



2023 - 2024

Vision and Strategy

#Building Bethlehem



Bethlehem Area School District

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IGNITE

curiosity and imagination

ENCOURAGE

creative cooperation and individual growth

EMPOWER

leadership and global thinking





MEMORANDUM

March 2023

TO: Board of School Directors
FROM: Dr. Joseph J. Roy, Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT: Vision and Strategy 2023-2024

MISSION

The Bethlehem Area School District in partnership with the home and community is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment in which each student will attain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to become a productive citizen and self-directed, lifelong learner in our technologically demanding and culturally diverse society.

PURPOSE

Eliminate race and family income as predictors of school success by guaranteeing equitable access to opportunities for personalized learning and growth.

BASD Policy #832 on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion makes several key commitments that must guide Vision and Strategy. The district shall be committed to:

1. Respecting the inherent value, humanity, and dignity of each person.
2. Promptly identifying, addressing, and eliminating the gaps between students by promptly identifying and addressing barriers that cultivate opportunity gaps for students that manifest as academic deficiencies.
3. Ensuring that a student's educational achievement and overall school participation and involvement is neither predicted nor predetermined by explicit or implicit biases with special attention to how these biases may be amplified at the intersections of identities.
4. Establishing and sustaining a school community that shares the collective responsibility to address, eliminate, and prevent actions, decisions, and outcomes that result from and perpetuate racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, xenophobia, and other discriminatory practices.

Built By Bethlehem Roadmap

ORGANIZATIONAL

Our Schools:

- Are part of a district/system with defined vision, goals, and strategies.
- Have established leadership and political stability.
- Are adequately resourced with a consistent level of material support (budget, staffing, facilities, professional learning).
- Are informed by evidence; pursue evidence-based practices.
- Act upon equity (anti-racism) with all important decisions.

ACADEMIC

Our Schools:

- Align teaching talent with the greatest academic needs.
- Focus relentlessly on best practices of high quality core instruction.
- Teach explicitly and assess systematically grade-level competencies and skills (content area literacy).
- Teach explicitly executive functioning and student agency toward career and college-readiness (personalization/career pathways).
- Partner with leading community organizations as a first option.

STUDENT SERVICES

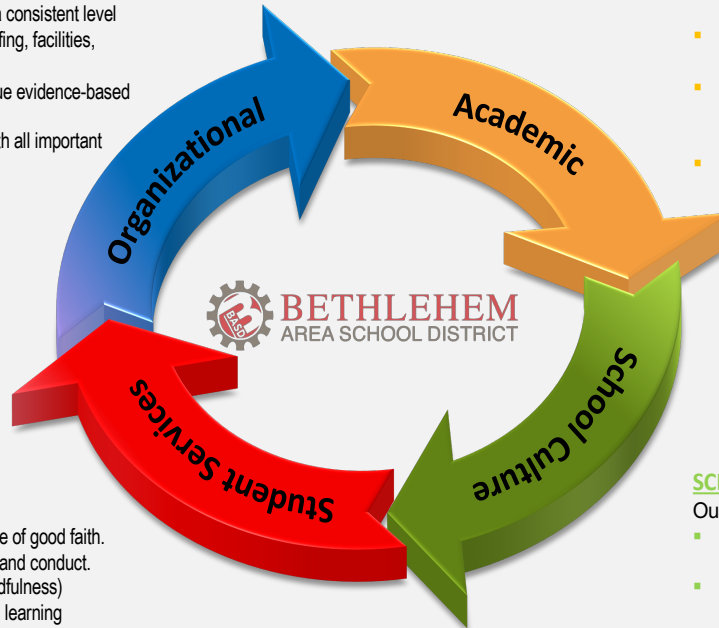
Our Schools:

- Assume students and families are of good faith.
- Teach explicitly valued behavior and conduct. (trauma informed instruction/mindfulness)
- Treat transgressions primarily as learning opportunities (restorative practices).
- Coordinate internal and community-based resources to meet basic student and family needs.
- Provide a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY/CULTURE

Our Schools:

- Recognize relationships as the foundation of school culture
- Establish a school-specific identity consistent with community expectations.
- Integrate academic and student support systems into the school identity.
- Cultivate regular and meaningful opportunities for student council and leadership in all areas.
- Prioritize a mentoring culture.
- Expect timely and civil communication in all areas.



The Bethlehem Area School District's "Built by Bethlehem Roadmap" focuses on four operational components of successful school systems:

- Academic
- Student Services
- Organizational
- School Culture

The Roadmap recognizes the need for synergy between each of the four operational components. The Roadmap continues to inform the vision and strategic initiatives detailed in this document.

The “Built by Bethlehem Roadmap” provides a view of distinct operational components. Comparatively, the “BASD Leader in Me Overview” takes an integrated, research based view that aligns and cuts across the operational components. Both the Roadmap and the Overview help to align our Vision and Strategy.



When we respect the inherent value, humanity, and dignity of each person, every person will belong and every person will thrive in our diverse school community.

<p>BASD's Wildly Important Goals (WIGS) or "When All is Said and Done" Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students will use grade level skills to successfully complete grade-level work. (90% of students will demonstrate proficient reading, writing, and math performance on annual district benchmarks.) • All students will make a clear path to their post-secondary success. (All students will meet district and state standards for career and college readiness and complete a career pathway). • All students will be informed and contributing citizens to their school and their community (Each year, all students will use their knowledge, skills, and career pathway to conduct meaningful service in their community). 	<p>Core Paradigms (Mindsets)</p> <p>Everyone can be a leader (leadership)</p> <p>Equity is necessary for excellence (potential)</p> <p>Everyone has genius (potential)</p> <p>Change starts with me (change)</p> <p>Empower students to lead their own learning (motivation)</p> <p>Educators and families partner to develop the whole person (education)</p>
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The Big 3 Organizational Components
(aligned with WIGS)

Leadership	Culture	Academics
Strategic Vision: Highly Effective students and adults are leaders in their school and community	Strategic Vision: High trust school district and school cultures where every person BELONGS, every person's voice is heard and their potential is affirmed	Strategic Vision: Engaged students are equipped to achieve and entrusted to lead their own learning
Staff Leadership Staff are provided with support to build their personal and professional capacity so they can confidently live, model, and teach social-emotional leadership skills	Supportive Environment for Staff Staff members feel supported and empowered with voice, choice, and opportunities to have a positive impact while doing meaningful work.	Empower Teachers Teachers positively impact students by using evidence based instructional practices that empower their students to lead their own learning
Student Leadership Students are developing their mindsets, behaviors, and skills to be effective, lifelong leaders	Supportive Environment for Students School is a welcoming, inclusive, supportive environment where students feel valued and actively engage in leadership and decision-making	Empowered Learners Students have the mindsets, skills, and supportive relationships they need to take ownership of their learning
Family & Community Engagement Families and community organizations are included as valued school partners that support student development	Supportive Environment for Parents Parents feel included and supported in the child's education	Goal Achievement Teachers provide their students with the knowledge, opportunity, and support to set and achieve meaningful goals - connecting their achievement to the school's key goals

Based on BASD's partnership with **LeaderinMe**.

The remaining pages of this booklet provide detailed descriptions of priorities and initiatives that span the 4 components of successful school systems. The department by department details inform the public and the Board about the important work of the district.

Educational Programs

Strategic Initiatives that Inform Budget Decisions:

There are numerous opportunities to recover, establish, and extend successful educational programs in the BASD over the next five years that will help students achieve higher levels of performance. BASD schools are committed to **improving core (Tier One) instruction in all classrooms so that all students demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to consistently do grade-level work.** That requires students consistently practice and improve in the **7 Cs in all academic programs:** Care for Self, Content Knowledge, Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Communication, Creativity, Citizenship.

Successful BASD student performance means empowering and stretching students to their potential and making them truly career and college ready when graduating from our school district.

- The academic priority of the BASD continues to be having **all students reading, writing, and learning at grade level** within a comprehensive multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) that:
 - (1) Includes within Tier One (for all students) the evidence-based frameworks of Leader In Me (elementary and middle) and Restorative Practices (middle and high) that support each student's social and emotional health, resilience, and executive functioning.
 - (2) Provides evidence-based, sustained training and job-embedded coaching to professionals dealing with BASD students in the most current reading pedagogy and assessment.
 - a. Elementary training will include LETRS and *Keys to Literacy*.
 - b. Secondary training will include *Keys to Literacy* with an emphasis on comprehension routines, vocabulary, and writing.
 - (3) Implements with fidelity and consistency the evidence-based curricula and pacing guides provided by the BASD in all subject areas.
 - (4) Uses of valid and timely *Acadience* and curriculum-based data to vigorously monitor the progress of learners toward grade-level mastery goals.
 - (5) Provides consistent, data-informed, and timely remediation and enrichment interventions in both Tier One (all classes) and Tier Two settings.
 - (6) Scaffolds content and skill instruction in support of EL and IEP student achievement of grade level programming.
 - (7) Makes needed curriculum and assessment accommodations and modifications consistent with student IEPs/GIEPs.
 - (8) Partners with community organizations in support of the BASD's academic goals.
- The BASD will significantly improve students' **math achievement**, K-12 that:
 - (1) Provides evidence-based, sustained training and job-embedded coaching to professionals dealing with BASD math students in the most current math pedagogy and assessment.
 - a. Elementary training will include REVEAL Math and *IXL*
 - b. Secondary training will include DESMOS Math and *IXL*
 - (2) Implements with fidelity and consistency the programmatic assessments, evidence-based curricula, and instructional pacing guides provided by the BASD.
 - (3) Uses of valid and timely *IXL* and curriculum-based data to vigorously monitor the progress of learners toward grade-level mastery goals.
 - (4) Provides consistent, data-informed, and timely remediation and enrichment interventions in both Tier One (all math classes) and Tier Two settings.
 - (5) Scaffolds content and skill instruction in support of EL and IEP student achievement of grade level math programming.
 - (6) Makes needed curriculum and assessment accommodations and modifications consistent with student IEPs/GIEPs.

- The BASD will extend **Any Given Child Bethlehem** activities by integrating community-based arts programming into academic programming in each grade, K-8.
- The BASD will extend student participation, implement more standardized curriculum, and tighten district procedures in **Related Arts courses and co-curricular arts programming**, K-12.
- The BASD will transform assessment and **grading practices in its secondary schools** to align to a standards-based, grade-level performance model that:
 - (1) Broadly shares the *BASD Purpose of Grading Statement* with all stakeholders
 - (2) Makes needed refinements of the new secondary report card based upon the pilot experience and feedback in 2022-2023
 - (3) Expands the new BASD Secondary Report Card use to all classes 6-12 in the 2023-2024 school year.
 - (4) Provides additional time in the District Calendar in support of the secondary teachers' grade reporting and feedback to students and parents.
 - (5) Maintains and expands the training and support of the secondary teachers in the new grade reporting system. Identify, demonstrate, and monitor improved summative and formative assessment practices and procedures that contribute to students' Academic Grades
 - (6) Refines procedures related to the consistent feedback/assessment of Academic Support Factors
 - (7) Establishes more consistent standards for what a student must "know and be able to do" to better align grade-level competency to the Academic Grade.
 - (8) Explores new and more equitable systems of incentives/recognitions for academic excellence that include changes to GPA, class rank, and academic distinctions,
 - (9) Adjusts BASD data and communication systems to align to standards-based grading and reporting.
 - (10) Builds understanding and support among all BASD stakeholders for standards-based reforms.
- The high school **Career Pathways** program will continue its evolution in developing graduates that are career and college ready. That process includes supporting students in a ubiquitous technology environment who can:
 - (1) Identify areas of personal strength and interest and set personal goals
 - (2) Select and navigate college and career curricular paths in STEM, Arts & Humanities, Health & Human Services, Business, Finance & Law, Education, and High-Need Vocational-Technical Occupations
 - (3) Experience more rigorous, relevant, and consistent assessment of student performance that include service learning, blended learning, job shadowing, internship programs, mentoring programs, dual enrollment and credentialing in support of college and career goals.
 - (4) Expand dual credit programming and dual credit cohorts.
 - (5) Learn in modern formats that include digital content, learning management systems, blended instructional formats, student portfolios, and modern presentation technologies.
- The BASD will continuously monitor and improve students' **digital learning and citizenship** in response to rapidly changing technology, blended learning platforms, immersive/virtual learning mediums, and students' social and emotional health.
- The BASD will continue and expand its **diversity, equity, and inclusion** effort to eliminate the barriers that lead to race and family income being predictors of school participation and academic success.

Facilities and Transportation

Facilities

The district's facilities are in good condition overall and able to meet the educational needs of the district and community. Over the next five years, it will be important to balance the resources necessary to preserve and maintain the district's facilities investments while at the same time looking to recapitalize, renovate and improve the oldest facilities and building systems. Additionally, the next five years represent an opportunity to continually evaluate the performance of existing personnel, processes, agreements and organizational structures required to meet the educational and operational needs of the future.

Over the last 30 years, the district has invested over \$330 million in major renovations and new construction bond projects to update and replace schools. These investments have served the community well and are the reason many schools are still in such good condition. However, there are several facilities and parts of facilities that have not yet been renovated during the last 30 years which require larger-scale capital investments to prevent the facility condition from negatively impacting the educational mission. The district has begun a focused facility study looking at long term solutions at Fountain Hill, Thomas Jefferson and William Penn Elementary Schools. Given a considerable injection of funds into the capital reserve fund at the end of the 2021-22 fiscal year, plans to move ahead with one or more projects seem probable over the next three to five years. The district continues to execute HVAC renovation projects using federal funds and plans to complete the final three projects over the next year. There are many more projects than funds available, but over the next five years, the district will continue to prioritize replacing aging mechanical systems and envelope repair projects where needed.

With the daunting challenge of funding much needed capital projects, the district cannot afford to lose sight of required preventive and recurring maintenance needs at all facilities. These proactive and low cost (compared to capital expense) maintenance projects extend the life of the existing facilities and building systems. One opportunity to meet this challenge is to continue our success building and maintaining a capital reserve account to fund one-time maintenance and repair costs that will extend the life of a facility or system. The biggest challenge to building a capital reserve account is identifying a recurring revenue source to replace the project funds used year after year to sustain the fund into the future. At the end of the 2021-22 school year, the district was able to transfer a sizable amount of funds into the capital reserve. That injection will serve to kick-start our capital planning and construction needs at Fountain Hill, William Penn and Thomas Jefferson, but will also be important in sustaining maintenance projects over the next five years. As a result, a long-term funding strategy including use of both capital reserve funds and borrowed funds will likely materialize over the next several years. The capital project funding challenge is not specific to Bethlehem, but it will continue to exert pressure on the BASD budget with each passing year as our buildings and systems continue to age.

One successful cost saving and efficiency effort that requires our continued attention is the energy management program. Energy management efforts have yielded a cost savings of over \$20 million since 2010, but our efforts to continue conserving energy will become even more important as inflationary pressure pushes energy costs higher after a period of near historically low energy prices. With increased energy prices and continued implementation of post-pandemic indoor ventilation protocols, we can expect to see energy savings slow during the coming five years. Operationally, the district will continue to foster a culture of conservation and pursue opportunities for high return on investment energy efficiency upgrades as funding priorities permit and do our part to minimize the amount of energy is consumed across the district.

Another continuing opportunity and challenge remain improving the cleanliness of the learning environment. Studies show a strong correlation between cleanliness and student achievement, so continued improvement in this area has a direct impact on our students' success in the classroom. In order to support that student achievement, we need to retain and invest in our custodial staff development. As our aging staff continues to retire, attracting new custodial staff members has become as important as ever. Over the next five years, we can expect to invest in new tools, techniques and chemicals to extend the reach of custodians as well as a renewed effort to standardize and improve processes and documentation for what we expect to be a relatively new staff. Improved cleaning processes, documentation and development of a training program are key opportunities that will occupy much of the department's energy in providing the high levels of support needed to match the higher expectations required by the Roadmap.

From a districtwide perspective, the safety of all staff and students is among the highest priorities in the district. Within the realm of workplace safety and occupational health, fostering a culture of safety is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss. By educating staff about workplace safety, addressing known physical safety issues and focusing on accident prevention, the district keeps its most important resources at work while at the same time reducing expenses. Ensuring that our students and staff go home every day in the same condition they arrived has a huge multiplier effect by reducing lost work time, increasing attendance, preserving employee quality of life and maintaining productivity. Fostering a culture of safety will not only keep our most important resources at work, but represents a considerable savings opportunity in insurance premiums alone from year-to-year that could be reinvested into the classroom.

Transportation

The district's transportation department is among the largest district owned and operated fleets in the state. The fleet of 119 vehicles transports over 9,500 to and from school each day and logs over 1 million miles annually. How far is 1 million miles? That is the equivalent of driving from BASD to Disneyland to Disney World and back every school day for the entire school year! Over the next five years, the biggest opportunities and challenges facing the transportation department include: finding and keeping drivers behind the wheel; leveraging the department's suite of technology tools to drive out operational inefficiencies; managing the increased demand on resources to transport more kids to more special education, non-pub and charter locations; and maintaining the bus replacement cycle including investing in alternative fuel vehicles and associated training.

The biggest challenge facing the entire transportation industry is finding qualified bus drivers to replace the retiring workforce and keeping new drivers behind the wheel once we do find and train them. This challenge has multiple cascading effects that make the already challenging job of student transportation even more difficult. The department has built new recruiting, marketing and incentive structures to entice prospective drivers to "Drive Bus with Us", but robust gains made on this front have been eroded by retirements of our aging workforce. The supervision and leadership provided by TransPar have helped the department confront the driver shortage challenge by creating opportunities to grow, develop and further deploy the Transportation Recruiting Team; improve and increase marketing of driving opportunities; implement employee referral and sign-on bonus incentives to get the right folks into the training pipeline, and focus on retaining our current folks through engagement surveys; revamped department culture, and exciting new technology.

Continued growth of the paid training program will be necessary to keep up with the retirements of our aging workforce and successes achieved over the past two years must be replicated and expanded over the next several years to keep up with demand. Future opportunities to continue the battle for bus drivers lie with changes in the collective bargaining agreement to provide both structure and flexibility that incentivizes drivers to come to work; and increasing pay and expanding benefits to attract drivers to "Drive Bus with Us" instead of the competition.

Despite the day-to-day challenges, the department continues to focus on safety, streamline existing processes and improve efficiencies within the complex logistics of student transportation. Ongoing staff training and focus on daily vehicle inspection has been and continues to be a priority and will continue into the future. With the deployment of BusPatrol stop arm cameras at the start of the 2022-23 school year, safety will be on the rise as community members who do not stop for flashing red lights on school buses will be mailed citations. Over the first six months of the school year, over 700 citations have been reviewed and some bus stops adjusted to improve student safety. Impacting both safety and efficiency has been the creation of a dispatch team providing continuous coverage to our drivers between 5AM and 7PM directly supporting driver and student needs throughout the day while affording other department team members to focus on primary job duties. In an attempt to streamline student accounting, the department is working with the Technology Department to integrate existing student ID's with bus passes. This will provide visibility into attendance patterns, automate data reporting for special education and homeless student ridership, as well provide parents an app to know when their students get on and off our buses. The push for continued efficiency is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss in keeping pace with growing special education, non-public, charter school, and homeless student transportation demands.

Over the next five years, another continuing challenge will be maintaining investments in bus replacements. Moving forward, the district must even out the number of bus replacements at a sustainable level of 7-10 per year into the future instead of waiting three to four years before purchasing a large block of 30 new vehicles. Supply chain issues in the school bus industry are currently pushing deliveries beyond a single fiscal year, so each year bus replacements are not funded means two years until a new bus can be delivered. The next big opportunity with bus purchases includes adding alternative fuel vehicles to the fleet. In 2022-23, the district received a \$1 million state grant for bus electrification that will result in two electric buses expected in service by the Spring of 2024. The need to work closely with local utility suppliers, state legislators, and various vendors will be critical to our success. Our partners at TransPar have extensive experience delivering alternate fuel vehicle solutions across the country and have been working closely with us to implement these new changes. Regardless of the bus fuel type, the need to continue bus replacements must not be overlooked.

Another challenge facing the transportation department is the increase in the number of students requiring transportation outside their attendance area. These include non-public and charter school students as well as special education and homeless students. Over the last several years as non-public and charter school enrollments have grown, so have the requirements to deliver more students within 10 miles of the district borders as required by state law. In addition to the district's 22 schools, the transportation department delivers students to 45 additional charter, non-public and parochial schools, many of which are located outside the district's boundaries. The district is also subject to special education decisions made in the best interest of students regardless of location and state agency decisions to place homeless students who must be provided transportation independent of any district input or distance between placements and school. Unfortunately, the number of homeless students has exploded during and after pandemic and has shown no indication of slowing down, especially as inflationary pressures and threat of recession looms. To tackle this challenge, the district is looking to expand purchases of student transportation vans that can pick-up and transport these challenging single-student requirements without the need for a CDL driver or large school bus. Opportunities to recruit more CDL drivers, improve operational efficiency and replenish the fleet with both alternative fuel and smaller capacity vehicles will help manage transportation challenges into the future.

Finance

In support of the BASD Mission, and in concert with the Board, staff and community, many challenges are facing the financial success of BASD schools and public education within Pennsylvania. Several issues are specific to our local schools and community while many other significant challenges are resulting from state/national concerns or mandates. Yet, the financial challenges resulting from the COVID inflation and global supply disruptions will continue for the foreseeable future.

The budgeted revenue for the district has increased by \$30M from \$299,284,574 (10%) in FY21 to \$329,602,481 in FY23. The increased revenue was primarily attributed to historic funding from the commonwealth as well as one-time COVID stimulus funding. As we near the exhaustion and expiration of these one-time monies, we will no doubt experience a reduction in revenue. At the same time, we continue to face economic uncertainty, fight inflation and increased charter school tuition expense. The natural growth of existing expenses and the expiration of one-time funds puts an undue burden to raise funds through local revenue and other alternate means.

The district will continue to proactively review real estate transactions to identify properties that may be under-assessed to current market values where the anticipated increase in assessed value would generate additional tax revenue above a predetermined value. This revenue effort is offset by the continued decline in the Common Level Ratio and taxpayer initiated real estate assessment appeals. While we have been successful in negotiating representative and equitable assessments in the past, this is a costly process that in some cases can take several years to resolve.

We will continue to look for alternative sources of revenue from all areas including increased involvement and fundraising with The Foundation for the Bethlehem Area School District, outside marketing, donations, grants, and fees for services to sustain our valuable educational and student programs. Additionally, to help offset the ever-increasing cost of charter school tuition payments, we will actively pursue the growth of our BASD cyber learning opportunities to attract and retain students who desire an alternative to the traditional classroom setting within BASD.

The budgeted salary and benefits expenses for the district has increased by \$21M (11.5%) from \$182,067,843 to \$203,342,033. We continue to invest in the recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff to provide educational services to our students and community. As is typical of governmental entities, employee salary and benefits make up ~74% of the district's budget.

The FY23-24 PA Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) employer contribution rate will be 34%. The employer contribution rate is 3.6% lower than the current FY22-23 rate of 35.26%. This is the first rate decrease since 2008-2009 and according to the PSERS actuarial firm, this is largely in part due to strong payroll growth and favorable demographic changes. While the reduction in rate is welcome relief, the projected PSERS employer contribution rate is expected to rise to 38.35% by FY30-31.

Through the Bethlehem Area Employee Benefit Trust, we have reduced our administrative costs through a statewide consortium of self-insured Healthcare Trusts while providing added financial security of stop loss insurance for catastrophic claims. Collectively we have also leveraged our market share to acquire a lower cost prescription benefit management program that includes more aggressive discounts off the average wholesale price for medications and increased formulary rebates to reduce plan costs. These efforts have allowed us to reduce or hold rates constant for the past seven years. The inherent structure of an employee healthcare trust also provides for greater involvement in the benefit decisions and shaping employee behavior that will ultimately add to the ownership of the plan and its operation generating cost saving programs that are a win-win for all.

Although we have a higher than average debt burden, the result is that BASD has outstanding facilities most of which have been renovated or replaced over the past decade. This investment in our community and its public schools adds much value to the BASD tax base by the increased marketability of residential homes due to our great public schools. This investment, however, must be maintained regularly to avoid deterioration and a loss of investment. Sound financial planning must include prioritization of any annual budgetary surplus to be considered for transfer to the Capital Reserve Fund to allow for ongoing preventative maintenance on our facilities to ensure they will last for our children's children.

Federal grants from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Act to address COVID needs is welcome relief but must be managed carefully to avoid devastating financial losses when these one-time grants expire. Current funds have been used to provide key student supports including academic coaching to address pandemic learning loss and as well as social and emotional supports for students adversely impacted by COVID. COVID relief funding is also planned to fund upgrades to existing HVAC systems in several elementary schools as investments in our capital assets for long term improvements. This also avoids using these funds to support ongoing operational expenses that continue beyond the grant creating a funding cliff without sustainable and ongoing revenue to support normal operations.

Finally, we cannot lose sight of the need to plan for the regular replacement of aging and obsolete equipment. Annually, we must evaluate the need for investment in recurring equipment cycles such as school buses, preventative maintenance, technology, band uniforms, etc. Acknowledging that resources are limited and demands many, continued failure to fund this replacement equipment puts our students' safety at risk and hinders their continued educational success. We will review all possible methods to finance these ongoing needs balanced together with the mandated obligations for the benefit of our students along their road to academic excellence.

Human Resources

The Human Resources function in the Bethlehem Area School District continues its development in order to most effectively meet our objectives in leading and supporting district strategies, the BASD Roadmap, building/department goals, equity initiatives, enhancing organizational effectiveness, meeting recruitment and retention targets, employee satisfaction, and ever-increasing state mandates.

Organizational goals in future years requiring leadership from HR include:

Labor Relations: CBA renewals

We have recently renewed three of our six labor contracts; two are pending for renewal by June of this year: Custodial/Maintenance and Food Service.

- Future collective bargaining agreement renewal dates are:
 - Teachers: 6/30/2026
 - Ed Support Personnel: 6/30/2026
 - Clerical: 6/30/2024
 - Custodial/Maintenance: 6/30/2023 (current bargaining)
 - Transportation: 6/30/2026
 - Food Service: 6/30/2023 (current bargaining)
- The two Act 93 Agreement renewal dates are:
 - Instructional Act 93: 6/30/2026
 - Non-Instructional Act 93: 6/30/2025

Updated PSBA job evaluation and salary studies are due for both Act 93 groups

Maintaining positive relations with local unions and Teamster/SEIU business agents/PSEA UniServ reps and minimizing grievances through strong communications with local leadership and effective supervision of staff.

HR Department Succession Planning

- The current Chief HR Officer has announced his retirement effective summer of 2023; the replacement has been identified.

Staffing

- Staffing and placement work considering curricular program additions and innovations, such as has been done in recent years with elementary Spanish, American Sign Language, digital literacy and middle level literacy. Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, middle schools revised their ELA/Reading programs, reducing core academic teams to four. High schools anticipate additional blended learning offerings, especially considering our experience during the pandemic.
- We remain very focused on employee job placement, with the goal of creating win-win matches of certification, interest, talent and job requirements. This remains job #1 with faculty placements.
- Talent development and succession planning for current and anticipated administrative retirements, particularly within the principal ranks and central office executive leadership teams.

- Maintenance of labor market competitiveness in all areas, with particular attention to educators in short supply, such as STEM, foreign languages, special education as well as substitute teachers, teacher assistants, bus drivers, and support department substitutes.
- New approaches to sourcing the best talent available; enhancing our efforts to attract diverse candidates.
- In 2021 we implemented Frontline Technologies' Recruit and Hire product, which has enabled us to improve our efforts around advertising, sourcing, recruiting and selection of professional staff. In 2022-2023 we expanded its use for administrative positions. In 2023-2024 we will expand its use to most support department positions.

Employee Benefits/Wellness

- Due to her retirement, we replaced Carole Hall with internal hire Kelly Male in June 2021. Kelly is continuing her development as our Benefits Specialist, which includes managing all leaves of absence and workers' compensation. We have reassigned clerical support within the office to help meet the increasing needs to best manage this function.
- At this time we are implementing a Benefits Admin platform which will provide us with the ability to assist us with the administration of new hire benefits enrollment, annual open enrollment, ACA reporting requirements, and the administration of COBRA and retiree medical benefits.
- Continued attention to costs in the employee benefits arena, building on recent years' successes, while offering a very competitive, attractive benefits package to aid recruiting and retention.
- We have been able to maintain employee premium shares, deductibles and co-pays since adopting our deductible plans for all employee groups in 2015 and 2016.
- Wellness initiatives to decrease sick time, leaves, and medical expenses, including expanding our partnership with the Kellyn Foundation, especially their Healthy Lifestyles program.

Organizational Development and Culture

- Continuing support of the district's DEI initiatives, including the development of a more diverse faculty.
- Management training and development for all A&S supervisory personnel, particularly in the "soft skills", building leadership capacity, supervisory skills/effectiveness and legal compliance.
- Greater capacity and productivity from district support staff through improved employee training and development.
- Periodic review of organizational structure and re-design that most effectively supports district objectives.
- Enhanced operating standards for separation through resignation, including exit interviews/surveys. The goals are to obtain feedback on employee experiences while employed by the district, communicate feedback to administrative personnel, and to influence what former employees have to say about us in the community.

Human Resources Development and Training

Given our central mission, state requirements and the particulars of the compensation structure for professional employees, the district has dedicated internal and external resources and significant budget dollars devoted to training and professional development of teaching staff. Most of these budgeted resources have been dedicated to PD in curriculum and instruction.

Our school administrators need more professional development in leadership and supervision, performance management and legal compliance.

We do not have a resource dedicated to driving and coordinating training and development for support staff. This should be more directly addressed within the time span of this plan, however, with the recent addition of an HR Specialist focused on support staff, we are making headway in this area.

The district's onboarding efforts for non-teacher new hires is mixed. Although each new hire receives an individual HR orientation to benefits and new hire processes, what occurs after that varies greatly. We need to do more in this area, particularly for non-instructional personnel.

Compliance

Prime examples of recent and continuing state mandates within the realm of HR are the requirements regarding educator and administrator certification standards, evaluations under Act 13 of 2020 which revised Act 82 of 2012, including teacher specific student growth scores; the renewal of employment clearances every five years; training requirements around child abuse awareness, suicide awareness, workplace safety, Title I revisions, security personnel and annual PIAA coaching training.

Data and Reporting

We have been able to replace a retirement with an internal hire who is able to maximize the CSIU system, limited as it is for HR purposes.

While we continue to improve internal data and reporting to assist us in strategic planning and decision making, a more robust HR system should be explored soon. We need the ability to provide specialized HR reporting that exceed the basic requirements for the financial system.

We have adopted Frontline Professional Learning but have not yet fully implemented it for managing our tuition loan/salary advancement processes, which currently take much more time to administer than they should.

For fall semester 2023, we will be implementing a new software system (Sonia) to assist us in managing the student teacher assignment process.

The PA-ETEP system from EduLink's partnership with IU 4 is serving us well in managing teacher observations and evaluations.

We also provide annual mandated state reporting on educator and principal evaluations (TPES), PIMS staffing, Act 45/48 compliance, district equity plan, and civil rights reporting.

HR Leadership Challenges

The following factors speak to the particulars of our district that provide for HR leadership and management challenges beyond most other districts and many private organizations:

- The demands and expectations on the part of the state and society generally of school district personnel along with the lack of adequate state funding to support those demands and expectations are stretching our human resources to their limits. The recent pandemic and its aftermath have only exacerbated the demands on our people.
- These demands require increasing creativity to meet objectives and greater leadership, attention and support from central office administration to maintain focus and a positive work climate.
- We are one of the largest employers in the greater Lehigh Valley. We currently employ just over 2,000 FT and PT staff, in 25 locations. We require large substitute employee labor pools, which have become increasingly difficult to staff and maintain.
- We are governed by a complex and ever-changing system of federal and state regulations, as well as board policy, school code, Collective Bargaining/Act 93 Agreements.
- The particulars of these various agreements have historically prevented an organization wide approach to most human resource issues including job placement, compensation, medical benefits, paid holidays, paid time off, disability insurance, etc. We have made and continue to make significant strides in the desired alignment of employment provisions as we renegotiate these agreements. Most of this work has been realized.
- We continue to maintain in-house programs for operational functions such as food service, transportation, as well as childcare, which present special HR/management challenges.
- While we enjoy certain benefits from having a long history and many long service employees, this fact can and often does present impediments to needed change. A strong sense of “past practices” is a significant challenge for management when implementing and/or succeeding prior administrations.

Human Resources

Office of Child Accounting

The Office of Child Accounting department's main responsibilities for the district include supervising the registration process, reporting membership data to the state for reimbursement, reconciling tuition invoices from charter and other LEAs, invoicing other LEAs for tuition, and developing enrollment projections and other enrollment reports.

Other areas of responsibilities include supervising the issuance of work permits and answering questions from families or employer on Child Labor Law, maintaining educational records and transcripts, advising on federal law regarding homeless children and youth, managing residency compliance and settling disputes, determining school assignments within the district and supervising the Home Education Program.

Our plans for the upcoming years include:

1. Streamline the internal processes for Records Requests, Open Enrollment, Out of District Grades, and Home Education Program as we look at a new Student Information System
2. Research options to digitize microfiche and microfilm records
3. Research options to receive electronic payment for transcript request
4. Continue providing reports to management for data analysis from projections to enrollment reports to other district needs
5. Continue to assist the district with state reporting requirements
6. Continue cross training to provide support as needed within the department
7. Continue co-facilitating at secretary in-service training meetings
8. Continue to aggressively pursue fraudulent residency claims through both leveraging in-district personnel and contracting with private investigators

Information Services Department

Information Services

The Information Services Department continues to make improvements across the district's technology systems and infrastructure. Such improvements, amid resource and financial constraints, supports the ongoing implementation of the Vision and Strategy plan of the district. Stabilization of the wireless and internal networks is always a focus, as it impacts every student, teacher and administrator. The continuation of server virtualization and implementation of numerous cloud-based services helps to maintain system reliability and efficiency while reducing overall cost of ownership.

ISD continues to focus on improving process efficiency, maintaining up-to-date technology, and reducing costs associated with a large enterprise environment. The use of digital resources requires continued integration between the instructional and information technology resources. ISD continues to balance user requests, district needs, and a constrained budget while keeping pace with a rapidly changing technology landscape. Through continued staff development and use of enterprise solutions, ISD can deliver economically sustainable and efficient solutions to the BASD students, faculty, and staff.

The K-12 technology landscape continues to change at a quick pace requiring nimble resources able to quickly respond to new technology and processes. This effort requires a continuing commitment to staff development across the district, both for the personnel supporting the end users and for the end users themselves who must then implement the technology in their daily classroom environments. This integration must be an ongoing shift in culture, operation, and direction to provide the competitive edge to the district that it should.

BASDNet, the district's consolidated digital network, continues to evolve to sustain current and future communication needs. Instructional applications and systems share information between BASD's Student Information System, Active Directory, and online learning platforms to provide a robust digital environment for BASD staff and students.

Technology at BASD continues to evolve and adapt, requiring periodic adjustments to the plan. Each of these changes requires strong commitment from the instructional and support departments within the district.

Core Technology (Wireless, Network, Server)

BASD continually improves its district-wide wireless capabilities. The district's core network and switch environment leverage the district's leased dark fiber to provide high-capacity data links between each building. In addition, the district's two high-speed Internet links ensures redundant capacity for online services. Continuous improvements only solve part of the challenge. The other half of the equation focuses on the district's data center and centralized computing services.

BASD maintains two data centers, one at Freedom High School and another at Nitschmann Middle School. Capital improvements coupled with the continually evolving virtualization technologies helps to reduce environmental costs while at the same time improving system efficiency. Through continually evolving virtual servers and economical centralized storage, the district is able to build a modular "private cloud". This approach allows for staggered upgrades of the individual virtual cluster components without requiring downtime.

The current virtual environment supports over 100+ “virtual servers,” each of which would take up space, power, and HVAC capacity in a traditional physical environment. Through virtualization, the total power usage by the two data centers supports the goals of increased efficiency while reducing overall cost.

Asset Sustainability

Having devices capable of leveraging the wireless infrastructure is also important. Chromebook technology brings economical devices that can serve as a foundation for a regular asset refresh program. This is important to ensure the availability of updated technology for students in support of the district’s goal to enable online and blended learning.

The district has standardized on certain wireless device models for staff as their primary device. Device standardization allows for efficient training and support. It also positions BASD for a 4-5-year regular technology refresh cycle that has a more predictable technology budget.

Service Desk and Technology Governance

The Service Desk is a central point for reporting, resolving and managing technical incidents. The Information Services Department uses this system and support staff to ensure staff and student productivity. Metrics from the system can reveal trends of system and hardware failures. Governance on project prioritization and resource scheduling remain a priority given the personnel, financial, and time constraints across the district.

Technology governance plays an important role in ensuring that technology decisions consider the larger district/enterprise view. Service Level Agreements (SLAs) set the expectation to the faculty and administration for issue response and resolution. BASD continues to embrace online learning through its partnership many educational online learning platforms. Each educational online learning platform has a specific set of technology requirements that may overlap but require functional equipment and connectivity to access. The district operates as an enterprise going forward to ensure every student has equitable access to the technology they need when they need it.

Application and System Integration

The district’s technology roadmap is based on three key pillars:

- Active Directory - authoritative source for authenticating a user’s rights to access applications and electronic resources
- The district’s Student Information System (SIS) and authoritative source for student data and information
- The district’s many educational online learning platforms that are authoritative sources for eLearning content

These three components form a foundation from which all other applications, systems, and services must link. These are an integral part of future planning across the district's grade levels. BASDNet standardizes both student and faculty user credentials, including facilities for self-service reset and administration. Continued integration of these three components allows the district to build new technology capabilities while maintaining the existing core environment at a financially sustainable rate.

The district continues with a forward-thinking approach to technology systems. Academic and curricular programs exist mainly online, and ISD must work with district leadership to ensure that these programs fit together with the existing technology framework. In addition, by leveraging these authoritative data sources, the district moves towards business intelligence as a critical tool for equitable decision making in support of the Vision and Strategy plan of the district.

Office of Equity Initiatives

Equity Initiatives

The guiding purpose of the Office of Equity Initiatives is to dismantle systemic barriers, myths, and beliefs to create a culture that affirms and supports the identities, experiences and voices of all students and staff and inform district-wide programs and initiatives towards educational equity and an anti-racist environment. As a district, we aim to eliminate race and family income as predictors of school success by guaranteeing equitable access to opportunities to learn and grow

As the sixth largest school district in Pennsylvania, the Bethlehem Area School District has had a commitment to diversity and inclusion for its students and communities of color for some time. In the early 1980s, the district partnered with the Puerto Rican community to ensure that there would be a focus for this specific group and the Office of Minority Affairs was created. We've learned a lot since that time and what we have learned is that our commitment must go deeper. The work must include equity and antiracism.

At the September 20, 2021 Board of School Directors meeting, the Board adopted Policy 832 Diversity Equity and Inclusion. The adoption of the policy was a significant step in the district's years long equity work. While we have a wide range of equity activities across the district, we did not have an overarching policy to guide those efforts or to establish specific actions such as an equity audit and districtwide equity plan.

The purpose of Board Policy 832 states:

The Board adopts this policy to prioritize the principle of educational equity and antiracism through the fair and just allocation of resources, opportunities and treatment of students based upon each individual student's needs. The pursuit of educational equity requires the continuous and collaborative effort of identifying various aspects of district programs and operations in which consideration of educational equity shall be analyzed, incorporated and prioritized.

To facilitate educational equity for all, the district shall be committed to:

1. Respecting the inherent value, humanity, and dignity of each person.
2. Promptly identifying, addressing, and eliminating the gaps between students by promptly identifying and addressing barriers that cultivate opportunity gaps for students that manifest as academic deficiencies.
3. Ensuring that a student's educational achievement and overall school participation and involvement is neither predicted nor predetermined by explicit or implicit biases with special attention to how these biases may be amplified at the intersections of identities.
4. Establishing and sustaining a school community that shares the collective responsibility to address, eliminate, and prevent actions, decisions, and outcomes that result from and perpetuate racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, xenophobia, and other discriminatory practices.

Organizationally, we are now at the point where we need sustained, specific district leadership to align, guide and build momentum across every department's equity efforts. This district level leadership will assure successful implementation of the Board's purpose in establishing Policy 832.

Office of Equity Initiatives

The Office of Equity Initiatives was established at the onset of the 2022-2023 school year. This office, under the leadership of a Director of Equity Initiatives and a Supervisor of Equity Initiatives, is responsible for leading and guiding the district's equity work. While every BASD staff member must have a commitment to equity and their piece of our equity work, the wide range of current initiatives that cut across every academic and operational department in the district requires dedicated district level leadership.

Office of Equity Initiatives

Early Learning, Grants, and Development

Child Care

The Bethlehem Area School District has been offering affordable, quality child care to parents for over 30 years. The District has 10 DHS licensed sites at our elementary schools. The Child Care department participates in Child Care Works, which is a subsidized program for families who fit within the financial guidelines outlined by the state, to assist in or completely cover the costs of child care. As of 2023, BASD Child Care is proud to announce participation in the Child Care Aware program, a program which U.S. Military service men and women can acquire funding to help offset the costs of child care.

In direct response to parent/guardian feedback from a prior survey, an online payment system, Brightwheel, has been implemented as of the Summer of 2022. Families can choose to pay online via credit card, debit card or bank account (payment is still accepted via personal check and money order). Past, current, and future invoices are at the family's fingertips as well as messaging features and more.

During the 2022-2023 school year, the Child Care office and child care sites began to increase collaborative efforts with the District's newly created Office of Equity Initiatives by expanding multi-cultural and historical curriculum into the Child Care Program to supplement what is taught in the classroom.

The Department has also implemented, within child care, the "Zones of Regulation" in an effort to create continuity between the child care and school settings. Children have responded greatly to this social/emotional learning tool and it has become a mechanism used daily to help navigate feelings, emotions, and actions. It has proven to benefit children and staff alike.

2023-2024

- Increase collaborative efforts with the Office of Equity Initiatives to provide, through instruction, play, and art, more opportunities to expand child and staff knowledge of various cultural norms, celebrations, and historical events.
- Emphasize collaboration between Child Care Staff and related District staff; this includes principals, teachers of children in the Child Care Program, and the elementary school counselors in an effort to provide more appropriately individualized guidance with academics and social/emotional learning.
- Refrain from charging higher rates in response to the increased economic hardships due to recent rises in inflation.
- Evaluate demand for child care at BASD elementary schools that currently do not have a child care program on site.
- Identify and alleviate barriers, where feasible, that prevent families from participating in our child care program.
- Heighten knowledge of Supervisor's roles/duties among Leads who have expressed interest and/or potential to be future Site Supervisors.
- Recruit qualified individuals with experience in the field in an effort to expand services to more families

2024-2025

- Encourage Child Care staff members to complete in person training in addition to the traditional online DHS accepted training sessions for real time question and answer opportunities.
- Inspire current Child Care staff to seek higher education; CDA, Associates, Bachelors, Masters, Director Credential, etc.
- Continue to attract and recruit highly qualified individuals as child care Aides and Leads in an effort to minimize the number of children on waitlists
- Expand STEAM materials and opportunities available to children
- Analyze current economy as it stands and consider a reasonable rate increases to reflect the inflated cost of materials, toys, and other operational expenses

2025-2028

- Create and implement a student driven curriculum that is flexible, yet based on monthly themes that are consistent across each site- exploring culture, diversity, history, math, science, art, and the world around us (lesson plans are always subject to change based on individual needs of children)
- Explore a salary scale based on education level and experience for Leads and Aides, as opposed to current standard pay based on title alone.
 - Similarly, explore a salary scale that has clarity for Supervisors in regard to experience, education level, and possibly years with BASD for those who transfer from another department
- Re-evaluate demand for child care at elementary schools that do not have care at their building.
- Re-examine and help diminish barriers that prevent families who are interested from attending BASD child care.

Early Learning

The Bethlehem Area School District is proud to offer universal full-day kindergarten in our 16 elementary schools. We want each child's experience filled with fun and exciting activities that will begin them on the path of successful learning experiences and personal development. Our kindergarten students come from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences, which is what makes each of them unique and special. Although children go through similar stages in the learning process, we understand that children develop at different academic, social, and emotional rates. Our full-day kindergarten classrooms offer support based on each individual child's needs. Additional information can be found at the following link:
<https://www.basdschools.org/kindergarten>

During the last several school years, the District's focus at the primary level was in the area of literacy. All K-2 teachers received formal LETRS® (Language Essentials for Teachers of Readng and Spelling) training on Modules 1, 2, and 3, and additional modules will continue to be added in subsequent years. Teachers have also received small-group phonology and phonics instruction that was explicit, systematic, and multisensory. Intensive MTSS support was also provided as well. Training, modeling, coaching, and support will continue in future years.

While the District will continue its work at the primary grade levels, we also recognize the need to work with our outside Pre-K partners, Pre-K parents/guardians, and Pre-K students. As a result, the following events will occur each school year:

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Events</u>	<u>Description</u>
August	Incoming Kindergarten Play Date/Orientation	Event for registered, incoming K parents/guardians and students
	BASD Pre-K Counts Orientation	Event held at Calypso, Donegan, Fountain Hill, and Marvine
September	Kindergarten Literacy Night	Evening event for all local Pre-K and/or child care providers to learn about the BASD's literacy work, professional development, and curriculum
October	Pre-K Provider Visitation Night	Evening event held during BASD Education Week for any interested Pre-K providers
November and/or December	Fall Incoming Kindergarten Open House	Evening Open House events held at each individual elementary school for Pre-K parents/guardians, and their child.
January	Kindergarten Registration begins	Online registration is completed through <i>Registration Gateway</i> .

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Events</u>	<u>Description</u>
March	Incoming Kindergarten Family Night Session #1 Topic: Print Awareness & Letter Recognition	a 60-90-minute workshop held at each elementary school
April	Incoming Kindergarten Family Night Session #2 Topic: Vocabulary Building	a 60-90-minute workshop held at each elementary school
	Spring Incoming Kindergarten Open House	Evening Open House events held at each individual elementary school for Pre-K parents/guardians, and their child.
May	Incoming Kindergarten Family Welcoming Day	Daytime event for all registered, incoming K students and their parents/guardians
	Incoming Kindergarten Family Night Session #3 Topic: Early Language & Phoneme Awareness	a 60-90-minute workshop held at each elementary school
	BASD Pre-K Counts & Head Start Transition Day	Events held at Calypso, Donegan, Fountain Hill, Lincoln, and Marvine
	Incoming Kindergarten Family Night Session #4 Topic: Letter Sounds	a 60-90-minute workshop held at each elementary school

Grants and Federal Programs

The Bethlehem Area School District is very fortunate to receive funding from a variety of federal, state, and local grants. Although funding is never certain, listed below is a brief description of some of the main funding sources that are anticipated for the 2023-2024 school year and beyond. This list is not inclusive, but it does provide an overview of the main grants that will be applied for during the upcoming school year.

During the 2021-2022 school year, the Bethlehem Area School District is anticipating approximately \$4,000,000 in federal Title money. **Title I funds** will be used for teacher salaries and benefits, administrative costs, supplies, parent involvement programs, and mandated set-asides at the elementary and middle school level. **Title II funds** will be used for salaries and benefits for class size reduction teachers and staff development opportunities focused on strategies to close student achievement gaps at the elementary and secondary level. **Title III funds** will be used to provide supplemental educational programming for English Learners and immigrant students at the elementary and secondary levels. **Title IV funding** will be used in the areas of safe and healthy students, well-rounded education, and effective use of technology. In addition to this federal funding, Broughal Middle School will also receive over \$500,000 in Comprehensive Support and Improvement funds.

At the State level, the District is anticipating grant funding in several key areas. The Pre-K Counts Program grant provides funding for six pre-kindergarten classes in the District, which are located at Calypso (1), Fountain Hill (1), Marvine (2), and Donegan (2) and service a total of 120 students. Ready to Learn funds will be used toward the implementation of full-day kindergarten.

The **Marvine Family Center Parents As Teachers Program (P.A.T.)** grant cycle will begin with the submission of a RFP (Request for Proposal). Pending available space with schools, the Bethlehem Area School District will seek to expand the program. The Parents As Teachers Program works with families who have children who have children from birth to age four to help them better understand child development and connects them to resources they need to make the best choices for their family. The Parents As Teachers program offers free personal home visits customized for the needs of the families.

At the local level, the District is hopeful that a number of grants will be approved for the 2023-2024 school year. UGI has provided funding annually to assist schools with the **Reading is Fundamental (RIF)** initiative. This funding was always designated to purchase books for all BASD first grade students. The Foundation for the Bethlehem Area School District provides up to \$25,000 for **Teacher Innovation** and **Service Learning** grants. In addition, the Foundation also started a **Leaders of Tomorrow** grant, which allows each elementary school to receive up to \$1,000 toward the implementation of a student-selected project.

Pupil Services

Special Education, Student Services, and Health Services

In support of the BASD mission and Roadmap to Educational Excellence, Pupil Services is committed to remove barriers and create equitable opportunities for student success by supporting the academic, behavior, social-emotional, and physical health needs of our District. Through various support and services, the department will work collaboratively with all stakeholders to provide what is equitably needed to achieve success and to be productive, socially, culturally responsive citizens.

The Pupil Services Department is comprised of school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, special education teachers, teachers of the mentally gifted, special education instructional assistants, speech and language teachers, attendance officers, educational support teachers, ACCESS Program Assistant, Coordinators of Special Education, Director of Special Education, and Director of Student Services. These highly experienced professionals provide a network of services within each school to ensure all students obtain the knowledge, skills, and experience to succeed and become responsible citizens in an ever-changing global society.

Overall, the Pupil Services department recognizes the need to expand partnerships to provide an integrated student support model with a strong link between health and wellness, so students have the ability to fully engage within the learning environment as each student works towards productive citizenship.

Special Education, Gifted Education, 504 Service Agreements

- ***To provide Quality Support, Services, and Instruction to Students and Staff***

Special Education staff and teachers of the Gifted provide quality support, services, and instruction to students with unique learning styles to ensure that students will be better prepared to participate successfully in the general education curriculum with rigor and high expectations. Students are identified for these services through a data-informed process with a focus on equity. Students in need of services will receive individualized support that includes consultation, collaboration, coaching and/or direct instruction in alignment with each child's needs.

The Special Education organizational administrative infrastructure allows central office personnel to focus on specific programs with an emphasis on a K-12 approach to quality instructional practices, program delivery and supervision to allow for greater fidelity, consistency, and compliance across all areas of special education mandates and district initiatives. Additionally, professional development and support to all teaching staff on how to implement best practice instruction for students with an exceptionality (disability and giftedness) remains to be a primary focus to foster the success of students in all educational environments.

- ***To provide Individualized Student Instruction and Interventions***

By utilizing the extensive BASD curriculum resources available (Wonders, Study Sync, Lexia, Phonics for Reading, IXL, MobyMax, Zones of Regulation) in both core instruction and intervention, staff will continue to address the specific, individualized learning needs of students in the academic, behavioral and social/emotional domains through evidence-based direct instructional methods. In addition, students receive deliberate case management that is focused on monitoring progress and ensuring a team approach in supporting students growth towards their individual goals. Informed by research and IDEA, BASD students will continue to be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment, accessing the core curriculum and general education settings to the maximum extent possible while also intervening meaningfully to increase student progress in areas of deficit.

For students in need of more supportive settings, BASD is cooperatively involved with multiple partners including the CIU20, and university partners such as Lehigh University. Through close cooperation and collaboration, BASD students, regardless of the severity of need, have access to high quality instruction and support for all exceptionalities.

Planning for the transition of students with special education needs into consecutive grade levels, and ultimately into the community is an essential component of contributing to their success. Instruction and support of students to live independently, access post-secondary education and become employed is a large component of the strategy of designing students' individualized education plans. BASD's special education staff is integrally involved with community resources and partners to assist students in reaching their potential not only within school but post graduation.

- ***To maximize ACCESS Program***

ACCESS, Medicaid reimbursement program, continues to revise procedures to meet yearly program

changes to maximize reimbursement for allowable services. This program assists in funding necessary equipment and services for special education students: i.e., curriculum materials, mental health/counseling, equipment.

Student Services

- ***To implement Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS)***

A unified Student Assistance Program and Multi-Tiered System of Supports, BASD/SAP, continues to be implemented at all levels which provides a sustainable infrastructure that contributes to the achievement of all students within our schools, K-12. A resource website is available to enhance the team's ability to meet the student needs by providing research backed interventions and tools along with videos for educators and parents to enhance their knowledge of the process.

Center for Humanistic Change (CHC), a community agency, provides a PA-SAP liaison to schools as part of this process. The SAP liaison works with schools to identify at-risk students and provide support to break down the barriers to their success. CHC provides schools the opportunity to conduct behavioral health screenings utilizing the BHWorks through Drexel University to identify students for behavioral support.

By removing the barriers to learning through data-based problem-solving and collaborative interventions, students are being identified with appropriate interventions, supports, and services.

- ***To increase Internal and Community Supports and Services through Partnerships***

Integrated Student Support services is currently implemented at six (6) schools by Communities in Schools of Eastern PA (CIS). The Site Coordinator works to create a network of support by working directly with teachers, families, services agencies, and local companies focusing on student academic, behavior, attendance, and mental health needs.

Pinebrook Family Answers is currently implementing licensed social work services across the district. PBFA collaborates and consults with CIS and the school based teams to identify the students that are in need of counseling.

- ***To increase Mental Health and Behavioral Health (MH/BH) Services***

Mental health and behavioral health services remain a priority focus within the district. To meet this priority, the district has partnered with St. Luke's Behavioral Health, Lehigh Valley Health Network, and Colonial Intermediate Unit #20 to provide out-patient mental and behavioral health services. All twenty-two (22) schools have been certified as an out-patient clinic. Discussions are on-going with Magellan to assist students who have insurance issues in accessing services.

The Community Voices Clinic (CVC) is a school-based mental health clinic operating within the family centers at Donegan Elementary and Broughal Middle schools. The CVC offers free individual, family, group, and couples' therapy to uninsured and underinsured residents of South Bethlehem who would otherwise be unable to access treatment. The clinic is fully staffed by doctoral and master's level students in counseling psychology from Lehigh University. Lehigh University contracts with Colonial IU#20 Resolve Behavioral Health to provide clinical supervision.

- ***To build Trauma Informed Schools***

Training and supporting teachers regarding the science of trauma and trauma informed practices, restorative justice, and social emotional learning with an intentional focus on anti-racism and cultural responsiveness.

Teachers provide direct instruction in the area of social emotional learning to increase appropriate social skills while decreasing discipline issues.

Leader In Me: Student Services oversees the implementation and development of Leader In Me (LIM) across all of our K-8 schools. Leader In Me (LIM) is based on Franklin Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. The LIM Framework provides the structures for implementation and data collection across the categories of leadership, culture, and academics. LIM is guided by 5 essential paradigms (leadership, potential, change, motivation, and education), followed by the teaching and integration of the actions that lead to successful outcomes. Schools work then collaboratively to analyze yearly data points and strategically target areas of need for growth. As of 2023-2024 school year all of our K-8 schools will be implementing a tiered approach with the philosophy and framework of Leader In Me (LIM) anchoring tier 1. A LIM coach works directly with each school to ensure consistent and intentional delivery of the framework. Leader In Me empowers the shared leadership of staff and students across Lighthouse and action teams to empower all members of the school community.

Zones of Regulation: Zones of Regulation teaches students to recognize their feelings and to use tools and strategies to regulate their feelings. Zones Of Regulation is implemented in Tier 1 (whole school, Tier 2 (group instruction) and Tier 3 (individualized) manner for students based on the needs of the school. Second Step, a social-emotional curriculum has been added as a Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention for students in need of more intensive support in social and emotional learning.

Restorative Practices (RP): Restorative Practices are embedded across all of our schools. It is based on the fundamental hypothesis that people are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in behavior when people of authority do things with them, not to or for them. The restorative practices process is based on the social discipline framework and designed to repair relationships that have been damaged. Restorative Practices provides a sense of remorse and **restorative** action on the part of the offender and forgiveness by the victim. A professional development plan has been developed to build a sustainable process to train all new staff members in restorative practices in addition to expanding these practices to our K-5 buildings throughout the internal coaching team. K-12 Counselors and administrators will be trained in restorative practices conferencing. Our secondary schools are restorative buildings.

SEL Consulting and Coaching: Our High Schools will continue to develop their core SEL teams towards confidence and competence of understanding and embedding the 5 pillars of SEL as defined by CASEL. Those teams are engaged in consultant work resulting in experiential learning as well as coaching and feedback sessions. The core SEL teams will be implementing a strategic approach to grow the tier 1 awareness and implementation of SEL practices throughout next year.

Framework for Citizenship: These frameworks have been embedded into the newly revised 2023 Framework For Citizenship explicitly outlining the philosophy and context of the both LIM and restorative practices. The teacher directed portion of the Framework outlines explicit intervention practices consistent with a restorative approach as well as restoration of harm following actions that created harm or punishment. All Framework For Citizenship sections have been revised to include administrative flexibility to consider a variety of level of discipline as well as alternative measures to address incidents of disruptive behavior.

- ***To provide Alternative Educational Opportunities***

Administration works collaboratively to determine an alternative educational placement for at-risk students struggling behaviorally before expulsion is recommended. Student Services monitors the district's in-house expulsion program, Evening Alternative Program (EAP), which provides educational services to students who have been expelled due to extreme and rare violations within the Framework of Citizenship. Students receive district curriculum utilizing restorative, trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices with the goal to transition back into school or graduate.

A structured plan to develop a strategic expansion and maintenance of current community resources, partnerships, and internal supports will be developed. Data will be collected and analyzed to ensure progress in addressing mental health and the effectiveness of our trauma informed initiatives.

Health Services

- ***To increase Evidence-Based Health Care through an Integration Model***

The school-based services integration model increases access to services for students through programs that link school systems with local healthcare and social services programs. Service integration can help students and their families overcome barriers to care and to achieve health equity among students who unjustly experience disparities in outcomes due to race, ethnicity, or family income.

- ***School-Linked Services***

Connecting students and their families to community organizations to increase access to health and human services. Schools play an important role in building partnerships between the school and community organizations to ensure that students have access to services. School linked service models may be implemented through mobile vans, a collaborative that links schools to community agencies that provide health and human services, or through family referrals to services.

- ***School-Based Health Centers***

Provide a variety of services to improve the overall health of students and their family members. Primary care provided by St.Luke's Bethlehem Mobile Youth Health Center and our two BASD school physicians. Childhood immunizations and Flu Vaccines for staff and students provided by BASD Vaccine for Children Program (VFC) and COVID vaccines provided by the Bethlehem Health Bureau(BHB). Mandated health screenings (provided by BASD Associate Nurses, CSNs and student nurses). Health education provided by nursing students from Cedar Crest College,

Moravian College, St.Luke's School of Nursing, dental hygiene students from NCACC Dental Program and the 5th grade puberty talk and 2nd grade safe touches by the Weller Center. Oral health services provided by Star Wellness Dental Van and our two BASD school dentists. Family Planning Van at Liberty High School provided by the Bethlehem Health Bureau. Free exam eye and eyeglasses if needed provided by Vision to Learn and St. Luke's Vision Vouchers These services provide care directly to our students no matter what their zip code so they have an equal opportunity to learn and grow and have access to care in a location that is safe and convenient.

Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC)

Evidence - based model which promotes the healthy development of school- aged children through health education, physical education, health services, nutrition services, counseling, psychological and social services, healthy and safe school environment, health promotion and/ or staff and family community involvement.