

Burlington Area School District Roadmap for Instructional Excellence

Introduction

The *Roadmap for Instructional Excellence* is the Burlington Area School District's vision for improving student achievement. It serves as the planning document through which school improvement decisions are made and resources allocated in the district.

Goal

The over-arching goal of the *Roadmap* is that all students graduate from high school college and career ready.

Philosophy

The *Roadmap* is a continuous plan for improvement through a collaborative culture of dialogue and reflection. Implementation of the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) framework fosters high levels of teacher collaboration to improve student achievement by addressing the following questions:

1. What do we want students to learn?
2. How will we know if each student has learned it?
3. How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?
4. How can we extend and enrich the learning for students who have demonstrated proficiency?

All of the essential functions of assessment, best practice, curricular alignment, rigor, and interventions are organized around the four essential questions mentioned above.

Accountability and Alignment

The key functions of the Burlington Area School District learning organization are aligned to produce high quality outcomes for students. The four components of the *Roadmap* are :

1. Individual School Improvement Plans
2. Educator Effectiveness and Professional Development Practices
3. Factors influencing Student Achievement
4. Data-driven Decisions regarding programs and resources

These essential functions are designed to operate as one continuous loop and to work together toward the common goal of producing college and career ready graduates. Through dialogue, reflection and educator effectiveness practices, school improvement plans remain relevant and meaningful, and teachers have the capacity needed to best serve students.

Long Term Viability

Continual improvement can imply that an organization is looking only to improve its system as it currently exists. Indeed, BASD is committed to improving its operations by ensuring that best practices are in place as they are currently defined by the research. However, the district understands that, through collaboration, it must also be innovative with an eye toward "next" practices—those that will ensure the relevance and viability of the system to serve the community effectively, not only in present times but well into the future. The *Roadmap* is intended to provide a framework within which the district operates and makes decisions. It is *not* intended to be a static document. Rather, the *Roadmap* should be viewed as an elastic, fluid guide that stretches, accommodates, and incorporates new trends and even anticipates future directions.

Components of the Plan

Target: College and Career Readiness for All Students

The following are the primary indicators of college and career readiness that will be monitored on an annual basis.

- Proficiency on 4K-12 curriculum benchmarks (ie. district, state and national assessments)
 - Attainment of high school credit in the recommended ACT Core Curriculum
 - Achievement at or above College Readiness targets as defined by the ACT
 - Proficiency on the ACT WorkKeys test
 - Participation in the college level programming prior to graduation (Youth Options, PIE, CAPP)
 - Achievement in honors or upper level coursework
- Proficiency in 21st Century Skills and Disciplinary Literacy

Learning

Critical Thinking
Creative Thinking
Collaborating
Communicating

Character

Flexibility
Initiative
Social Skills
Productivity
Leadership

Literacy

Information Literacy
Media Literacy
Technology Literacy

- Percentage of students accepted to post-secondary institutions
- Freshman year performance at state colleges and universities
- High school graduation rate
- Career Readiness as demonstrated by:
 - Development/Adjustment of career plan beginning at the elementary level (HEP)
 - Enrollment and success in specific coursework related to career plan
 - Earned career related certifications (i.e. EMT, CNA...)
 - Experience with part-time employment in preferred area prior to graduation
- Post-Secondary career attainment as demonstrated by:
 - Received military induction date
 - Secured career-specific apprenticeship or employment
 - Initiated self-employment

Arrow Number One: Individual School Improvement Plans

Building level school improvement plans drive the district's efforts to improve student achievement. Principals work with their staffs to develop annual school improvement plans based on student achievement data using the SMART goal (Strategic/Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results Oriented, and Time-Bound) format. Consistent with district initiatives and priorities, the goals are presented to the Board of Education annually at the start of each year.

The achievement of SMART goals, inclusive of highly specific outcomes and detailed action plans, is the focus of PLC collaboration time and building level staff development programming. Goals are monitored throughout the year and successful completion (or progress towards completion) of the goals is presented to the Board at the end of each school calendar year.

Arrow Number Two: Educator Effectiveness and Professional Development

Component One: Educator Effectiveness

The Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness System was designed by and for Wisconsin educators to support the continuous improvement of educator practice that leads to improved student learning. The System is a performance-based evaluation system that balances an educator's professional practice with the evidence of student outcomes.

Component Two: Professional Development

BASD is committed to investing in and building the capacity of all members of the school community. Professional development in BASD is primarily internal, individualized, ongoing, and job- embedded. It is designed to support the Indicators of College and Career Readiness and the four components of student achievement outlined in Arrow Number Three.

Aspects of the district staff development program include: Mentoring and Induction of new teachers, PLC Collaborative Time, In-service and Early Release Days, and Professional Workshops and Conferences.

Arrow Number Three: Student Achievement

Arrow number three features four components: Balanced Assessment, Best Instructional Practices, Common Standards, and Curriculum Alignment.

Component One: Balanced Assessment

BASD has adopted a balanced assessment system that effectively measures the depth and breadth of student learning and monitors student progress towards college and career readiness. The BASD Balanced Assessment System includes three components: annual testing, interim/benchmark testing, and classroom Assessment.

Annual Testing

- ❖ is an assessment of learning and designed to certify learning and provide for accountability

Interim/benchmark testing

- ❖ which is still primarily a measure of learning, but can be more useful in informing practice and is helpful in evaluating program effectiveness

Classroom Assessment

- ❖ is assessment for learning through formative and summative assessment.

Annual Assessments for Students in Wisconsin Public Schools

The ACT Plus Writing tests include: Reading, Math, English, Science, and Writing and is administered to all students in grade 11. The ACT Plus Writing helps students understand what they need to learn next so they can build on rigorous high school course plans and identify career areas that align with their interests.

ACCESS

Federal and state laws require that students identified as English Language Learners, in grades K-12, be assessed annually to determine their level of English language proficiency and ensure that they are progressing in achieving full English proficiency.

ACT Aspire Early High School

The ACT Aspire is administered to all students in grades 9 and 10. The Aspire is a summative assessment that measures what students have learned in the areas of: English, Reading, Math, Science, and Writing. ACT Aspire scores predict how a student will perform on the the ACT and ACT WorkKeys when they reach grade

ACT WorkKeys

The ACT WorkKeys tests are administered to all students in grade 11 and test the following areas: Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information. Students can earn National Career Readiness Certificates which are recognized by business and industry nationwide. Through obtaining a National Career Readiness Certificate, students have a clear way to demonstrate their abilities to future employers.

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)

The DLM assessments measure the academic progress of students with significant cognitive disabilities in the subject areas of ELA and Mathematics in grades 3-11, Science at grades 4 and 8-11, and in Social Studies at grades 4, 8, and 10. The DLM system is designed to map a student's learning throughout the year and assist teachers in altering instruction to better support student learning.

Wisconsin Forward Exam

Wisconsin Forward Exam is administered to all Wisconsin students in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics in grades 3 through 8, in science in grades 4 and 8, and in Social Studies in grades 4, 8, and 10.

Interim/Benchmark Assessment in BASD

In addition to annual state required assessments, as noted above, the BASD utilizes a variety of formative assessments to monitor student progress and to assist in the planning of instructional programs.

Early Literacy Screener

Students in grades 4K-2 are required in the state of Wisconsin to be assessed by an early literacy screening tool. The BASD has selected the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) as this assessment. The PALS helps to identify students at risk of developing reading difficulties, diagnose students' knowledge of literacy fundamentals, monitor progress, and plan instruction that targets students' needs.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

MAP tests are administered three times a year to students in grades K-8. They are nationally normed assessments and are adaptive to the responses of the learner. After completion, students receive a RIT score indicating the student's current level of performance. These scores help teachers target instruction to the individual needs of the students and are also linked to a web-based program called Odyssey Learning, which provides resources and learning activities for improvement and enrichment.

Running Records for Reading Proficiency (K-4)

A running record is one method of assessing a student's reading level by examining both accuracy and the types of errors made. Teachers administer the running records at various times throughout the year to monitor students' reading progress. This data is helpful in identifying students who may be in need of remediation or enrichment opportunities to meet their needs.

Classroom Assessment and Common Assessments

Classroom assessment in the Burlington Area School District is at the foundation of teachers' instructional practices. The ultimate goal of effective classroom assessment is to develop confident learners who themselves clearly understand the learning targets and mature to where they develop the ability to assess their own learning. This assessment data, as gathered from common assessments, benchmarks, proficiency rubrics, and on-going checks for understanding are used by districts to adjust their instructional procedures.

Component Two: Best Instructional Practices

Research consistently indicates that the classroom teacher is the single most important factor in improving student learning. BASD utilizes the research of [Robert Marzano](#) and [Charlotte Danielson](#) as frameworks for clarifying classroom expectations for teacher instructional practices and organizing professional development. Teachers planning and preparation include [Bloom's Taxonomy](#) and [Webb's Depth of Knowledge](#) for lesson design to increase critical thinking and engagement in student learning.

Component Three: Common Standards

Educational researcher Robert Marzano (2003) asserts that the number one school level factor that positively impacts student learning is ensuring a guaranteed and viable curriculum. A guaranteed and viable curriculum is defined as time, plus the opportunity to learn. The adoption of the Common Core State Standards significantly changes how curriculum decisions will be made for the foreseeable future. BASD currently prioritizes its curriculum decisions based on three factors: Common Core State Standards, ACT College Readiness Standards, and 21st Century Skills.

Component Four: Curriculum Alignment

The Burlington Area School District is committed to ensuring a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students, at all grade levels, and in all subject areas. The district curriculum serves to clarify essential content and assist in the pacing of instruction. It provides guidance to all teachers in the district. District common assessments reflect the district's curriculum and the standards they are based on. Curriculum in grades K-12 is aligned with the Common Core State Standards and the ACT College and Career Readiness Standards. Together, the curriculum and common assessments hold teachers accountable for student learning outcomes.

The Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Assessments lead to increased student engagement, enhanced learning, and prepares students for success in an information driven, technologically advanced, global economy.

Arrow Number Four: Data Driven Decisions Regarding Programs and Resources

The outdated concept of “sort and select” essentially means that, in previous times, public schools accepted that some students continued on in their education and others entered the world of work. In the global economy of the information age, the competition for jobs and the complexity of the skills and talents required to be qualified to do them have both increased significantly. It is no longer acceptable for practitioners to “stand and deliver” information to students who elect to take advantage of the opportunity to learn while accepting that others are destined to fail. Rather, BASD is committed to the concept that “all students can learn” and recognizes the need for all students to leave the system with much higher levels of proficiency than in past eras.

Elements of the *Roadmap* reflect these changing priorities. For example, the focus on assessment is necessary to ensure that all students master essential learning targets. Because data is necessary for teachers to collaborate in the PLC model and make informed instructional decisions, the infrastructure and professional development needs must be considered. Likewise, if all students are to master essential learning targets at higher levels of proficiency, then a model of delivery in which special education students do not have legitimate access to the core curriculum is not acceptable. This necessitates staffing patterns and professional development to support the effort. In addition to its work planning staff development, the district Technology Committee is continually planning for the infrastructure and material needs necessary to support contemporary instructional practices and enhance 21st Century learning skills.

The current examples outlined above illustrate the budgeting process in BASD. Under this system, resources are allocated based on student learning and program data and identified district priorities, with the stated goal to support increased student achievement and college and career readiness for all graduates.