

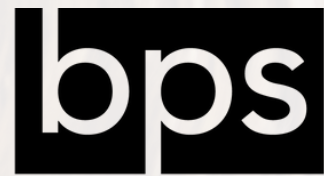


STRATEGIC PLAN

BISMARCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2025-2030

**Empowering every
learner to** *Thrive*



**BISMARCK
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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LETTER TO MEMBERS OF THE BISMARCK PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY



DR. JEFF FASTNACHT
Superintendent



To Our Bismarck Public Schools Community,

I'm Dr. Jeff Fastnacht, and it's my privilege to present the 2025–2030 Bismarck Public Schools Strategic Plan—a refreshed vision anchored in our unwavering mission to **Empower Every Learner to Thrive**.

Over the past two years, we have embraced **TRUST** and **ELEVATE** as guiding principles for our culture and decision-making. TRUST reflects our commitment to transparent communication, accountability, and building meaningful relationships across our community. ELEVATE represents our promise to continuously enhance every facet of the Bismarck Public School experience—by investing in educators, expanding student opportunities, supporting the well-being of every individual, and fostering clear and respectful communication.

Guided by input from staff, families, and community stakeholders, this plan has been redesigned to be more dynamic, accessible, and user-friendly. It will serve not only as our roadmap but also as a practical tool for evaluating progress and staying responsive to the evolving needs of our community.

One of the most notable changes in this plan is the introduction of our **Drivers of Excellence**—a set of clearly defined focus areas that organize and align the district's work. These drivers reflect what matters most to Bismarck Public Schools and provide direction our entire community can stand behind.

While the format may be new, our core mission remains unchanged. Our district values—**Excellence, Innovation, Leadership, and Inclusion**—continue to guide every decision we make. With TRUST as our foundation and a commitment to ELEVATE every level of our system, we are ready to turn today's challenges into tomorrow's opportunities.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support as we move forward together—on behalf of every learner, every educator, and every member of our BPS community.

Respectfully,

Dr. Jeff Fastnacht
Superintendent

Governance & Goals

Governance Culture

Bismarck Public Schools is governed using a Coherent Governance model, which provides a clear and consistent framework for defining success, measuring performance, and maintaining accountability. This model plays a critical role in guiding the implementation of the strategic plan and ensuring alignment with community expectations.

Coherent Governance

The Bismarck School Board has adopted the “Coherent Governance” model as a framework to clarify their roles and responsibilities, empowering and enabling them to govern effectively. The model includes **Student Results Policies**, **Operational Expectations Policies**, **Governance Culture Policies**, and **Board-Superintendent Relationship Policies**. The policies define what success looks like for students and are closely aligned with the **Drivers of Excellence** in this plan. The operational expectations (OEs) outline the standards for how the district will operate. Together, they provide a governance structure that supports the implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement of this strategic plan.



Linkage

OE-11 & R-2

To articulate the **linkage** between governance and our **Strategic Priorities**, look for this Linkage Icon. This will show the specific Results or Operational expectations set out by the Bismarck Public School Board that align with each priority.

Monitoring Results

As part of the Coherent Governance model, the Bismarck School Board monitors progress toward key student outcomes through a series of annual Results Monitoring Reports. Each report provides data, analysis, and evidence of progress, helping ensure accountability and transparency across the district. Community members are encouraged to follow the review of these reports, which are published and discussed publicly throughout the year, the schedule is located at the end of this document.

To view current and past monitoring reports, visit the **BPS Board Monitoring Reports Page** at <https://www.bismarckschools.org/school-board/board-governing-policies/monitoring-reports>

You can also monitor the district and school-level performance on the **ND Insights Dashboard**, which can be found at <https://insights.nd.gov/Education/District/08001>

Bismarck Public School Board



DANIEL EASTGATE

President



JOSH HAGER

Vice-President



DONNELL PRESKEY



JON LEE



AMANDA PETERSON



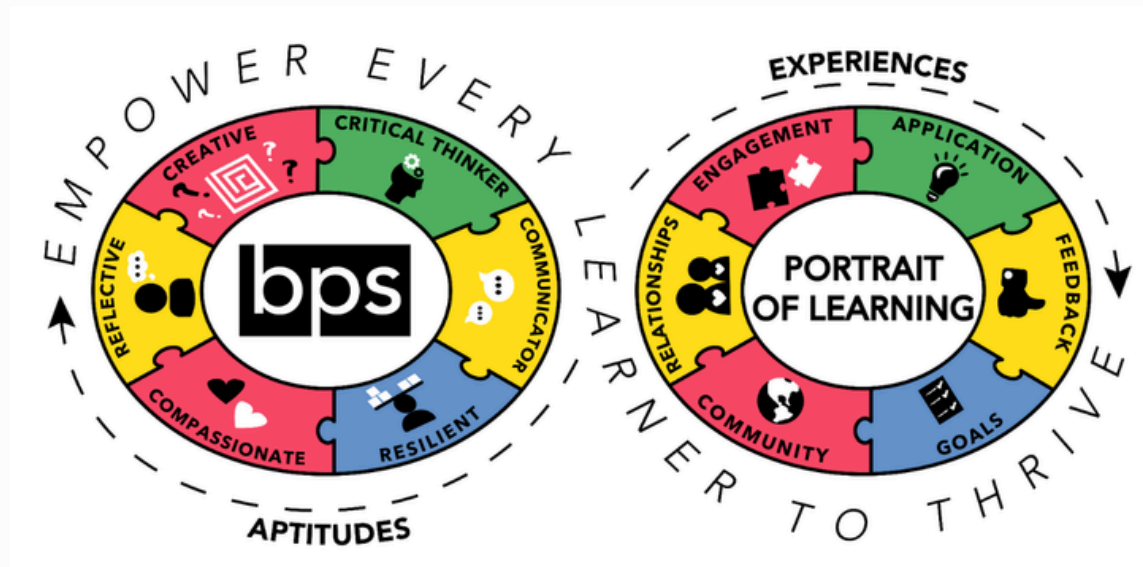
Empower Every Learner to Thrive

Our Vision



Together, our strong relationships build inclusive, collaborative, and innovative environments that create agency and inspire a passion for learning, excellence, and discovery.

Portrait of a Graduate



A Learner

Throughout this plan you will find references to “Learners”. Typically we think of these as our students, but we expand that within this document to include both adults and children, students and staff, even at times our community.



Our Values



Excellence: Ensure all learners receive an exemplary education that is academically challenging and meets their social and emotional needs.



Innovation: Engage in forward-thinking to identify bold ideas that enable us to be responsive to the expectations of our organization and community while cultivating creativity, critical thinking, and resourcefulness.



Inclusion: Grow all learners as reflective leaders with high levels of integrity who are inspired and inspire others to work, learn, and solve problems.



Leadership: Strengthen our community by valuing people for who they are, nurturing our diversity, and embracing the contributions of all students, families, and staff.

Choice Ready

All students will graduate choice ready with the knowledge, skills, and disposition to be successful.

Post-Secondary Ready

Workforce Ready

Military Ready



North Dakota
Choice Ready



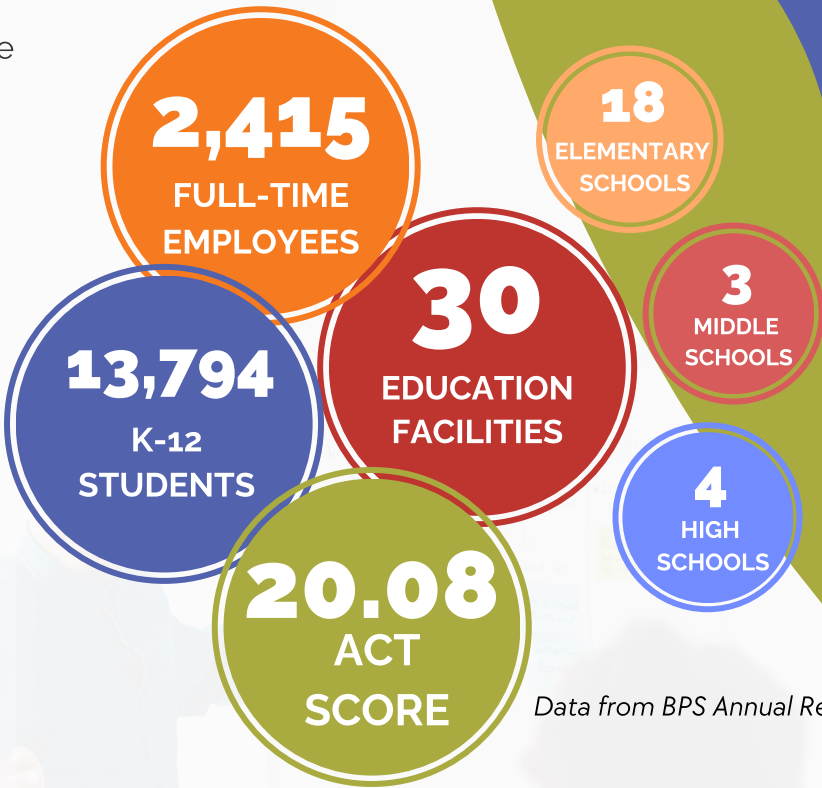
Who We Are Today

ENROLLMENT: BPS is the largest district in the state of North Dakota with **13,794 K-12 students** and 371 Pre-K students in the early childhood education program.

PERFORMANCE: BPS students consistently outperform state averages on the ACT and other standardized tests.

INNOVATION: BPS includes 18 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 3 high schools, an alternative high school, the Bismarck Early Childhood Education Center (BECEP), and the Adult Learning Center.

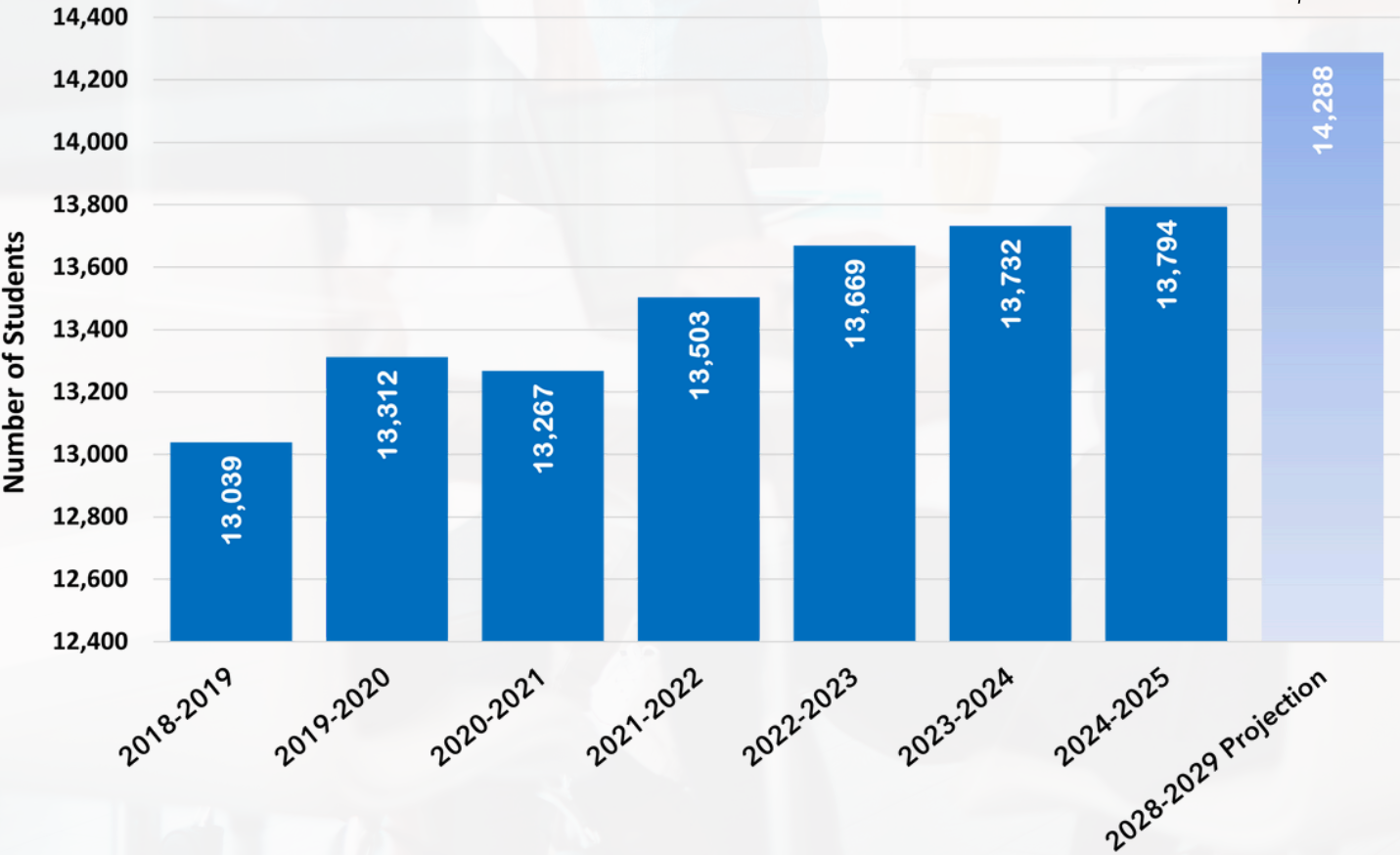
The district operates three cutting-edge Career and Technical Education sites, including the state's first dedicated student Career Academy.



Data from BPS Annual Report

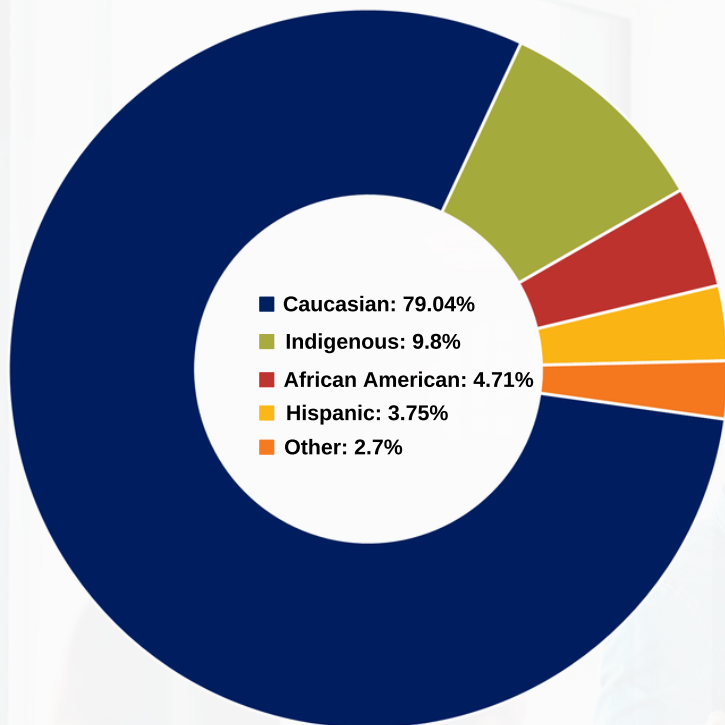
K-12 Enrollment Over Time

Enrollment projections from RSP Report

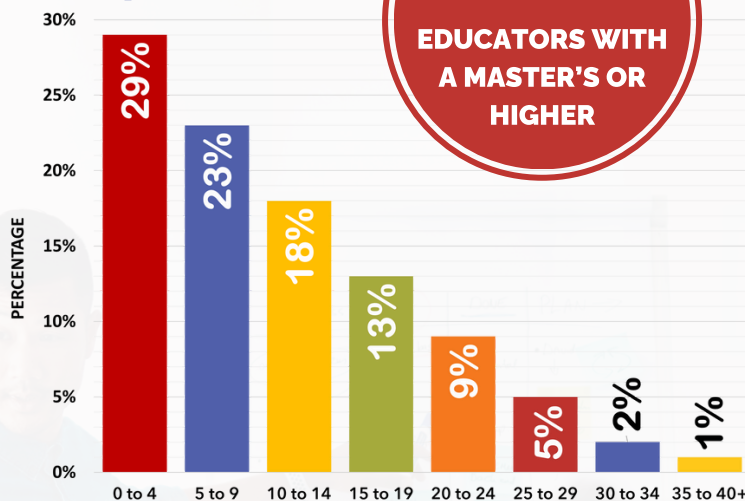


Who We Are Today

Student Ethnicity



Teacher Experience



60%
EDUCATORS WITH
A MASTER'S OR
HIGHER

SPECIAL EDUCATION

14% of the total enrollment within BPS qualifies for special education services

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Over 400 students enrolled in Pre-K with Bismarck Early Childhood Education

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

3% of students are enrolled within the English Learner program and speak over 60 languages

BUSED STUDENTS

Around 5,000 BPS students in the district utilize busing services daily



**1 in 4 students qualify for
free and reduced lunch**



Planning Process

A Vision for the Future

The decision to engage in strategic planning this year was grounded in our belief that a strong, forward-thinking plan is essential to guiding the work of Bismarck Public Schools. Rather than starting from scratch, this process served as **a refresh of our existing plan**—an opportunity to reflect on our progress and adjust course where needed. We recognized that **the core mission, vision, and values** of the previous strategic plan remain relevant and meaningful. At the same time, we acknowledged the need for a plan that is more responsive to the evolution of our community, educational landscape, and the individualized needs of our students and staff.

The new strategic plan is designed to **serve as a living, active framework** that guides decision-making, resource allocation, and our shared pursuit of excellence over the next five years. It is structured to be flexible and adaptive, with a clear commitment to monitoring progress and adjusting as needed.

The development of this plan was shaped by input from a wide range of stakeholders, including educators, students, families, community members, district leaders, and board members. Through surveys, committee discussions, and strategic planning sessions, their voices helped define the direction of our work.

Additionally, this plan features a new, **more accessible format**, built to be engaging, readable, and shareable. By organizing the plan around **Drivers of Excellence** and **Strategic Priorities**, we have created a structure that is both easy to understand and actionable. It is a tool for guiding our daily efforts, measuring progress, and uniting our community around a shared vision: **Empowering Every Learner to Thrive**

Summer 2024

Evaluation of strategic priorities and connections to district policies and culture such as the High Reliability Schools initiative and School Board Operating Expectations.

October 2024 - January 2025

Collaboration/feedback collection with school board, excellence committees, administrators, teachers, students, and community partners

January - March 2025

Strategic priorities finalized based upon information collected in previous steps. Preparation for community-wide rollout undertaken.

Annual Review

The strategic plan will be reviewed annually to remain **responsive** to the needs of our students, staff, and community. Each year, our community can review the effectiveness of this plan and our work in multiple ways. These include the Bismarck School Board's ongoing evaluation of progress through its Coherent Governance model, including the review of board goals and Operational Expectations, as well as the publication of the District Annual Report and the Superintendent's Annual Report. These tools are directly linked to the **Drivers of Excellence** and **Strategic Priorities** in this plan. A detailed summary of this feedback and annual communication process is included within the strategic plan to promote transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.



THE STRATEGIC PLAN



The strategic plan serves as a **roadmap** for Bismarck Public Schools, guiding our efforts to meet the goals set by the Bismarck School Board under its coherent governance model. It outlines clear strategies and actions to help every student, educator, and stakeholder thrive in a culture defined by **Excellence, Innovation, Leadership, and Inclusion**.

At the center of the plan are our **Drivers of Excellence**—the key areas we aim to strengthen across the district. These drivers represent the core outcomes we want to achieve and are designed to be easily articulated to all stakeholders. They help focus our work and define what success looks like for BPS.

DRIVERS OF EXCELLENCE

To move our **Drivers of Excellence** from vision to reality, we've identified **Strategic Priorities**—the focused actions and initiatives that shape how we do the work. Each priority is intentionally designed to help us engage and advance the Drivers of Excellence by aligning our efforts, resources, and systems to what matters most. These priorities serve as the **bridge** between our values and our daily practice, ensuring every action we take brings us closer to a more responsive, effective, and empowering educational experience for all learners.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This is not a plan that is completed and never looked at again. It is a **living framework** that evolves as our district grows and changes. To keep the plan responsive and community-driven, we will maintain the use of our **Excellence Committees**—teams of educators, leaders, board members, families, and community partners as needs arise. Each committee is aligned with specific Drivers and plays a vital role in offering **feedback, sharing ideas**, and helping shape the future of BPS.

EXCELLENCE COMMITTEES

Excellence Committees

Learning
Excellence

Personal
Excellence

Environmental
Excellence

Operational
Excellence

Purpose, Structure, and Impact

Excellence Committees play a vital role in guiding the strategic direction and continuous improvement of Bismarck Public Schools. These advisory groups bring together educators, district leaders, board members, community stakeholders, and families to offer meaningful insight, recommendations, and feedback on key district initiatives. Their purpose is to ensure Bismarck Public Schools remains responsive, transparent, and aligned with its **strategic priorities** and community values.

Goals of the Committees include:

- Gathering meaningful stakeholder input to inform decision-making
- Aligning district initiatives with community expectations and best practices
- Promoting transparency in policy, programming, and resource allocation
- Serving as a two-way conduit for feedback and communication

Operational Context & Structure

Excellence Committees are organized around the **Drivers of Excellence** in this strategic plan, allowing each committee to focus on a specific set of priorities. The work and direction of each committee are aligned annually by the Bismarck Public School Board, ensuring consistent focus, relevance, and responsiveness to emerging needs across the district.

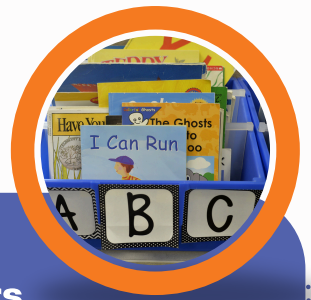
Impact & Role in BPS Decision-Making

Bismarck Public Schools utilizes Excellence Committees as both listening round-tables and leadership partners. They gather diverse perspectives from the community and return valuable insights to district leadership. Their feedback directly informs decision-making, helping shape policy, guide implementation strategies, and refine initiatives. By involving stakeholders in meaningful ways, these committees help **strengthen trust**, **transparency**, and **shared responsibility** across the district.

Through their collaborative and advisory role, the Excellence Committees help ensure Bismarck Public Schools remains future-focused, community-driven, and **committed to excellence** in every aspect of student learning and development.



Drivers of Excellence



LEARNING EXCELLENCE

Bismarck Public Schools is a place where learners are motivated to learn and grow because experiences for each individual are matched to their level, style, strengths and interests. All learners are empowered, committed, and deeply reflective, and we work collaboratively to advance our knowledge and skills.



Empowering Learners



Strengthening Teaching Practices



Preparing the Future Workforce

PERSONAL EXCELLENCE

Bismarck Public Schools believes students and educators thrive when supported in their personal growth. We strive to help students grow emotionally, physically, and socially. We are committed to elevating educators, supporting them and engaging them in decision-making.



Nurturing Well-Rounded Learners



Elevating Educators

ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE

Bismarck Public Schools establishes physical and digital learning environments that are safe, welcoming, and engaging. We proactively identify and resolve any barriers to access and full participation by learners and their families.



Strengthening Our Community



Enhancing Communication



Ensuring a Safe Environment

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Bismarck Public Schools establishes system-wide operations that meet the needs of our growing and changing community. We honor stakeholder feedback, foster strategic partnerships, and create comprehensive, effective and efficient operational systems.



Building Partnerships



Providing Efficient & Responsive Services



Bismarck Public Schools is a place where learners are motivated to grow because learning experiences are matched to their individual levels, strengths, interests, and styles. All learners are **empowered**, **committed**, and **reflective**, and we work collaboratively to deepen knowledge, strengthen skills, and support one another's success.

Learning Excellence

Empowering Learners



We believe every student deserves the opportunity to grow through **personalized, high-quality instruction** and support. Empowering Learners means ensuring students receive what they need to succeed—through Multi-Tiered System of Supports for Academics (MTSS-A), personalized learning pathways, and clearly defined academic expectations. Aligned systems like MTSS-A, standards-referenced learning, and blended instruction **empower students** to own their learning while enabling educators to respond intentionally to individual needs. By fostering student voice, promoting engagement, and embracing flexible pathways, we **equip all learners to thrive** both in school and beyond.



Strengthening Teaching Practices



We believe that every student deserves a **highly effective educator**. Strengthening Teaching Practices ensures that instruction across Bismarck Public Schools is grounded in evidence-based strategies and delivered with consistency, intentionality, and care. Through the use of shared instructional frameworks, collaborative professional learning communities, and culturally responsive teaching, **we support educators** in continually growing their craft. This work also includes job-embedded coaching, peer collaboration, and expanding capacity through co-teaching and mentorship. By **investing in our educators** and **honoring their expertise**, we create classrooms that are engaging, inclusive, and driven by continuous improvement.

Preparing the Future Workforce



We believe students should be prepared to thrive in an **evolving workforce** and community. Preparing the Future Workforce ensures all students gain the skills, experiences, and mindset needed for success beyond high school. While Career and Technical Education (CTE) is a key pillar, all coursework—including Advanced Placement (AP), Dual Credit, and work-based learning—plays a role in career readiness. Through **real-world learning** and our **Career Ready Practices**, students build communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and adaptability—preparing them to work and lead in our community, state, and world.

Empowering Learners

System of Academic Supports



Support of the Academic System ensures all students receive high-quality instruction, intervention, and enrichment through a multi-tiered framework. This strategy empowers learners to be choice-ready by providing differentiated learning paths, data-driven support, and targeted instruction. By embedding Multi-Tiered Systems of Support in Academics (MTSS-A) and strengthening Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), we foster collaboration, shared leadership, and continuous improvement to ensure every learner thrives.



Our Priority

Every student experiences growth through multi-tiered instruction and assessment practices inclusive of differentiated learning paths and supplemental support.



Additions of dual credit, honors, and work-based learning opportunities benefit students



Professional Learning Communities enhance collaboration and improve instruction



Technology is used as a positive tool in providing supportive learning tools for learners.

Strategies

- Ensure that all students experience core instruction that is responsive to students' needs.
- Ensure that intervention and enrichment opportunities support students by closing achievement and opportunity gaps, and accelerating growth.
- Build educators' capacity to collaboratively plan, reflect, and act using high-functioning PLC structures.

Linkage

OE-11 & R-2

Empowering Learners

Personalized Learning



Personalized Learning ensures that every student has access to a learning pathway that reflects who they are, how they learn, and what they aspire to achieve. This strategy empowers learners with voice and choice, offering flexible experiences aligned to their strengths, interests, and goals. By aligning instructional practices, district systems, and learning environments, we make space for blended learning, flexible scheduling, and multiple pathways to success.



Our Priority

Every learner has access to personalized learning paths.



Empower(Ed) allows students to shape and customize their educational journey.



Cafeteria Credit Pathways are enabling students to customize courses based on interests.



Empowering students to demonstrate their learning in different ways.

Strategies

- Transition to one unified Learning Management System to allow learners to access course content seamlessly regardless of location.
- Foster skills and dispositions that support student engagement in personalized learning.
- Align systems to support personalized learning across the district (policy, infrastructure, curriculum, instruction, and professional learning).
- Expand learning environments for all students to include supports that promote personalized learning.

Linkage

OE-11 & R-4

Empowering Learners

Standards-Referenced Learning



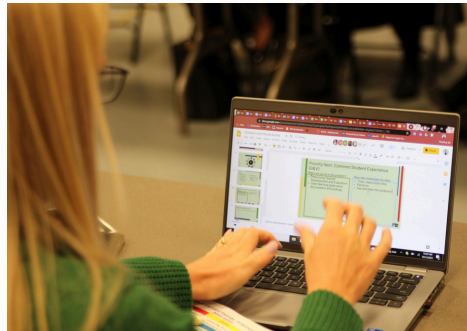
Standards-Referenced Learning ensures that all students receive a high-quality, equitable education aligned with North Dakota state standards. This strategy focuses on delivering a guaranteed and viable curriculum that is consistent across grade levels and courses, ensuring students demonstrate mastery of essential skills and knowledge. By establishing clear learning progressions, aligned assessments, and transparent grading practices, we create a system that supports high expectations, academic growth, and instructional clarity for all students.

Our Priority

Deliver a high-quality, guaranteed and viable curriculum that is consistent across grade levels and courses.



Guiding coalitions are teams of classroom educators that help ensure alignment of classroom/course goals.



The creation of proficiency scales ensures expectations for learning are consistent.



Exceptional athletes have coaches, so do exceptional educators.

Strategies

- Increase all stakeholders' understanding of the components of effective standards-referenced learning.
- Establish and maintain a guaranteed and viable curriculum review and revision cycle.
- Establish and communicate clear and consistent grading practices, supportive of learning.

Linkage

OE-11

Strengthening Teaching Practices



Effective Instructional Strategies



Effective Teaching Practices ensure that all educators use research-based strategies that promote student growth, engagement, and success. This work centers on high-quality instruction supported by social-emotional learning, culturally responsive teaching, and disciplinary literacy. Grounded in a research-aligned, systemic school improvement approach, we focus on building a safe, collaborative culture and ensuring effective teaching in every classroom. By strengthening Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), instructional frameworks, and peer collaboration, we create a system that promotes instructional consistency, fosters continuous improvement, and supports effective teaching at every level.

Our Priority

Educators use evidence-based instructional practices to ensure meaningful, inclusive, and high-impact learning experiences.



Improving professional development for educators by making it job-embedded.



Implementing instructional frameworks promotes consistency of teaching practices district-wide.



Empowering educators by empowering them to facilitate peer observations and feedback.

Strategies

- Implement and sustain a consistent instructional framework grounded in evidence-based practices.
- Embed social emotional learning into instruction to support student well-being, foster positive relationships, and enhance the learning experience.
- Expand existing coaching model to include more co-teaching and peer coaching to build capacity.
- Strengthen literacy skills across all content areas.
- Build internal capacity and provide time to facilitate professional learning and PLC collaboration.

Linkage

OE-11

Preparing the Future Workforce



Career & Technical Education for All



Career and Technical Education (CTE) Exploration for All, which is grounded in authentic learning experiences, allows students to explore, discuss, and meaningfully construct concepts and relationships in contexts involving real-world problems and projects. These experiences include learning trips, projects, capstones, internships, and alternative graduation pathways that integrate academic and critical employability skills such as problem-solving, communication, and teamwork. By connecting education to real-world applications, authentic learning and CTE, we provide students with the tools to thrive in an evolving workforce and society.

Our Priority

Every student has access to high quality career exploration experiences that help them develop skills and aptitudes that will prepare them to thrive in an evolving workforce.



Adding a work-based learning coordinator, increased opportunities for job shadows, internships, and capstone experiences.



Advancing the first in the state, center based CTE experience for middle-school students.



Bismarck Public Schools Career Academy becomes hub for regional CTE Center

- Provide career-awareness activities that introduce students to a wide range of careers and workforce concepts in elementary curriculum.
- Create an inclusive and adaptable CTE program by expanding middle school career exploration, high school course offerings, and flexible scheduling options that support all students in pursuing their individual career interests.
- Expand access to high-quality work-based learning opportunities that prepare students for success in their future careers by fostering real-world skills, industry connections, and professional readiness.
- Collaborate with community partners to create relevant learning experiences that prepare students for future success.
- Design and implement a model for authentic learning experiences that connect education to real-world problems, ensuring alignment with academic standards.

OE-11 & R-4

Strategies

Linkage



Bismarck Public Schools is committed to **developing the whole person**—supporting both students and staff in their personal growth, self-awareness, and leadership. Personal Excellence means nurturing well-being, character, and connection so **every individual can thrive**. We believe that through meaningful relationships, inclusive environments, and a culture of empowerment, all learners and educators can grow, contribute, and lead with purpose.

Personal Excellence

Nurturing Well-Rounded Individuals



We believe students succeed when they are supported as **whole individuals**—mentally, emotionally, socially, and physically. Nurturing Well-Rounded Individuals means creating inclusive environments where every student has access to leadership opportunities, extracurricular and co-curricular experiences, and behavioral supports that foster belonging and positive development. Through systems like the Multi-Tiered System of Supports for Behavior (MTSS-B), inclusive practices, and the Portrait of a Graduate framework, we help students **build character, confidence, and the skills needed to contribute** meaningfully to their communities.

Elevating Educators



We believe that the **strength of our schools** depends on the passion, talent, and commitment of our educators. Elevating Educators means intentionally **supporting those who choose education** as their profession—from inspiring future teachers to empowering current staff. Through early exposure, dual credit and internship opportunities, strategic partnerships with teacher preparation programs, and financial incentives, we are **building a sustainable educator pathway**. We also celebrate and invest in the professional growth of our current workforce, recognizing that when **educators feel valued and supported, educators and students thrive**.

Nurturing Well-Rounded Individuals



System of Behavior Supports



Support of the Behavior System ensures that all students receive comprehensive behavioral and mental health support through a tiered system framework. This strategy integrates Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and School-Based Mental Health to provide proactive, evidence-based interventions that promote social-emotional well-being and student success. By strengthening Student Support Services, community partnerships, and data-driven decision-making, we create a coordinated system of care that prioritizes prevention, early identification, and intervention—ensuring that every student has access to the support they need to thrive.

Our Priority

Every student is supported through a continuum of evidence-based practices that promote behavioral and mental health.



Community collaborators working with the district to provide mental health support.



RenewEd programs provide targeted interventions for students needing academic, behaviors, and mental health support.



Adoption of the Check & Connect framework to ensure students begin and end the day with support.

Strategies

- Expand resource room and day-treatment options for our students with the most intensive needs.
- Establish and monitor a continuum of evidence-based interventions at all MTSS-B levels that results in early identification and intervention implementation using data-based decision making.
- Increase efficiency and effectiveness of supports provided by Student Support Services.
- Provide professional development to meet the social and emotional needs of all staff and students.
- Engage community collaborators in supporting schools in the promotion of behavioral and mental health supports.

Linkage

OE-10 & R-3

Nurturing Well-Rounded Individuals



Inclusion



Inclusion ensure that every learner is valued, respected, and supported as an equal member of the school community. This strategy fosters positive school climates by recognizing and honoring the diverse identities, strengths, and perspectives of all those that enter our doors. By embedding culturally responsive teaching, equitable access to opportunities, and meaningful engagement, we create learning environments where all feel safe, seen, and empowered. Through intentional curriculum design, instructional practices, and strong community connections, Inclusive Practices promote belonging, fair access to opportunity, and success for all.

Our Priority

Every learner is valued for their distinct characteristics, ideas, perspectives, and culture.



Cultural and Family Liasons support communication and engagement.



Building connectedness and inclusion among all students with Peer to Peer program.



Expansion of English Language services are supporting our students.

- Cultivate and integrate diversity in all learning environments by recognizing each learner's distinct needs, ideas, and perspectives.
- Examine teaching practices to ensure that we are effective in reaching each learner.
- Improve access to equitable school opportunities across buildings and for each student.
- Enhance opportunities for learners to see themselves reflected in the adults, instructional practices, and programming within our schools.
- Provide training and support that builds staff capacity to implement culturally responsive instruction and awareness.
- Create opportunities to engage with families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds to promote positive engagement and open dialogue.

Strategies

Linkage

OE-10

Nurturing Well-Rounded Individuals



Extracurricular & Co/Curricular



Extracurricular and Co-Curricular Opportunities ensure that all students have access to diverse, meaningful activities that enrich their school experience and build essential life skills. These opportunities foster teamwork and leadership through participation in clubs, sports, fine arts, and career-focused organizations. By expanding inclusive programming, leadership training, and outreach efforts, we create an environment where every student can explore their interests, develop new skills, and connect with their school community. Ensuring access and student-centered programming, Extracurricular and Co-Curricular Opportunities enhance engagement, well-being, and success beyond the classroom.

Our Priority

All learners have diverse opportunities to participate in or lead activities that enhance their experience.



Addition of new clubs and sports including e-sports, four-directions, and CTE student organizations.



Expansion of mental health supports into athletic programs.



Peer to Peer offers club opportunities for all students.

Strategies

- Provide opportunities for all students to experience success in activities.
- Improve communication and outreach to inform parents and students about opportunities to engage in various activities.
- Provide leadership training to coaches, advisors, and students involved in activities.
- Enhance the access-equity of opportunities available to students at all schools.

Linkage

R-4

Elevating Educators

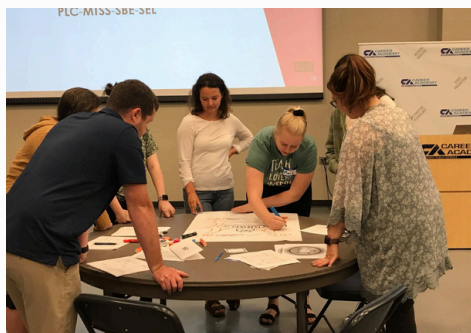
Developing Human Capital



Developing Human Capital ensures that Bismarck Public Schools strategically invests in the growth, skills, and leadership of its employees to foster a high-performing and sustainable workforce. This strategy focuses on professional learning, leadership development, and continuous improvement, ensuring staff members are equipped to meet district goals and support student success. By enhancing employee engagement, career pathways, and collaborative learning communities, we cultivate a positive work culture that drives innovation, retention, and long-term excellence across the district.

Our Priority

Develop and enhance employee skills and strengths to build a sustainable workforce that drives success for both staff and students.



Expanded leadership and professional development for secretaries, instructional aides, and paraprofessionals.



Addition of a Teacher Leadership Academy and other professional development opportunities for educators.



Development of a new educator evaluation system that focuses on growth and skill building.

Strategies

- Develop an evaluation growth model that encompasses our values.
- Implement leadership opportunities for all employees.
- Enhance employee engagement and foster a healthy and positive climate and culture through improved communication pathways.
- Engage staff in decision making, ensuring their voices are heard.
- Focus on staff well-being and support by focusing on ways to protect their time.
- Drive innovation and continuous improvement through personalized professional learning opportunities.



Linkage

OE-4

Elevating Educators

Investing in Future Educators



Investing in Future Educators ensures that Bismarck Public Schools strategically develops a pathway for future educators to meet the district's evolving workforce needs. This strategy focuses on early exposure to the teaching profession, hands-on learning experiences, and strong partnerships with teacher preparation programs. By expanding dual-credit opportunities, internships, mentorship programs, and financial incentives, we create pathways that encourage students and staff to pursue careers in education and return to BPS as dedicated professionals. Through these efforts, we will cultivate a sustainable workforce that strengthens the future of education in our community.

Our Priority

Develop a sustainable pipeline of future educators. Through early exposure, strategic partnerships, and financial incentives, we will cultivate talented educators to serve our students into the future.



Expanding work-based learning opportunities for high school students in our schools.



Partnering with the University of Mary allows their students to gain more experiences within Bismarck Public Schools.



Investing in expansion of dual credit courses for our students allowing them to enter the teaching workforce more quickly.

- Expand academic pathways within the high school experience to expand interest in the profession of education.
- Create additional internship and mentorship opportunities for students interested in education.
- Support the para to teacher program to empower our own staff to advance their passion and become certified teachers.
- Develop partnerships with teacher preparation programs at the college level to ensure AP and dual credit opportunities for our students.
- Partner with Bismarck Public School Foundation, and community partners to create scholarship opportunities for aspiring educators.

Strategies

Linkage

OE-4



Bismarck Public Schools is committed to creating environments where students, staff, and families feel safe, supported, and welcome. Environmental Excellence means building inclusive schools grounded in strong **relationships**, open **communication**, and community **partnerships**. By prioritizing safety, trust, and engagement, we create the conditions where everyone can thrive.

Environmental Excellence

Strengthening Our Community



We believe strong schools are built on **strong relationships**—with families, local organizations, and the broader community. Strengthening Our Community means **engaging families** as true partners in learning and well-being, while also working collaboratively with local businesses, mental health providers, and community leaders. Through inclusive events, wraparound services, and shared initiatives, we **expand resources and opportunities** for students and families. These relationships build **trust** and ensure that Bismarck Public Schools remains a valued partner in the growth and success of our region.

Enhancing Communication



We believe communication is the foundation of **trust**, **connection**, and **shared purpose**. Enhancing Communication means delivering timely, accurate, and accessible information, while also creating opportunities for two-way dialogue with students, families, staff, and the public. By using multiple communication platforms, actively listening, and responding to community feedback, we **ensure transparency** and **invite collaboration** in every aspect of our work.

Ensuring a Safe Environment



We believe every learner and staff member **deserves to feel safe**, seen, and supported at school. Ensuring a Safe Environment means maintaining spaces that are **free from harm, harassment, and exclusion**—where relationships are built on trust and care. Safety in Bismarck Public Schools includes building strong relationships with students and first responders, identifying and responding to potential threats, securing facilities, preparing for emergencies, and protecting students in digital spaces. Through prevention, preparedness, training, and digital stewardship, we **promote a culture of belonging, awareness, and readiness** that supports the well-being of all.

Strengthening Our Community



Culture & Climate



Culture and Climate ensure that all stakeholders experience a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment that fosters positive relationships, well-being, and academic success. This strategy focuses on building school cultures where students, staff, and families feel valued, connected, and engaged. We are committed to creating learning spaces that foster engagement, belonging, and personal growth. Through mentorship, well-being initiatives, and continuous improvement efforts, Culture and Climate drive collaboration, respect, and a shared commitment to excellence across the district.

Our Priority

Stakeholders contribute to and benefit from welcoming and supportive environments.



Using Highly Reliable Schools framework to ensure safe and supportive school environments.



Prioritizing improved educator and staff well-being with ELEVATE and VITAL



Academic pep rallies celebrate student achievements and foster a culture of academic excellence.

Strategies

- Identify and implement schoolwide strategies that foster welcoming, supportive and inclusive school environments.
- Create experiences that promote student engagement, celebrate success, and strengthen a sense of belonging.
- Create and implement school cultural proficiency plans that build staff and student capacity to thrive in our diverse community.
- Expand leadership opportunities for students to contribute to a positive school culture and build their own leadership skills.
- Establish a system to monitor and evaluate the impact of climate and culture programs across the district.

Linkage

OE-3 & OE-10

Strengthening Our Community



Family Engagement



Family Engagement ensures that families and schools form strong, collaborative partnerships that support student success. This strategy focuses on removing barriers to participation, fostering two-way communication, and strengthening relationships to create welcoming school environments. By empowering families with tools, information, and opportunities to be active participants in their child's education, we enhance student learning, well-being, and overall achievement. Family Engagement reinforces the vital role families play in creating supportive and thriving learning communities.

Our Priority

Families are empowered and engaged as partners to support their child in safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments that foster student success.



Support of building level Parent Teacher Organizations that help engage families.



Using community forums to gather feedback and engage the community.



Working with community partners to strengthening our connections.

Strategies

- Offer meaningful opportunities for families to engage at both the district and school levels through events, feedback forums, and learning experiences.
- Communicate regularly and transparently with families through a variety of methods, including digital platforms, face-to-face meetings, and conferences.
- Assure that all families, regardless of background, income, or primary language can access school information and participate in their child's education.
- Collaborate with families as partners in student learning by setting shared goals, celebrating progress, and providing responsive support.
- Equip families with tools, resources, and information to support learning at home and make informed decisions about their child's education.
- Provide staff with training to strengthen family engagement, improve communication practices, and build cultural responsiveness.

Linkage

OE-3 & OE-9

Enhancing Communication

Communication



Enhancing Communication ensures that Bismarck Public Schools maintains transparent, timely, and effective engagement with all stakeholders. This strategy focuses on informing and connecting students, families, staff, and the broader community through multiple communication channels that foster trust, engagement, and collaboration. By implementing clear and responsive communication systems, we enhance transparency, strengthen relationships, and support informed decision-making.



Our Priority

Stakeholders are well informed about district business and events through multiple channels.



Use of annual community surveys to gather feedback and monitor results



Development of community frameworks for school board and superintendent.



Promoting the adoption of the Dignity Index within BPS and the community.

Strategies

- Share accurate, timely, and accessible information with all stakeholders through a variety of communication channels.
- Promote healthy dialogue and civic engagement using tools like the Dignity Index to guide respectful, values-based communication.
- Highlight district achievements to build trust and maintain a positive public perception.
- Recognize employee achievements internally and externally to foster pride.
- Cultivate long-term, collaborative relationships with community members, businesses, and partner organizations
- Implement consistent and effective communication protocols for managing incidents and crisis situations.

Linkage

OE-3 & OE-9

Ensuring a Safe Environment

Safety



Creating and maintaining a safe and secure environment is essential for student learning and well-being. Through proactive threat assessment, strong partnerships with first responders, and ongoing training, we will foster physically, emotionally, academically, and socially secure schools. By implementing facility improvements, safety protocols, and emergency preparedness measures, we ensure that all students, staff, and visitors can learn, work, and grow in a protected and supportive setting.



Our Priority

Every learner is safe; physically, emotionally, academically, and socially.



Bus and cross-walk monitors ensure a safe route to school and home each day.



Partnerships between Bismarck PD and Lincoln PD provide School Resource Officers (SROs) in our schools.



The district safety director works with community emergency services to coordinate response protocols.

Strategies

- Strengthen internal and external collaboration on school safety through coordinated planning with local agencies, first responders, and district departments.
- Establish a cross departmental team from student support services, school safety personnel, administration, and teachers.
- Provide ongoing safety training and supports that address physical, emotional, and digital safety for all learners.
- Develop and train all stakeholders on safety processes and procedures including safety mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.
- Enhance communication with families, staff, and community members regarding safety procedures, expectations, and updates.

Linkage

OE-10 & R-3

Ensuring a Safe Environment

Digital Stewardship



Bismarck Public Schools will equip learners with the skills needed to navigate an increasingly digital world. Through clear expectations, integrated curriculum, and targeted training, we will promote ethical technology use, cybersecurity awareness, and data privacy across all learning environments. By embedding digital stewardship into daily practice and providing resources for safe and effective technology use, we will create a culture of digital responsibility that supports innovation, safeguards information, and prepares students for success in an interconnected society.

Our Priority

Every learner has the tools, skills, and behaviors to positively contribute in digital environments.



common sense
DISTRICT

Bismarck Public School is a Common Sense District dedicated to help students thrive as digital learners and citizens.



The integration of 1:1 technology allows students to learn to digital world.



Cybersecurity and computer science standards are embedded in our K-12 curriculum.

Strategies

- Set clear expectations for data use and security for all learners in the district; ensuring the highest quality of data-driven decisions.
- Develop and maintain a guaranteed and viable curriculum to promote digital stewardship for all learners.
- Communicate clear expectations for data use and digital citizenship behaviors in all learning environments.
- Embed a common digital environment into the learning experience for all.
- Promote resources for effective & ethical use of AI tools in learning environments.

Linkage

OE-10



Bismarck Public Schools is committed to operating with **integrity**, **efficiency**, and **foresight**. Operational Excellence means aligning our resources, systems, and partnerships to ensure the highest levels of service and support. By investing in smart infrastructure, responsive systems, and collaborative relationships, we build a strong foundation for learning and long-term success.

Operational Excellence

Building Partnerships



We believe that strong partnerships expand opportunities for students, staff, and the community. Building Workforce Partnerships means **collaborating** with local businesses, higher education, and service providers to **enrich student learning** and **strengthen the regional workforce**. These partnerships support mental health services, career development, and innovation—ensuring Bismarck Public Schools remains a vital contributor to the community's long-term growth.

Efficient & Responsive Services



We believe schools run best when operational systems are **efficient**, **aligned**, and **centered on student success**. Efficient & Responsive Services means managing district resources—from transportation and technology to facilities and finance—with transparency and purpose. Through strategic planning and proactive communication, we ensure services **meet the evolving needs of our schools** while supporting a safe and effective learning environment.

Building Partnerships

Partnerships



Partnerships with the community are essential to enhancing the educational experience and ensuring student success. "Building Partnerships" focuses on strengthening relationships with local businesses, higher education institutions, and community organizations to provide valuable resources and opportunities for students and staff. By fostering collaborative efforts, pathways for career readiness, financial support, and school-based mental health services are created, enriching the learning experience. These partnerships help build a stronger workforce, contribute to the region's growth, and ensure that BPS continues to thrive as a key educational and community leader.

Our Priority

Create and refine partnerships based on the mutually beneficial interests between BPS and other agencies, citizens, and private sector companies.



The Bismarck Public Schools Foundation supports the school community with scholarships, grants and services.



Our partnerships with organizations like Sanford Health and the Dept. of Human Services benefit all learners.



Community partnerships are essential to the growth of Career & Technical Education Programming.

Strategies

- Continue to support the BPS Foundation and its services to benefit all learners.
- Develop partnerships with providers aimed at establishing a continuum of services for wellness and school-based behavioral and mental health.
- Create collaborative partnerships that enhance district operations and learning experiences for all learners.

Efficient & Responsive Services



Operational Systems



Efficient and responsive services are essential to a well-functioning school system, ensuring students, staff, and families receive the support they need. "Efficient & Responsive Services" prioritizes streamlined operations in transportation, technology, facilities, financial management, and human resources. Through strategic planning, innovation, and continuous improvement, this work enhances operational effectiveness, maximizes resources, and creates safe, reliable, and future-ready learning environments. By maintaining a focus on adaptability and service excellence, this priority ensures the district can effectively meet the evolving needs of its schools and community.



Our Priority

Deliver high-quality, efficient, and responsive operational services that support student learning and staff success.



Prioritizing building maintenance to ensure our facilities meet community expectations.



Recruiting and retaining highly-qualified staff is a top priority for district Human Resources.



BPS Strives to provide a reliable, safe, and efficient transportation system.

Strategies

- Develop effective recruitment, hiring, and retention strategies while ensuring to attract and retain top talent.
- Implement sound fiscal planning, transparent reporting, and data-driven budgeting to support long-term sustainability.
- Maintain and modernize buildings to provide safe and future-ready learning environments that align with enrollment and educational needs.
- Ensure safe, reliable, and cost-effective transportation solutions.
- Invest in secure, reliable, and scalable technology systems that enhance instruction and streamline operations.

Linkage

OE-1, OE-5, OE-6, OE-7 & OE-12

REPORTING

KEY

- **BPS Administrative Report**
- Board Governance Report
 - [Link to all Reports](#)
- **DPI or Agency Report**

SUMMER

- **Superintendent's Annual Report**
- Mega Results - R-1 Board Report
- Global Operations Expectations - OE-1 Board Report

FALL

- [Insights Data Released \(DPI\)](#)
- Personal Administration - OE-4 Board Report
- Finance Planning - OE-5 Board Report
- Asset Protection - OE-7 Board Report
- Personal Development - Community Ready - R-4 Board Report
- Personal Development - Behavior - R-4 Board Report
- [DPI Finance Facts \(DPI\)](#)
- **District Annual Report**

WINTER

- Financial Administration - OE-6 Board Report
- **Independent Audit Report**
- Communicating with the Board - OE-8 Board Report
- Academic Electives - R 2.2 Board Report
- Literacy - R 2.1 Board Report
- Facilities - OE-12 Board Report
- Science - R 2.1 Board Report

SPRING

- **District Comparability Report**
- Math - R 2.1 Board Report
- Treatment of Community Stakeholders - OE-3 Board Report
- Communicating with the Public - OE-9 Board Report
- Social Studies - R 2.1 Board Report
- Learning Environment - OE-10 Board Report
- Instructional Program - OE-11 Board Report



DR. JEFF FASTNACHT

Superintendent

GRATITUDE

"I would like to express my gratitude to all of the individuals, internal and external, who contributed to this plan. It has truly been a community effort. From our dedicated staff and leadership teams to our valued partners and stakeholders, each contribution played a meaningful role in shaping this vision. I also extend my sincere thanks to the broader community for your interest, feedback, and participation throughout the process. Your engagement is not only appreciated—it is essential to our continued success and progress."



BISMARCK
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EMPOWER

EVERY LEARNER TO *thrive!*



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