



City School District of the City of Niagara Falls

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August 1, 2016

Dear Parent or Guardian:

This letter/notice is to inform you that Gaskill Preparatory School has been named a Focus School in New York State. You may have read about changes to State standards, curriculum, and assessments over the past few years. The New York State Education Department and its school districts continue to work to find the best possible processes for identifying needed improvements and providing supports for individual schools as they strive to meet higher standards.

As part of these ongoing changes, NYSED has identified 442 schools across New York State, including Gaskill Preparatory School as Focus Schools. This designation is based on:

- Student achievement on State assessments
- Student growth, or improvement in test scores, over time
- Achievement by subgroups of students, as compared to their peers
- Formulas which predict if students are on track to graduate

The staff at Gaskill Preparatory School has been busy creating a plan, known as a School Comprehensive Education Plan, which outlines action steps for school leaders, teachers, counselors and other school staff to implement which will result improved achievement for all pupils. You may have already participated in this effort, by taking the Parent Engagement Survey our district administered in May and June. You can learn more about how Focus schools are identified and the supports they receive by visiting the New York State Education Department website at: <http://www.nysed.gov/>.

The Niagara Falls City School District has already taken several steps to improve student learning in all schools, including Gaskill Preparatory School. We have aligned all District curriculum to new State standards, offered after school Booster Classes, begun a new rigorous literacy program in grades Kindergarten through 2, and offered an Extended Learning Time summer program for all students in grades 1 and 2. As a result, our students are already showing accelerated growth in specific areas of ELA and Math.

Please let me know if you have any questions about our school's efforts to improve or how parents can support those efforts. Thank you for all you do to support your child's learning and Gaskill Preparatory School.

Sincerely,

Sheila Smith
Principal