while improving overall academic growth and achievement district-wide.
Ensure teachers have access to low-floor, high-ceiling tasks that are capable of stretching student thinking.	District-level support for rigorous, standards-aligned instruction will ensure all teachers have access to high-quality, low-floor/high-ceiling tasks that promote critical thinking, productive struggle, and meaningful student engagement. • The district will provide professional learning focused on designing, selecting, and facilitating rigorous learning experiences aligned to NYS Learning Standards and vertically aligned expectations. • Implementation will include grade-level exemplars, instructional modeling, visual supports, and shared district resources that demonstrate effective Tier 1	

	instructional practices and cognitively demanding tasks. • District and building leaders will support implementation through collaborative planning, PLC discussions, instructional walkthroughs, and reflection protocols focused on student thinking and task rigor. **Evidence-Based Support:** • Instructional coaching cycles focused on maintaining cognitive demand and effective questioning strategies. • PLC protocols and student work analysis to evaluate rigor, accessibility, and student thinking. • District walkthrough "look-fors" aligned to higher-order thinking, student discourse, and high-quality Tier 1 instruction.	

District Actions to Ensure Every Student Thrives

Districts have specific roles and responsibilities separate from the school to ensure that their schools have strong structures to ensure Every Student Thrives:

- **Fund and allocate** counselors, social workers, psychologists, nurses, interventionists, and family liaisons based on student need rather than uniform staffing formulas.
- **Build and maintain** integrated data systems that allow schools to view academic, behavioral, attendance, and support data together over time.
- **Develop and support** a districtwide MTSS framework with clear referral pathways, intervention options, and progress-monitoring tools.
- **Design and operate** district-managed intervention, credit recovery, reengagement, and alternative pathway programs that schools cannot sustain independently.
- **Expand and fund** access to advanced coursework, enrichment, arts, athletics, and career pathways so opportunity is not determined by school assignment.
- **Coordinate and fund** partnerships with community-based organizations, health providers, and mental health agencies to address student needs beyond the schoolhouse.
- **Build and support** early warning systems that help schools identify students needing additional academic, social, or behavioral support before gaps widen.
- **Fund translation and engagement infrastructure** so schools can communicate consistently with families across languages, cultures, and contexts.
- **Provide guidance, tools, and oversight** to help schools monitor equity in school connectedness, belonging, access, supports, and outcomes across student groups.
- **Stabilize student support systems** across years by protecting funding for counseling, mental health, and enrichment even during leadership or budget transitions.

What specific activities will the district pursue to strengthen the Core Structures necessary for Every Student to Thrive?

DISTRICT ACTION	METHODS	SUCCESS CRITERIA
What activity will we pursue?	What does this district level support/action entail? What will implementation look like in our district?	What is our goal for doing this? What data will we collect and review to determine if we are on track to meet this goal? What improvements do we hope to see if we have met this goal?
Develop and support a districtwide MTSS framework with clear referral pathways, intervention options, and progress-monitoring tools.	District-level support for ensuring every student thrives will focus on strengthening and sustaining a cohesive districtwide Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework across all four buildings. • The district will establish clear referral pathways, intervention processes, and progress-monitoring tools to ensure timely identification, intervention, and support for students' academic, behavioral, attendance, and social-emotional needs. • Ongoing professional learning will support staff in the effective use of district platforms and MTSS systems, with embedded collaborative team application time during professional development half-days to strengthen implementation and consistency across buildings. • District and building teams will utilize common protocols, data review processes, and collaborative problem-solving structures to monitor student progress, evaluate interventions, and adjust supports based on student need. **Evidence-Based Support:** • Utilize collaborative data team protocols during PLC and MTSS meetings to review intervention effectiveness and student progress-monitoring data. • Provide ongoing training and coaching on district MTSS platforms,	By June 2027, all four buildings will consistently implement the districtwide MTSS framework, including common referral pathways, intervention processes, progress-monitoring tools, and collaborative data review protocols to support students' academic, behavioral, attendance, and social-emotional needs. As measured through MTSS artifacts, Panorama usage reports, Panorama Intervention Plans, SAEBRS/MySAEBRS data, intervention tracking, and progress-monitoring outcomes, the district will increase timely intervention implementation and documented progress-monitoring practices by at least 20% from Fall 2026 baseline data. systems and Panorama tools effectively, and equitable access to interventions district-wide.

	progress-monitoring tools, and Panorama Playbook resources. • Establish consistent districtwide MTSS referral timelines, intervention menus, and decision-making protocols to ensure equitable implementation across all buildings.	

District Actions to Support Attendance

Districts have specific roles and responsibilities separate from the school to ensure that their schools have strong structures to support Attendance:

- **Build and fund** early warning systems that concern flag attendance alongside indicators of mental health, disengagement, and unmet student needs.
- **Establish and support** districtwide attendance response frameworks that integrate academic, social, and mental health problem-solving rather than punitive approaches.
- **Fund and coordinate** school-based and districtwide mental health services, including counselors, social workers, clinicians, and partnerships with licensed providers.
- **Create referral pathways** that allow schools to connect students quickly to mental health supports when school avoidance is linked to anxiety, trauma, or other clinical needs.
- **Develop and sustain** community schools that integrate mental health care, family supports, enrichment, and reengagement services on or near school campuses.
- **Fund districtwide access to mental health supports** so attendance interventions address underlying school avoidance, not just compliance.
- **Coordinate cross-agency partnerships** with health departments, mental health providers, and community organizations to extend services beyond what schools can offer alone.
- **Invest in reengagement options** such as credit recovery, flexible scheduling, therapeutic programs, and alternative pathways for students with persistent attendance challenges.
- **Use attendance data as a learning signal to adjust** transportation, scheduling, policy, and support structures rather than to enforce compliance.
- **Align transportation, scheduling, and policy decisions** to reduce structural barriers to attendance that schools cannot address on their own.
- **Fund family outreach and navigation supports** to help caregivers understand attendance expectations and access needed services.
- **Monitor attendance patterns and outcomes** by student group to identify inequities and adjust mental health, reengagement, and community school investments accordingly.
- **Fund and provide districtwide training for front-facing staff** (e.g., bus drivers, secretaries, attendance clerks, safety staff) on supportive, non-punitive attendance messaging and responses.
- **Establish clear, districtwide expectations** for how lateness, absences, and re-entry are handled so students and families experience consistent, welcoming responses across schools.

What specific activities will the district pursue to strengthen the Core Structures necessary for Attendance?

DISTRICT ACTION	METHODS	SUCCESS CRITERIA
What activity will we pursue?	What does this district level support/action entail? What will implementation look like in our district?	What is our goal for doing this? What data will we collect and review to determine if we are on track to meet this goal? What improvements do we hope to see if we have met this goal?
• Establish clear, districtwide expectations for how lateness, absences, and re-entry are handled so students and families experience consistent, welcoming responses across schools.	District-level support for attendance will focus on establishing consistent, student-centered expectations and responses related to lateness, absences, and re-entry procedures across all four buildings. • The District MTSS Team will develop a districtwide attendance protocol that reflects the accessibility, developmental needs, and operational dynamics of each building while maintaining consistent expectations and supportive practices for students and families. • Implementation will include common attendance procedures, communication protocols, re-entry supports, and data review processes designed to promote belonging, reduce barriers to attendance, and strengthen family partnerships. • District and building teams will utilize attendance data, MTSS processes, and collaborative problem-solving structures to identify trends, provide timely interventions, and monitor student progress. **Evidence-Based Support:** • Establish tiered attendance intervention protocols aligned to MTSS processes and chronic absenteeism indicators. • Utilize attendance data dashboards and regular MTSS team reviews to	By June 2027, all four buildings will consistently implement districtwide attendance protocols for lateness, absences, and re-entry practices through aligned MTSS processes, common communication expectations, and tiered attendance interventions. As measured through attendance dashboards, MTSS artifacts, chronic absenteeism rates, and intervention tracking, the district will reduce chronic absenteeism by at least 10% from Fall 2026 baseline data.

	identify patterns, barriers, and intervention needs. • Provide staff professional learning on relationship-centered attendance practices, restorative re-entry supports, and family engagement strategies.	

Section 3: Addressing Inequities

Districts will need to complete the DCIP Equity Analysis prior to completing this section. The purpose of this section is to ensure that the students in schools identified as CSI/ATSI/TSI are given the same opportunities for success as their peers.

There are three components of this section:

1. Staffing Inequity (required)
2. Enrollment/Participation Inequity (requited)
3. Funding Inequity (optional)

Districts will need to address at least one staffing inequity and one enrollment/participation inequity. In addition, any inequity in specific data points, noted below, MUST be addressed.

The resulting plan for Staffing Inequity and Enrollment/Participation Inequity will need to cover both the actions the district will pursue to reduce the gaps AND the support the district will provide the schools where there are gaps knowing that these inequities exist. Districts can copy and paste the table if they are addressing more than one inequity.

Districts that do not have any data points in which there is a difference between schools can skip this section. **All districts must submit their completed DCIP Equity Analysis with their DCIP.**

Staffing Inequity

Identify how the district will address at least one staffing inequity between schools identified through the needs assessment:

We recognize that there is an inequity in the % of teachers w < 3yrs exp, and to mitigate this, we will implement a comprehensive support and retention system that includes targeted mentoring, instructional coaching, collaborative Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), common districtwide instructional expectations, and differentiated professional learning opportunities. We will also strategically recruit, place, and retain highly effective educators, while providing additional leadership support and resources to buildings with higher concentrations of novice teachers. Through ongoing monitoring of staffing patterns, teacher effectiveness data, and retention trends, Waterloo CSD will work to ensure that all students have equitable access to high-quality instruction regardless of school assignment.

Inequity	**% of teachers w < 3yrs exp**	
Actions to reduce the Data Gap	**Person Responsible**	**When**
Develop and implement a comprehensive support and retention system that includes instructional coaching and differentiated professional learning opportunities.	Superintendent ASI Instructional Coach Mentor Coordinator	July 2026-June 2027

Strategically recruit, place, and retain highly effective educators, while providing additional leadership support and resources to buildings with higher concentrations of novice teachers.	Cabinet Building Administrators	July 2026-June 2027
Monitor staffing patterns and retention trends	Administrative Leadership Team	July 2026-June 2027
Knowing that these gaps exist now, how will we provide additional support to the affected schools	**Person Responsible**	**When**
Additional Administrator	Superintendent	July 1, 2026
Instructional Coaching Cycles	Instructional Coach	July 2026-June 2027

Enrollment/Participation Inequity

Identify how the district will address at least one enrollment/participation inequity between schools identified through the needs assessment:

We recognize that an inequity exists between the number of referrals written in the Waterloo Middle School versus the 3 other schools within the district, with a notable difference between WMS and Lafayette Intermediate (46% difference in referral rate) and between WMS and WHS (28% difference in referral rate). To mitigate this, we will implement a comprehensive, data-driven behavioral support system that emphasizes consistent expectations, restorative and proactive practices, high-quality Tier 1 behavioral supports, staff training in classroom management and de-escalation strategies, and regular analysis of referral data to identify patterns, root causes, and disproportionalities. Building and district leadership teams will monitor referral trends, provide targeted interventions and coaching, and ensure that behavioral expectations are taught, reinforced, and applied consistently across all schools to create equitable, supportive learning environments for all students.

Inequity	**Office Referrals**	
Actions to reduce the Data Gap	**Person Responsible**	**When**
Develop and implement a comprehensive, data-driven behavioral support system that emphasizes consistent expectations, restorative and proactive practices, high-quality Tier 1 behavioral supports, staff training in classroom management and de-escalation strategies, and regular analysis of referral data to identify patterns, root causes, and disproportionalities.	ASI Building Administrators Mentor Coordinator MTSS Coordinator MTSS Coaches IT Coordinator	July 2026-June 2027
Monitor referral trends, provide targeted interventions and coaching, and ensure that behavioral expectations are taught, reinforced, and applied consistently across all schools to create equitable, supportive learning environments for all students.	ASI Building Administrators MTSS Coordinator MTSS Coaches	July 2026-June 2027

Section 3: Addressing Inequities

Knowing that these gaps exist now, how will we provide additional support to the affected schools	Person Responsible	When
Identify students approaching the threshold (1–2 office referrals) and intervene early through Tier II/MTSS monitoring.	MTSS PBIS Tier 2 Team Grade Level Teams	Biweekly
Facilitate calibration sessions for staff using referral scenarios to improve consistency in discipline decisions, as needed.	Assistant Principals Dean of Students	September 2026 Ongoing