

# Memo

**To:** BVSD Board of Education

**From:** BVSD District Accountability Committee (DAC)

**Date:** March 3, 2021

**Re:** DAC Recommendations on the 2020-22 District Unified Improvement Plan (UIP)

To fulfill the DAC responsibility:

*C.R.S. 22-11-302(1)(b) – To advise its local school board concerning preparation of, and annually submit to the local school board recommendations regarding the contents of, a district performance, improvement, priority improvement, or turnaround plan, whichever is required based on the school district's accreditation category. In advising and preparing the recommendations, the school district accountability committee shall make reasonable efforts to consult in a substantive manner with the school accountability committees of the school district.*

## **Broad Recommendations for the District's Unified Improvement Plan**

- To meet the statutory responsibilities of the DAC, the UIP must be drafted by September of each year to allow for more feedback, edits and implementation. By drafting a plan in September, the district provides the critical time needed to assure that adequate metrics, processes and expectations can be set for the district, and at every school, prior to the plan's formal adoption.
- The DAC commends the District for clearly aligning the 2020-2022 BVSD UIP to the strategic plan, and for including implementation benchmarks and action steps for each Priority Performance Challenge (PPC) identified.
- The COVID-19 pandemic, and subsequent lack of state testing in 2020, has highlighted the need for more, high quality, sources of internal/local data.
- Develop clear, concise and quantifiable progress monitoring measures to assess the impact of the plan. Without anchoring in metrics, it is unclear how schools, the district and the DAC can monitor the plans implementation (benchmarks and action steps). In addition, anchoring metrics help the district and board determine whether they are pursuing the right plan to accomplish their goals.
- The PPCs and Major Improvement Strategies are well defined, but the action steps and implementation benchmarks are not well designed and do not always provide clear connections to the targets.
- Explicitly address the role of the DAC, the SACs and other parent engagement groups in progress monitoring, data review cycles, oversight and the improvement planning process overall.

## **Specific Recommendations for the 2020-2022 District UIP**

Based on the draft 2020-2022 UIP shared with the DAC on February 20, 2021, the DAC has the following observations and recommendations:

- PPC - Inequitable Discipline: Two root causes are identified (data collection & promoting positive behaviors), but they alone do not seem to fully capture the problem. Additionally, the majority of the benchmarks identified address data collection and review, however, there is not an explicit focus on positive behavioral interventions and restorative justice as a major improvement strategy.
- PPC - Achievement and Growth Gaps Likely Widening During Remote Learning: The proposed plan does an excellent job of recognizing the acute impact of the pandemic and remote learning on educational outcomes. However, the chronic nature of disparity in opportunity and achievement is overlooked. Including clear, measurable action steps and implementation benchmarks for the root cause of inconsistent instructional delivery may help address the long term gaps.

- Historically, there have been no systemic means to “catch-up” students who do not meet grade level expectations. The district needs an effective, evidence-driven, approach to measure its success in this area.
- It is unclear how online support will improve outcomes for engaging instruction; it is also unclear who is accountable for the delivery of engaging instruction or how this will be assessed/measured.
- The summer learning action step is student focused, rather than district focused. The purpose of the UIP is to address actions that are within the sphere of control of the district. Encouraging students to use tools independently may be part of the solution but it does not belong in this document.
- PPC - Large Disparities in Academic Acceleration: It is not clear how the action plans and implementation benchmarks will achieve the intended result of equitable academic opportunities. In particular, we note that;
  - Lack of clear, consistent acceleration paths are noted as a root cause, but creating those paths outside of the area of mathematics are not described.
  - If the root causes and major improvement strategies are to be evidence based, baseline data for enrollment in, and access to, accelerated courses should be included. Measuring subsequent change in access to courses is equally important to enrollment in courses.
  - Options for acceleration still involve a high degree of choice, by school leaders, to participate which perpetuates systemic inequities.
- Include data trends and performance targets for gifted students as part of the Gifted Addenda or integrated into the district’s overall plan.

**Appendix:**

The *Quality Criteria Rubric for Evaluating District Unified Improvement Plans UIPs*, published by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), was used as a tool to evaluate this year's UIP. This rubric can be found on the CDE website at: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/quality-criteria-rubric-district-uip-2020-21-pdf>