



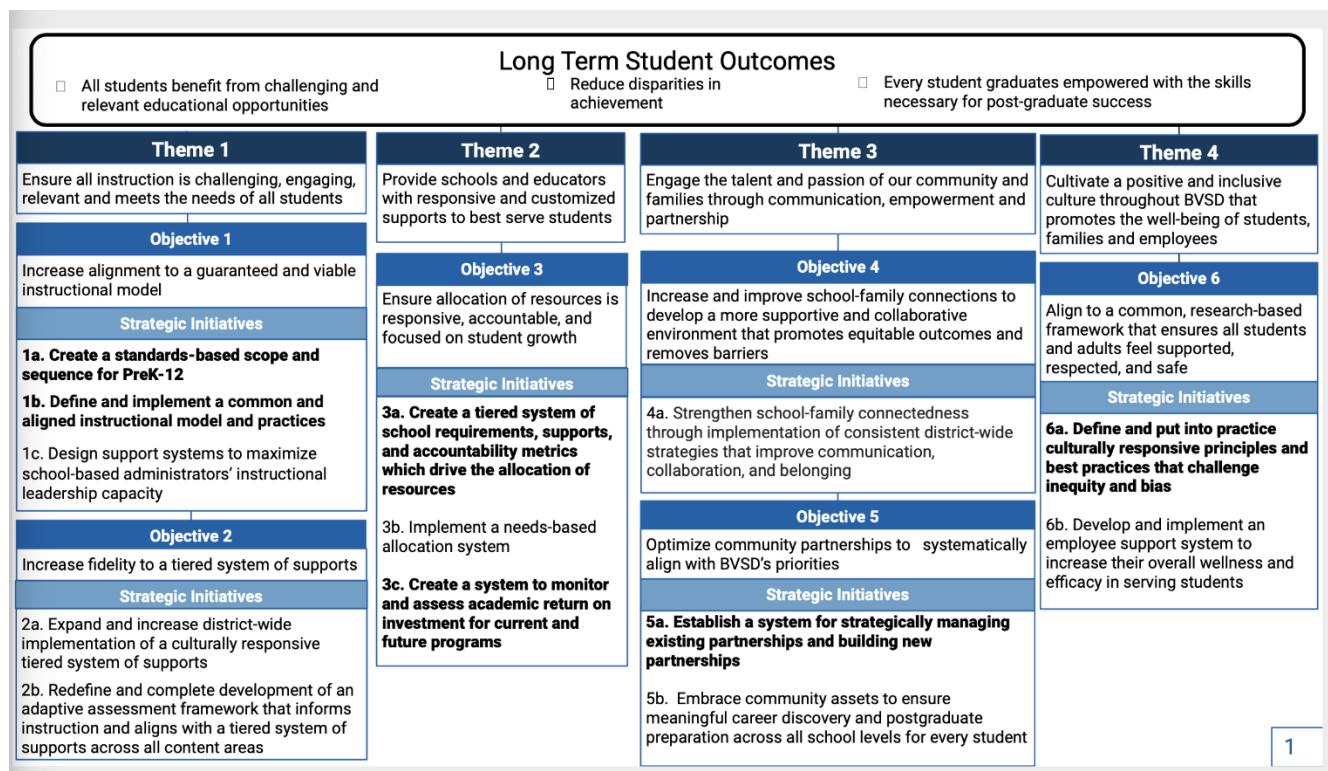
1. Executive Summary

This document provides a discussion and analysis of the findings that accompanied the 2021 District Accountability Committee (DAC) Budget Survey. This supplemental report addresses details that were not practical to include in the presentation to the Board of Education (BoE) and on January 12, 2021.

Persistent challenges spanning more than a decade were revealed by the committee's analysis of the survey results, academic data, and various reports.

1.1 Survey Focus – Strategic Planning Prioritization

The Strategic Plan (shown below) is the District's official roadmap for long term student success. This year's DAC/SAC Budget Survey was modified to solicit input on how best to prioritize objectives and themes within the BVSD Strategic Plan.



The objective of this document is to highlight strategic priorities that effectively address the disparity in learning opportunities among BVSD students. Adopting evidence-based practices and data-based decision making will significantly improve the effectiveness of the Strategic Plan.

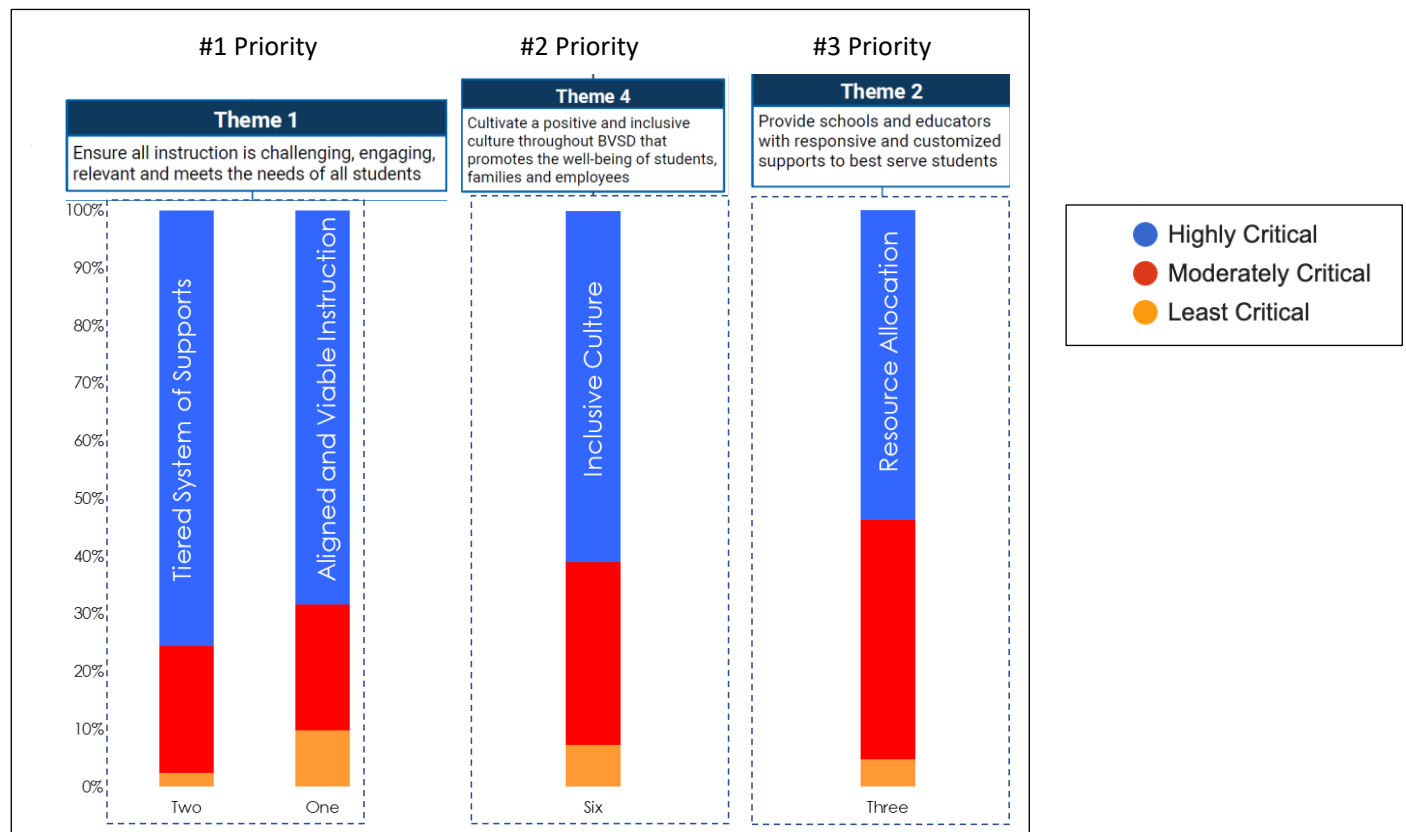


While compiling the survey results, conducting relevant analytics and research, the DAC Budget and Finance Subcommittee recognized a persistent theme: The District's Strategic Plan, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) guidance on the Unified Improvement Planning (UIP) process, and the University of Virginia District's analysis (conducted in 2018) all describe a process for improvement that has yet to be adequately implemented across the District.

The BoE has a unique opportunity to take timely, decisive action to shift the culture of BVSD toward one of transparency and accountability by mandating use of more robust data and evidence-based decision-making. The UVA study, BVSD Strategic Plan, BVSD DAC, and other parent advisory groups are aligned in their support of this effort.

The District can only realize its potential to provide both excellent and equitable education if it embraces a culture of accountability and transparency. As shown by the success of the UVA schools, the District must prioritize data-based decision making.

The top 3 Strategic Theme DAC Survey priorities are shown below. Each strategic objective was assessed as Highly Critical, Moderately Critical, or Least Critical.





1.2 Foundational Basis – UIP

The guidance from the DAC is to rigorously apply the **Big Five Guiding Questions from the CDE UIP Process more diligently than before**. This action, combined with quarterly reporting, via regular communication, to parents and faculty can help drive improvement in the more challenging areas.

The “Big Five” five guiding questions drive improvement in planning around critical objectives. The questions build upon each other in a manner that facilitates alignment in decision-making to support the integrated plan. The Quality Criteria shown below describes the Big Five:



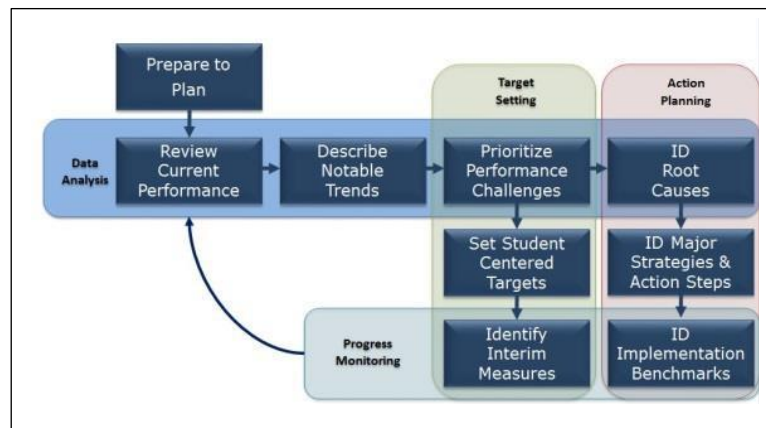
District Quality Criteria

Quality Criteria for District Unified Improvement Plans (UIPs)



- 1 Investigate the most critical performance areas and prioritize the most urgent *performance challenges*.
- 2 Identify *root causes* that explain the magnitude of the performance challenges.
- 3 Identify evidence-based *major improvement strategies* that have likelihood to eliminate the root causes.
- 4 Present a well-designed *action plan* for implementing the major improvement strategies to bring about dramatic improvement.
- 5 Include elements that effectively *monitor* the impact and *progress* of the action plan.

It is the observation of the DAC that the recommended UIP process has not been adequately applied at the District or school level. For example, to our knowledge, there are no extensive reports on performance challenges, root cause analysis, improvement strategies or trend analysis. Another element that is crucial to the improvement process (below), but missing in BVSDs reporting, are clear implementation benchmarks.





1.2.1 Identical Recommendations from UVA

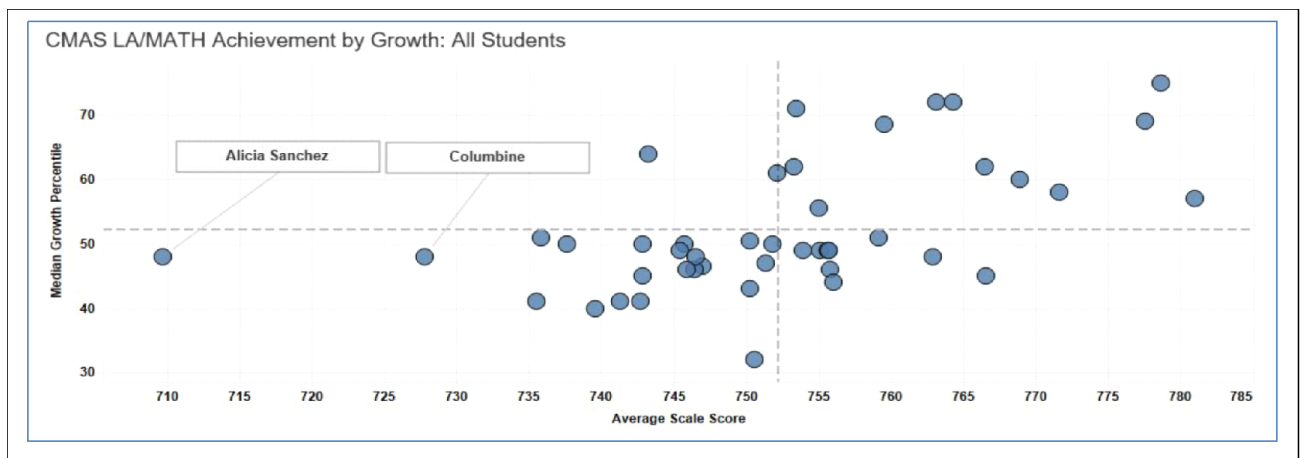
The following recommendations from the 2018 UVA analysis align with the UIP guidelines described above as a proven path to move toward a data-driven culture.

INSTRUCTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- District leadership ensures a rigorous assessment strategy, with interims clearly aligned to standards that serve as foundational.
- District leadership has provided clear, coherent, and quality curriculum that guides teachers during weekly collaborative meetings, supports alignment of lesson plans to the rigor of the standards and helps build teacher understanding of each standard.
- District leadership establishes a data-driven culture and student data management system that prioritizes responsiveness, urgency, and individual student needs
- District leadership has established practices and systems to ensure high-quality instruction (core and interventions) that is aligned with curriculum and assessments in all classrooms.

1.2.2 Resolution of Chronic Issues Requires a Disciplined Process

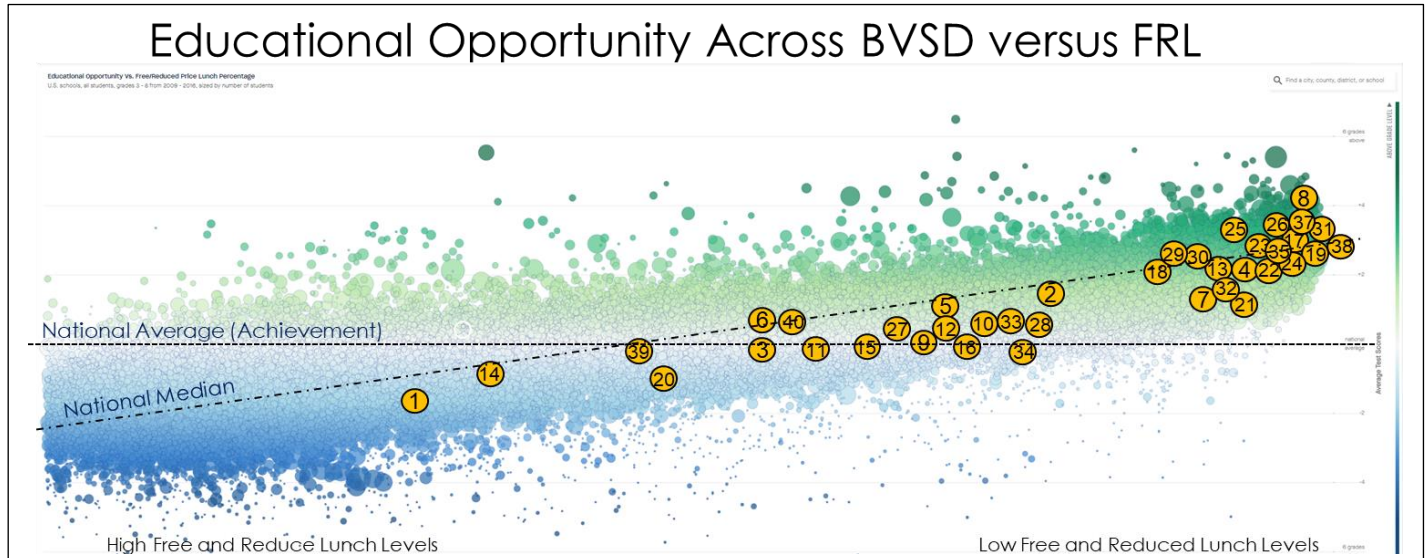
The District's Strategic Plan, the UIP and UVA all call for a highly disciplined process to identify root causes, use data-driven decision making, and problem resolution. The following chart, presented a year ago to DAC, provides evidence that such a disciplined process does not broadly exist within the District. In fact, it's a rare occasion that data of this quality is presented.



More than half of the District's schools have endured below average growth. In the presence of this data, root cause investigations should have been conducted, plans put into place (to remediate challenges) and progress reported. To date, the DAC is only aware of 3 schools (all participating in the UVA program) that have implemented rigorous improvement plans.

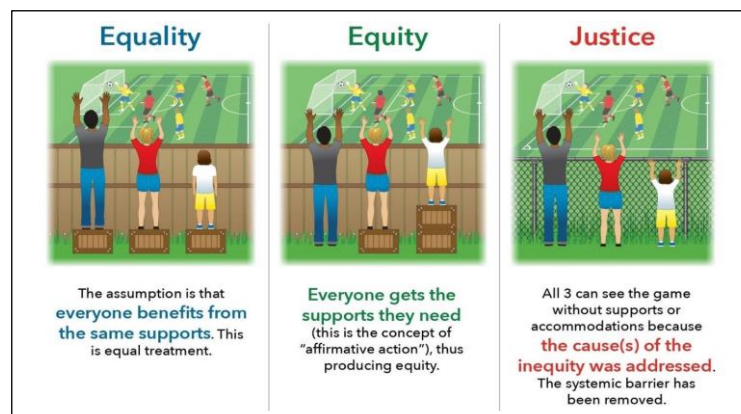


Schools within our District rank well below the national median level when academic performance is factored for affluence; a data-driven improvement process could change this.

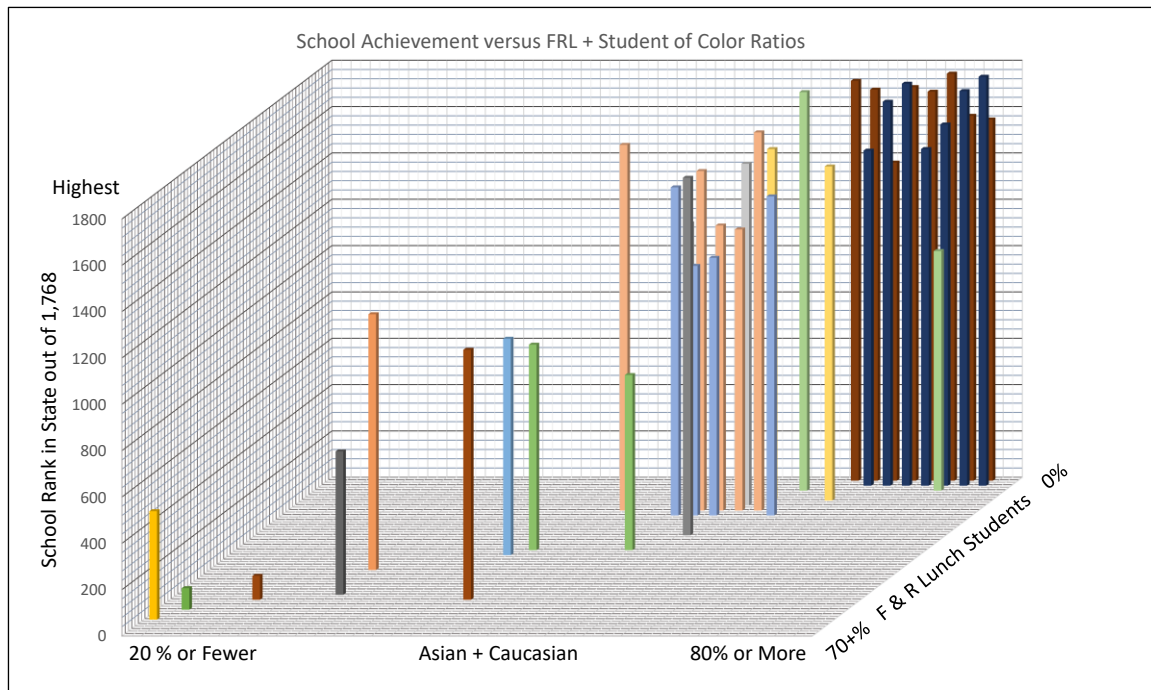


The data from Stanford University (above for 2009 – 2016) shows many schools within the District falling below the national median line for academic achievement when factored for affluence. Because the BVSD student population is disproportionately affluent, the average achievement and growth rankings are misleading.

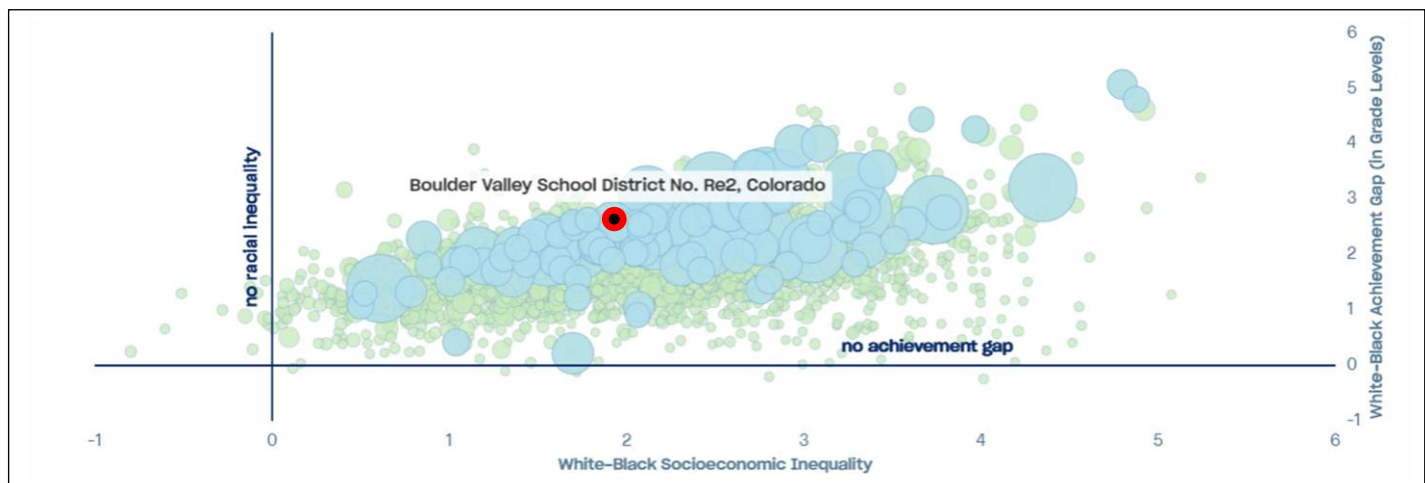
1.2.3 Lack of Learning Equity



If we use the above definitions for understanding educational equity as a lens to assess the learning environment, we see that BVSD performance excels in schools that are predominantly composed of White and Asian students. These students possess long-term learning advantages as a result of their socio-economic situation. These advantages have been expanded and enhanced by BVSD funding and policy choices. As a result, students and schools with greater needs consistently do not meet expectations.



The Stanford University data provides another view of the situation (2009 – 2016) for Black Students attending BVSD Schools.



This pattern is evident among the 100 larger districts (blue circles), where those with larger differences in socioeconomic status between White and Black families tend to have more substantial gaps in achievement. In almost all districts, White children come from more economically advantaged families than their Black schoolmates, a factor which contributes significantly to the White-Black opportunity gap.

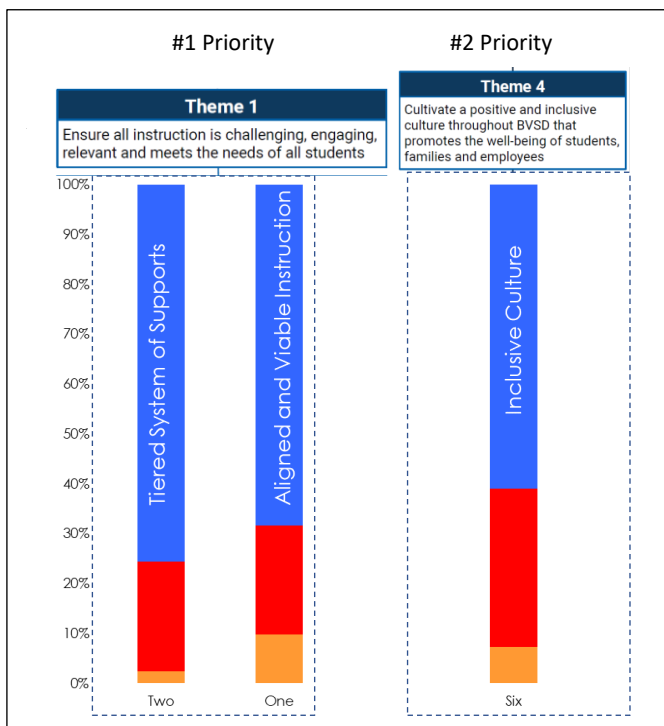


2. Call to Action from Survey Results



An early observation made during the completion of the survey was how many BVSD School Accountability Committee (SAC) members (principals, teachers, and parents) were unfamiliar with the Strategic Plan. At present, the District's Strategic Plan does not appear to be well-understood or adequately integrated into decision-making processes at the school level.

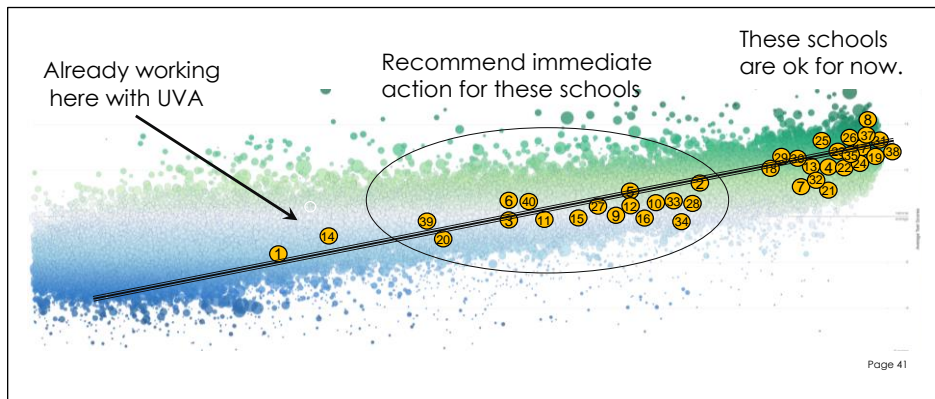
Given established academic trends, the 2021 Survey Priorities as assessed by SAC / DAC membership, the UIP Improvement Process, the UVA strategies for Turnaround School Improvement, and a consistent lack of accountability across the District, the Board of Education should be prepared to act in a decisive and specific manner to influence positive change across all schools.



The DAC recommends (left) the District fund the Strategic Plan with emphasis for Theme 1 and Theme 4. Implementation Metrics, and initial objectives should be put in place early this year and reported on a quarterly basis.

As shown in the chart below, the energy of change can be focused on a portion of the District's schools effectively without negatively impacting other school locations.

As stated in the UVA report, BVSD must: *"Create a systemic approach to support the neediest schools by reallocating current resources to provide weekly principal support focused on school-based needs, deployment of district instructional coaches and staff for more intensive instructional supports for leaders and teachers as well as a communication pathway to ensure needs of these schools are addressed quickly and efficiently."*



Recommended Priority Schools

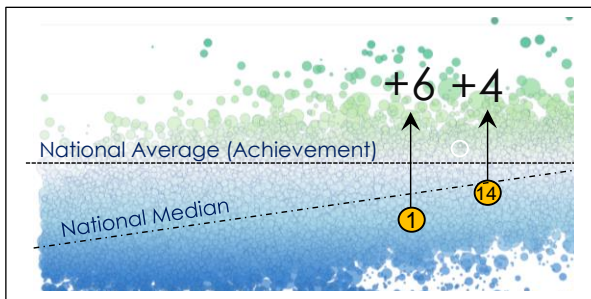
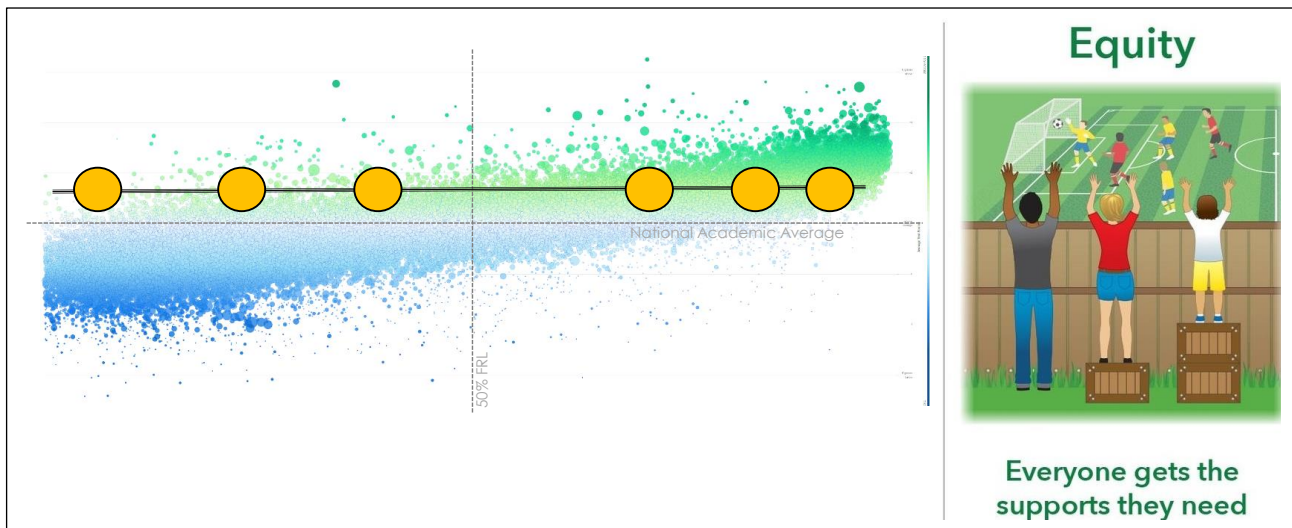
- 34. Nederland Middle School
- 20. Emerald Elementary
- 11. Casey Middle School
- 15. Creekside Elementary
- 3. Escuela Bilingual Pioneer
- 9. Birch Elementary
- 16. Crest View Elementary
- 28. Kohl Elementary (in work)
- 33. Nederland Elementary
- 10. Broomfield Heights M. School
- 12. Centennial Middle School
- 27. Jamestown Elementary School



2. Call to Action from Survey Results

2.1 Near-Term Objective

The near-term objective should be to demonstrate elevated learning opportunities and a more equitable level of academic achievement and growth for students identified as Black, Latinx, ELL, FRL, IEP and other students with chronically lagging learning opportunities. This is a manageable objective that other schools have attained.



The Stanford database identifies schools with poverty profiles and ethnic demographics similar to Alicia Sanchez and Columbine that have performed at four to six grade levels higher throughout the 2009 – 2016 school year period. BVSD can do as well.

It appears, from all the data DAC has collected, that to successfully increase overall quality and provide more equitable educational opportunity will require following a rigorous process with full determination, fidelity and accountability. To do this, the district needs to hold itself

accountable to the objectives identified within its strategic plan.



This work falls squarely within:

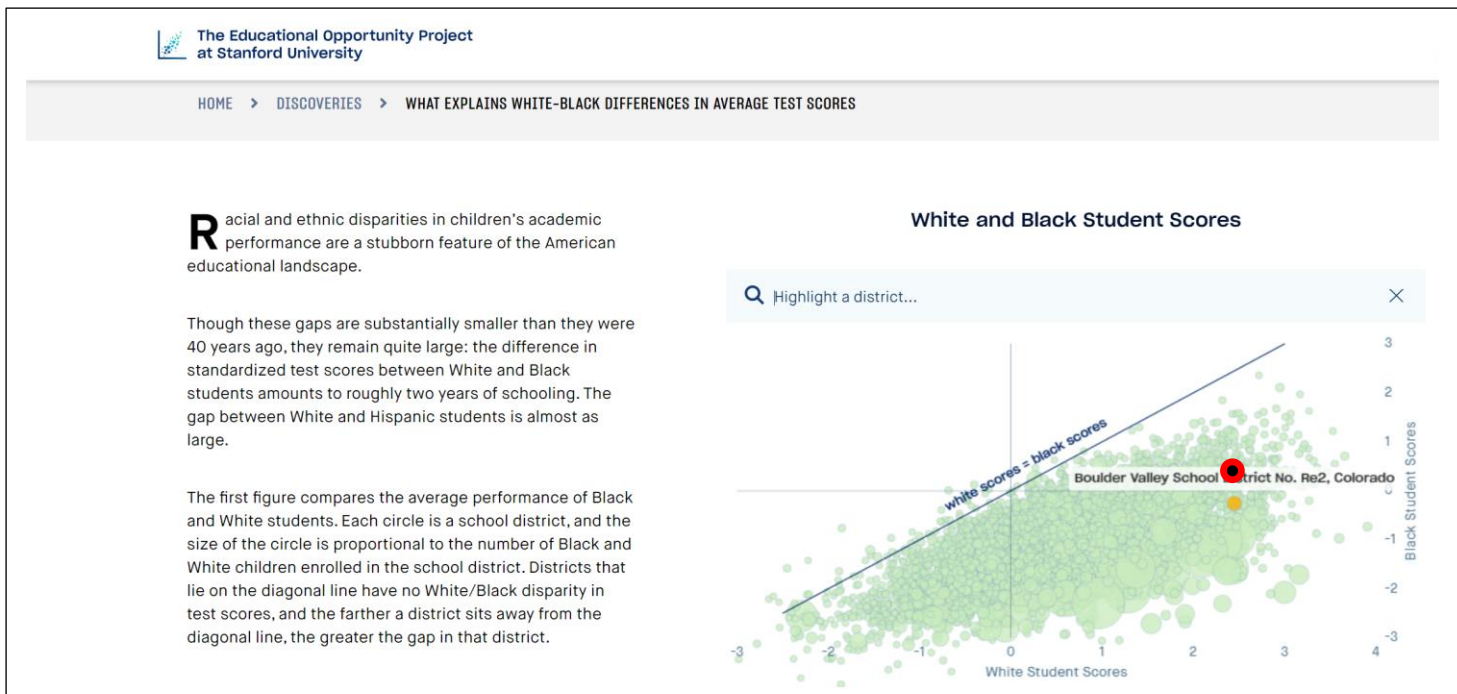
- Theme 1, Objective 1: Increase alignment to a guaranteed and viable instructional model.
- Theme 1, Objective 2: Increase fidelity to a tiered system of supports.
- Theme 4, Objective 6a: Define and put into practice culturally responsive principles and best practices that challenge inequity and bias.



2.2 Culturally Inclusive Environment

The BVSD community is aware of the importance of having a culturally inclusive environment. This was identified as the second highest priority of the District's Strategic Themes. Culturally responsive school and district climates are imperative on many fronts and are necessary for any educational system to be equitable and just.

As an example data point, the image below shows how BVSD compares to other school districts when the academic test scores of White student and Black students are compared:



2.3 Critical Resource Availability

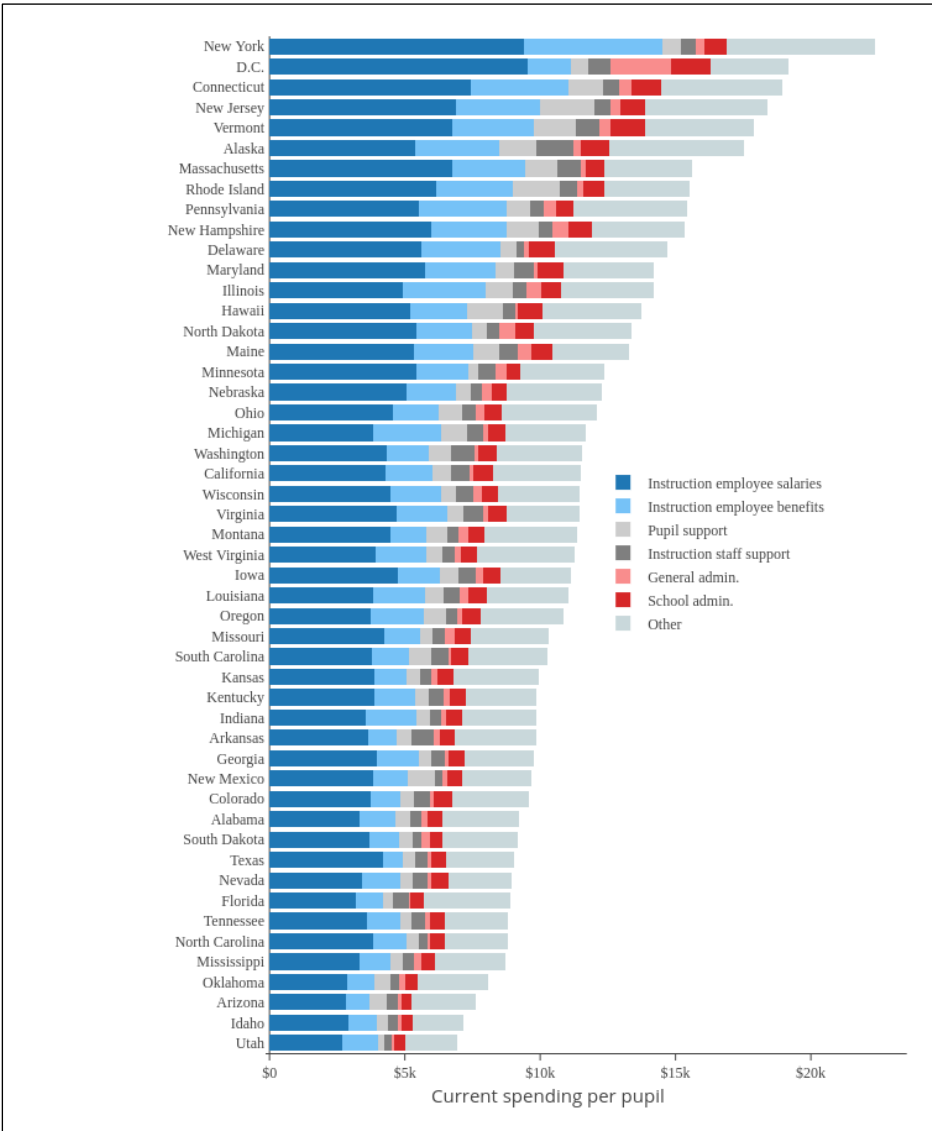
The BVSD Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2020 tells a delightful story, albeit in accounting language, of a District led by some of the most accomplished stewards of public resources.

For **eleven consecutive years** the state legislature has lowered its statewide funding by applying a budget stabilization factor (negative factor) to reduce total program funding to school districts. For 2020-21 this amounts to a decrease of \$12.7M, or roughly -5.5% per pupil in BVSD (page 29 of the Comprehensive Report).



**2. Call to Action from
Survey Results**

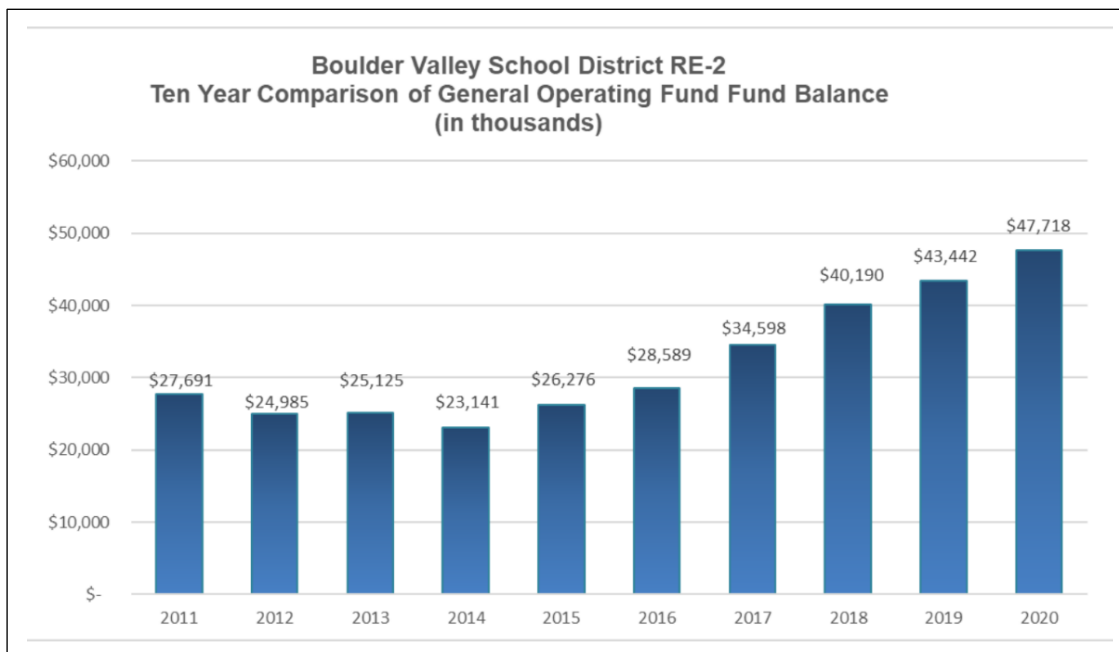
Colorado ranks 13th from the bottom in school funding.



Yet, in the face of this economic challenge, the Financial Office of BVSD has restored health to its financial reserves. This District enjoys a General Fund Reserve that has been growing through careful fiscal management. This was not an easy feat to accomplish and can be shown in the chart below and on page 26 of the Annual Report.



2. Call to Action from Survey Results



BVSD has a very competent Chief Financial Officer in Bill Sutter. Under his leadership the District has delivered resources and stability to this district during a period of unequalled financial instability.

The point to be made is this: The resources of this district lie somewhat within the assets, cash, and real property. However, the District's human resources and talent remain its greatest asset. The highly skilled, dedicated, and competent staff need to be leveraged effectively, and quickly, to improve the opportunities and outcomes for all students.

3. Concluding Remarks:

- The UVA partnership has been successful. The work of this group has opened our eyes to best practices which BVSD is not currently implementing district-wide.
- These best practices are also reflected in CDE guidance and regular DAC/SAC feedback.
- These best practices provide a path forward for redressing past shortcomings.
- Other districts have successfully closed achievement gaps despite socio-economic inequalities.
- BVSD has the resources, personnel, and now, the understanding to provide both excellence and equity.
- The essential ingredients are accountability, transparency, and a data-driven process.
- The BVSD Board of Education should implement process and reporting requirements to ensure the best practices are rolled-out district-wide.