

National Heritage Academies

Buffalo United Charter School

2026-2027

School Improvement Plan

May 2026

1.0 Overview Continuous School Improvement Plan and Team Process

The school has created this schoolwide plan in order to outline and direct its schoolwide improvement efforts for the 2026-2027 school year and beyond. By evaluating and updating this plan, along with completing their assigned school improvement-related OnBase grants compliance tasks (see Appendix A), the school will meet state and federal requirements pertaining to schoolwide planning each year.

2.0 Program Evaluation Overview (ESSA [Section 1114(b)(1)(A) of Title I])

ESSA requires that schools must annually complete a formal Program Evaluation with a team consisting of a variety of stakeholders that includes:

- Evaluation of the implementation of and results achieved for grant-funded programs, strategies, and initiatives;
- Determining the effectiveness of the programs in increasing achievement of students in meeting state academic standards;
- Revising their continuous school improvement plan as necessary, based on the results of the evaluation, to ensure the ongoing continuous improvement of student achievement.
- A school-specific Program Evaluation spreadsheet template will be sent via email to the school principal in early January of each year. Once completed, the Program Evaluation spreadsheet template is uploaded by the school to the Grants Compliance (GC-Program Evaluation) OnBase task.

3.0 Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) Overview (ESSA [Section 1114(b)(1)(A) of Title I])

As part of the school's annual Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA), the school's identified Continuous Improvement Team (CIT) completes a data-driven review of demographic, process, perception, academic, non-academic, and systems data that includes all students and subgroups in the school. The CNA identifies the school's strengths and challenges in key areas that affect student achievement. The CNA, when conducted thoroughly, provides both targeted and schoolwide schools with identified strengths and weaknesses and through completion of a root cause analysis, specifies priorities for addressing whole-child needs. The CNA is critical to developing a schoolwide program, as it reveals the priority areas on which the program will focus.

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Together the CNA, along with the Program Evaluation, guides the development of the comprehensive schoolwide plan.

Continuous Improvement Team (CIT) The school has a Continuous Improvement Team that is responsible for the school improvement efforts of the school. Its job is to conduct the school's comprehensive needs assessment and program evaluation by analyzing student and other data in order to establish appropriate goals and strategies to reduce achievement gaps as identified in both a root cause and gap analysis and adequate yearly progress reviews.

The CIT also reviews and assists in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the following school improvement components:

- Annual review of the Building Mission Statement;
- Building goals, strategies, and assessments based on academic standards for all students;
- Curriculum alignment with State Standards and Benchmarks, NHA Curriculum, and Core Knowledge objectives;
- Monitor and evaluate the process for the building continuous school improvement plan;
- Building professional learning plans consistent with student academic performance needs;
- Participatory decision-making process;
- Identifying community resources that enhance instructor and student learning;
- Utilization of community resources and volunteers.

The CIT meets regularly (at least quarterly) to assess progress on and accomplishment of goals and implementation of the various components of the Schoolwide Plan, including evidence-based strategies and adult-led activities.

The CNA template is found within the OnBase Instructions for the task. Most data needed to complete the Comprehensive Needs Assessment can be found on InSite within the [Continuous Improvement Data Hub](#). If you need additional data please reach out to your school's designated Service Center Accountability Analyst. Once completed, the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) template is uploaded by the school to the Grants Compliance (GC-Comprehensive Needs Assessment-CNA) OnBase task.

Decision-Making Process

Decision-making authority within the school lies with the school's leadership team, although the school values and considers the input and perspective of staff and stakeholders as decisions are made. Decisions support the vision and purpose of the school, National Heritage Academies, and also the best practices of school

improvement research and effective teaching strategies. Staff members and various stakeholders, including parents, board, and community partners, participate as appropriate in Continuous Improvement Team meetings and activities.

4.0 School Community Partnerships

The school utilizes a variety of partnerships to support staff, students, and parents. The school employs an Admissions Representative who works in partnership with the community to organize events, fundraisers, and charity events, as well as to inform the media and local community of school events. Additionally, the school partners with area organizations or community members in order to promote a symbiotic relationship between itself and the community.

Please complete the table below for each partnership that your school has developed. Include specific details about the benefits of that partnership. A minimum of three partnerships is required.

Name of partnership organization	Approximate number of years in partnership	Details regarding the benefits of partnership
Toyota	3	Provide scholars with free school supplies
WNY Muslims	2	Provide students with school supplies in the community
Citibank	2	Sponsors families with holiday gifts, toys, and clothing
Buffalo Center for Health Equity	1	Provides community with dinner and giveaways
City of Buffalo Mayor's Office	3	Provides turkeys and Thanksgiving dinners to 20 families
M&T Bank	1	Provides scholars & families with presents for Christmas
Network of Religious Communities	1	Provides clothing and resources to families in need
NY Charter Association	4	Supports BUCS and their role in the community
AKA Sorority	1	Sponsors scholars to volunteer in the community
New Era	3	Provides winter hats/other New Era merchandise to scholars
Buffalo State Speech/Hearing Clinic	5	Provides students with free hearing screenings

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UB Dental	4	Provides free cleanings and teeth screenings for scholars
Erie Co. Dept. of Health	2	Provides scholars with free dental presentations, toothbrushes and toothpaste
Haircuts for Those in Need	1	Provides free haircuts to boy scholars at the start of the school year

5.0 Evaluation of Current School Improvement Efforts

ESSA requires that you evaluate the effectiveness of your school improvement efforts at least once annually. This data-based review provides an opportunity to evaluate progress toward your current year goals based on the school's implementation of their evidence-based strategies and activities.

Consider what was successful and what may need to be updated or adjusted for the upcoming school year and provide a summary by answering the following questions for each goal.

Current Year Goal #:1

Provide scholars with minimum of 2 out of school experiences

1. Fidelity: Were the strategies and activities identified in the goal implemented with fidelity? What is the evidence?

The school was able to plan 1 out of school event but some grades were able to do 2. The evidence is the field trips taken by the students at BUCS.

2. Scale/Reach: Did the plan reach the intended audience? What is the evidence?

We somewhat met this goal. All of the students were provided with a minimum of 1 opportunity.

3. Capacity: Were sufficient resources (funds, staff, materials, time, etc.) allocated toward the implementation of the plan, and were they distributed equitably and used as intended? Were barriers addressed? What is the evidence?

Yes, the funds were distributed equitably but there was a lack of funding to be able to ensure every grade level was provided the opportunity for 2 out of school experiences.

4. Impact: What was the impact of the implementation of the plan? Did it accomplish its goals? Why or why not? What is the evidence? Will the school continue this goal into the next year? What adjustments might be needed?

The school met approximately 50% of this goal. The school will continue to focus on this

goal for next year but will look at ways to incorporate some in-school opportunities that can be offered to a wide range of ages.

Current Year Goal #2

Community Outreach to Offer High Interest Programs for Families

1. Fidelity: Were the strategies and activities identified in the goal implemented with fidelity? What is the evidence?

Yes, the school has partnered with multiple organizations this year to provide the families with various opportunities. The evidence would be the invitations/flyers/sign in sheets/meeting notes, etc.

2. Scale/Reach: Did the plan reach the intended audience? What is the evidence?

Yes, because the number of partnerships that the school has established has increased due to community outreach.

3. Capacity: Were sufficient resources (funds, staff, materials, time, etc.) allocated toward the implementation of the plan, and were they distributed equitably and used as intended? Were barriers addressed? What is the evidence?

Yes. The only real barrier is community attendance at planned events.

4. Impact: What was the impact of the implementation of the plan? Did it accomplish its goals? Why or why not? What is the evidence? Will the school continue this goal into the next year? What adjustments might be needed?

Yes, it established meaningful partnerships with people and organizations in the community. We will continue this outreach during the upcoming school year.

Current Year Goal #3

Increase Student Achievement

1. Fidelity: Were the strategies and activities identified in the goal implemented with fidelity? What is the evidence?

Yes, we focused on targeted instruction and data-driven instruction. We also worked with teachers about effective teaching strategies. The evident is classroom observations and team calibrations.

2. Scale/Reach: Did the plan reach the intended audience? What is the evidence?

Yes, and the student growth was showing on the winter benchmark assessments and interim assessments for most students.

3. Capacity: Were sufficient resources (funds, staff, materials, time, etc.) allocated toward the implementation of the plan, and were they distributed equitably and used as intended? Were barriers addressed? What is the evidence?

Yes, the teachers were given time to plan with deans and the C&I team. Evidence of growth is seen from student data in i-Ready, interims, aimsweb+, and etc.

4. Impact: What was the impact of the implementation of the plan? Did it accomplish its goals? Why or why not? What is the evidence? Will the school continue this goal into the next year? What adjustments might be needed?

Staffing for intervention was affected due to medical leaves throughout the building. Student growth was seen throughout the building, but it is hard to determine how greatly it was affected due to staffing shortages. Yes we will continue the goal into next year with a higher focus on the professional development for the planning of intervention groups across the building.

Current Year Goal #:4

Decrease chronic absenteeism

1. Fidelity: Were the strategies and activities identified in the goal implemented with fidelity? What is the evidence?

Parent meetings, home visits, and incentives were all completed during this school year. The school could benefit from an increase in home visits during the first part of the school year. Phone logs and visits were tracked on a tracking sheet as well as attrition intervention calls.

2. Scale/Reach: Did the plan reach the intended audience? What is the evidence?

The plan reached the intended audience since calls and letters occurred based on priority of need by absence rates.

3. Capacity: Were sufficient resources (funds, staff, materials, time, etc.) allocated toward the implementation of the plan, and were they distributed equitably and used as intended? Were barriers addressed? What is the evidence?

We could benefit from additional staff able to make home visits. Having a dean on maternity leave at the start of the school year made it difficult for as many staff members to go on home visits. Resources were distributed equitably. Transportation factors have been addressed but have not improved. The school continues to work with the transportation department to make improvements, unsuccessfully.

4. Impact: What was the impact of the implementation of the plan? Did it accomplish its goals? Why or why not? What is the evidence? Will the school continue this goal into the next year? What adjustments might be needed?

Our chronic absenteeism rates continues to be an issue. The goal was not accomplished due to transportation issues beyond our control. We will continue to work towards this goal next school year. Continued pushback to the transportation department is necessary as well as increased staff members working on home visits.

6.0 School Improvement Goals Best Practice Guidelines

Writing a Smart Goal: Goals provide a sense of direction, motivation, and a clear focus for improvement. They create a target for those implementing a plan. Focusing improvement efforts by setting goals increases the likelihood that improvement will take place.

Define A Measurable (SMART) Goal: Identify the components of the Goal, ensuring that it is SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented, Time-bound) and name the goal. The measurement component of a SMART goal should align to the data considered during the CNA process. A SMART Goal can have more than one measure.

- Specific: Clearly define what you want to achieve, the reasons for it and who is involved.
- Measurable: Establish how you will track progress and determine when the goal has been met. What data will be used to measure?
- Achievable: Ensure the goal is realistic and attainable with your current skills, knowledge, and resources.
- Relevant: Confirm that the goal aligns with broader organizational priorities and that the outcome is meaningful.
- Time-bound: Set a specific, realistic deadline for completing the goal to create a sense of urgency and manage the timeline.

Examples of SMART Goal Statements:

- Increase reading comprehension scores in grades K-3 by x% as measured by State Assessment and NWEA by Spring, 20xx.
- Decrease student absenteeism in grades 6-8 from x% to x% as measured by attendance reports by June 20xx.

Selecting Evidence Based Programs, Strategies and Initiatives: Strategies are the roadmap to achieving measurable goals. The team should focus on selecting a strategy that is tightly aligned to the outcome you want to achieve with your goal.

Things to consider when identifying an evidence-based strategy for implementation

- Evidence: The strength of the strategy's evidence in achieving intended outcomes when implemented well through research and or evaluation work. How will you consider the ESSA Tiers of Evidence in your selection of a strategy [1]
- Fit: The extent to which the strategy aligns with the district's current priorities, existing initiatives, and values.
- Need: The extent to which the strategy has demonstrated meeting the identified need of the target population through research and/or evaluation with a comparable population.

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- **Supports:** The strength of the foundation available to support implementation, including resources for building the competency of staff (staff selection, training, coaching, fidelity) and organizational practice (data system and use support, policies and procedures, and stakeholder engagement).
- **Usability:** The extent to which the strategy's principles, values, and core components are measurable and observable.
- **Capacity:** The strength of the district's qualified workforce, financial supports, technology support, and administrative supports needed to implement and sustain the strategy with fidelity.

[1] Emphasis of the use of evidence-based strategies, programs and initiatives is required for ESSA grant-funded programs. ESSA defines the term “evidence-based: when used with respect to an LEA, as an activity, strategy, or intervention that demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on the following identified levels.

- **Tier 1 Strong** - At least one well designed and well-implemented experimental study (randomized, control trial). Studies that meet What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservation
- **Tier 2 – Moderate** - At least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study. Studies that meet What Works Clearinghouse standards with reservation
- **Tier 3 - Promising** - At least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias
- **Tier 4 – Demonstrates a Rationale** - Supported by well-specified logic model supported by research and evaluation

EXAMPLES:

Strategy, Program or Initiative	ESAA Level of Evidence (1-4)	Evidence Based Citation
Academic Intervention Coaches	1-Strong Evidence	https://www.evidenceforessa.org/program/content-focused-coaching-whole-class/
aimsweb Plus	3- Moderate Evidence	https://www.pearson.com/content/dam/one-dot-com/one-dot-com/global/Files/efficacy-and-research/reports/efficacy-assessment-reports/aimsweb-Plus-research-report.pdf
Corrective Reading	3- Promising Evidence	https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/EvidenceSnapshot/120

Identifying the Root Cause: There are many tools available to assist in completing a Root Cause Analysis including the “Five Why’s” and “Fishbone Diagram”. Click on the

link to access resources and templates for these tools. [Root Cause Analysis Guidelines and Templates](#)

Root Cause Best Practices:

A cause is a “Root Cause” if:

- The problem would not have occurred if the cause had not happened
- The problem would not reoccur if the cause were corrected or dissolved, and
- Correction or dissolution of the cause would not lead to the same or similar problems

A Root Cause should be:

- Within the control of the school (a practice or system)
- Connected to the identified priority need
- Fit your improvement strategy (if one has already been decided)

A Root Cause should NOT be:

- Identified as a person
- Something you cannot control

Example of identifying a Root Cause using the Five Why's:

Problem statement: Parents do not feel that they receive timely and relevant communication from the school.

1. Why? Parents do not regularly check our school website.
2. Why? They might not know the information is there.
3. Why? We have not told parents that the information is there.
4. Why? We have not had the time to meet with parents or prepare any materials to share with parents about the website.
5. Why? It is not something we normally plan time for.

Possible Root Cause: We need to schedule time to provide resources and tools for communicating with parents in a timely manner that they can readily access.

Identifying Activities: Activities are the details for implementing programs, strategies and initiatives.

Activities should be adult based actions and include a person(s) responsible and the start and end date of the activity. Some activities may be one-time events while other activities may be ongoing. Most, but not all activities should be tied to your budget requests for the upcoming year. A minimum of 3 activities per strategy, program or initiative should be included in your goal.

Examples of one-time event activities:

- Purchase supplies and materials for Math Parent Learning Event
- Hold staff meeting to include training on building parent capacity and engagement
- Bringing in an outside vendor to provide Professional Learning related to the strategy

Examples of ongoing activities:

- Paraprofessionals providing Tier 2 supplemental instruction to the most at-risk students
- Weekly PLC meetings to review and analyze ELA data
- Yearly subscription renewal for a curricular or progress monitoring tool
- Instructional Coaches completing weekly observations to new teachers

7.0 Continuous School Improvement Goals for the Upcoming Year

Based on your Program Evaluation and Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA), complete the tables below with your identified priorities and continuous school improvement goals for the upcoming year. A minimum of two goals is required. Additional goals may be added at the school's discretion based on their priority needs.

Best Practice: See OnBase Grants Compliance tasks for instructions and templates for completing your Program Evaluation and CNA, which must be completed prior to writing your Continuous School Improvement Goals.

Note: All Federal and State budget requests for the upcoming investment and consolidated application season must be tied back to your school improvement goals, strategies, activities, and/or your Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Program Evaluation.

Continuous Improvement Goals for 2026-2027

Required Goal #1

1. SMART goal statement: [BUCS will decrease their suspension rate by 10% compared to 2025-2026 school year.](#)
2. Area of need being addressed: [Behaviors/suspensions](#)
3. Root Cause: [Decrease in staff, decrease in ABSS](#)
4. Baseline data (Where are you starting?): [Will review end of year suspension data](#)
5. End target measure (Where do you want to be?): [Decrease suspensions by 10% of where we were at end of 25-26.](#)

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Evidence-based programs, strategies, initiatives, and activities for implementation to meet the goal			
Name of Evidence-Based Program, Strategy, or Initiative #1	Decreased suspensions		
Specific Adult-Based Activities/Actions (must have at least 3 activities per strategy)	Begin Date	End Date	Staff Responsible
Activity #1 Professional Development	8/25/26	6/24/27	Admin team/ABSS
Activity #2 Revamp of schoolwide behavior system	8/25/26	6/24/27	Admin team
Activity #3 SEL /CPI Resources	8/25/26	6/24/27	Admin team/School counselor

Required Goal #2

1. SMART goal statement: BUCS will increase their student proficiency rates by 10% in reading and mathematics and science (in grades 5&8).
2. Area of need being addressed: academic performance levels
3. Root Cause: chronic absenteeism, new students, decreased staff
4. Baseline data (Where are you starting?): NYS test results 2025
5. End target measure (Where do you want to be?): 10% proficiency increase on NYS testing

Evidence-based programs, strategies, initiatives, and activities for implementation to meet the goal			
Name of Evidence-Based Program, Strategy, or Initiative #1	Student Proficiency		
Specific Adult-Based Activities/Actions (must have at least 3 activities per strategy)	Begin Date	End Date	Staff Responsible
Activity #1 Tutoring	3/1/27	4/30/27	Teachers
Activity #2 C&I support	8/25/26	6/24/27	C&I team
Activity #3 Intervention PD	8/25/26	6/24/27	Deans

Optional Goal #3

1. SMART goal statement: BUCS will reduce its chronic absenteeism rate by 10% of what it was in 2025-2026.
2. Area of need being addressed: student attendance

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3. Root Cause: [transportation, parents educational views](#)
4. Baseline data (Where are you starting?): [end of year rate 25-26](#)
5. End target measure (Where do you want to be?): [decrease by 10% the rate of end of year 25-26.](#)

Evidence-based programs, strategies, initiatives, and activities for implementation to meet the goal			
Name of Evidence-Based Program, Strategy, or Initiative #1	Student Attendance		
Specific Adult-Based Activities/Actions (must have at least 3 activities per strategy)	Begin Date	End Date	Staff Responsible
Activity #1 Weekly/monthly incentives	9/3/2026	6/24/27	Deans
Activity #2 Home visits	9/3/2026	6/24/27	Deans/Counselor
Activity #3 Parent Meetings	9/3/2026	6/24/27	Deans/Counselor

Appendix A

Examples of one-time event activities:

- Purchase supplies and materials for Math Parent Learning Event
- Hold staff meeting to include training on building parent capacity and engagement
- Bringing in an outside vendor to provide Professional Learning related to the strategy

Examples of ongoing activities:

- Paraprofessionals providing Tier 2 supplemental instruction to the most at-risk students
- Weekly PLC meetings to review and analyze ELA data
- Yearly subscription renewal for a curricular or progress monitoring tool
- Instructional Coaches completing weekly observations to new teachers

Resources

Questions?

- Email the Program Accountability Advisor Team at PAA@nhaschools.com
- Attend PAA weekly Open Office Hour every Thursday from 1-2 PM ET to Office <https://meet.google.com/vws-qpxn-dxt>
- School Finance Resources tile on myNHA <https://sites.google.com/nhaschools.com/schoolfinanceresources/home>. Your guide to all things School Finance, including Program Accountability, Grant Project Manager, and School Finance Partner resources