



New York State
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity

District Comprehensive Improvement Plan

2026-27

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Rome City School District	Nerlande Anselme

Section I: 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>	High-quality instruction engages students in cognitively demanding, grade-level learning that develops them as thinkers and problem solvers. It fosters student voice, productive struggle, and meaningful collaboration, with teachers acting as coaches rather than rescuers, allowing students to self-assess their learning. Instruction balances rigor and support through intentional scaffolds, integrates interdisciplinary connections, and is culturally relevant to students’ experiences, ensuring all learners can access and make meaning of the content.
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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

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		to see if we have met this goal?
Weekly grade-level meetings with the Instructional Coach will be built into each building's master schedule one day a week during the teacher prep period.	Compensation for encumbering teacher prep time per CBA. The District will create a template in eduClimber to guide the planning and implementation of each weekly meeting to align the sessions across all buildings, focused on cognitively demanding tasks for all students. Every building will develop a schedule for the meetings at each grade level.	The goal of the district is to have all classrooms implement high-quality instruction that engages students in cognitively demanding, grade-level learning. Data from walkthroughs using the RIGOR Unveiled structure will be reviewed. The district will specifically look to see that teachers provide consistent opportunities for students to be more challenged, engaged, ask questions, and work collaboratively with other students Students will be able to take ownership of their learning and articulate what they are learning. Teachers will be facilitators of student learning by utilizing cognitively demanding tasks. As a result of high-quality instruction in all classrooms, proficiency and growth will increase on STAR benchmarks and NYS tests.

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.

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- **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?
Monthly ILT/GLIIM	Compensation for grade-level teams to meet before or after school on a monthly basis. The District will create a template in eduClimber to guide the planning and implementation of each monthly meeting to align the sessions across all buildings, focused on cognitively demanding tasks for all students as well as data analysis, lesson pacing check-in, and review of at-risk students. Every building will develop a schedule for the meetings at each grade level.	A curriculum monitoring routine where the leadership team examines pacing, task quality, and curriculum use across classrooms to identify variation and inconsistency. Instructional Leadership Team (ILT/GLIIM) monthly routine on the cognitive demand of lessons.
Building Thinking Classrooms Book Study	District-level administrators, directors of elementary & secondary schools, will work with and support the teachers who are engaging in the work. Teachers will need “wipe boards” and other materials that the district will provide. PD and follow-up feedback cycles will also be built in.	To engage teachers in actionable research-based strategies to support student thinking in their classrooms and move to an inquiry-based structure, shifting away from direct instruction.
Strategy Share @Faculty Meetings	The district office will support the building leaders who will ask for volunteers to present to their peers. The directors will also provide a “sounding board” for teachers who wish to present their strategies and ensure	The goal is to have 1 teacher from each content area to present a strategy that is working for them in their classroom that aligns with the district definition of

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	that it aligns with the district's definition of high-quality instruction.	high-quality instruction at each faculty meeting.
Instructional Improvement Teams	Directors will support the peer collaborators and instructional coaches in their efforts to provide PD around what high-quality instruction will look like. They will take place in the professional development opportunities and provide feedback to teachers who are trying out the various "recipes".	If we stay on track with these efforts, we will start to see a shift in instruction from teacher-led to student-led. We will also begin to see students doing the thinking and learning instead of sitting and getting.

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
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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?
Implementation of the MTSS Framework in each building	The Director of Student Support Services will support each building with full implementation of the MTSS framework in buildings through monthly meetings.	At-risk students will be identified, tier 2 and 3 interventions will be put in place, and actionable items will be assigned to various stakeholders.
Dean of Students	The Dean of Students will have professional development through the local BOCES and have quarterly meetings with the assistant principals and superintendent of schools to discuss best practices and what is working and what is not.	The goal for the Dean of Students is to identify and work with our at-risk population. They also work very closely with our local resources that are available to support students and families. The goal is to provide families and students with the necessary support systems so that we see a decline in behaviors and an increase in learning.

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.

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- **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?
Monthly attendance meetings with counselors, teachers, and admin to look at monthly attendance. Looking for patterns and trends emerging. Identifying interventions and protocols that are needed to address attendance concerns.	Support through the Director of Student Support Services around attendance protocols and interventions.	Increase daily attendance for each building based on their baseline data from the 2025-26 school year.
Dean of Students	Support through the Director of Student Support Services around attendance protocols and interventions.	The Dean of Students will sit on the attendance committee in their buildings to support staff and families. The goal is to see an increase in the percentage

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		of students who are present in school on a daily basis.

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 a staffing inequity in teaching experience between Lyndon H. S. Middle School (40% of teachers have fewer than 3 years of experience) and Rome Free Academy (14%). To mitigate this disparity, we will strategically recruit and retain experienced educators, strengthen mentoring and instructional coaching for early-career teachers, and provide targeted professional learning.

Inequity	The number of teachers with less than 3 years of experience at Strough vs RFA	
Actions to reduce the Data Gap	Person Responsible	When
Provide Mentors	Jennifer DePerno	September 2026
Provide New Teacher Orientation	Rome Teacher Center	August 17-21, 2026
Instructional Coaching opportunities	Melissa Sisco/Dana Benzo	September - June
Knowing that these gaps exist now, how will we provide additional support to the affected schools	Person Responsible	When
Coach, Principal, on having “staying” conversations—due to contract language, teachers can “pick out” of Strough to go to the high school whenever there is an opening.	Melissa Sisco	September - June

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Coach the principal and assistant principals on building culture and morale within the building.	Melissa Sisco	September - June
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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 Denti Elementary has a significantly higher rate of office referrals than other elementary schools in the district, and to mitigate this, we will hire a dean of students, train the assistant principal in CPI (Crisis Prevention Interventions), and utilize the new MTSS Framework to identify and support struggling students.

Inequity		
Actions to reduce the Data Gap	Person Responsible	When
Hire a Dean of Students	Building Principal	July - August 2026
Train the assistant principal in CPI, who will then turnkey the PD for staff	CPI	October 2026
Utilize the MTSS framework to support students who reach the tier II or III level with supports and interventions (restorative practices)	Amanda Jones	September - June
Knowing that these gaps exist now, how will we provide additional support to the affected schools	Person Responsible	When
Professional development in the area of classroom management strategies for staff	Building Principal during faculty meetings and staff days	September - June
Professional development in the area of Restorative Practices	Amanda Jones	September - June

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.