

## BMS Board Report: Leadership Cycle 3/12/24

Hello Board of Trustees, welcome to another BMS board report. How do things change? How do things improve? How do things grow in a positive direction? How can you make a positive impact on every student every day? Throughout this 23-24 school year these have been some guiding questions for the administration, coaches, and SLT at BMS. At this point in the school year you have gathered enough data to inform you of what direction your trend line is going. There are also major components that need to be braided together to develop a strong multitiered system of support. These braided components are academics, attendance, social emotional learning, and behavior management. At BMS we also have Culturally Responsive Teaching providing a foundational pillar in our instructional framework in addition to Gradual Release of Responsibility, Danielson Framework, and our tribal specific (BNAS) history within the implementation of Indian Education For All. The overall BPS Strategic Plan summarizes the implementation of our holistic educational framework in the components titled: Graduation Matters, Attendance Matters, Culture Matters, and Safety Matters. Lastly, an overall outcome that we are all working towards is developing a Profile of a Graduate within our vertical and horizontal alignment of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and whole child competencies for each student to ensure that students are enjoying their educational career feeling being treated equally and equitably. All of the frameworks and plans at BMS are built with a mindset of being trauma informed, of using restorative practices, of developing a reflection of Blackfeet Culture, and of getting every student college and career ready.

How do things change? What gets monitored gets changed, meaning that it is the leadership's responsibility to monitor their expectations of staff and students. It is the accountability of the leader(s) of the building or district to work every day to implement these frameworks, plans, and programs with fidelity. It is the responsibility of the leader to hold themselves accountable to their role in the implementation process, otherwise things will change, in a negative direction. Education is always changing and evolving and there is so much information and places to start, and the leader has to choose their starting point. At BMS our starting point is that students are in school to learn. We are all here for student learning, that is our starting point. If students are not ready to learn then we become trauma informed and ask why, and then provide that needed support. If students can't do the work due to their skills, then teachers make adjustments to instruction based upon their checks for understanding. The teaching support for student learning is a vital piece to the puzzle and student motivation always needs to be addressed within the learning environment. At BMS we start everyday with unconditional positive regard which creates the opportunities for students to make the choice to learn everyday with the overall expectation being that students take ownership of their learning. Students do this by trying, they just need to try. It is made clear to students that the expectation of students each day at BMS is to be here to learn- and to try, just try. The learning environments are always being monitored to support students and staff to complete what is expected of them everyday. Getting out of survival mode to "thrive-al mode" restarts every day to ensure that learning and living is going on and not simply surviving.

How do things improve? At BMS things improve by being structured, firm but fair, and by having clear expectations for staff and students. The expectation is to be in compliance with the plans and frameworks in order to take steps to improve performance. Being structured, or having structure, allows for transparency to be implemented as everyone is following the same plan, including leadership. This transparency then allows for trust to develop and it is trust that provides the avenue for improvement. If staff and students trust you then they will most likely be in compliance with your directive as they know that they will be treated with respect and receive the outcome that they are working towards. Staff and students must try, they must attempt to reach the goals set, and they have to be willing to participate on a daily basis. Trust provides this self-motivation as staff and students know that they will be held accountable for their actions with either positive reinforcement, or with a difficult conversation. The topic of improving is a difficult discussion to have with

professional experts who are in front of students day after day on the frontlines, but if the relationship is built upon trust, then these difficult discussions will be positive and remain positive as the improvement plan is discussed and put into action. The relationship will be maintained, or improved, after having gone through this shared experience. It is difficult for the staff, or students, or families to trust you regardless of their previous experience. The relationship developed will help them believe and feel that this time will be different and they will put forth their best efforts to improve because they trust you. Trust also allows for leaders to be vulnerable, to be relatable, and to be friendly, but not friends, with all stakeholders to successfully implement action plans, strategic plans, frameworks, and individual interpersonal relationships. Trusting relationships build the bridge needed for improvement to be successful and they must be worked on every day, in every interaction.

How do things grow in a positive direction? This is the point where we are at this school year which is how do we all grow together in a positive direction? In building on what was previously written, leaders need to be servant leaders within a distributed leadership model that engages, enlightens, and empowers staff to come to know their individual positive staff identity in tandem with understanding their role within the building. Staff and students need to be engaged and know what it means to be engaged, how does that look? They become engaged by being here to learn, or being here to support student learning. Staff and students then need to be enlightened by being placed within a safe learning environment that allows for mistakes to be made, teachable moments to occur, and for staff to ask questions regarding their role within the building to gain confidence regarding their positive staff identity. Staff and students then need to be empowered by allowing them to be individual leaders in their individual roles. This distributed leadership model allows for each staff member to be a leader, and for each student to be a leader. There are many roles in the building and each staff member has an opportunity to be a leader in that role. Staff need to be empowered for things to grow in a positive direction as they navigate the daily grind of working in education. Working together allows for the school and the staff to grow in a positive direction but that needs daily maintenance and the ability to listen and make yourself available so that you know what type of help and support is needed. The key is keeping your eyes on the big picture so that you can always determine what direction you are going, even if it's going slower than planned or taking two steps back when you get a step forward. Keeping your eyes on the big picture will allow staff and students to be comfortably uncomfortable- in other words, being comfortable working with you but still expecting the challenges to continue, but that the expectations are the same for everyone. Empowering staff and students to take complete control of their work or education is a monumental task and it will help keep them happy as they meet the day's challenges.

How can you make a positive impact on every student every day? In our reservation community at the top of the list is consistency. Staff must be consistent everyday despite what is going on outside of their classroom or office. This consistency includes: unconditional positive regard, being trauma informed, using restorative practices, and by working hard to determine what students are feeling, just as much as what they are learning. Staff can control what they have control over in the distributed leadership model, such as their consistency, however, what about outside of their classroom or office, what about that consistency? In order to address consistency, leaders need to implement systems- systems that are describable, replicable, repeatable, and sustainable. These systems can address consistency for students within the learning environment and provide staff with an opportunity to take control of their individual consistency. Systems take time to implement in order for the system to be successfully implemented. As described above there are a number of academic, attendance, SEL, and behavior management multi-tiered systems of support to be implemented by the action plans, strategic plans, frameworks, and daily plans of BPS. The systems must be implemented by leadership in a manner that staff and students understand their expectations and it's clear the steps that they need to take in order to be successful. Staff and students must know their success criteria and be self-motivated to operate and work within those systems. Working within systems goes back to what was already discussed- trust, relationships, distributed leadership, servant leadership, taking control of what

they have control over, and trust. Working within systems is harder than it seems as autonomy becomes accountability and autonomy becomes synonymous with responsibility.

This struggle renews every single day, and each day students and staff must work on their individual accountability and their responsibility within the system, and this struggle can become overwhelming. It is at this point that leadership must step in and provide leadership to not only keep the systems functional but to keep the operators operational. On top of their own personal struggles that each student and staff member must deal with every day, they must also be nice, be supportive, have empathy, be challenged, and be engaged while being respectful at all times in all areas of the building with every person in the building. This is where leadership must step in and step up to keep students and staff in their individual zone of proximal development, keep them on the road to self-actualization, and on the journey of coming to know. Staff and students must live their daily expectations while being a role model of the mission and vision of the building. The personal struggle before the professional struggle becomes a struggle that takes away motivation, positivity, and beneficence from everyone. Leadership does not need to add more struggles to students and staff in how systems are implemented, or in how they are communicated with, or by having a lack of transparency. The struggle is real and leadership must find that fine line between enabling and liberating. This brings us back to the beginning of this one continuous improvement cycle. This cycle described is only one of the many cycles that need to be implemented on an hourly, daily, weekly, and monthly basis for leadership, students, and staff. This leadership implementation cycle of identifying change, finding ways to improve, working with students and staff on moving in a positive direction together, and then how that ultimately supports student learning and staff wellness. This cycle allows for staff to make a positive impact on all students every day and is braided throughout everything that we do.

In closing, at BMS each staff member and student is on an individualized learning plan to support them in implementing their individual distributed leadership. These cycles also repeat throughout the school year, over and over again. There are many leaders in the building- teachers, teacher assistants, secretaries, custodians, support staff, cooks to name a few- and each person has helped and supported BMS to change, improve, and grow in a positive direction so that every student is supported equally and equitably. These leaders must then be supported using the same system and consistency that is expected of them. In doing so trust develops that allows for each staff member to want to make a positive difference in the lives of all students. Leadership is now being expressed by the students as they are planning and developing their positive rewards system, identifying privileges and incentives to work toward, and in supporting their fellow students to become Sukapi Students. Throughout the leadership cycle students have learned WICOR skills, AVID strategies, MCC standards, IEFA Essential Understandings, Blackfeet standards, whole child competencies skills, writing with legible penmanship, how and when to change their behavior, how to work towards incentives, authentic and disciplinary literacy, math at their level, and how to be happy. It is this happiness advantage that has been successfully implemented. If people are happy, they will work harder, if they are happy, they will work together, if they are happy they will put forth their best effort, and if they are happy they create a happy learning environment. As stated before, getting out of survival mode and into “thrive-al mode” while they develop their positive personal, tribal, and professional identities. Going forward the 9 components of education will be identified and the cycle(s) being implemented will be provided in upcoming Board reports, including but not limited to: leadership, standards, curriculum, instruction, assessment, whole child, learning environment, family/ community engagement, and culture. Thank you Board of Trustees for your time and for your district leadership efforts. Your overall efforts, guidance, and expertise is very much appreciated.

The 5 most important aspects of the BMS leadership cycle:

1. **Being the role model** of the mission and vision of the school in addition to providing the example on a daily basis of your expectations of the staff and of your professionalism. It is the day to day example and role modeling of work ethic, empathy, accountability, and motivation that is the most important.
2. Using your day to day interactions as an avenue to **develop trust**, trusting relationships allows for improvement, growth, and a way for staff to work together despite the ups and the downs of the school year and remain positive and united.
3. **Instructional leadership** is very important, students are at school to learn and teachers are there to teach and it is the leader's job to get the students to want to learn and to teach the teachers how to manage their teacher autonomy effectively and efficiently.
4. **Structure in all areas of the building** that is in place via systems that are describable, repeatable, replicable, and sustainable. Structure allows for the leader to be firm but fair and allows for transparency and accountability of the leader by the staff, families, and supervisor(s).
5. Taking advantage of **the happiness advantage**, everyone in the building should feel a part of the team and they should know their role- it is the leader's job to ensure that these two components are in place so that the employee knows the success criteria and how to provide their individual leadership within the distributed leadership system.

BMS by the numbers: Referrals-

Assault-1

Drugs-1

Fighting: 2

Overt Defiance-2

Vaping-4

Total Suspensions: 10

Attendance: Students and Staff

6th- 74%

7th- 80%

8th-72%

Overall- 75%

Home Visits: 12

Truancy Court: 4 (waiting for a hearing to be scheduled)

Working with students who are not enrolled, enrolled but not attending, enrolled but going to school less than 20% of the time, and remote learning

Certified: 98%

Classified: 96%







Today my class focused on 'Kindness" for SEL/PBL...

Our project for today was to make Valentine's Day cards with the focus being "Kind(ness)" and what it means to us and how being kind to someone can change a person's day for the better.

The students worked in a whole group and individually. The finished project was to go and give them out in the community; they did this by going to Glacier Family Foods and giving their cards to the workers and to people within the community.

By doing this, students got to see firsthand how their act of "kindness" changed many somber smiles into happy smiles of gratitude and grace.

When returning back to the classroom, students wrote a one page reflection of their experience.



We delivered our in kind donations to Browning Elementary School this morning