



New York State
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity

School Comprehensive Education Plan 2026-2027

District	School Name	Grades Served
Niagara Fall City School District	Cataract Elementary School	PK3-Grade 6

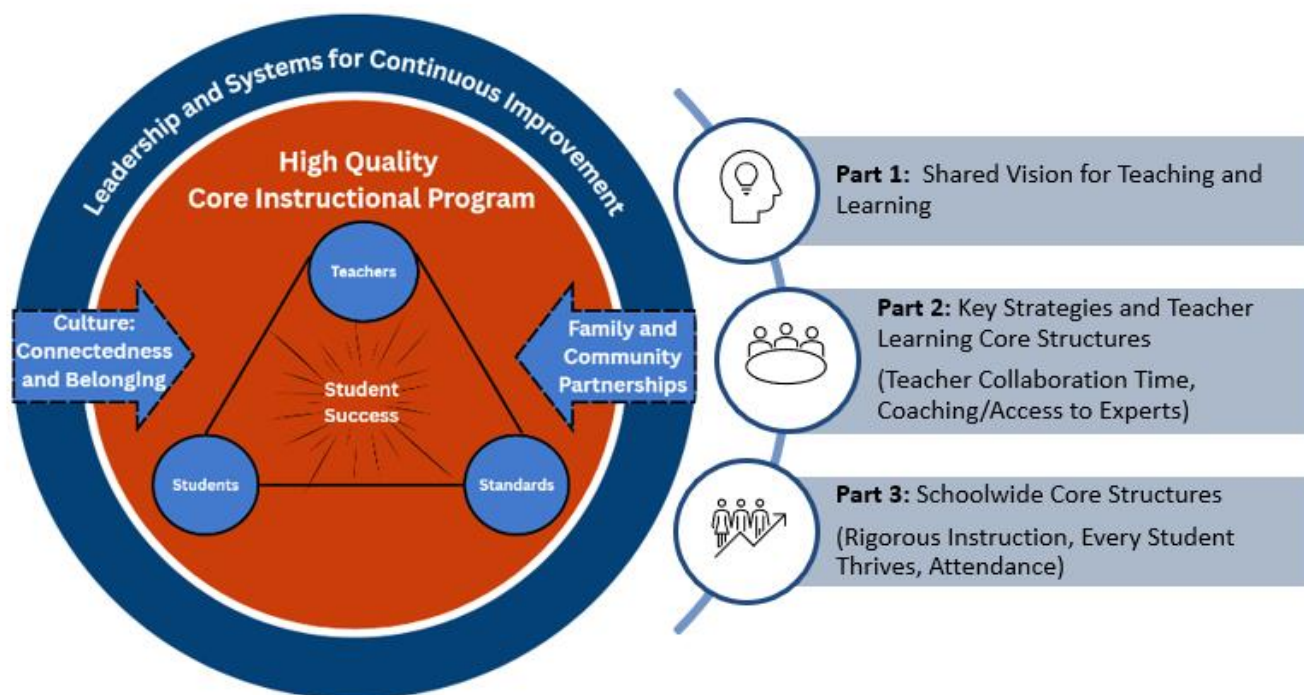
Collaboratively Developed By:

The Cataract Elementary School SCEP Development Team:

Angela Manella: Principal
Michael Corsaro: Assistant Principal
Allison Jaworski: Teacher-Primary
Sunnie Ventry: Teacher-Intermediate
Amy Beckett: Teacher-Special Education
Caryn Skowronek: Teacher-Special Class
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Heather Spence-Johnson: Parent-Special Education
Lauren Piaskowski: Parent-General Education

and in partnership with the staff, students, and families of Cataract Elementary School

Part 1: Shared Understand of High-Quality Teaching and Learning



Part 1: Connecting Our Shared Understanding for Teaching and Learning

Purpose: Ground the plan to the District's shared understanding of what high-quality Tier 1 instruction looks like.

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.

Part 1: Shared Understand of High-Quality Teaching and Learning

Part 2: Key Strategies/Instructional Priorities and Structures for Teacher Learning

Key Strategies/Instructional Priorities

Schools **collaborate with their district** to identify 1-2 Key Strategies/Instructional Priorities that will strengthen the instructional core and be the focus of teacher learning for the upcoming year.

Key Strategies/Instructional Priorities should be:

- **Instructional**, not programmatic.
- **Broad enough** to apply across grades/content but **focused enough** to drive teacher learning.
- Concepts that can be explored with the Structures for **Teacher Learning**
- Connect to **Tier 1/Universal instruction**
- Stable enough to allow for **deep learning and improvement over time**, yet flexible enough to respond to emerging evidence about student needs.
- Grounded in the **instructional core**, not buzzwords, fads, or short-lived initiatives.

Examples are provided in the **SCEP Team Resource Guide** and available in the drop-down menu below.

KEY STRATEGY/INSTRUCTIONAL PRIORITY (What are we prioritizing to improve the Instructional Core?)

Key Strategy: Other: Promote and monitor the regular use of academic discourse/oral language in all classrooms, PK-6, and afterschool programs

Schools selecting “Other” should type the Key Strategy after the word “Other.”

Teacher Learning Core Structures

Schools will support teaching the Instructional Key Strategies/Instructional Priorities through coherent, sustained structures for adult learning that are collaborative, reflective, and directly tied to classroom practice.

The Teacher Learning Core Structures will be a primary driver of strengthening skills related to the 1-2 Key Strategies/Instructional Priorities identified above.

All schools are required to outline their structure for Teacher Collaborative Time. Schools in CSI-B will also be required to outline their structures to ensure teachers have opportunities to learn with experts. For other schools, this is optional. Guidance on effective practices for both can be found below.

Teacher Learning Core Structures

1. Teacher Collaborative Time (required for all schools in TSI, ATSI, CSI-A, and CSI-B)

Effective Teacher Collaborative Time should:

- Be structured, and ideally facilitated by instructional coaches or teachers with expertise in both ambitious teaching and supporting teachers’ learning
- Ideally occur during the school day
- Provide time for teams to make sense of the school-level key strategy and adapt the big ideas from professional development to the complex daily realities of their classrooms.
- Be connected to teachers’ daily practice with opportunities to understand both **how** a practice may look AND **why** that practice is effective, so that teachers can make adaptations while preserving the integrity of the practice.

2. Opportunities for Teachers to Learn with Experts (required for schools in CSI-B)

Part 2: Key Strategies/Instructional Priorities and Structures for Teacher Learning

Most schools will address this through Instructional Coaching. Content-Focused Instructional Coaching can be a critical structure for Continuous Professional Learning when it allows opportunities for the following:

- Modeling lessons
- Co-teaching
- The Coaching Cycle
- Working with groups of teachers to engage deeper in content, analyze student work, analyze classroom videos, and conduct lesson studies

Schools without instructional coaches will need to look for alternate ways to ensure that teachers have access to see experts in action and unpack their instructional delivery through activities such as those bulleted above.

Essential Question

How will teachers have consistent, structured opportunities to learn together and with experts that strengthen practice around the instructional priorities and improve classroom instruction?

What structures and routines will support this in 2026-27?		HOW TO DOES THIS COMPARE TO EXISTING EFFORTS?
Teacher Learning Core Structure	Regularly scheduled collaborative time with grade-level (PK-6)and/or department colleagues facilitated by administrator or Instructional Coach	☒ NEW ☐ X REFINE
When and how often will this structure take place?	Grade-level (PK-6) and department meetings twice per month as scheduled by administrator	
What does this entail?	Each meeting will include the following: • New Information: Sharing of applicable new student discourse/oral language strategy by trainer • Application: Collaborative discussion to determine how to implement the new strategy; Which core content, ELA/Math? ..Small group/whole group? Meetings that follow: • Reflection: Reflecting on applying the previously learned student discourse/oral language strategy: What work well/didn't work well? How might be modified to promote success • Introduction of new student discourse strategy by trainer Follow cycle for the duration of meetings	
Teacher Learning Core Structure	Embedded staff development (beyond collaboration time) for novice and otherwise identified teachers provided by a purchased service	☐ NEW ☒ X REFINE
When and how often will this structure take place?	Novice teachers, and those otherwise identified by the administrator, will participate in on-school time staff development from a purchased service agent	

Part 2: Key Strategies/Instructional Priorities and Structures for Teacher Learning

What does this entail?	Schedule to be determined by administrator and purchased service agent
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Implementation

Schools will identify how they will implement their Key Strategies/Instructional Priorities through the Teacher Learning Core Structures.

Preparing for a Successful Launch

BEFORE THE 1st DAY OF SCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION	What needs to happen before school starts to prepare our staff for understanding the Teacher Learning Core Structures and the Key Strategy to be pursued this year? What steps are involved?	When will this be in place?
Identify grade level and department meeting schedule		Summer 2026
Identify purchase service staff development agency		Summer 2026
Identify novice teachers, and others, that will participate in staff development facilitated by the selected purchased service staff development agency		Summer 2026
Identify PK lead teacher (s) that will facilitate building-level staff development		Summer 2026
Schedule and facilitate PK3/PK4 screening to identify oral language deficits and plan appropriate interventions; create balance class lists to promote oral language development		Summer 2026
Development two administrator walkthrough tools: - Oral language development (PK) - Academic Discourse (K-6)		Summer 2026

Key Strategy I

KEY STRATEGY 1	Other: Key Strategy: Other: Promote and monitor the regular use of academic discourse/oral language in all classrooms, PK-6, and afterschool programs	
FIRST HALF OF THE YEAR IMPLEMENTATION		
What is our plan for leveraging our Teacher Collaborative Time (and Opportunities for Teachers to Learn with Experts, if applicable) to support this Key Strategy? What steps are involved?		When will this be in place?
Staff development on promoting academic discourse/oral language in all classrooms PK-Grade 6 (Grade-level meetings, Department meetings and staff development agency)		September-December 2026
Promote academic discourse in targeted after-school remediation and enrichment programs		October-December 2026
Monitoring the promotion of academic discourse/oral language in classrooms using a walk-through tool and resulting feedback		November-December 2026
SECOND HALF OF THE YEAR IMPLEMENTATION		
What is our plan for leveraging our Teacher Collaborative Time (and Opportunities for Teachers to Learn with Experts, if applicable) to support this Key Strategy? What steps are involved?		When will this be in place?

Part 2: Key Strategies/Instructional Priorities and Structures for Teacher Learning

On-going staff development on promoting academic discourse in ELA and Math	January-June 2027
On-going monitoring the promotion of academic discourse in ELA and Math using a walk-through tool and resulting feedback	January-June 2027
Continue to promote academic discourse in targeted after-school remediation and enrichment programs	January-June 2027
Continue staff development on promoting academic discourse/oral language in all classrooms PK-Grade 6 (Grade-level meetings, Department meetings and staff development agency	December 2026-June 2027

Key Strategy I

Progress Monitoring

Directions: Describe the evidence you will need to collect **in the first quarter of the year** to understand the impact of Core Structures and Key Strategy.

Use the remaining cells to identify evidence **as the year progresses**.

Key Strategy I

What evidence will we need to collect and monitor to understand **if change is taking hold**?

	Early Progress Indicators (set in advance)	Mid-Year Indicators (complete after quarter 1)	End-of-Year Indicators (complete midyear)
Evidence of Student Learning Improving	Increase in student achievement, each Trimester for ELA and Math K-6 and an increase oral language skill acquisition for PK3/4 as noted in Teaching Strategies Gold		
Evidence of Teacher Practice Changing	Data resulting from use of the walkthrough tool showing an increase in the use of academic discourse/oral language		

What is our end-of-the-year vision for this Key Strategy?

	End-of-the-Year Vision (set in advance)	Mid-Year Reassessment (update mid-year)
Students will be...	Students will be able to productively engage in academic discourse (K-6) and use age-appropriate oral language (PK) to express their learning	
Teachers will be...	Teachers will be able to facilitate numerous academic discourse strategies with their students (K-6) and engage students in oral language development activities (PK)	

Part 2: Key Strategies/Instructional Priorities and Structures for Teacher Learning

Survey Monitoring

Directions: Identify 1 or 2 teacher survey questions from this year's Needs Assessment that will give you a good understanding of how the activities outlined above have impacted teacher perceptions. Input this year's survey data (*SD=Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, IDK=I Don't Know*). The team will revisit this during the 2026-27 Needs Assessment.

	Survey Question 1	SD	D	N	A	SA	IDK
25-26 Needs Assessment	Q13: Collaborative time leads to meaningful changes in instructional practices across our team			41 %	44%		
26-27 Needs Assessment							

Part 3: Schoolwide Core Structures

Instructional Leadership Team – Rigorous, Standards-Aligned Instruction

These structures describe the routines a building-level team uses to ensure that all students receive rigorous, standards-aligned instruction. The structures include routines the Instructional Leadership Team has to monitor curriculum use, instructional practice, student learning, and equitable access, and to refine supports so the school functions as a coherent and effective instructional system. Examples of potential structures are provided below.

Instructional Leadership Team Core Structures

- **A schoolwide framework for high-quality instruction** that the leadership team regularly reviews, refines, and reinforces through shared look-fors and coordinated messaging.
- **A curriculum monitoring routine** where the leadership team examines pacing, task quality, and curriculum use across classrooms to identify variation and inconsistency.
- **A system for reviewing patterns in teacher-team work**, including analysis of student work, task selection, and upcoming lessons, to assess whether teacher teams are maintaining rigor and coherence.
- **A routine for monitoring equitable access to rigorous learning** through analysis of course placement, teacher assignment, student grouping, and the quality of tasks used across settings.
- **A schoolwide inquiry cycle** where the leadership team studies evidence of implementation, identifies trends across classrooms, and makes decisions about supports, PD, and resource allocation.
- **A coherence-monitoring routine** that identifies and removes low-value initiatives, reduces conflicting demands, and keeps staff focused on essential instructional priorities.
- **A coordinated feedback and responsiveness system** (student voice, teacher feedback, and observational evidence) used to refine instructional supports and improve alignment across the school.

Planning Implications: Schools define how they will ensure consistent, rigorous instruction across classrooms by clarifying expectations, monitoring curriculum use, and supporting teacher teams to refine lessons and tasks based on evidence of student thinking.

Essential Question

How will the school ensure that all students consistently experience rigorous, standards-aligned instruction that challenges them to think deeply and supports their academic growth?

What structures and routines will support this in 2026-27? <i>Schools should outline 1-2 of the highest leverage structures, focusing on Tier 1 (universal) structures and routines.</i>		HOW TO DOES THIS COMPARE TO EXISTING EFFORTS?
Instructional Leadership Team Core Structure 1	Cycle of observations/feedback using the developed academic discourse/oral language walkthrough tools as scheduled by administrator	X NEW ☐ REFINE
When and how often will this structure take place?	Monthly, as per determined schedule	
What does this entail?	Administrator-teacher meetings to review feedback	

Part 3: Schoolwide Core Structures

Evaluating the Key Strategies/Instructional Priorities Identified

What specifically will the Building Level Team be doing to evaluate the first Key Strategy identified?	Conducting focus walks to monitor the regular use of academic discourse (K-6) and oral language activities (PK)
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Survey Monitoring

Directions: Identify 1 or 2 survey questions from this year's Needs Assessment that will give you a good understanding of how the activities outlined above have impacted teacher, student, or family perceptions. Input this year's survey data (*SD=Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, IDK=I Don't Know*). The team will revisit this during the 2026-27 Needs Assessment.

	Survey	Survey Question 1	SD	D	N	A	SA	IDK
25-26 Needs Assessment	☐ Teacher ☐ Student ☐ Family	Q1: I am asked to think hard, explain my ideas and learn from my mistakes			19 %	34 %	41 %	
26-27 Needs Assessment	☐ Teacher ☐ Student ☐ Family							

Every Student Thrives Core Structures

These structures describe the routines a building-level team uses to ensure that student supports are coherent, equitable, and aligned across the school. They include routines for monitoring student experience, coordinating interventions, and addressing patterns in belonging, access, and achievement so that every student thrives. Examples of potential structures are provided below.

Every Student Thrives Core Structures

- **A systematic approach to ensuring every student is known well by at least one adult**, with routines that track relationships, monitor connection points, and ensure no student is overlooked.
- **A coordinated student support identification process** with clear entry points for noticing concerns, assigning responsibility, and organizing interventions so no student "slips through the cracks."
- **A routine for monitoring whether students receiving additional support continue to engage with grade-level content**, ensuring intervention does not replace rigor.
- **A schoolwide system for checking consistency of expectations, routines, and supports across classrooms and grade levels**, identifying where students encounter conflicting messages or uneven experiences.
- **A pattern-analysis routine** where the team examines data on participation, belonging, discipline, attendance, and achievement to identify inequities and address disparities across groups of students.
- **A structure for monitoring experiences of students who may feel marginalized or different from their peers**, ensuring the school proactively identifies and responds to signs of alienation or exclusion.
- **A feedback and responsiveness routine** where the team gathers, analyzes, and acts on insights from students and families to strengthen relationships, improve supports, and increase belonging.

Essential Question

How will the school ensure that every student experiences consistent expectations, meaningful relationships, timely supports, and access to rigorous grade-level learning?

What structures and routines will support this in 2026-27? <i>Schools should outline 1-2 of the highest leverage structures, focusing on Tier 1 (universal) structures and routines.</i>		HOW TO DOES THIS COMPARE TO EXISTING EFFORTS?
Every Student Thrives Core Structure 1	Routinely monitor the academic progress and social-emotional health of students	☐ NEW ☐ REFINE
When and how often will this structure take place?	Academic progress and social-emotional wellness will be monitored with routine/bi-weekly data team meetings, as scheduled by administrator	
What does this entail?	• Analysis of BASC3-BESS screener • Analysis of academic benchmark assessments • Provide parent/guardians with benchmark assessment results with printed reports	

Survey Monitoring

Directions: Identify 1 or 2 survey questions from this year's Needs Assessment that will give you a good understanding of how the activities outlined above have impacted teacher, student, or family perceptions. Input this year's survey data (*SD=Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, IDK=I Don't Know*). The team will revisit this during the 2026-27 Needs Assessment.

	Survey	Survey Question 1	SD	D	N	A	SA	I D K
25-26 Needs Assessment	☐ Teacher ☐ Student ☐ Family	Q5: The school keeps me informed about my child's progress and any supports they need			18%	34%	40%	
26-27 Needs Assessment	☐ Teacher ☐ Student ☐ Family							

Part 3: Schoolwide Core Structures

Were there any atypical circumstances (e.g. significant winter storm, bus driver strike, etc.) during the 2025-26 school year that impacted attendance for multiple days that the SCEP team will want to remember when comparing 2026-27 data to 2025-26 data? If yes, identify the circumstance and the month it occurred below:

Survey Monitoring

Directions: Identify 1 or 2 survey questions from this year's Needs Assessment that will give you a good understanding of how the activities outlined above have impacted teacher, student, or family perceptions. Input this year's survey data (*SD=Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, IDK=I Don't Know*). The team will revisit this during the 2026-27 Needs Assessment.

	Survey	Survey Question 1	SD	D	N	A	S A	ID K
25-26 Needs Assessment	☐ Teacher ☐ Student ☐ Family	Q1: I know who to go to when I can go to when I am concerned about a student's attendance.	27%	50%				
26-27 Needs Assessment	☐ Teacher ☐ Student ☐ Family							

	Survey	Survey Question 2	SD	D	N	A	SA	IDK
25-26 Needs Assessment	☐ Teacher ☐ Student ☐ Family	Q6: Attendance expectations and responses feel consistent not dependent on which teacher or staff member is involved			15 %	22 %	26 %	24 %
26-27 Needs Assessment	☐ Teacher ☐ Student ☐ Family							

Our Team's Process

Our Team's Process

Background

All schools are expected to follow the guidelines outlined in the document "[Assembling Your Improvement Planning Team](#)." The "Our Team's Process" section outlines how we worked together to develop our plan.

Team Collaboration

In the first two columns, identify the members of the SCEP team and their role (e.g., teacher, assistant principal, parent). In the remaining columns, indicate that team member's participation in each of the activities by identifying the date that person participated in that activity OR leaving the space blank if the person did not participate in that activity.

Name	Role	Orientation to School Teams	Meeting 1: Systems and Structures Self-Assessment	Meeting 2: Teacher Survey Review	Meeting 3: Variations in Data	Meeting 4: Student Interviews	Meeting 4A: Family Focus Groups (optional)	Meeting 5: Plan Writing	Meeting 6: Plan Writing	Meeting 7: Plan Finalization
Name	Title	3/11/26	3/25/26	4/22/26	4/29/26	5/21/26	6/1/26	6/8/26	6/11/26	6/15/26
Angela Manella	Principal	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Michael Corsaro	Assistant Principal	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Allison Jaworski	Teacher-Primary	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Sunnie Ventry	Teacher-Intermediate	X	X	X			X			X
Amy Beckett	Teacher-Special Ed	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Caryn Skowronek	Teacher-Special Class	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Haleigh Bianco	School Counselor	X	X	X	X		X	X		X
Heather Spence-Johnson	Parent-Special Ed	X	VIRTUAL	VIRTUAL			X			X
Lauren Piaskowski	Parent-General Ed	X	VIRTUAL	VIRTUAL	X					

Next Steps

Sharing the Plan

By Early June: After the team has completed at least one substantive draft section of the plan (preferably the Teacher Learning Core Structures or the Schoolwide Structures), the principal should share the plan with the school's SCEP liaison, who will review the initial section and conduct SCEP Development Check-In 3.

Before the Last Day of School (2025-26): Following SCEP Development Check-In 3, the team should incorporate any feedback and proceed to complete the remainder of the plan as part of SCEP Team Meeting 6. The full plan should be sent to the liaison, who will review it and set up SCEP Development Check-In 4 to confirm the plan meets [NYSED's Minimum Expectations](#).

No Later Than the First Day of School (2026-27): By regulation, the plan must be implemented no later than the first day of school. The district (Superintendent or designee) and local Board of Education will need to have approved the plan and the plan must be posted on the district website.

Implementing the Plan (All Schools)

1. The plan should be monitored closely. Adjustments to the plan are expected based on what the school and district are learning through implementation.
2. The SCEP team will need to reconvene during the year to discuss implementation and review progress in relation to the Early Progress Indicators and Mid-Year Indicators identified.
3. The principal should plan to meet with their assigned liaison following the end of the first quarter to discuss implementation and the Early Progress Indicators and again following the end of the second quarter to discuss implementation and the Mid-Year Indicators.
4. The portions of the plan shaded gray should be filled in based on 2026-27 data throughout the year.