

## CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT

As per MS 120B.11, school boards are required to adopt annually a written policy, which includes the following components:

- district goals for instruction and curriculum
- a process for evaluating each student's progress toward meeting graduation standards and identifying strengths and weaknesses of instruction and curriculum
- a system for periodically reviewing all instruction and curriculum
- a plan for improving curriculum and instruction
- an instructional plan including education effectiveness processes (122A.625) and integration of instruction, curriculum, and technology

### I. District Goals for Curriculum and Instruction

**A. Philosophy of Education.** We believe that each student should develop to his or her full potential through learning. We believe that all students share common characteristics but that each student also has unique characteristics, learning styles, and needs. Bemidji Area Schools will provide a common core of basic learning for all, a set of exploratory learning opportunities to guide students in selecting areas of specialty, and an array of elective learning to match the distinctive needs of each student. Bemidji Area Schools will also provide civic, social and recreational learning opportunities through a community education program designed to respond to the needs of a diverse public. Priorities that reflect the values and traditions of the community and will be emphasized at all levels.

**B. Characteristics of a Good School.** Parents are ultimately responsible for their children's education. However, Bemidji Area Schools recognizes their role in students' intellectual development. We believe it is essential to cooperate with parents and enlist their involvement in education thereby enhancing the quality of education for each individual student. A good school is impossible without (1) a proper atmosphere for learning, (2) high academic standards, (3) quality teachers, administrators, and Board of Education members and (4) education without discrimination.

- 1. A Proper Atmosphere for Learning.** We believe that learning occurs best in an atmosphere of emotional and physical security. It is our obligation to provide such an atmosphere for each student by setting standards for the conduct of all students. Moreover, we believe that successful adulthood requires responsible behavior that does not threaten the emotional or physical security of others, and that we should prepare students for that characteristic of adult life.
- 2. High Academic Standards.** Because high expectations and high academic standards correlate with increased learning, we believe that such standards should be established and maintained for each grade and course for promotion from grade to grade, and for graduation from high school. Furthermore, we should expect, and assist all students to meet or exceed the standards to the extent it is reasonable to do so.
- 3. Good Teachers, Administrators, and Board of Education.** We believe that teachers, administrators and members of the Board of Education must be qualified in experience and/or education and competent in performance. Moreover, those who serve the educational enterprise should be understanding and helpful in all interactions with students, members of the community, and each other. Administrators and the Board of Education are expected to provide leadership in all aspects of school operations.
- 4. Education Without Discrimination.** We recognize that Bemidji Area Schools operates within the requirements set forth in the federal and state constitutions and in federal and state legislative, executive, and judicial actions. Central among these requirements is each individual be educated regardless of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, native language, and mental, emotional, or

physical capacity. We gladly meet the letter of these requirements and are in full accord with their spirit.

**C. Curriculum.** We believe that a good curriculum is more than a collection of subject fields and specific courses. Curriculum should be dynamic and designed to meet the needs of an ever-changing world. Curriculum content will focus on basic skills, intellectual development, mental and physical health, and preparation for a career.

1. **Basic Skills.** We believe that the basic skills provide a foundation for all other learning and that some areas deserve emphasis at the expense of others. Curriculum will focus on the fundamental principles of mathematics and enable students to compute accurately. It will focus on the fundamental principles of language arts and enable students to read with understanding, write legibly and correctly, and speak effectively. Although an understanding of and participation in the fine and practical arts are desirable, basic skills are essential and are considered the means to full participation in all areas of the curriculum.
2. **Intellectual Development.** We believe that each student should learn to think logically and to organize facts, ideas, and things into categories. Curriculum will teach students to think critically, select information, see patterns, make generalizations, and evaluate results. Students will learn how to use good study habits.
3. **Mental and Physical Health.** We believe that each student should develop essential attributes of mental health, should learn and practice good physical health habits, and should regularly engage in activities to maintain physical fitness. Curriculum will focus on promoting general physical health and fitness and will be prioritized over skills in specific sports.
4. **Career Preparation.** We believe that a student should be familiar with the world of work, should have a thorough understanding of his or her own interests, abilities and special talents, and should leave school with a tentative career plan. Curriculum will promote a favorable attitude toward work and develop various job skills.
5. **Good Citizenship and Character Development.** We recognize that families, the community, youth organizations, service clubs, churches and other religious organizations are important assets in character development. We believe we share the need to help students develop: (1) self-understanding, (2) personal values, (3) a pattern of ethical behavior, (4) an understanding of economic systems, including the ability to manage a personal budget, (5) skills for maintaining a home, (6) an appreciation of the arts, (7) a balance life pattern between work and leisure, (8) a regard for the environment, and (9) an understanding of the following ideas of respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, trustworthiness and good citizenship. It is our intention to work in cooperation with the other entities to produce a viable healthy community.

Furthermore, we believe that life in a democratic society offers citizens the best possible opportunities for productivity, achievement, and happiness. Curriculum will educate students to believe in and appreciate democracy, to know its origins, to understand its principles, and to be contributing members of a democratic society. Curriculum will also educate students to be aware of, understand, and develop an appreciation for the rich cultural diversity that has made our country great.

Finally, we believe that in today's complex world it is essential for our students to develop an understanding of the cultures of other nations. Accordingly, curriculum will educate students to know the origins of other cultures and to understand the principles upon which they were founded.

- B. Characteristics of Good Instruction.** Current Best Practice methods in all disciplines will be encouraged at all levels. Best Practice methods focus on the following strategies:
1. **Student-Centered:** The best starting point for schooling is young people's real interests; all across the curriculum, investigating students' own questions.
  2. **Experiential:** Active, hands-on, concrete experience is the most powerful and neutral form of learning.
  3. **Holistic:** Children learn best when they encounter whole ideas, events, and materials in purposeful contexts.
  4. **Authentic:** Real, rich, complex ideas and materials are at the heart of the curriculum.
  5. **Expressive:** To fully engage ideas, construct meaning, and remember information, students must regularly employ the whole range of communicative media.
  6. **Reflective:** Immersion in experience and expression allows learners to reflect on what they feel, think, and learn.
  7. **Social:** Learning is socially constructed and often interactional.
  8. **Collaborative:** Cooperative learning opportunities tap the social power of learning.
  9. **Democratic:** The classroom is a model of community; students learn what they live as citizens of the school.
  10. **Cognitive:** The most powerful learning comes when children develop true understanding of concepts through higher-order thinking associated with various fields of inquiry and through self-monitoring of their thinking.
  11. **Developmental:** Children grow through a series of definable but not rigid stages.
  12. **Constructivist:** Children recreate and reinvent cognitive systems based on direct experience.
  13. **Challenging:** Students learn best when faced with genuine challenges, choices, and responsibility for their learning.

## **II. District Process for Evaluating Student progress Toward Meeting Graduation Standards and Identifying Strengths and Weaknesses of Instruction and Curriculum**

Student progress will be monitored on an individual basis. Special emphasis will be placed on measuring individual student gains. This will enable students to be successful in terms of learning growth versus comparison of progress only to that of other students. Bemidji Area Schools will use the following measures for determining individual student growth: 1) nationally norm-referenced scores in reading, math, and language; 2) criterion-referenced scores on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments and Basic Skills Tests in reading, math, and writing; and 3) performance levels on the Minnesota Profile of Learning.

Strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction will be determined by monitoring aggregate group scores at the building and the district levels using the following measures: 1) nationally norm-referenced scores in reading, math, and language; 2) criterion-referenced scores on the Minnesota Comprehensive

Assessments and Basic Skills Tests in reading, math, and writing; and 3) performance levels on the Minnesota Profile of Learning in all 10 learning areas.

### III. System for Reviewing All Instruction and Curriculum

**A. Curriculum Review Cycle.** A curriculum review cycle will be implemented that will ensure that all areas of the curriculum are reviewed and updated at least every

#### Curriculum Review Cycle

<b>2001-02 Study:</b>	<b>2002-03 Study:</b>	<b>2003-04 Study:</b>	<b>2004-05 Study:</b>	<b>2005-06 Study:</b>	<b>2006-2007 Study:</b>
Music	Vocational Education	Language Arts	Social Studies	Science	Math
Art			Media	Phy Ed	Health
World Languages					

**B. Curriculum Adoption.**

All courses and their outcomes must be approved by the Board of Education prior to being included in the instructional program of the school district. The following criteria will be used in adopting outcomes:

1. The outcomes must be relevant to the philosophy and goals established by the Board of Education.
2. If a proposed course offering is to replace an existing course, sound reasons must be presented concerning why the existing course is in need of improvement or no longer necessary.
3. Teachers must teach all the curriculum outcomes adopted by the Board of Education. A copy of the outcomes for each course offered in the school district will be on file in the school district office.

**C. Selection of Instructional Material and Other Resources**

It is the policy of Bemidji Area Schools to provide a wide-range of instructional materials that represent all levels of difficulty, diversity of appeal, and different points of view. Materials must enrich and support the curriculum, be inclusive, and age appropriate. The Superintendent will develop selection procedures for instructional materials and other resources. All teachers must use district textbook adoptions as their prime source of instructional material.

### IV. Plan for Improving Curriculum and Instruction

**A. School Improvement.** Bemidji Area Schools will engage in district-wide school improvement to ensure ongoing improvement in curriculum, instruction, and student achievement as a means to measure education effectiveness processes (122A.625). School Improvement is a process in which schools assess and monitor student achievement by collecting and analyzing multiple forms of data and implement school improvement plans based on the findings of the data. The purpose of school improvement is to increase student achievement in academic, behavioral, and social areas of development as well as improve school climate. Accountability standards and performance measures are articulated and used to determine the effectiveness of school improvement.

**B. School Improvement Roles and Responsibilities.** School improvement is carried out at all levels. Roles and responsibilities have been identified.

### **School Board**

Articulate Vision for School Improvement  
Identify District Goals (1-5 years)  
Determine Accountability Measures  
Commit Time and Resources

### **District School Improvement Team**

Provide parent and community input into the district level school improvement process  
Identify district curriculum strengths and areas for development from a customer point of view  
Provide direction in effectively communicating district mission, goals, and progress to families and to the community

### **Building School Improvement Team**

Steer the Building School Improvement Process  
Articulate 1-5 Year Goals  
Provide Staff With Appropriate Training and Support in Data-Driven Practices  
Collect Multiple Forms of Baseline Data  
Analyze and Report Data  
Ensure Alignment of Efforts Between School Improvement, Grad Standards, Staff Development, and Technology  
Articulate Major Improvement Themes  
Establish Action Teams and Identify Charges to Implement Major Improvement Projects  
Develop School Profiles  
Share School Profiles with Internal Public

### **Action Team Responsibilities**

Collect Multiple Forms of Baseline Data Relative to Charge  
Analyze and Report Data  
Establish Goals for Improvement Based on Baseline Data  
Identify Strategies to Achieve Improvement Goals  
Study and/or Implement Strategies Selected  
Report Data on Implementation to Building Team

### **District Office Improvement Responsibilities**

Communicate Building Progress to the School Board  
Communicate School Board Expectations to Buildings  
Collect Multiple Forms of District-Wide Baseline Data  
Analyze District-Wide Data  
Provide Leadership With Appropriate Training and Support in Data-Driven Practices  
Identify Timelines for Project Implementation  
Create District Profile  
Report District Profile to Internal and External Publics

**C. Reporting Process.** Buildings will develop and submit to the Board of Education annual academic and climate goals and develop and implement strategies designed to assist them in meeting those goals. Site teams will collect various forms of data to measure the effectiveness of the selected strategies. Site teams will link at least a portion of their professional development resources to their school improvement goals and measure the impact of those strategies in accordance with MS 126C.10. Buildings will submit to the School Board a year-end report stating progress made toward achieving their school improvement goals and identify future courses of action. School Improvement goals and their results will be reported to the community in the annual Systems Accountability Report (SAR) in accordance with MS 120A.03.

## **V. Plan To Integrate Instruction, Curriculum, and Technology**

*ISD #31*

*SBR 400-30-8*

*ORIGINAL: 27 August 2001*

*Page 5 of 6*

Curriculum and instruction are integrated into technology across the curriculum. Specific information regarding integration can be found in the district technology plan, which has been approved by the Board of Education and filed in accordance with the Telecommunications Access Revenue Program (TARP).