



NEWS RELEASE

Department of Communications and Community Outreach
6901 Charles Street Towson, MD 21204
443.809.5908 www.bcps.org

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CONTACT: Dept. of Communications/Community Outreach, 443.809.5908
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BCPS Superintendent shares themes emerging from work of System Improvement Teams

TOWSON, MD. – Three themes have emerged from the mid-year reports produced by Baltimore County Public Schools’ System Improvement Teams. The 11 teams, established by BCPS Superintendent Dr. Darryl L. Williams, demonstrate coordinated planning to meet the goals of the school system’s strategic plan, [The Compass](#).

The reports reveal the following themes:

Access and Opportunity

The need to increase:

- equitable student access and opportunity to more rigorous and effective curriculum and instruction in core courses, like English language arts and mathematics, as well as advanced academic courses;
- opportunities for students to demonstrate college and career readiness and to participate in career and technical education and AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination); and
- comprehensive support to schools and families.

Professional Learning

The need to develop:

- comprehensive professional learning plans for leaders and teachers to support the written, taught, and assessed curriculum (especially for English language arts, Algebra I, advanced academics, AVID, and career and technical education);

- strategies to disrupt disproportionality in student behavior management and social-emotional learning;
- social-emotional learning focused support for first-year teachers; and
- strategies to promote professional growth for all staff (with special attention to those with fiduciary responsibilities).

Systems and Structures

The need to enhance and make more equitable:

- the processes by which BCPS prepares students for Algebra I in Grade 8; identifies and supports students in advanced learning opportunities; and prepares students for college readiness;
- the process of recording middle school students' GPAs for athletic eligibility;
- the means of connecting students to community and academic opportunities;
- the rating of each career and technical education program of study;
- additional professional learning time for first-year teachers; and
- salary structure reviews for hard-to-fill positions.

The System Improvement Teams were announced by Dr. Williams last October, and they are designed to gather and analyze data to develop recommendations for research- and equity-based enhancements and fulfill the goals of [The Compass](#).

The interdisciplinary teams bring together system administrators and school-based staff to focus on the following areas: reading, algebra 1, gifted and talented education/honors/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate, PSAT/SAT/ACT/Accuplacer, athletic ineligibility, College and Career Ready/graduation, College and Career Ready/Career and Technical Education, suspensions, staffing/recruitment, family engagement, and fiduciary responsibilities.

Since the fall, the teams have been researching best practices to identify strategies that narrow disparities in student achievement and access based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, or disability; conducting focus groups with BCPS stakeholders so that all voices are represented; and analyzing data to identify schools that are beating the odds to determine what processes and practices can be replicated throughout the system.

The work of the teams is expected to conclude with recommendations to the superintendent and Board of Education of Baltimore County by the end of June 2021. Throughout the school year, the groups will also produce internal monthly updates, including midyear retreat reports in January and February.

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