



ISD 877 -- Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools
Local World's Best Workforce Plan 2014
Making a Difference

In accordance with 2013 Minnesota statutes, section 120B.11, the BHM School Board at a public meeting shall adopt a comprehensive, long-term strategic plan to support and improve teaching and learning that is aligned with creating the world's best workforce. The plan is intended to serve as a foundational document aligning all educational initiatives serving students from pre-kindergarten through high school. BHM's *World's Best Workforce Plan* will serve as a blueprint that demonstrates how current district initiatives and plans work together in a concerted effort to create a quality workforce equipped with the necessary skills for the 21st century. An electronic summary of the report must be submitted to the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education each fall. The report must include:

- A. A summary of progress towards improving teaching and learning and striving for the world's best workforce, specifically:
- All students ready for kindergarten
 - All students in third grade achieving grade-level literacy
 - Progress towards closing the achievement gap
 - All students attaining career and college readiness before graduating from high school
 - All students graduating from high school
- B. Information about best practice strategies that have been implemented and are showing evidence of impacting the closing of achievement gaps and working toward creating the world's best workforce.

BHM Schools' Plan

The mission of BHM Schools is *making a difference by preparing all students for a successful future in a changing world*. All district and school goals must align with this mission. The district developed a *Strategic Plan* during the 2013-2014 school year through a series of meetings and work sessions including parents, community representatives, school board members, school staff and administration. As a result of this plan, BHM Schools is working together to reach its mission through four strategic directions that guide all district goals and plans:

Goal 1: Life Skills

Purposefully integrate life skills to prepare our students to become contributing members of the community

Goal 2: Whole Child

Invest in the whole child to fully develop their social, emotional, mental and physical health

Goal 3: Pathways

Provide a variety of educational pathways for all students to succeed in a college or career setting

Goal 4: Engagement

We engage our community by fostering a positive relationship between key stakeholders and our schools

The district's progress toward achieving this vision as well as its efforts in creating the world's best workforce is evaluated on an annual basis and reported as the *Local World's Best Workforce Plan*.

World's Best Workforce Plan Report Sections:

- Part I: **Assessing and Evaluating Student Progress**
Part II: **Goals and Benchmarks for Instruction and Student Achievement**
Part III: **Reviewing and Evaluating Effectiveness of Instruction and Curriculum**
Part IV: **Strategies for Improving Instruction and Curriculum**
Part V: **Best Practices**
Part VI: **District Advisory Committee, Budget and Report Requirements**

Part I:**Assessing and Evaluating Student Progress**

BHM uses a comprehensive process to assess and evaluate student progress toward college and career readiness standards. The layered system incorporates local, state, and national assessments that provide a complete profile of achievement by individual student, student group, school, and district.

There are a variety of tests used to evaluate the achievement of students as well as instructional programs in the BHM Schools. Students are tested in order to determine instructional level, measure basic skills, evaluate student progress towards achieving state academic standards, and to evaluate program effectiveness. Data from assessments is regularly reviewed by school stakeholders to screen, progress monitor, determine curriculum effectiveness, guide student instruction, evaluate program effectiveness, gauge instructional strategy effectiveness, determine student program placement, diagnose learning difficulties, determine state/federal accountability, determine professional development needs, and inform parents of student progress. A brief description of major assessments follows. For more information on these and other assessments administered by BHM Schools click [here](#).

	Dibels	Performance Series (M/R)	MCA-III Reading	MCA-III Math	MCA-III Science ¹	ACT Explore	ACT PLAN	ACT Compass ²	ACT College Entrance
Kindergarten	F/W/S								
Grade 1	F/W/S								
Grade 2	F/W/S	F/S							
Grade 3	F/W/S	F/S	S	S					
Grade 4	F/W/S	F/S	S	S					
Grade 5	F/W/S	F/S	S	S	S				
Grade 6		F	S	S					
Grade 7		F	S	S					
Grade 8		F	S	S		F			
Grade 9									
Grade 10			S		S		F	W/S	
Grade 11				S				F/W	S
Grade 12									

Minnesota Required Assessments**1. Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA-III)**

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) are federal and state-mandated tests that assess student progress toward achieving Minnesota standards in reading, math and science. Minnesota students are assessed in math and reading each year in Grades 3-8 and in reading at Grade 10 and math at Grade 11. Minnesota students are also assessed three times in science at Grade 5, 8 and at high school during the year student's complete biology. Data are used for school and district accountability by the state.

2. College and Career Readiness Assessments

BHM Schools will utilize ACT's College and Career Readiness assessments during 2014-15 at Grades 8, 10 and 11. ACT's *PLAN* test has been administered for several years at Grade 10, but during 2014-15 the ACT *Explore* will be administered to all Grade 8 students and the ACT *with Writing* college entrance exam will be administered to all Grade 11 students. Students in Grades 10-11 are also required to participate in ACT *Compass* testing if they are not on track for college/career readiness in a core subject.

A. ACT Explore: (Grade 8)

At Grade 8 ACT's *Explore* assessment will be administered to all BHM students during November. The *Explore* is designed to help eighth graders explore a broad range of options for their future. It prepares students not only for their high school coursework but for their post-high school choices as well. The *Explore* helps students identify areas of academic strength and weakness in four areas important for success in college and the workplace -- English, math, reading, and science. Since *Explore* is a curriculum-based test, its scores show the knowledge and skills that students are likely to have in each of these areas. The *Explore* also includes a career planning component designed to help students consider possible career options.

B. ACT PLAN: (Grade 10)

BHM has administered the *PLAN* assessment to sophomores for many years. This assessment helps student's build a solid foundation for future academic and career success and provides information needed to address school districts' high-priority issues. It is a comprehensive guidance resource that helps students measure their current academic development, explore career/training options, and make plans for the remaining years of high school and post-graduation years. The *PLAN* assessment can help all students -- those who are college-bound as well as those who are likely to enter the workforce directly after high school. *PLAN* points out academic strengths and areas where improvement is needed and lets students know if they're on track for college. The *PLAN* helps them find careers that match their interests and even helps connect them with colleges interested in them.

C. ACT Compass: (Grades 10 and 11)

The *ACT Compass* is a suite of online assessments required for students who are not considered to be "on track" for college and/or careers by graduation. This assessment is required only for students determined not on track based on the *PLAN* and previous MCA administrations. Students will be administered the *Compass* after completing the *Plan* in Grade 10 and prior to taking the *ACT* in Grade 11. Students are assessed in subjects where their performance is considered not "on track" for college readiness (math, reading and writing). The *Compass* provides teachers with detailed information on a student's areas of need.

D. ACT Plus Writing College Entrance Exam: (Grade 11)

In the past, only BHM students interested in college admission completed the *ACT College Entrance Exam*. For the first time in 2014-15, all Minnesota juniors will participate in *ACT Plus Writing* college entrance exam this April. All BHM students are expected to participate in the state's administration even if they've previously taken the *ACT*. *ACT* scores will be reportable for college admission, including those receiving ACT-approved accommodations.

3. Access for English Learners

The *ACCESS for ELLs* is an assessment developed by the WIDA consortium and administered to English learners in order to measure progress toward meeting Minnesota's standards for English language development. The assessment is a federal and state requirement for students still learning the English language. A link to the WIDA Consortium website is available by clicking [here](#).

Locally Adopted Assessments

1. Performance Series Assessments

BHM students in Grades 2-5 are evaluated using online *Performance Series* assessments during the fall and spring and students in Grades 6-8 participate only during the fall. These online assessments in math and reading provide teachers with information on how their students are doing compared to the nation, and provide detailed information on how students are progressing on Minnesota standards.

2. Elementary Screening

Elementary students are assessed multiple times in a variety of literacy and math skills. *Dibels* assessments are administered three to four times a year when students are given probes (screeners) to determine how they are performing on grade-level standards. Students who score below the 25th percentile are provided with individualized instruction. K-2 students are also assessed on high-frequency sight words three times a year to make sure students know enough words to work at grade level. Kindergarten students are assessed on letter names and sound recognition three to four times a year. K-1 students are assessed in oral counting and number recognition three to four times a year.

3. Guided Reading Benchmarks

K-5 BHM students have *Guided Reading Benchmarks* (end of the year goals) established for all students to see if they end up where we want them to be.

4. Scholastic Reading Inventory

Students in Grades 6-8 are administered the *Scholastic Reading Inventory* two or three times a year which provides grade-level information used to monitor student progress.

5. Local Math Assessments

Students in Grades 2-5 are administered math fact fluency probes three times a year. These are district-created assessments to gauge student's math skills. In addition, there are common summative math assessments that are administered to students in Grades K-8.

6. Title I Assessments

Title I is a federal grant program available only at elementary schools that qualify by student poverty levels within the district boundary levels. The Title I program is designed to help students who would benefit from extra support to reach their grade level goals. Licensed teachers are hired as Title I teachers. Some Educational Support Professionals (ESPs) are employed under the supervision of a highly-qualified teacher. Title I teachers and support staff use research-based interventions to instruct students.

Students are monitored daily and assessed at least every 2 weeks to see if progress is being made. The interventions are chosen to best meet the needs of individuals or small groups. Most Title I groups will not exceed 6 students. The time frame that groups are seen varies from grade to grade. This is between 15 and 30 minutes.

7. District Common Assessments

All curricular areas have common assessments administered to all students to monitor progress and achievement. The results of common assessments are discussed in professional learning community meetings to identify areas of weakness and strength and develop appropriate instructional strategies.

Goals and Benchmarks for Instruction and Student Achievement

Minnesota Achievement Goals

1. All Students Ready for Kindergarten

BHM Schools is making efforts to assure that all students come to school with the skills necessary to be ready for kindergarten. Approximately 25% of the students who eventually enroll in BHM kindergarten participate in district school readiness preschool which has received a four-star rating by the state. All students participating in this program take part in early childhood screening. These students are assessed and preschool staff partner with special education to provide students with disabilities or special needs with appropriate instruction. BHM is working with other preschools to promote the same screening process which is required before kindergarten entrance.

All BHM students entering kindergarten are assessed using *Dibels* "Letter Name Fluency" during the first week of school. Data from the fall of 2014 shows 87% of students were at benchmark level placing them approximately "at grade level." The district literacy plan is in place to accomplish the goal of having all students achieving grade level literacy in third grade.

A variety of resources for parents are available on the district's website, including an annual workshop provided by a kindergarten teacher to assist parents in getting their children ready for starting school. Community Education ECFE and Adult Basic Education Programs provide family literacy classes for English Language Learners and high need families at the Buffalo and Montrose sites. ECFE also provides parent education including home visits for high need parents and their children with the goal of promoting school readiness and access to community resources.

2. Literacy by Grade 3

In order to ensure that all students are reading by the end of third grade, Minnesota requires that all curriculum, instruction, and assessment needs to be aligned with current research-based practices. Districts are required to examine their current practices and implement local literacy plans. The BHM Literacy Plan provides an overview of how to provide students with appropriate, research-based instruction with the goal of having all students reading by Grade 3 or earlier. The plan outlines the main reading components for core instruction with students who are exceeding grade level standards while receiving instruction that continues to progress their learning, and support for students who have not met standards. To view a copy of the BHM Local Literacy Plan click [here](#).

BHM Schools is making progress towards all third grade students achieving grade level literacy. 62.7% of BHM Grade 3 students achieved proficiency as measured on MCA-III reading assessments administered in the spring of 2014. On the spring 2014 Dibel's Oral Reading Fluency probe, 89.5% of third graders scored in at grade level or above. On the *Performance Series* reading assessment administered in the spring of 2014, 57.8% of BHM students scored above national norms.

3. Progress Towards Closing Achievement Gap

Minnesota schools have one of the largest achievement gaps in the nation. Minnesota currently has a waiver from *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation that targets lowering the achievement gap by 50% by 2017. As a result, BHM is compelled to increase the growth of traditionally lower-performing student groups (American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, Black, English Learners, special education and students of poverty) in an effort to reduce the achievement gap.

Under Minnesota's NCLB waiver, annual targets were established by the Minnesota Department of Education up to 2017 in reading and math for all student groups, including American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, Black, English Learners, special education and students of poverty. Each district has their own targets based on the number of students enrolled for the full academic year within different grades and student groups. Districts must have at least 20 students within a student group for it to be included in the data. A district is considered on track in 2014 to meeting the 2017 goal if the proficiency index rates for all applicable student groups exceeded the 2014 math and reading targets.

BHM Achievement Gap Progress 2014						
<i>Student Group</i>	Math			Reading		
	<i>BHM Proficiency Index</i>	<i>Proficiency Index Target</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>BHM Proficiency Index</i>	<i>Proficiency Index Target</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Asian	83.67	61.56	22.11	80.43	51.95	28.48
Hispanic	57.50	49.58	7.92	51.98	45.52	6.46
Black	54.26	43.88	10.38	43.00	40.08	2.92
English Learners	47.06	39.46	7.60	35.58	28.09	7.49
Special Education	49.67	50.63	-0.96	46.37	46.69	-0.32
Free/Reduced Lunch	62.68	59.10	3.58	59.79	54.77	5.02

Current data from the Minnesota Department of Education shows BHM is “partially on track” to meet the 2017 goal. This means only one or two student groups within BHM Schools did not meet established proficiency targets – for 2013-14 this was students receiving special education services. The district came close, however, had five more special education students scored in the proficient range in math, and two more in reading, all groups with historically lower achievement would have met their targets last year.

It is important to remember that the proficiency index targets will increase every year until 2017 and continued improvements in achievement for all students will be needed to become on track in the future. BHM is concentrating on increasing the growth of all students as the main strategy for reducing the achievement gap.

4. All students attaining career and college readiness before graduating from high school

BHM students will participate in ACT's College and Career Readiness assessments during 2014-15 at Grades 8, 10 and 11. ACT's *PLAN* test has been administered for several years at Grade 10, but during 2014-15 the ACT *Explore* will be administered to all Grade 8 students and the *ACT with Writing* college entrance exam will be administered to all Grade 11 students. Previously, only students interested in college participated in the ACT college entrance exam.

A. ACT PLAN: (Grade 10)

As a measure of College and Career Readiness, the *PLAN* results show BHM juniors with an average composite score of 18.4 in 2013-14 compared to the national average of 17.2. 68% of BHM juniors scored above national norms and 56.3% attained a *PLAN* composite score of 18 indicating that they are on track for career and college readiness.

B. ACT College Entrance Exam: (Grade 11)

An ACT benchmark score is the minimum score needed on an ACT subject-area test to indicate a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in the corresponding credit-bearing college courses, which include English Composition, Algebra, Social Science and Biology. As a measure of College and Career Readiness, BHM students attained a composite score of 23.1 on the ACT assessments administered during 2013-14. The average national 2013-14 ACT composite score was 20.9 and the Minnesota state average was 22.9. In 2013, 78% of BHM students met the ACT English College Readiness Benchmark compared to 77% of the state and 64% of the nation. 40% of BHM students met college readiness benchmarks in all four subjects compared to 39% of Minnesota students and 26% nationally.

ACT College Readiness Benchmarks 2013-14							
<i>Average ACT Scores</i>					<i>Percent Attaining All Readiness Benchmarks</i>		
<i>Subject</i>	<i>ACT Benchmark</i>	<i>BHM</i>	<i>MN</i>	<i>National</i>	<i>BHM</i>	<i>MN</i>	<i>National</i>
English	18	22.0	22.1	20.3	78%	77%	64%
Reading	22	23.6	23.1	21.3	60%	56%	44%
Mathematics	22	23.1	23.0	20.9	65%	61%	43%
Science	23	23.3	22.9	20.8	57%	53%	37%
Composite	21.0	23.1	22.9	21.0	40%	39%	26%

5. All Students Graduating from High School

While Minnesota high schools strive to get all students to graduate, the minimum expectation is to get 90% or more to reach that level. Graduation rates are averaged over four, five or six years. Minnesota uses the federally-required "adjusted cohort graduation rate" model. This model follows students in a group, or a "cohort," throughout high school and determines if they graduate within four, five or six years. The four-year graduation rate shows the number of students graduating from high school within four years after entering grade nine. The five-year and six-year graduation rates show the number of students who took additional time to earn sufficient credits or meet other graduation requirements and to receive a high school diploma from their district. BHM continues to do an excellent job of helping their students attain high school graduation.

BHM Schools Graduation Rates 2013-14			
	<i>4-Year Rate</i>	<i>5-Year Rate</i>	<i>6-Year Rate</i>
BHM	93.2%	93.6%	95.2%
Buffalo High School	94.5%	96.3%	96.3%
Phoenix Learning Center	54.6%	69.2%	81.3%
<i>Minnesota Average</i>	<i>79.8%</i>	<i>81.4%</i>	<i>81.8%</i>

BHM District Student Achievement Goals for 2013-14

BHM Schools has an established structure of strategic systematic goal setting which aims to align all district and building student achievement and staff development goals toward the district's vision. Each year the School Board adopts goals designed to impact instruction and student achievement within the district. All schools develop site plans that are based on these student achievement goals. The following are the three district goals for 2013-14:

District Achievement Goal #1: Proficiency

Demonstrate a 4% increase in the overall percentage of students meeting proficiency standards on the MCA in math, and demonstrate a 4% increase in the overall percentage of students meeting proficiency standards on the MCA in reading.

Although Minnesota was granted a federal waiver under NCLB, the target of every student reaching proficient levels remains. While BHM students continue to score above MCA state averages at most grades and subjects, the district did not meet its proficiency goals for 2013-14.

BHM was striving for a 4% increase in the percent of students scoring at proficient levels as measured by the MCAs in both reading and math. The 4% increase represents a meaningful statistical difference for a district our size.

Similar proficiency targets to raise achievement by at least 4% in both math and reading have been established for 2014-15. All sites are developing improvement plans to reach these goals with reports scheduled for the fall of 2015.

	Math		Reading	
	BHM	MN	BHM	MN
2013-14 Target	71.8%	N/A	66.3%	N/A
2013-14 Final Results	67.1%	61.4%	62.9%	59.1%
2014-15 Target	71.4%	N/A	66.9%	N/A

District Achievement Goal #2: Academic Growth

- A. *Demonstrate average growth measured by Performance Series at all grade levels in both reading and math above the national norms as established by Scantron for fall to spring growth.***
- B. *Demonstrate positive average z-score growth at all grade levels in both reading and math as measured by the MMR data which indicates students are making higher than anticipated growth.***

BHM also established two goals involving growth in math and reading – one for *Performance Series* assessments adopted locally and another for MCAs. Both goals are designed to raise the achievement level of all district students.

Performance Series Results:

BHM students scored above Performance Series growth norms in both reading and math. 64.3% of district students scored above national norms in math, and 55.5% scored above national norms in reading. This means BHM students demonstrated more growth on average than other schools in the nation. The district was successful in meeting this goal and will increase the rigor for 2014-15.

MCA Results:

Student growth is measured by the student's performance on the MCAs relative to their performance in the most recent year they took the test. Each student's growth is compared to typical students. These growth scores are known as "z-scores" and indicate whether the student is above or below expectation. A student's z-score can be calculated as: $Z\text{-Score} = (\text{Student Score} - \text{Expectation}) \div \text{Standard Deviation}$.

MCA Growth (Average Z-Scores)		
	BHM	MN
Math	0.0817	0.0000
Reading	0.0310	0.0000

A growth z-score of zero indicates that the student met the expectation and demonstrated as much growth as an average Minnesota student. A positive z-score indicates the student had higher than expected achievement. A negative z-score indicates the student achieved below the expectation. Every student receives a z-score so schools can measure the average growth of all students. On the whole, BHM students demonstrated more growth (positive) than typical Minnesota students in both math and reading. These relatively small differences are statistically significant.

District Achievement Goal #3: Achievement Gap Reduction

All Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) z-Scores for each student group will be reported as a negative number, therefore indicating BHM students in all student groups are making strides towards reducing the achievement gap. These numbers will be reported through the Multiple Measures Rating (MMR) based on the MCA data in reading and math.

As previously described, all students who participate in MCA testing receive growth scores in both math and reading. These scores can be combined to examine the growth patterns of student groups within the district. The district is compelled to increase the growth of traditionally lower-performing student groups (American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, Black, English Learners, special education and students of poverty) in an effort to reduce the achievement gap.

To see how district's are doing, z-scores from reading and math from lower-performing groups are compared to a higher-performing student group with the expectation that to reduce the achievement gap these students will have to demonstrate more growth than their comparison counterparts.

An achievement gap reduction (AGR) score is then determined by subtracting a student group's average z-score from their comparison group in both math and reading and averaging the two. If an AGR score is negative, it means students in that student group grew more over the past year than their comparison group (i.e. BHM Asian students grew more between 2013 and 2014 than their white counterparts). If the AGR score is positive it means the lower-performing group grew less than their counterparts. For this reason BHM is striving to achieve negative AGR scores for all groups.

BHM Combined AGR Scores 2014				
	Math		Reading	
	Student Count	Combined AGR	Student Count	Combined AGR
American Indian	14	0.432	14	-0.069
Asian	50	-0.217	47	-0.290
Hispanic	106	0.077	107	0.155
Black	47	0.353	52	0.381
English Learners	34	0.029	33	0.325
Special Education	388	0.197	412	0.204
Free/Reduced Lunch	868	0.200	866	0.216
Total Students	3100	N/A	3094	N/A

The chart at right shows BHM did not reach its goal as most lower-performing student groups continued to demonstrate less growth than their comparison groups. However, BHM is making strides towards reducing the achievement gap. While not all student groups registered a negative number, five student groups (American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, English Learners and special education) registered improved AGR scores when compared to 2013. BHM Schools strives for all students to be working at grade-level.

BHM District Student Achievement Goals for 2014-15

Each year the School Board adopts goals designed to impact instruction and student achievement within the district. All schools develop site plans that are based on these student achievement goals. The following are the three district student achievement goals for 2014-15:

1. District Proficiency

Demonstrate a 4% increase in the overall percentage of students meeting proficiency standards on the MCA in math, and demonstrate a 4% increase in the overall percentage of students meeting proficiency standards on the MCA in reading.

2. District Academic Growth

- A. Demonstrate above average growth for sixty percent or higher of BHM students as measured by Performance Series at grades 2-8 in both reading and math.
- B. Demonstrate positive average z-score growth at grade levels 3-11 in both reading and math as measured by the MMR data which indicates students are making higher than anticipated growth.

3. District Academic Goal #3: Achievement Gap Reduction

All Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) z-Scores for each student group will be reported as a negative number, therefore indicating BHM students in all student groups are making strides towards reducing the achievement gap. These numbers will be reported through the Multiple Measures Rating (MMR) based on the MCA data in reading and math.

Results on progress towards completion of these goals will be reported on in the fall *2015 BHM Schools World's Best Workforce Report*.

Site Improvement Goals 2014-15

Guided by the strategic plan and the district's student achievement goals, each building has leadership teams comprised of teacher leaders and administrators who use SMART goals to guide their building's efforts towards increasing student achievement. Site Improvement Plans (SIP) are developed after teams analyze and disaggregate student achievement results and growth data for all grade levels and student sub-groups served. All SIPs include school-wide student achievement goals and action plans to support the achievement of each of those goals. These leadership teams assist in planning, organizing and carrying out staff development plans necessary for curriculum, instruction or programming modifications for students not meeting grade level expectations.

Reviewing and Evaluating Effectiveness of Instruction and Curriculum

1. Continuing Improvement Process

BHM employs a comprehensive system to periodically review and evaluate the effectiveness of all district curriculum and instruction. The primary goal of BHM's curriculum review process is to develop a guaranteed and viable curriculum. A guaranteed and viable curriculum is one in which the agreed upon essential content and skills are covered within adequate instructional time. BHM recognizes that a guaranteed and viable curriculum has a strong correlation to student achievement (Marzano, 2003). There are seven components to the district's Continuous Improvement Process:

Reflection: Identify program's strengths and weaknesses

Research: Determine program improvement action plan based on identified program strengths and limitations and current research in the field, as well as revised state or national standards. Examination of best practice research, current trends and district test data are reviewed. Essential standards are identified ensuring the identified content can be adequately addressed in the given time.

Pilot: Apply research to the recommended materials, resources and actions for adoption.

Implement: Successfully incorporate the revised curriculum into daily practice. During this phase, teachers develop master curriculum maps for each course. Curriculum mapping involves teachers collaborating to write course and unit essential questions, draft learning targets, and identify essential content and skills. Teachers also develop common summative and formative assessments.

Adjust: Adjust curriculum, instruction and assessment based on implementation findings. During this year, curriculum maps are reviewed for effectiveness by examining common assessment and standardized test data. In addition, curriculum maps are reviewed for horizontal and vertical alignment.

Monitor: Monitor student achievement by collecting and reviewing assessment data.

Evaluate: Evaluate the effectiveness of the current curriculum

2. Teacher Evaluation

BHM engages in regular evaluation of probationary and tenured teachers. The goal of the BHM's teacher evaluation system is to articulate expectations, assess performance in the instructional domain, and provide support for the development of high performing teachers capable of delivering outstanding education that improves the quality of teaching and learning. Instruction is improved through self-assessment and reflection, individual and PLC goal setting, and peer observations conducted by instructional coaches.

3. Principal Evaluation

BHM has a comprehensive principal evaluation system designed to evaluate principals in five domains. Principal evaluations are based on school performance data, state level and school performance measures, and feedback from staff and parents. The evaluation involves principal self-reflection, goal setting, and a professional growth plan.

4. Constituent Surveys

BHM periodically surveys their constituencies about their connection to and level of satisfaction with its schools. The most recent survey occurred in December 2013 when 400 district residents from Buffalo, Hanover and Montrose were surveyed randomly as a step in developing the district's strategic plan. The Morris Leatherman Company, who conducts similar surveys throughout Minnesota and the Midwest, was contracted to complete the project.

When BHM residents were asked for their first thoughts when thinking about BHM Schools, the vast majority indicated “good” or “excellent academics” or “good teachers.” When asked what sets BHM apart from other districts, residents replied “good teachers” or “better academics.” When asked to provide an overall quality rating of BHM Schools, 93% responded “good” or “excellent.” This is significantly higher than when last surveyed in 2007 when only 77% of residents gave BHM Schools a positive rating. The most important indicator of the district’s high-quality was identified as “broad curriculum” chosen by a majority of respondents. By a 15-1 ratio, respondents see education getting better rather than worse. This is an outstanding rating and validation of the direction of the District.

When asked to grade the job performance of district staff, the results were overwhelmingly positive. 89% of respondents gave teachers and instructional staff positive ratings. This was the highest rating the survey company had ever witnessed. School principals and administrators, the School Board and Superintendent also received very strong ratings with at least 82% of residents responding positively.

The survey also uncovered challenges facing the district. When asked what the most serious issue is that the district faces, 26% of residents identified “lack of funding” (although the most common response was “nothing” provided by 35%). When residents were asked about various characteristics of the district, the two highest levels of concern were “class sizes” at 26% and up-to-date technology at 23%. The recently passed levy referendum will remedy some of these concerns.

The results of the constituent survey indicate that residents generally feel that the district is moving in the right direction with 88% percent indicating BHM was doing a good job of preparing students for the future.

Part IV:

Strategies for Improving Instruction and Curriculum

Comprehensive strategies for district/school improvement are developed and/or revised annually and focus on increasing student achievement by enhancing instruction, upgrading curriculum and developing effective programming. Various improvement plans and significant instructional strategies are described briefly below.

1. District Improvement Plan

A District Improvement Plan is written by the Director of Teaching & Learning on a yearly basis. It focuses on improving curriculum, programming and assessment practices district-wide or in specific areas of programming and is formed using student achievement data, feedback from building and district committees and curriculum/programming needs assessment data.

2. Site Improvement Plans

Each building within the BHM school system develops plans for improving student achievement, programming and instruction within their individual building. Individual site teams draft Site Improvement Plans (SIP) outlining explicit staff development strategies to ensure professional growth opportunities and curriculum development specific to assisting staff in meeting the building's student achievement goals. The SIPs are part of a comprehensive method of professional development to ensure all staff members effectively provide instruction which ensures all students remain on track to graduate from high school and attain career and college readiness before completing high school. Strategies for improving instruction, curriculum and student achievement vary among buildings. Specific strategies are identified in each school improvement plan.

3. Curriculum Development

The primary goal of BHM's curriculum development process is to develop a guaranteed and viable curriculum. A guaranteed and viable curriculum is one in which the agreed upon essential content and skills are covered within the allocated instructional time. The cyclic review involves teacher collaboration, parent/community member input, reflective inquiry, and decision making based on best practices, current research, district data, and state/federal mandates. The process results in a living document that describes content, skills, and assessments both horizontally within a grade level and/or content area and vertically across grade levels. BHM recognizes that a guaranteed and viable curriculum has a strong correlation to student achievement.

Component: 2014-15 Curricular Area:

Reflection	Career/Technical Education
Research	World Languages
Pilot	Physical Education and Health
Implement	Social Studies English Language Development
Adjust	English Language Arts
Monitor	Art Math Music Science
Evaluate	Library Media & Technology

4. District Staff Development

The Director of Teaching & Learning in conjunction with administrators is charged with structuring professional development to improve instruction and ultimately student achievement. The administrative team works closely with Teaching & Learning Councils (TLCs). Together they provide suggestions and guidance to develop goals that align with the district's strategic direction. These goals direct all building staff development goals and plans toward BHM's vision.

During 2014-15, the emphasis is working in professional learning communities to use data for instructional decisions. Teachers are learning data-driven decision-making skills and strategies to better enable them to meet the needs of their students.

Part V:

Best Practices

BHM incorporates a wide variety of education effectiveness practices to enhance the achievement of all students. Some of these include:

1. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

All teachers belong to PLCs. PLC leaders ensure teachers have access to common formative assessment data, assist in facilitating the use of this data to inform instruction, and develop skills to identify highly effective practices and strategies which can be emulated in classrooms. PLCs are responsible for researching and sharing effective instructional strategies and practices as a team. Educators implement chosen strategies in their classrooms and bring back student work examples to the team for further discussion and refinement of practice.

2. Data-Driven Dialogue (or Collaborative Inquiry)

The Data-Driven Dialogue is a process for looking at and analyzing student data in an objective way to see areas of strength and areas to work on at school, grade, classroom and individual levels. It provides a technique for teachers and administrators to work hand-in-hand to make sure all students receive appropriate instruction at their level.

3. QUEST

Quest is a special program designed to meet the special needs of highly gifted students (top two to three percent in class) in grades 2-9. The program is a tuition-free school within a school located at Parkside Elementary (grades 2-5), BCMS (grades 6-8), with some transitional courses at Buffalo High School. The Quest program covers the core areas of English, mathematics, science and social studies within a full-time, elementary classroom for students in grades 2-5, and at the middle school level in grades 6-8. Quest students experience an enriched and accelerated curriculum. Instructors in the Quest program receive specialized training for meeting the needs of highly gifted students. For more information on the Quest program click [here](#).

4. STEM

Currently Tatanka Elementary School provides STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) programming for students in kindergarten through Grade 5. Students receive an education with lessons that integrate science, technology, engineering and mathematics concepts. Through the "Engineering is Elementary" (EiE) curriculum developed by the Museum of Science in Boston, Massachusetts, students apply their knowledge of science and mathematics and use questions and problem solving skills to plan, design, create, and improve a technology. Through these lesson experiences, students collaborate, communicate, critically think, and use creativity to develop a deeper understanding of STEM concepts and the world around them. For more information on Tatanka's STEM program click [here](#).

5. Arts Magnet

The BHS Arts Magnet program was launched in 2006 when seven school districts created the Northwest Suburban Integration School District to give students more choices for their educational experience. Currently there are approximately 250 Arts Magnet students enrolled at BHS in grades nine through twelve. The program is designed for motivated students who possess an interest in the areas of visual arts, music, theater, dance, literary and media arts, and interior or fashion design. The curriculum is based on the belief that the arts teach essential skills for the 21st century. The arts actively engage kids to think creatively, collaborate with peers and advisors, apply critical thinking skills and learn to communicate their ideas. One of the tenets of the program is the belief that students benefit when arts cross cultural and socioeconomic boundaries and prepares students to become productive, responsible, and creative members of their community. The curriculum framework helps students make connections between academic disciplines and to experience real world applications and meaning. For more information on the Arts Magnet program click [here](#).

6. Literacy By Design (LBD)

BHM uses *Literacy by Design* as a core literacy program for Grades K-5. This program is founded on scientifically research-based reading and writing instruction. LBD uses the research from the National Reading Panel that found literacy instruction should include Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension. These five areas are part of a balanced literacy program – phonics instruction, leveled reading, high-frequency sight words and a variety of approaches to learning to read.

7. Required Secondary Courses

At BCMS students who are below grade-level in reading and/or math are enrolled in appropriate courses. Students below grade-level in reading are enrolled in the “English 2” course which utilizes the “Read 180” program and doubles the amount of classroom time devoted to reading, as well as incorporating additional reading strategies. Students in Grades 6-8 who struggle in math are enrolled in “Pre-Taught” classes to provide additional instruction. These classes are taught before students attend their regular math classes. This strategy allows these students to work on prerequisite skills and receive additional instruction. There is also a reading course at BHS students for students who are well-below grade level in reading.

8. Co-Taught Classrooms

At the secondary level there are classes that include both the regular classroom teacher and a special education teacher who work together. These classes have a larger number of special education students within the classroom. This permits special education students to attend mainstream classes and provides immediate individual attention as needed.

9. Response to Intervention (RTI)

RTI provides tools to assist in identifying elementary students who need help in reading, writing, math and behavior in an effort to prevent the development of serious learning problems. Elementary students who are screened as below grade-level on two or more assessments are administered research- or evidence-based interventions. These interventions are the first step in identifying the obstacles to a student’s learning. Depending on the building, available supports could include Minnesota Reading Corps, Title I, or additional small group instruction from the classroom teacher or other support professional. Various resources are available to parents on the Student Support website available [here](#). Some of the resources include “I Can” statements that simplify the standards for students, links to various websites to help support the practice of the standard’s skills, and basic overviews of reading and math strategies for parents. Title I parents should receive this link through Title I parent night and various newsletters.

10. Minnesota Reading Corps

Minnesota Reading Corps is a program for K-3 students just below grade-level who are pulled out and provided with 20 minutes of direct one-on-one instructional interventions with a trained Reading Corp (Americorps) instructor. This program is currently available at four buildings (DES, NES, PES and TES).

11. AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)

AVID is a global nonprofit organization dedicated to closing the achievement gap by preparing all students for college and other postsecondary opportunities. AVID trains educators to use proven practices in order to prepare students for success in high school, college, and a career, especially students traditionally underrepresented in higher education. There is an AVID program at BHS that concentrates on increasing the achievement of all students.

12. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)

Three elementary schools in the district (MES, NES and PES) utilize PBIS which is designed to provide school focus of common language: goals and rules that provide a structure for discussing how to help students who are not responding to school-wide rules.

13. Other District Initiatives

There are several other initiatives that are integrated into some BHM schools. Some elementary schools utilize *Responsive Classroom* to increase student engagement within the classroom. Some secondary teachers have been trained in *Developmental Design*, a similar program designed to increase student engagement for older students. A number of elementary teachers have been trained in CGI (Cognitive Guided Instruction) which helps teachers see where their students are at and design appropriate instruction to further their development. Many elementary teachers have been trained in *Visual Phonics* which provides visual clues to help students learn to pronounce sounds within the English language. In addition, many district staff have received *SEED* training. The SEED program engages teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders from all subject areas, grade levels, and geographic locations to create gender fair, multi-culturally equitable, socioeconomically aware, and globally informed education.

Part VI:

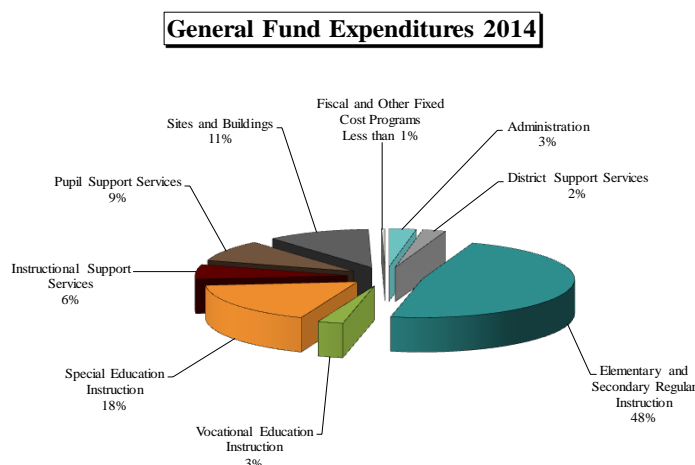
District Advisory Groups, Budget and Report Requirements

Parent Advisory Groups

While parents are encouraged to discuss questions or concerns with their teacher or principal, there is an opportunity for parents and community members to actively participate in the curriculum and instruction process on the District/Community Teaching & Learning Council (D/CTLC). This committee serves as BHM Schools' curriculum advisory committee. The D/CTLC is composed of community members, teacher leaders, administrators who represent all students, as well as the communities of Buffalo, Hanover, and Montrose. The purpose of the D/CTLC is to advise and provide recommendations to the school board regarding BHM's curriculum, thus ensuring BHM students are college and career ready upon graduation. For more information on the D/CTLC click [here](#).

Budget

Information on annual district expenditures for curriculum and instruction are shown below. Approximately 75% of all BHM expenditures are used for direct instruction (elementary/secondary, special education, vocational and instructional support services. If pupil support services are included (transportation, nursing, guidance and counseling) BHM would be at 84%.



Report Requirements

To meet state requirements the School Board will:

- Meet to review as necessary, student achievement goals, local assessment outcomes, approve strategies and practices for improving curriculum and instruction
- Review the District student achievement goals, benchmarks, and improvement plans
- Hold an annual meeting to review and revise the plan.
- Approve the submission of the electronic summary of its report to MDE each fall
- Seek continual stakeholder input and provide updates publicly throughout the year so the report is not the sole source of information.

To meet state requirements, BHM's Teaching and Learning Department will:

- Title the report "ISD 877 BHM Schools Local World's Best Workforce Plan."
- Place the approved report on the district's web page.
- Submit an electronic summary to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education each fall
- Periodically survey affected constituencies about their connection to and level of satisfaction.