

## 2023-24 Contract for Excellence Narratives

**Program Narrative** - Please address changes in your existing C4E programs, including any redesign or reallocation. Also, describe how activities support the Regents Reform Agenda.

The Utica City School District will target Contract for Excellence Funding to address the needs of at-risk populations, most particularly English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, and low-income subgroups, in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics. The District is striving for all students K-12 to meet annual State and District student performance measures through enhanced programing and additional time on task. The school district is also addressing student attendance issues and the social emotional needs of all students, specifically focusing on our at-risk subgroups. The school district intends to sustain staff members that were hired through previous Contract for Excellence funding - to increase time on task and reduce class sizes - while also including new teacher hires who were also selected to help the District meet these Contract for Excellence goals. The District's Targeted Support & Improvement (TSI) School and any school identified as being at-risk for TSI designation (i.e., schools designated as PTSI) will enhance their extended day tutorial programs. Guidance counselors, social workers and other related service providers will continue to work with our at-risk students and identified subgroups, ultimately reducing disruptive behavior and increasing productive instructional time. Professional Development will focus on Curriculum alignment with New York State Standards, Research-based Student Engagement Strategies, Data Driven Instruction, Differentiated Instruction, positive behavior interventions and research-based strategies to enhance teaching and ultimately increase student performance. In addition, there will be a focus on the effective use of technology to support culturally and linguistically sustaining lessons that provide students with personalized learning in order to close learning gaps as the result of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

**Targeting Narrative** - Please address both student educational need and building-level accountability status as reflected in the attached Targeting Matrix. Explain how the district and school Comprehensive Plan supports the program.

The Utica City School District has established class size reduction, principal teacher quality, and time on task as the primary goals of the Contract for Excellence. Class size reduction, especially at the K-6 grade levels, in each school building, will help to ensure that teachers are able to meet the intricate needs of their students. Smaller class sizes enable teachers to better differentiate instruction for the most academically at-risk students, including students with disabilities, English language learners, students from poverty, and other targeted subgroups. Smaller class sizes also enable teachers to formatively assess student learning and to better target remedial supports, especially in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics. Likewise, teacher and principal quality is critical in raising academic achievement through the delivery of high-quality instruction in each and every classroom, along with effective monitoring, supervision and guidance. With respect to time on task, the school district has prioritized additional student support personnel such as counselors and social workers to provide necessary social emotional supports for students. Social emotional support is an essential ingredient in helping our most at-risk students to focus on academics during the school day. Increasing student achievement, increased emphasis on social emotional supports for students and increased parental engagement are the priority commitments in the Utica City School District Comprehensive Improvement and School Comprehensive Education Plans, and are therefore directly aligned to the Utica City School District Contract for Excellence; thus, reflecting the school district's goals and objectives and those of the New York State Education Department. As a Target district under state school accountability guidelines, Contract for Excellence funding has been earmarked for our one identified Targeted Support & Improvement (TSI) school, as well each of our LSI elementary schools and high school according to the Targeting Matrix as well as based on data from the school report card and transparency report which can be found at the link below:

<https://data.nysed.gov/profile.php?instid=800000041284>

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**Performance Narrative** - Describe the district's expected performance targets for the accountability criteria and disaggregated groups for those schools within the district not in good standing.

As a result of increased time on task, class size reduction, and improved teacher quality initiatives provided through Contract for Excellence funding, students will demonstrate at least a 5-point increase in the unweighted combined ELA and Math Performance Indices for all identified subgroups, with a focus on Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners. The graduation rate is expected to increase by 1-3% in all subgroups, and the suspension rate will decrease for all students. These targets are aligned to the District Comprehensive Improvement Plan, and the School Comprehensive Education Plans; additionally, state and school performance targets will also be met.

**Experimental or District-wide Programs Narrative** - If applicable.

District-wide interventions to support student learning will be implemented, as well as initiatives designed to decrease student suspensions. To increase engagement and to prepare students to be college and career-ready, the school district will be enhancing its CTE programming to include a K-12 initiative. This initiative will positively impact learning and student performance outcomes.