



New York State
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity

District Comprehensive Improvement Plan

2026-27

District	Superintendent
City School District of the City of Niagara Falls	Stanley Wojton

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: <i>What is the District's definition for what we expect high-quality, equitable and adaptive Tier 1 instruction to look and feel like in every classroom?</i>	Instruction in PreK – Grade 12 classrooms is consistently aligned as we transition to the NYS Portrait of a Graduate. Students can articulate learning targets, success criteria, and how their learning connects to real-world skills and Portrait of a Graduate competencies: • Academically Prepared • Creative Innovator • Critical Thinker • Effective Communicator • Global Citizen • Reflective & Future Focused Instruction demonstrates student ownership through active engagement in discussion, reading, writing, problem solving, and collaborative learning. Students regularly engage in self-reflection to assess their learning, progress, and next steps. Teachers routinely use evidence of student learning to adjust instruction & pacing while supporting & maintaining cognitively demanding learning. Multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and historically marginalized students' cultures, experiences and needs are incorporated in every classroom. Observation, walkthrough, and coaching data show consistent implementation of equitable, student-centered, and adaptive Tier 1 instruction across all classrooms.
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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.
- **Invest 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?
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.	1. Identify Priority Content Gaps - Use data (student performance, walkthroughs, coaching feedback) to identify: - High-leverage content areas (e.g., foundational literacy, math reasoning) - Where internal capacity is inconsistent across schools - Prioritize areas where teachers and coaches need deeper content-specific support 2. Develop and Support Subject Matter Specialists - Invest in: - District-based content specialists/ Coaches/ Teacher Leaders (e.g., literacy, math, ENL, special education) - External experts or vendors when internal expertise is limited (ie. BOCES Instructional Resource Team, Curriculum vendors)	Goal: Build district capacity in high-leverage content areas by providing specialized expertise to support coaches and schools, ensuring consistent, high-quality instruction across all classrooms. Data: Coaching artifacts and feedback quality; evidence of specialist support (training, co-planning, modeling); teacher implementation of content-specific practices; walkthrough data aligned to instructional priorities; student performance in targeted content areas. Improvements: Stronger content-specific coaching and instructional support; consistent and rigorous implementation of curriculum and practices; increased teacher confidence and effectiveness; improved

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	3. Clear Roles Focused on Instructional Support are in place: • Specialists: ○ Support (not replace) instructional coaches ○ Focus on content quality, curriculum use, and pedagogy 4. Integrate Specialists into Coaching Systems • Specialists: ○ Work alongside administrators, instructional coaches & teachers in coaching cycles ○ Support co-planning, modeling, and debriefing lessons • Provide content-specific support for: ○ Lesson design ○ Task rigor ○ Student work analysis 5. Build Capacity of Coaches and Leaders • Use specialists to: ○ Train instructional coaches & teachers in content-specific pedagogy ○ Support principals in identifying high-quality instruction 6. Provide Demonstration and Shared Resources • Create access to: ○ Model classrooms and demonstration lessons ○ Curriculum materials and task banks including new	student outcomes in targeted content areas.
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	resources such as Go ThinkTech. • Ensure all schools—especially those with limited internal capacity—can access high-quality resources. 7. Align to District Instructional Priorities • Ensure all work: ○ Reinforces the same district instructional vision and “look-fors”. ○ Aligns to curriculum and assessment systems. 8. Monitor Impact and Adjust • Review: ○ Coaching quality and consistency ○ Teacher implementation of content-specific practices ○ Student outcomes	
Develop shared tools and protocols for collaborative planning, student work analysis, and coaching cycles, reducing the burden on schools to invent their own systems.	1. Design Common Tools and Templates • Develop districtwide tools for: ○ Collaborative planning (unit/lesson planning templates) ○ Student work analysis (structured analysis forms, guiding questions) ○ Coaching cycles (goal setting, observation, feedback templates) ○ Data Dashboards • Ensure tools are: ○ Ready-to-use ○ Aligned to instructional priorities and look-fors included in the District’s definition of high-quality, equitable and adaptive Tier 1 instruction	Goal: Provide shared, districtwide tools and protocols that enable consistent, high-quality collaborative planning, student work analysis, and coaching across all schools, reducing variability and building instructional coherence. Data: Artifacts from use of planning templates and protocols; coaching cycle documentation; evidence of student work analysis; consistency of practices across schools; walkthrough data aligned to instructional priorities; feedback from Administration and teacher leaders on usability.

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	2. Create Clear, Repeatable Protocols • Define consistent protocols for: ○ PLC/collaborative planning meetings ○ Student work analysis conversations ○ Coaching cycles (plan → observe → debrief → adjust) ○ DAP/mini-DAP • Include: ○ Step-by-step routines ○ Roles (facilitator, recorder, coach) ○ Expected outcomes 3. Align to Instructional Priorities and Data Systems • Ensure all tools and protocols: ○ Reflect district instructional priorities and “look-fors” ○ Connect to data systems and dashboards • Integrate: ○ Assessment data ○ Walkthrough data ○ Student work evidence 4. Train Leadership Teams and Coaches • Provide training on: ○ How to use and facilitate protocols ○ How to interpret student work and instructional evidence 5. Integrate into Ongoing School Structures • Embed tools and protocols into: ○ PLCs and grade-level meetings, common planning time ○ Data meetings	Improvements: Consistent and effective collaborative planning and analysis; improved quality of coaching and feedback; greater alignment of instructional practices across schools; and improved student outcomes through stronger Tier 1 instruction.
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	○ Coaching cycles and walkthrough feedback ● Ensure they are part of: ○ Regular routines (not one-time initiatives) 6. Provide Ongoing Support and Refinement ● Use district staff (Administrators, coaches, specialists) to: ○ Support implementation ○ Troubleshoot challenges ● Revise tools based on: ○ School feedback ○ Evidence of impact (mid-year check-in) 7. Monitor for Consistency and Impact ● Review: ○ Use of protocols across schools ○ Quality of collaborative planning and analysis conversations ○ School Dashboard presentations at Evolution meetings	
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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 sunseting 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?
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.	District level support will entail: 1. Re-establishing and calibrating clear instructional “look-fors” across schools based on the District’s definition of high-quality, equitable and adaptive Tier 1 instruction. 2. Providing job-embedded coaching and leadership academies focused on instructional practice. 3. Shift walkthroughs and monitoring from compliance to evidence-based coaching cycles. 4. Implement regular data inquiry routines linking instruction to student outcomes utilizing the NFCSD Assessment handbook as a tool. 5. Monitor administrative and teacher leadership effectiveness through artifacts of practice and calibrated observations.	Goal: Build leadership capacity to deeply understand and lead instructional priorities, ensuring monitoring and support focus on coaching, feedback, and instructional improvement rather than compliance. Data: Walkthrough data aligned to look-fors; evidence of feedback/coaching cycles; calibration data; teacher perception surveys on clarity and feedback; student performance and work samples. Improvement: Increased leadership consistency in identifying and supporting high-quality instruction; improved feedback quality; stronger teacher implementation and clarity; improved student outcomes.

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Coordinate central office roles (curriculum, assessment, special education, multilingual learners) to ensure guidance to schools reinforces a single instructional vision.	1. Communicate and focus on the NFCSD's Definition of High Quality Tier 1 Instruction. • Focus on a small, non-negotiable set of instructional priorities ("look-fors") grounded in high-quality, equitable, and adaptive Tier 1 instruction. • Ensure all departments (curriculum, assessment, special education, ENL) align guidance, tools, materials, and expectations to these priorities. • Use consistent, common language across all communications to schools. 2. Establish Cross-Department Leadership and Alignment Structures • Continue a Central Office instructional cabinet with shared ownership of priorities. • Regular meetings will serve to: ○ Align guidance, tools, and materials before release ○ Eliminate conflicting expectations ○ Vet new initiatives and ensure coherence prior to rollout 3. Develop and Align Common Instructional Tools and Exemplars • Create or refine district-wide tools aligned to instructional priorities, including: ○ Curriculum alignment, pacing, and rigor ○ Task quality and cognitive demand	Goal: By the end of the school year, ≥85% of classrooms will consistently demonstrate district-defined instructional "look-fors," with 100% of schools implementing aligned tools and protocols across PLCs, leadership teams, and coaching cycles. Data: Walkthrough data aligned to instructional "look-fors" (monthly). PLC artifacts (agendas, minutes, student work analysis). Coaching logs and PD alignment evidence. Principal feedback on clarity and coherence (quarterly). Common formative and benchmark assessment data (quarterly) Improvement: Increased consistency of instructional practices across classrooms and schools. Stronger alignment between curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Improved quality of student work and evidence of grade-level rigor. Positive trends in student achievement on district and state assessments.
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	○ Student work analysis (evidence of learning and misconceptions) ○ Instructional patterns and consistency of practice • Provide high-quality exemplars (annotated lessons, student work, strong vs. weak practice) with clear “look-fors” • Ensure consistent use of shared tools, assessment frameworks, and data analysis tools 4. Establish Clear, Repeatable Protocols for Use in Schools • Provide structured protocols for: ○ Curriculum review ○ Task analysis ○ Student work analysis ○ Instructional rounds and walkthroughs • Support the consistent use of protocols in PLCs, common planning, data meetings, and walkthrough cycles. • Train leadership teams to facilitate protocols and interpret evidence through calibration and modeling. 5. Coordinate and Deliver Integrated Support to Schools • Provide aligned, cross-department support (curriculum, special education, ENL) rather than siloed efforts. • Align coaching, professional development, and technical assistance to instructional priorities and tools	
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	• Utilize co-led sessions and modeling to build shared understanding and capacity 6.Embed Tools and Practices into Ongoing Systems • Integrate tools and protocols into: ○ Leadership team meetings ○ Faculty and department meetings ○ PLCs and common planning time ○ Walkthrough and coaching cycles • Ensure continuous use of evidence to revisit and refine practice, including SCEP mid-point check-ins 7.Monitor for Alignment, Coherence, and Impact • Review communications, PD agendas, and coaching focus areas for alignment to priorities • Collect principal feedback on clarity and coherence of expectations • Monitor use and effectiveness of tools and protocols through student work, instructional evidence, and leadership team analysis • Adjust centrally to maintain coherence and effectiveness 8.Prioritize and Streamline Initiatives • Maintain a focused set of instructional commitments aligned to the district vision • Ensure all tools, supports, and expectations reinforce—not compete with—the instructional vision	
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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?
Support a districtwide MTSS framework with clear referral pathways, intervention options, and progress-monitoring tools.	1.Communicate a clear MTSS Framework to support school's SCEP Key Strategies for Every Student Thrives. - Communicate districtwide our: - Tiered support model (Tier 1, 2, 3) - Clear definitions of academic, behavioral, and SEL supports - Provide non-negotiables and expectations (e.g., entry/exit criteria, frequency of interventions). - Continue monthly districtwide MTSS Committee meetings to share best practices and resources to support students and families. - Continue to partner with the University at Buffalo's Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care to: - update and utilize the yearly Trauma Informed Toolkit at each school - Maintain and support Student Champion Teams, School Liaisons and Families 2.Communicate clear referral pathways:	Goal: A coherent districtwide MTSS framework with clear referral pathways, aligned interventions, and consistent progress-monitoring systems to ensure timely, data-driven support for all students. Data: Universal screening (BASC3) and progress-monitoring data (AIMSWeb); referral and intervention tracking; MTSS team artifacts; fidelity checks; student academic, behavioral, and attendance indicators (EveryDay Labs). Improvement: Timely and consistent identification of student needs; improved fidelity of interventions; coordination of supports; and improved student academic, behavioral, and attendance outcomes.

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- Communicate standardized processes for:
 - Identifying student needs (screeners, data triggers)
 - Moving students into interventions
 - START referrals and meetings
 - When and how to use each intervention
- Ensure pathways are consistent across schools

3. Define and align intervention options:

- Curate & communicate an approved menu of:
 - Evidence-based academic interventions
 - Behavioral/SEL supports
- Align interventions to:
 - Identified needs (e.g., foundational literacy, math reasoning, attendance, behavior)
 - Provide after school academic support & remediation sessions provided by NFCSD teachers
 - Provide bussing home for eligible students who participate in support & remediation after school sessions.

4. Provide Progress-Monitoring Tools

- Select consistent tools for:
 - Universal screening
 - Ongoing progress monitoring
- Define:
 - Frequency of monitoring

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	○ Decision rules for adjusting supports • Ensure data is accessible through shared systems or dashboards 5.Build School-Based Team Structures. • Provide support to schools to continue: ○ MTSS/data teams with defined roles • Provide protocols for: ○ START meetings ○ Data meetings ○ Intervention planning ○ Progress review cycles 6.Train and Support Implementation • Provide PD and coaching on: ○ Using data to identify needs ○ Selecting and implementing interventions ○ Monitoring progress and making adjustments • Ensure training is aligned across departments (curriculum, special ed, ENL) 7.Monitor Fidelity and Effectiveness • Review: ○ Use of referral pathways ○ Implementation of interventions ○ Progress-monitoring practices • Use data to: ○ Identify schools needing support ○ Adjust district tools and guidance	
Coordinate and fund partnerships with	1.Identify needs and map community assets.	Goal: Establish a coherent, districtwide system of

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community-based organizations, health providers, and mental health agencies to address student needs beyond the schoolhouse.	• Conduct an internal Districtwide needs assessment (academic, health, mental health, family support). • Map available community resources (health centers, nonprofits, mental health providers, etc.) & use this to identify service gaps and priority partnerships. 2.Establish shared vision and partnership goals. • Define how partnerships support the District’s instructional and whole-child vision. • Align partners around: ○ Priority student groups ○ Expected outcomes (attendance, engagement, health, etc.) • Ensure partnerships are integrated into district and school improvement plans 3.Formalize Partnerships. • Develop formal agreements (MOUs) that include: ○ Roles and responsibilities ○ Services provided ○ Data sharing and confidentiality expectations ○ Funding/reimbursement structures 4.Coordinate Services and Integrate into Schools. • Treat schools as service hubs • Integrate services such as: ○ Mental health counseling	academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports by implementing a clear MTSS framework and coordinated community partnerships to ensure timely, equitable, and comprehensive support for student needs. Data: MTSS referral, tier, and intervention data; universal screening and progress-monitoring results; fidelity of implementation measures; MTSS team artifacts; partnership agreements and service utilization data; attendance, behavior, and academic indicators; feedback from schools, families, and partners. Improvement: More consistent identification and support of student needs; increased fidelity and effectiveness of interventions; stronger coordination between school-based and community supports; improved student academic performance, attendance, behavior, and overall well-being.
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	○ Medical or dental services ○ Family support and case management ● Ensure coordination between school staff and external providers 5.Fund and Sustain Partnerships (including Say Yes Niagara Falls). ● Use multiple funding sources: ○ Grants (state & federal) ● Invest in: ○ On-site providers or contracted services (ex. Dr. Ahanti Hayes, A.T. Haynes Consulting, LLC) ○ A Community Liaison cohort comprised of NFCSD Teachers ○ Saturday Say Yes Academy Programming including Say Yes Coordinators, Say Yes Navigators, NFCSD Teachers and Staff supporting Say Yes activities ○ University at Buffalo's Institute on Trauma & Trauma Informed Care – Champion Team Support 6. Build Internal Capacity to Manage Partnerships ● Designate district and school-based partnership & community liaisons ● Include partners in: ○ Training and PD ○ MTSS and student support meetings	
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	• Provide clear guidance to Principals on how to integrate partners into school systems 7. Monitor Impact and Adjust • Collect and review: ○ Service utilization (who is accessing supports) ○ Student outcomes (attendance, behavior, academic engagement) ○ Partner performance and feedback • Adjust partnerships based on: ○ Effectiveness ○ Emerging student needs	
Build and support early warning systems that help schools identify students needing additional academic, social, or behavioral support before gaps widen.	1. Define and standardize Early Warning Indicators • Establish a districtwide set of indicators, including: ○ Attendance trends ○ Course performance and assessment data ○ Behavioral referrals ○ Screening and engagement indicators • Ensure consistent definitions and thresholds across schools 2. Build and Maintain Data Systems • Implement or align platforms that integrate: ○ Attendance, behavior, and academic data • Provide dashboards that allow schools to: ○ Identify at-risk students quickly	Goal: Establish a districtwide early warning system that uses timely academic, attendance, and behavioral data to proactively identify students in need of support and respond through MTSS before gaps widen. Data: Early warning indicators (attendance, course performance, behavior, screening data); referral and intervention data; progress-monitoring data; EWIMS/MTSS team meeting artifacts documenting identification and response. Improvements: Earlier identification of student needs; more timely and appropriate interventions; stronger coordination of supports; improved student

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	○ Track patterns and trends over time 3. Establish school-based EWIMS/MTSS Teams • Schools will have teams that: ○ Review early warning data regularly ○ Identify students for support • Provide: ○ Defined roles, meeting structures, and protocols • Ensure teams are connected to MTSS processes 4. Continue Districtwide monthly MTSS Steering Committee meetings. • representatives from all schools to oversee intervention services and supports district-wide ○ Review early warning data regularly for trends and response levels ○ Share resources 5. Train Staff and Build Capacity • Provide training on: ○ Interpreting early warning indicators ○ Linking data to interventions • Include principals, counselors, and teachers • Align training with MTSS and intervention systems 6. Create Clear Response Pathways • Define how schools respond when students are identified: ○ Referral into MTSS tiers	academic performance, attendance, and behavior with fewer students requiring intensive support.
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	○ Assignment to targeted interventions • Ensure responses are: ○ Timely ○ Documented ○ Consistent across schools 6. Monitor Implementation and Trends • District monitors: ○ Early warning indicators across schools ○ Referral and intervention patterns • Refine: ○ Indicators ○ Tools ○ Supports based on trends 7. Embed into Continuous Improvement Cycles • Integrate early warning systems into: ○ SCEP monitoring ○ MTSS reviews ○ Data meetings • Ensure alignment between: ○ Identification → intervention → outcomes	
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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.

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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?
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.	1. Define and Standardize Referral Pathways - Develop a clear, step-by-step referral process for when school avoidance is linked to mental health needs - Specify: - Indicators/triggers (attendance patterns, behavior, student reports) - Required data for referral - Expected timelines for response - Ensure pathways are consistent across all schools 2. Clarify Roles and Responsibilities - Define roles for: - School staff (counselors, social workers, psychologists, deans, administrators) - District staff (MTSS leads, student support teams) - External providers (mental health agencies, clinicians) - Ensure all parties understand: - Who initiates referrals - Who follows up - Who monitors services	Goal: Establish clear, coordinated referral pathways that allow schools to quickly connect students experiencing school avoidance due to anxiety, trauma, or other clinical needs to appropriate mental health supports. Data: Referral logs and timelines; service access/utilization data; attendance and engagement indicators; follow-up documentation; feedback from schools, families, and providers on effectiveness and coordination of services. Improvements: Faster and more consistent access to mental health supports; improved coordination between schools and providers; reduced school avoidance; and improved student attendance, engagement, and well-being.

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3. Align with MTSS and Early Warning Systems

- Embed referral pathways into:
 - MTSS frameworks (Tier 2/3 supports)
 - Early warning systems (attendance, anxiety indicators, disengagement)
- Ensure students are identified early and referred before patterns escalate

4. Coordinate with Community Mental Health Providers

- Establish partnerships with:
 - Mental health agencies
 - Trauma-informed providers
 - Community-based clinicians
- Create systems for:
 - Warm handoffs (not just referrals)
 - Ongoing communication between schools and providers
- Ensure services are accessible and timely

5. Develop Communication and Follow-Up Protocols

- Establish processes for:
 - Communicating with families
 - Implementing EAB's Teachers Guide for Communicating with Parents
 - Tracking whether referrals lead to services
 - Monitoring student response to supports
- Ensure follow-through so students do not "fall through the cracks"

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	6. Build Staff Capacity - Collaborate with staff to: - Use referral pathways appropriately - Engage families in the process - Provide guidance on: - Trauma-informed approaches - Mental health awareness 7. Monitor Effectiveness and Adjust - Collect and review: - Referral volume and timelines - Service access rates - Student attendance and engagement outcomes - Use data to: - Improve pathways - Address service gaps	
Establish clear, districtwide expectations for how lateness, absences, and re-entry are handled so students and families experience consistent, welcoming responses across schools.	1. Communicate Clear, Consistent Attendance Expectations - Communicate the districtwide attendance policy that clearly defines: - Lateness, absences (excused/unexcused), and early departures - Procedures for documentation and communication - Ensure expectations are: - Consistently applied across all schools - Clearly communicated to staff, students, and families 2. Standardize Procedures for Response and Follow-Up - Define common protocols for: - Responding to lateness or absences	Goal: Communicate clear, districtwide expectations for lateness, absences, and re-entry to ensure students and families experience consistent, supportive, and welcoming responses across all schools. Data: Attendance and lateness data (including chronic absence); re-entry meeting documentation; consistency of school-level practices; family communication logs; student and family feedback on school climate and re-entry experience. Improvements: Increased consistency across schools; improved student and family experience; reduced chronic absenteeism and tardiness;

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	○ Communicating with families (timing, messaging, escalation) • Ensure responses are: ○ Predictable and consistent ○ Focused on support rather than punishment 3. Create Welcoming Re-Entry Practices • Develop district guidance for: ○ Re-entry conversations (restorative, student-centered) ○ Reintegration plans for students with extended absences • Emphasize: ○ Building relationships ○ Reducing stigma or anxiety about returning 4. Align with MTSS and Early Warning Systems • Embed attendance practices within: ○ MTSS frameworks (Tier 1 expectations, Tier 2/3 supports) ○ Early warning systems (identify patterns early) • Use data to ensure students receive: ○ Preventive support before patterns escalate 5. Ensure Consistent Family Communication • Provide districtwide guidance for: ○ Proactive communication about expectations ○ Timely outreach when attendance issues arise • Ensure messaging is:	stronger student engagement and sense of belonging.
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Section 2: District Actions to Support Structures

	○ Clear, culturally responsive, and accessible ○ Focused on partnership with families 6. Train Staff and Monitor Consistency ● Train principals and staff on: ○ Attendance expectations and procedures ○ Welcoming, restorative approaches to re-entry ● Monitor across schools to ensure: ○ Fidelity to district expectations ○ Elimination of inconsistent or conflicting practices 7. Use Data to Improve Systems ● Review: ○ Patterns of lateness, absence, and re-entry outcomes ○ Differences across schools and student groups ● Use data to: ○ Refine policies ○ Address inequities and barriers	
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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 (required)
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 [inequity], and to mitigate this, we will _____.

Inequity: We recognize that our schools have varying percentages of teachers with less than three years of teaching experience.		
Actions to reduce the Data Gap	Person Responsible	When
NFCSD will prioritize hiring new teachers who have experience in the field (three years or greater).	Maria Massaro	Ongoing
Knowing that these gaps exist now, how will we provide additional support to the affected schools	Person Responsible	When
NFCSD will provide designated Instructional Coaching support time at schools with a high percentage of teachers with less than three years in the field.	Carrie Buchman	Ongoing

Section 3: Addressing Inequities

Districts with inequities related to the following data points MUST have a plan to mitigate the identified inequity.

- % of uncertified teachers (*must be addressed if one of more identified schools has a rate 20 percentage points higher than a school in LSI*)
- Average number of Teacher Absences (*must be addressed if one of more identified schools has an average that is five days more than the district average*)
- % of teachers with fewer than 3 years' experience (*must be addressed if one of more identified schools has a rate 20 percentage points higher than a school in LSI*)
- Teacher Turnover rate (*must be addressed if one of more identified schools has a rate 20 percentage points higher than a school in LSI*)

Feel free to copy and paste the table for each Inequity being addressed.

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 [inequity], and to mitigate this, we will _____.

Inequity: We recognize that the percentage of students who enrolled in our schools after September is unequal in our schools.		
Actions to reduce the Data Gap	Person Responsible	When
The District will create and implement a communication plan to educate the community regarding the school enrollment process and school calendar.	Carrie Buchman	July – October 2026
Knowing that these gaps exist now, how will we provide additional support to the affected schools	Person Responsible	When
By June 2027, the district will reduce achievement gaps for students who enroll after September by ensuring that newly enrolled students are screened within 5 school days and receive appropriate MTSS intervention supports, resulting in a minimum of 60% demonstrating measurable academic growth in literacy and/or math within 8–10 weeks of enrollment, as evidenced by district assessment and progress monitoring data.	Carrie Buchman Building Administrators	September 2026 – June 2027

Feel free to copy and paste the table for each Inequity being addressed.

Section 3: Addressing Inequities

Funding Inequity (optional)

Districts that would like to leverage Title I, 1003 School Improvement Funding to explore how to better equitably distribute resources across the district should complete this section below. This section is optional.

DISTRICT ACTION	METHODS	SUCCESS CRITERIA
What activity will we pursue?	What does this action entail?	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?

Feel free to copy and paste the table for each Inequity being addressed.