



Albany Area Schools Independent School District 745

A Community of Successful Learners

District 745 - Albany Area Schools Local World's Best Workforce Plan 2020-2021

Overview:

The World's Best Workforce Plan (state statute, section 120B.11) is a comprehensive, long-term strategic plan to support and improve teaching and learning with the ultimate goal of creating the world's best workforce. In order to create the world's best workforce, Albany Public Schools must make progress toward

- closing the identified achievement gaps in the district
- making sure all students are ready for kindergarten
- making sure all students in third grade are achieving grade-level literacy
- making sure all students attain career and college readiness before graduating from high school
- making sure all students graduate from high school

This progress will be measured through any combination of the following:

- student performance on the National Association of Education Progress (NAEP) assessment
- student performance on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments along with other relevant assessments
- analysis of assessment data as it relates to achievement gaps in student sub-groups (racial groups, ethnic groups, English Language Learners, students receiving special education services, and/or students living in poverty.
- high school graduation rates
- college and career readiness assessments

The World's Best Workforce Plan is intended to serve as a foundational document that aligns educational initiatives that serve Albany Area Schools' students pre-k through high school.

Goals for Instruction and Student Achievement

The Albany Area School District has an established structure of strategic systematic goal setting which aims to align all district, school board, site-specific, and staff development goals toward the district's vision. Each of the components of this structure is described briefly below. Documents which provide a detailed and comprehensive description of each element are referenced.

District Goals Aligned to World's Best Workforce Goal Areas

Kindergarten Readiness Goal

- The number of students in high risk or some risk categories on the Letter Naming subtest will decrease from 25 out of 71 students in the fall 2020 to 20 out of 71 students in the spring 2021.
- The number of students in high risk or some risk categories on the Counting Objects subtest will decrease from 63 out of 72 students in the fall 2020 to 30 out of 72 students in the spring 2021..

Third Grade Literacy Goal

- The percentage of Albany Area Public Schools third graders achieving proficiency on the MCA III Reading Test will be at least 60% in spring of 2021.
- The percentage of Albany Area Public Schools third graders making typical or aggressive growth based on start score as measured on the aReading assessment will increase from 61.6% in spring of 2019 to 63.6% in spring of 2021 (no Spring 2020 data available due to closure).

Achievement Gap Closure

- The proficiency gap on the MCA reading assessment between students who receive special education services and students who do not receive special education services across the district will decrease from 49.3% in 2019 to 45.3% in 2021 by increasing the percent proficient of the groups as follows:
 - SPED from 26.8% to 30.8%
 - Non-SPED maintained at 76.1%

Career and College Readiness

- By spring of 2021, 62% of 9th and 10th grade students will be proficient (an equivalency score of 977 for 9th grade and 1045 for 10th grade) using the STAR reading test.
- By spring of 2021, at least 90% of students in grades 9-10 will show proficiency (a grade 9 scale score of 849 or above/a grade 10 scale score of 856 or above) or adequate growth (an SGP of 35 or above) using the STAR test for math.

High School Graduation Goal

- Albany Area High School will maintain a 4-year graduation rate above 90% in spring 2021.

Albany Strategic Plan

Albany has a three-year Strategic Plan which was developed during the 2019-2020 school year through a series of meetings and work sessions that included students, parents, community representatives, school board members, school staff, and administration. A comprehensive needs assessment was conducted and the results were used to guide the development of the district's Mission Statement, Vision, Strategic Directions and Strategic Plan.

Goals of the current strategic plan:

- Expand current SEL programs and build deeper supports for the mental health of students, staff, and community and adapt as needs change
- Embed and demonstrate Portrait of a Graduate skills E-12
- Continue to implement and enhance personalized learning opportunities for our students.
- Ensure the facilities meet the needs of learners through further exploration of options
- Leverage community and business relationships and seek additional collaborative opportunities to enhance real-world experiences

Albany Area School Board Goals

The Albany Board of Education, after taking input from various stakeholder groups including teaching staff, administrative staff, parents and students, develop the goals annually that are consistent with the Strategic Plan of the district. These goals are intended to drive the work of the Building Leadership Teams (BLTs), the Professional Learning Community structure (PLCs), and the District Staff Development Committee. The school board goals are as follows:

- Support students, staff, and administration in implementation of the Strategic Plan
- Increase collaboration and engagement between the board, administrative team, teachers, students, and community
- Ensure financial stability of the school district

Albany Area Schools Staff Development Committee Goals

The District Staff Development Committee is charged with structuring professional development intending to improve instruction and ultimately student achievement. This committee is comprised of teacher representatives from each building, two classified staff members, one principal, one parent representative, two school board representatives, the director of teaching and learning, and the staff development coordinator. Working together, they develop district staff development goals that align with the district's Strategic Plan, School Board goals, and site-specific goals.

The specific goals for the Staff Development Committee are

- to assess, prioritize, and address staff needs through staff development programs,
- to evaluate its effectiveness in meeting those needs,
- to support district goals.

BLT Site-Specific Goals

Each building within the Albany Area School district is led by a building leadership team (BLT). These shared leadership teams composed of teachers and administrators study school-wide data and determine goals for their building. These goals then guide professional development for teachers.

Albany High School (9-12)

- Create a positive school climate and culture based on 5 Rs: Recognize, Reward, Reinforce, Respect, Results. All staff and the leadership team will incorporate ideas and strategies to promote a positive, inclusive, enjoyable, and rewarding learning environment and empower students to assume responsibility for their learning.

Albany Middle School (6-8)

- In the 2020-2021 school year, students will develop self-awareness and social awareness in order to achieve school and life success, maintain positive relationships, and demonstrate responsible behaviors.

Albany Elementary (K-5)

- Based on the Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener (SAEBRS), the percentage of students in grades K-5 who screened as high risk in October, 2020 will decrease from 13% to 11% by May of 2021.

Avon Elementary (EC-5)

- From September 2020-April 2021, Avon Elementary will increase the number of K-5 students responding “yes” to the question: Do you feel that an adult at school cares about you?

Assessing and Evaluating Student Progress

Albany Area Schools Assessment System:

Albany Area Schools implements a comprehensive system of assessments that incorporates local, state, and national measures. The focus of our coordinated plan is to promote student academic growth and achievement while ensuring accountability for student progress toward career and college readiness standards. A variety of tools are used to measure students' progress with grade level standards: formative classroom assessments, FAST assessments, STAR reading and math assessments, and required measures including the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments. At an individual student level, assessment data is regularly used to screen, progress monitor, determine program placement, diagnose learning difficulties, guide instruction, and inform parents of student progress. A district profile of achievement is reviewed by stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of our curriculum, assess staff development needs, and examine state and federal accountability results.

The WBWF committee serves as the assessment advisory committee.

Albany Area Schools Standardized Assessment System	
Grade	Standardized Assessments
PreK	FAST earlyReading and earlyMath subtests three times per year
K	FAST earlyReading, aReading, and SAEBRS assessments three times per year
1	FAST earlyReading, aReading, aMath, and SAEBRS assessments three times per year
2	FAST aReading, AUTOreading, CBM-Reading, aMath, CBM-Math Automaticity, and SAEBRS assessments three times per year
3	MCA Reading; MCA Math; FAST aReading, AUTOreading, CBM-Reading, aMath, CBM-Automaticity, and SAEBRS assessments three times per year
4	MCA Reading; MCA Math; FAST aReading, AUTOreading, aMath, SAEBRS, and mySAEBRS assessments three times per year
5	MCA Reading; MCA Math; MCA Science; FAST aReading, AUTOreading, aMath, SAEBRS, and mySAEBRS assessments three times per year
6	MCA Reading; MCA Math; STAR Reading and Math three times per year

7	MCA Reading; MCA Math; STAR Reading three times per year; STAR Math one time per year
8	MCA Reading; MCA Math; MCA Science; STAR Reading three times per year; STAR Math one time per year
9	STAR Reading three times per year; STAR Math three times per year
10	MCA Reading; STAR Reading three times per year; STAR Math two times per year
11	MCA Math; MCA Science; ASVAB, Accuplacer, and ACT by choice

Data Utilization

- Targeted instruction for students based on identified needs
- Tiered interventions for elementary students
- Curriculum review and revision
- Measuring the impact of new or improved instructional practices
- Evaluation of programs, curricular resources, and action plans
- Communication with students, parents, and community stakeholders

Systems of Review and Evaluation

Seasonal Data Retreats

After benchmark testing in fall and winter, teams of teachers and administrators work with multiple data points to determine interventions and/or placements for individual students. Teachers also look at strand data to determine needed focal points within their curriculum and instructional adjustments that may need to be made in order to meet local and state standards.

Curriculum & Instruction Review Process

(available on [district website](#))

Albany Area school district employs a comprehensive system to periodically review and evaluate the effectiveness of all district curriculum and instruction. The primary goal of Albany Area Schools' curriculum review process is to develop a rigorous and relevant curriculum that positively impacts student achievement.

Currently the curriculum review process is on a 7-year cycle. Curricular areas move through a one-year research process, a year of program design, and a year of implementation followed by four years of refinement. If a particular area of curriculum is in need of major adjustments, there is flexibility for a reset of the academic programming.

Teacher Evaluation System

(available on [district website](#))

The goal of the Albany Area Schools' teacher evaluation system is to articulate expectations, to assess performance in all domains, and to continue in the development of high performing teachers capable of delivering outstanding education that improves the quality of teaching and learning.

Principal Evaluation System

(available on [district website](#))

Albany Area Schools has a comprehensive principal evaluation system designed to evaluate principals in five domains. The superintendent evaluates principals 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.

Strategies for Improving Instruction and Curriculum

Comprehensive plans 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. Each of the various improvement plans and support systems is described briefly below. Documents which provide a detailed and comprehensive description of each element are referenced.

District Staff Development Focus: Student Achievement through Improved Instructional Strategies

In an effort to close the achievement gap between our higher performing and lower performing students while maintaining high expectations for all students, the Albany Area School District develops an annual staff development plan to organize staff development activities that improve the instructional strategies of certified and classified staff. The goal of these activities is to improve student performance by improving instructional performance. Staff development practices will align with district, School Board, and site-specific goals.

Building Leadership Teams (BLTs)

Continuous improvement decisions in each building are guided by a Building Leadership Team (BLT) that includes the building principal and teachers elected by their peers. Each BLT is charged with developing action plans in their building that reflect the intent of the Board Goals. Their focus, as is the focus of the Board, is on student achievement and closing any gap that might exist between student groups.

The BLT is responsible for developing SMART goals to guide their building's efforts towards increasing student achievement. Committee members analyze disaggregated student achievement results and growth data for all grade levels and student sub-groups served, and then set yearly student achievement goals. In addition, the committee assists in the planning, organizing, and carrying out of staff development plans necessary for curriculum, instruction or programming modifications for students not meeting grade level expectations.

BLTs direct the activities of the building PLCs that work directly on improving instructional strategies and student achievement as related to Board and District Goals. PLCs establish SMART goals to articulate the direction of their activities.

Each year the BLTs report progress to the Board and suggest future needs that the Board considers in developing the next year's goals.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Each of our four school sites, under the guidance of its respective BLT, meets regularly in professional learning communities. They are engaged in implementing action plans to address the site and district goals. These PLC teams meet twice a month.

Curriculum Development

The primary goal of Albany Area Schools' curriculum development process is to develop relevant and rigorous curricula in which the agreed-upon essential content and skills are delivered 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 within a grade level and/or content area and across grade levels. Curriculum is tightly aligned to meet MN State standards and national standards. Albany Area Schools believes that a guaranteed and viable curriculum has a strong correlation to student achievement.

Data Retreats

After benchmark testing is completed each season, teams meet to discuss student performance results. Data is triangulated with results from other standardized tests as well as classroom assessments. Elementary and middle schools meet by grade level to plan tiered interventions for students. The high school meets by departments to identify struggling students as well as challenging benchmarks and craft action plans to address gaps as indicated by assessment data.

Additional System Supports and Information

Achievement and Integration Grant

Albany Area Schools is a grant recipient with Minnesota's Achievement and Integration program. The purpose of this program is to support racial and economic integration, increase student achievement, and reduce academic disparities in Minnesota's public schools. Albany Schools is eligible for this grant as an adjoining neighbor to the racially isolated school district of Melrose.

Our approved actions for 2017 – 2020 include the following:

- Literacy interventionists in the elementary schools to support reading intervention activities and provide direct instruction to K-3 students
- Family literacy events for families from both Albany and Melrose school district with Early Childhood through 1st grade students, to increase readiness for Kindergarten, and increase the percentage of 4 year olds enrolled in preschool
- Career fair opportunities for secondary students in both districts

Title I Program

Title I is a federally funded program that provides financial assistance to districts and schools based on percentages of low income families. The purpose of Title 1 is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education and meet challenging state academic standards. Title 1 grants provide schools with supplementary funding to enhance the teaching and learning of children.

- Albany Area Schools receives targeted assistance funds that are allocated to Albany Elementary School.
- Funds are used to provide high quality interventions in Reading and Math to students who would benefit from extra support.
- Title I provides Family Outreach programs and support to families in temporary housing.
- For more information on Albany Area Schools Title I programs, please see our website: <http://dist745title1.weebly.com/>

Career Readiness

Albany Area Schools engages students in career readiness with a vibrant program of career exploration beginning in ninth grade. Students, guided by the counseling department and a required quarter course called "Career Exploration," culminate by mapping out a four-year course of study that will help prepare them for career decision-making. Community engagement, post-secondary exposure, and work-based learning internships all serve to provide students with a frame of reference and information for what they need to accomplish in high school and beyond.

Special Education

Albany Area Schools supports and maintains a comprehensive Special Education program designed to identify qualified students and to develop and deliver an individual learning program suited to

the specific needs of the students. Each student's cognitive, social and emotional needs are developed and advanced to the fullest extent possible. The program culminates in a seamless transition plan that will launch the student into adult life at the most productive stage possible.

Gifted and Talented:

The Albany District supports and promotes a Gifted and Talented program K-5 known as Huskie High Potential that allows qualified students to be challenged beyond the regularly adopted curriculum. This pullout program exposes students to challenging and rigorous activities that stretch their imagination and creativity.

Process to Assess and Identify Students for Participation in Gifted and Talented Programs

Under current district procedures, teachers or parents nominate students for inclusion in Huskie High Potential, or the student can nominate himself/herself. Parents then submit permission for screening using the SAGES-2 and/or CogAT. Students qualification scores are determined by the HP committee.

Acceleration

District procedures exist for students to test out of courses at the middle school and high school level. Students who want to test out of a course submit a form to the counseling office to begin the process.

Early Admission to Kindergarten and First Grade

District Policy 503.1 addresses Early Entrance to Kindergarten. In order to gain early admission to kindergarten, a prospective student must satisfy the following requirements:

- Participate in early childhood screening
- Meet the cut off birth date of five years on or before November 1
- Parents must apply in writing to elementary principal by May 1
- Complete an appointment with an early entrance team

Access to Excellent and Diverse Teachers

At the elementary level, current-year teachers work in teams to create class lists for the upcoming school year. Class lists are created with a number of objectives in mind. Class lists should be as balanced as possible based on gender. Class lists should include a range of student abilities based on formative and summative assessment data. Current year teachers also work to pair students with teachers for the upcoming year based on student and teacher personalities. Finally, teachers work to create lists that balance the number of students receiving special education services in each classroom.

At the high school level, the master schedule is built on students' pre-registration requests. Teachers are assigned to courses based on licensure. Due to the size of our district, in most cases, one teacher will teach all sections of a course. In the rare cases when this doesn't

occur, student assignment to courses is based on best fit within the student's registration selections as generated by the scheduler in our student information system.

Early Learning

Using FAST assessment tools along with locally designed evaluation, teachers screen students three times per year in order to improve programming and to inform parents. Results are also shared with the kindergarten team prior to start of kindergarten for students.

The preschool curriculum provides learning experiences in the following areas: social and emotional skills, art, music, math, science, large motor, dramatic play, language and literacy skills, blocks, library books, games and puzzles. Curriculums include High Scope, Everyday Math, Zaner-Bloser Handwriting, and Second Step Social-Emotional. The curriculum is professionally designed to nurture the whole child by supporting the child's social, emotional and intellectual growth. Parents are required to attend the first session with their child. Additional parent participation includes attending three Building Blocks activity nights with their preschool child and parent-teacher conferences.

Q Comp/ATPPS

Albany teachers are implementing their proposed Alternative Teacher Professional Pay System (formerly known as Q Comp). According to the MDE website, "Q Comp was enacted through a bipartisan agreement in the Minnesota Legislature in July 2005. It is a voluntary program that allows local districts and exclusive representatives of the teachers to design and collectively bargain a plan that meets the five components of the law. The five components under Q Comp include Career Ladder/Advancement Options, Job-embedded Professional Development, Teacher Evaluation, Performance Pay, and an Alternative Salary Schedule." The school board, administration, and the Albany Federation of teachers continue to collaborate on the implementation of this system.

Report Requirements

To meet the report requirements, Albany Area Schools teaching and learning department will do the following:

- Title the report “District 745- Albany Area Schools Local World’s Best Workforce Plan.
- Place the report on the district’s web page.
- Submit an electronic summary to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education by the required deadline each year.
- Draft an annual budget based on the district’s improvement plan and submit to the superintendent of schools each May.
- Survey parents about their connection to and level of satisfaction with schools. The annual survey will be conducted in the spring and will be placed on the district website. An automated caller will invite parents of students in grades prek-12 to take the survey. Paper copies will be available in all school offices. Results will be published in the district newsletter, reviewed by the administrative team, and shared with staff via building administrators. District staff development committee and site BLTs will use the data from the survey to inform improvement plans.

World’s Best Workforce Committee Members

Community Members: Scott Hansen, Kim Lange, Jen Lecy, Alexis Lutgen, Nadine Reiland, Laura Roelike

Teachers: Jacob Boone, Kristi Spohn, Dana Amdahl, and Nancy Trehey

Administration: Greg Johnson, Sue Jenkins, Cassie Novak, Ann Schultz, Tim Wege, Paul Conrad, and Amy Notch
