

BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS: DISTRICT-WIDE STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING OUR MISSION: 2018-2019

Overarching Vision

The Bedford Public Schools develops skillful, reflective, lifelong learners who think critically and creatively and who are informed, responsible, and productive global citizens. The school community provides a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment in which the unique intellectual, social, ethical, and emotional growth of each learner is realized.

Overarching Theory of Action

All students will become skillful, reflective, lifelong learners who think critically and creatively and who are informed, responsible and productive global citizens if:

- the system hires and supports passionate, skillful and knowledgeable teachers who personalize learning and regularly collaborate to produce student-centered, “minds-on” instructional strategies;
- the curriculum prioritizes higher order thinking skills development and depth of content understanding;
- checking for understanding is systematic and student achievement is evaluated through authentic, common assessments;
- and deliberate steps are taken to address diverse learning needs, promote cultural proficiency and close achievement gaps while maintaining high expectations.

District-wide Strategic Objectives

Coherent, Higher Order Thinking Curriculum/Student Centered Learning

Ensure that all students are actively and regularly engaged in inquiry oriented, “minds-on”, student-centered learning that develops their capacities for:

- building content knowledge while understanding and analyzing complex material, particularly written text;
- creatively solving problems and applying their learning in new, particularly cross-curricular contexts;
- reflecting upon, making choices concerning and directing their own learning;
- effectively communicating their ideas;
- demonstrating these skills both through authentic, performance-based assessments and Common Core-based MCAS 2.0.

Equity and Diversity: Teaching All Students and Building Community

Ensure that all students are meeting district-wide learning expectations by:

- personalizing learning, in particular through the use of appropriate technologies;
- strengthening our inclusive instructional practices and support services;
- closing achievement gaps;
- diversifying our staff;
- and carrying out the cultural proficiency work and developing social emotional supports needed to ensure that all students feel safe to take intellectual risks and grow.

Ensure that the historic integration mission embraced by the BPS as a METCO district is realized through purposeful school-based planning and the facilitating of bridge-building family partnerships.

Collaborative Professional Culture

Nurture a professional culture that maximizes administrator and teacher learning, innovation and creativity by creating authentic opportunities for collaborative work on higher order thinking curriculum, student-centered instruction and authentic, performance-based assessment, and by effectively managing the impact of accreditation, state and federal mandates.

- Shift the primary evaluation observation focus from the teacher to the student to better determine the impact of teaching on student learning.
- Wherever possible, develop professional practice goals that focus on literacy learning and developing student independence.

Strengthen Communication and Deepen Our Community Support

Review and renew our Strategic Plan. Explore and implement new ways to bring families into the educational process, for example, by:

- sharing learning strategies for home-based reinforcement
- creating an interracial parent advisory council to support the district's equity work and build family bridges across differences

More effectively tell our district's unique story and strengthen our connection to a wide range of community resources.

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Primary Strategic Focus: K-12 Literacy and Student Independence
Purpose
<p>Developing <u>all</u> students' abilities to comprehend complex texts is essential to their achieving depth of understanding, analytical and inferencing skills, and enduring independence as thinkers and learners, (hereafter referred to as 'literacy learning'). These qualities and the attendant capacities for researching effectively and writing clearly and persuasively are essential for citizenship, college and careers in our constantly changing, technology charged and interconnected world. Doing so for all students is essential to the effective closing of our persistent learning opportunity gaps. In order to successfully close these gaps, the purposeful integrated teaching of general literacy in the elementary grades and disciplinary literacy in the secondary grades must be the responsibility of all educators.</p>
Theory of Action
<p>Successful development of the abilities of all students to comprehend complex texts and express themselves in sophisticated ways depends upon the simultaneous shift of instructional emphasis to inquiry-based learning and student ownership of their own literacy learning goals and progress. While these pedagogical approaches themselves target key student outcomes, i.e., higher order thinking and independence, they intersect with literacy instruction as critical engagement and motivation mechanisms, essential for ensuring student persistence through the real challenges of becoming deliberate, critical and capable readers and writers.</p>
District-wide Steps
<p><u>Framing the Work and Facilitating Adult Learning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the summer retreat and opening day to further frame the district-wide and school-based strategic steps towards improved literacy in ways that maximize teacher leadership, innovation and collaboration. Refine curriculum leaders' work plans (6-12), and focus (K-5) on identifying power standards in support of more effective integration of literacy learning with science and social studies and critical background knowledge development. • Distribute vision paper and promote teacher reflection on key components. • Provide readings and professional development for teachers, teacher leaders and administrators re: literacy learning, student ownership and differentiation. • Provide PD in inquiry-based instruction that engages students' curiosity, provides them with in-the-moment opportunities to investigate interesting questions, and increases their reading engagement by providing time to pursue avenues of interest through internet searches of lesson-related topics. • Visit other schools-districts who have practices in place from which we can learn. • Link supervision and evaluation to literacy learning and student learning independence as systematically as possible, beginning with involving teachers and administrators in identifying what this work looks like in practice, particularly with a focus on what students who are actively engaged in this learning should be doing. <p><u>Literacy Learning Steps</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate K-12 expectations for elements of literacy, involving Claim-Evidence-Reasoning (CER) in reading and written expression, using student work. • Develop and deepen vertical conversations related to literacy; beginning K-8, integrate vertical work into K-12 curriculum leaders' work. • Identify district measures including common assessments and other comprehensive data to track student growth and achievement as we implement the plan, and pilot the use of new data analytics tools to advance this work. <p><u>Literacy Learning and Student Independence Steps</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen educator understanding of the links between literacy learning and developing student independence in the context of inquiry-based, cross curricular, workshop model and project based-learning approaches. • Involve at least 50% of teachers in framing long and short term literacy learning targets as "I can" statements that involve students directly in owning their progress, particularly in the collaborative unpacking of learning targets that reflect Common Core/Massachusetts Literacy Frameworks. • Explore the creation of a district-wide teacher committee that will provide leadership in combining literacy learning instruction with student learning ownership practices. • Expand with some K-12 consistency electronic portfolios that allow students to curate and reflect upon own work relative to literacy growth.