CHEEKTOWAGA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Comprehensive Improvement Plan

2026–2027

Union East (K–4) · Middle School (5–8) · High School (9–12)

For District Leadership & Community

CHEEKTOWAGA

CHARGERS

DISTRICT PLAN AT A GLANCE

	Cultivating self-awareness, resilience, and empathy that shapes how students interact and develop.
	Designing coherent, standards-based learning experiences that build skills, knowledge, and voice.
	Fostering belonging, connection, and collaboration within and beyond the classroom walls.

CCSD District Plan 2026–2027

Our Focus

Every student — in every classroom, at every level — will engage in cognitively demanding tasks that require reasoning, sense-making, and problem-solving. Teachers will build productive struggle, increase structured academic discourse, and adjust instruction in real time, while protecting the rigor of grade-level learning.

Key Practices:

- Cognitively demanding tasks
- Productive struggle & growth mindset
- Structured academic discourse
- Scaffolding without lowering rigor
- Quick formative checks
- Learning targets & success criteria

Our Four Cornerstones

- **Well-Being**- Nurturing emotional safety, physical health, and a sense of belonging for all learners.
- **Relationships** - Building authentic, trusting connections among students, staff, and families.
- **Structure** - Design coherent, intentional systems and routines that develop positive culture & maximize learning outcomes
- **Engagement** - Design learning is relevant, rigorous, and reflective of students' identities and interests.

How We'll Know It's Working

- Monthly learning walks at every school
- Student work samples & lesson plan review
- Student, teacher & family surveys (annual)
- Teacher collaborative time review & reflection
- SCEP alignment review 3x per year

Who Developed This Plan

This plan was developed collaboratively by building-level SCEP teams at each school — including administrators, instructional coaches, teachers, and staff — in partnership with students and families.

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ABOUT THIS PLAN

This District Comprehensive Improvement Plan brings together the individual school plans from Union East (K–4), the Middle School (5–8), and the High School (9–12) into one shared, easy-to-navigate document. It is designed to help district leaders and community members quickly understand what we are focused on, why it matters, and how progress will be measured across all schools.

Our Shared District Priority

Every student — in every classroom, at every level — will engage in cognitively demanding tasks that require reasoning, sense-making, and problem-solving. Teachers will build productive struggle, increase structured academic discourse, and adjust instruction in real time, while protecting the rigor of grade-level learning.

SECTION 1: DISTRICT INSTRUCTIONAL VISION

All three schools share a unified vision for high-quality teaching and learning. While the language is tailored to each level, the core beliefs are identical across the district.

	Tier 1 Instruction (In every classroom…)	Tier 1 Learning (In every classroom…)
Union East K–4	Students are engaged in instruction that is cognitively demanding, aligned to grade-level standards, and structured so students share thinking through academic discourse. Teachers consistently conduct 2–3 checks for understanding, provide purposeful scaffolds throughout the lesson and use evidence of learning to adjust instruction in real time.	Students are actively thinking, problem-solving, and making meaning of grade-level content. They demonstrate their knowledge through collaboration and discussion with peers and apply learning their learning to real-world contexts.
Middle School 5–8	Teachers deliver instruction that is at grade-level and cognitively demanding. Instruction that requires academic discourse and creates space for problem solving, sensemaking and reasoning. Teachers model a growth mindset and use evidence of learning to drive decisions, adjusting in real time.	Students are actively engaged in cognitively demanding tasks and conversations that push them to think deeply, comprehend the learning objective and demonstrate transferable skills. Students apply their learning to new and authentic contexts, taking ownership of their thinking and growth.
High School 9–12	Instruction is engaging, cognitively demanding, and prioritizes student voice through academic discourse. Teachers consistently demonstrate compassion, empathy and respect while using evidence of learning to drive instruction in real time.	Students are actively invested in their own learning, demonstrating compassion, empathy and respect. Students apply learning by actively transferring classroom concepts into practicable, real-world situations.

SECTION 2: KEY INSTRUCTIONAL PRIORITIES (DISTRICT-WIDE)

The following instructional practices are the shared focus for all staff across all schools in 2026–2027. They are not separate programs — they are the way we teach every day, in every classroom.

#	Practice	What It Means in the Classroom
1	Cognitively Demanding Tasks	Students are consistently asked to reason, analyze, justify, and problem-solve — not just recall facts. Teachers select and protect grade-level tasks that require real thinking.
2	Productive Struggle	Students are expected to persist through difficulty. Teachers coach rather than rescue — providing support that keeps the thinking with the student, not the teacher.
3	Structured Academic Discourse	Every lesson includes structured opportunities for students to explain their thinking, listen to peers, and build on one another's ideas through protocols, sentence stems, and accountable talk.
4	Scaffolding Without Lowering Rigor	Supports are designed to help students access the standard — not simplify or replace it. Over-scaffolding and 'telling' are actively avoided.
5	Quick Formative Checks	Teachers use brief, frequent checks during the lesson — such as thumbs up/down, whiteboards, partner shares, or quick writes — to gauge student understanding in real time. This evidence is used immediately to adjust pacing, re-teach, or extend learning before moving on.
6	Learning Targets & Success Criteria	Every lesson's student friendly learning target, with success criteria, is referenced throughout instruction. Students use these to monitor their own progress, self-assess their work, and understand where they are headed and why it matters.

SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

All schools follow the same two-phase implementation arc, aligned to the same district calendar.

Phase	District Wide Actions
Pre-Launch June – August 2026	• Establish shared definitions and language for all key practices • Update instructional playbooks and/or tools at each school • Build common learning walkthrough look for(s) and tools • Finalize professional learning calendars for the first half of the year • Set norms for Teacher Collaborative Time (TCT) • Launch student connection and relationship-mapping systems
First Half Sept – Dec 2026	• Schoolwide PL on productive struggle, academic discourse, and cognitive demand • Instructional coaches and administrators support teachers through coaching cycles • Monthly learning walks with debrief and feedback • Collaborative planning sessions review tasks, discourse routines, and scaffolds • Teacher-to-teacher intervisitations begin • Student surveys and experience feedback collected (Q1)
Second Half Jan – June 2027	• Review and share learning walk data with all teams • Teachers refine tasks, discourse routines, and scaffolds based on evidence • Continued PL based on identified needs and trends • Mid-year student survey and experience check • SCEP alignment review by each leadership team • End-of-year data collection and planning for 2027–2028

SECTION 4: DISTRICT-WIDE CORNERSTONE STRUCTURES

Each school implements the instructional priorities through four shared cornerstone structures. The table below summarizes how each cornerstone is addressed across all levels.

Well-Being

Essential Question: How will every student feel safe, supported, and known?

Practice	Union East (K 4)	Middle School (5 8)	High School (9 12)
Every student known by one adult	Relationship mapping each marking period; monthly check-ins to ensure no student is overlooked.	Teacher mentor groups by team; lunch-period check-ins; HS student mentors recruited.	Student connection spreadsheet mapping all students to a trusted adult.
Behavior & discipline data review	Analyze referrals, identify root causes, address disparities, connect students to counselors.	Ongoing proactive outreach; high school peer mentors support at-risk middle schoolers.	Monthly faculty meeting data review; targeted interventions based on trends in behavior, attendance, and grades.
Student voice & belonging	Student surveys + focus groups at key points of the year; data shared with leadership to refine supports.	Quarterly student-experience surveys (8 questions across 4 cornerstones).	Student surveys + focus groups at key points of the year

Relationships

Essential Question: How will every student experience consistent expectations, meaningful relationships and timely support?

Practice	Union East (K 4)	Middle School (5 8)	High School (9 12)
Consistent expectations across classrooms	Quarterly walkthrough reviews; grade-level teams compare routines each marking period to reduce mixed messages.	Quarterly student surveys to help surface gaps in student experience across classrooms.	Learning walks quarterly; follow-up conversations with staff to address inconsistencies and clarify expectations.
Student connection monitoring	Students not yet connected to a trusted adult are identified and receive intentional check-ins.	Feedback surveys reviewed each quarter; mentoring connections tracked by team.	Relationship mapping in October, December, and May; connection spreadsheet linked to STAR monitoring list.

Structure

Practice	Union East (K 4)	Middle School (5 8)	High School (9 12)
Teacher Collaborative Time (TCT)	Monthly Wednesday PL; PLCs review tasks, discourse routines, and implementation; each session ends with a concrete classroom takeaway.	PLC meetings deepen understanding of key practices; teachers share evidence of implementation and receive coaching.	TCT used to design tasks, plan discourse routines, build content-specific scaffolds, and review student work against the rigor of standards.
Learning walks & instructional monitoring	Monthly learning walks (teacher to teacher or admin); curriculum audit to identify high-demand tasks; protect cognitive demand in lessons.	Walkthroughs by admin; monthly trend reviews with faculty and two teacher to teacher visits during the year.	Learning walks quarterly by admin; data shared with department heads and teacher teams; lesson plans and student work reviewed.
Instructional coaching	Coaches support productive struggle, discourse, formative checks, and scaffolding in daily instruction.	Coaches help teachers build discourse routines, embed cognitive demand, and reflect on implementation.	Coaches & department heads lead task review, discourse planning, and scaffold design; teacher-to-teacher intervisitations used as peer learning.

Engagement

Essential Question: How will every student be meaningfully engaged in rigorous, grade-level learning?

Practice	Union East (K 4)	Middle School (5 8)	High School (9 12)
Engagement monitoring	District engagement rubric normed through learning walks & talk tallies tracked. Both debriefed at instructional planning meetings.	Talk tallies track who participates and at what level of thinking; teachers surface patterns of inclusion and exclusion.	Learning walk data, student work, and teacher reflection used to monitor and improve student engagement and ownership.
Student agency & discourse	Accountable-talk stems posted in every classroom	Total Participation Techniques (TPT) implemented and shared sentence stems used across content areas.	"Why Campaign" helps students understand the purpose of deeper thinking; students take increasing ownership of discourse and learning.

SECTION 5: HOW WE WILL KNOW IT'S WORKING

Progress will be monitored through a combination of evidence sources at each school. The district will use these indicators to assess whether the instructional shift is taking hold.

Evidence of Student Learning

Early Indicators (Q1)	Mid Year Indicators	End of Year Vision
• Student work showing reasoning & justification • Learning walk data on discourse & cognitive demand • Student survey responses on engagement & belonging • Evidence of academic vocabulary in use	• Trends in participation patterns • Updated student work samples • Comparison of Q1 to Q2 survey data • Teacher observations from intervisitations	Students are thinking and talking at a higher level. They persist through productive struggle, explain their reasoning, use academic language, and engage meaningfully with peers across all grade levels.

Evidence of Teacher Practice

Early Indicators (Q1)	Mid Year Indicators	End of Year Vision
• Lesson plans showing grade-level tasks & discourse • Learning walk data aligned to key practices • PLC/department meeting notes • Teacher confidence survey data	• Evidence of scaffold refinement • Shift toward questioning vs. telling • Teacher reflections on implementation • Intervisitation debrief notes	Teachers design cognitively demanding tasks, facilitate structured academic discourse, use scaffolds that preserve rigor, and regularly reflect on evidence to adjust their instruction.

District-Level Survey Snapshot (2025–26 Baseline)

The following survey data was collected in the 2025–26 Needs Assessment. These baselines will be re-measured in 2026–27 to gauge impact.

School	Survey Question	SD	D	N	A	SA	IDK	Source
Union East	There is a shared understanding of what high-quality instruction looks like	3.1%	3.1%	7.7%	47.7%	36.9%	1.5%	Teacher
Union East	Instruction prioritizes student thinking, not just procedures.	3.1%	3.1%	9.2%	52.3%	27.7%	4.6%	Teacher
Union East	Students regularly engage in discussion and discourse	0%	3.1%	6.2%	40%	44.6%	6.2%	Teacher
Union East	Students collaborate meaningfully through structured talk, group tasks and peer feedback	0%	3.1%	12.3%	55.4%	21.5%	7.7%	Teacher
Union East	Students reflect on and monitor their own learning.	0%	6.2%	20.%	49.2%	16.9%	7.7%	Teacher
Union East	I get to explain my thinking.	4.1%	5.2%	18.6%	37.1%	32%	3.1%	Student
Union East	I get to talk with other students about my learning	4.1%	9.3%	22.7%	23.7%	34%	6.2%	Student
Union East	What I learn connects to real life.	7.2%	7.2%	17.5%	23.7%	38.1%	6.2%	Student
Union East	Students treat each other with respect.	11.3%	19.6%	34%	17.5%	13.4%	4.1%	Student
Union East	Adults notice when I am having a hard time.	7.2%	6.2%	26.8%	28.9%	26.8%	4.1%	Student
Union East	My child is challenged to think deeply.	1.2%	3.7%	8.8%	46.3%	33.8%	6.3%	Parent
Union East	Expectations for learning are consistent across classrooms.	1.2%	3.7%	6.3%	40%	40%	8.8%	Parent
Middle school	There is a shared understanding of what high quality instruction look like	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	46.6%	31.5%	5.5%	Teacher
Middle School	Instruction prioritizes student thinking not just procedures	1.4%	12.2%	13.7%	43.8%	24.7%	4.1%	Teacher
Middle School	Students regularly engage in discussion and discourse	0%	15.1%	27.4%	32.9%	15.1%	9.6%	Teacher
Middle School	Students collaborate through structured talk, group tasks, and peer feedback	4.1%	13.7%	26%	32.9%	11%	12.3%	Teacher
Middle School	Students reflect on and monitor their own learning.	4.1%	9.6%	28.8%	41.1%	8.2%	8.2%	Teacher

School	Survey Question	SD	D	N	A	SA	IDK	Source
Middle School	I get to explain my thinking	4.3%	7.1%	32.6%	38.2%	13.1%	4.7%	Student
Middle School	I get to talk to other students about my learning	16.9%	21.8%	30.2%	19.3%	8.1%	3.7%	Student
Middle School	What I am learning connects to real life.	12.8%	10.5%	29.2%	26.4%	12%	9.1%	Student
Middle School	Students treat each other with respect.	25.4%	20.9%	30.4%	12.5%	5.6%	5.1%	Student
Middle School	Adults notice when I am having a hard time	8.6%	12.3%	30.2%	24.3%	11.8%	12.8%	Student
Middle School	My Child is challenged to think deeply.	14.1%	7.8%	18.8%	45.3%	6.3%	7.8%	Parent
Middle School	Expectations for learning are consistent across classrooms.	6.3%	20.3%	17.2%	40.6%	6.3%	9.4%	Parent
High School	There is a shared understanding of what high quality instruction looks like.	3.1%	7.8%	15.6%	45.3%	17.2%	10.9%	Teacher
High School	Instruction prioritizes student thinking, not just procedures.	1.6%	6.3%	10.9%	59.4%	14.1%	7.8%	Teacher
High School	Students regularly engage in discussion and discourse	1.6%	9.4%	17.2%	43.8%	17.2%	10.9%	Teacher
High School	Students collaborate through structured talk, group tasks, and peer feedback	0%	9.4%	21.9%	39.1%	18.8%	10.9%	Teacher
High School	Students reflect on and monitor their own learning.	6.3%	23.4%	20.3%	28.1%	10.9%	10.9%	Teacher
High School	I get to explain my thinking	1.9%	6.5%	30.5%	46.1%	11%	3.9%	Student
High School	I get to talk to other students about my learning	7.8%	18.8%	24.7%	36.4%	9.7%	2.6%	Student
High School	What I am learning connects to real life	16.2%	18.2%	36.4%	19.5%	5.2%	4.5%	Student
High School	Students treat each other with respect.	18.2%	23.4%	35.1%	18.2%	3.9%	1.3%	Student
High School	Adults notice when I am having a hard time	7.1%	16.9%	34.4%	28.6%	7.1%	5.8%	Student
High School	My child is challenged to think deeply.	4.8%	7.1%	21.4%	28.6%	21.4%	16.7%	Parent
High School	Expectations for learning are consistent across classrooms.	2.4%	16.7%	14.3%	31%	19%	16.7%	Parent