



# Beacon City School

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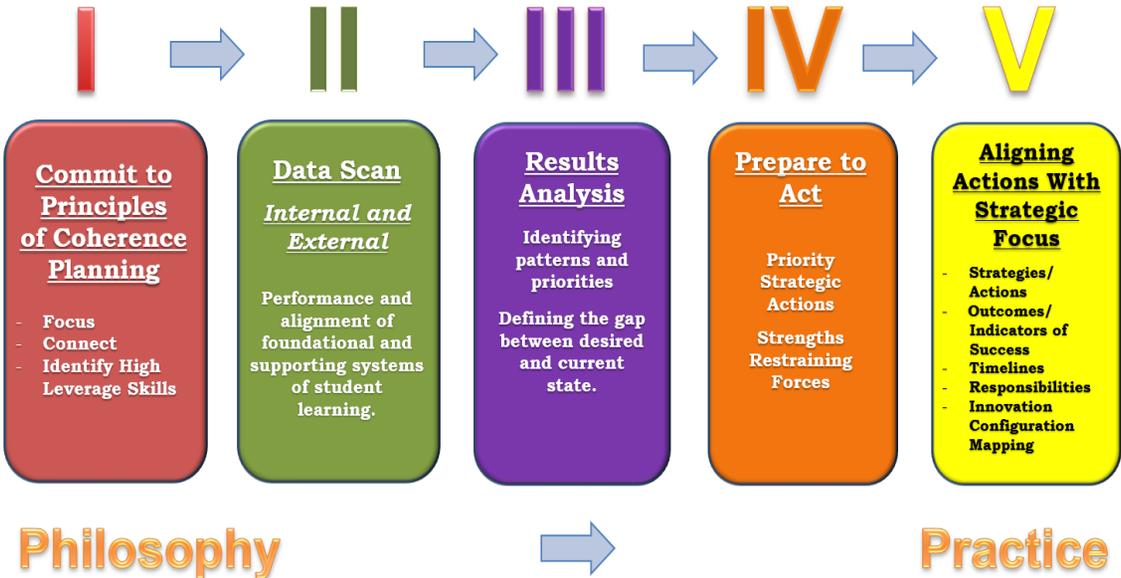
## **Introduction to the Plan:**

Beacon is situated in Dutchess County, New York and has a total population of around 15,000 residents. Beacon was named to commemorate the historic beacon fires that were lit on the summit of the Fishkill Mountains to alert the Continental Army about British troop movements. In recent years, Beacon has been undergoing a significant transformation. Upward real estate value pressure caused by an expanding New York City metropolitan area is changing the demographics of the town. Simultaneously, the public schools, after some stumbles and leadership instability, have stabilized and started to work collaboratively to improve their ability to prepare students for their lives in the world beyond school. That world, however, is rapidly changing and to maintain and extend Beacon City's record of educational success, the public schools must continuously reflect on its practice and seek to align itself with the evolving needs of students in this new environment. With the advent of the digital age and the interconnected nature of the global economy, the definition of what it means to appropriately prepare a student for life learning and work beyond school has been transformed. Content knowledge and Regent's Test scores are no longer the main variables that portend student success. It is now known from research and experience that students will also need to develop a sophisticated set of skills and foundational personal attributes to ensure they can navigate the uncertain challenges we know they will encounter. The purpose of this Strategic Coherence Plan is to align and focus the systems that drive the Beacon City Public Schools on these critical student skills and attributes and to ensure that all the students who are served by the community's schools can acquire them.

Unlike traditional strategic planning which seeks to collect data and set goals related to narrowly defined special interests, this Strategic Coherence Plan was totally focused on just those elements of work that support the development and improvement of skill-based student success. Through this process, the Strategic Coherence Planning Team sought to answer questions regarding how are PreK-12 teaching and classroom experiences facilitating student practice of the districts recently identified foundational skills? How is the district measuring its success and using that K-12 data to create accountability and the continuous improvement of student performance in those areas? How do budgets and plans ensure that all PreK-12 work is designed to increase the number of children who leave Beacon City ready to perform and succeed at a high level? By asking these questions and building the answers based on the good things that are already happening in Beacon City, the members of the Strategic Coherence Planning team have identified the steps that need to be taken over the next 5 years to ensure every child is ready for his/her own future.

The planning process began with research, vetting, and the eventual commitment to the approach of Strategic Coherence Planning by Superintendent Dr. Matthew Landahl. Upon his hiring in 2017, he had set district-wide planning as an objective of his early tenure and with the support of the Beacon City Board of Education, he launched this process in the summer of 2018. Dr. Landahl selected Jonathan Costa, the creator of the Strategic Coherence Planning process, from EdAdvance in Litchfield Connecticut as the process facilitator. Having completed more than 75 strategic plans for public school districts over the last 25 years, the Superintendent believed Mr. Costa had the experience and expertise to help the district complete this process. Strategic Coherence Planning is essentially backwards design for district planning. A five-step process which is outlined below, the district starts with the skills and attributes it believes student

## Strategic Coherence Planning Process



To get started, Superintendent Landahl recruited a diverse group of school and community constituents who would be willing to volunteer their own time to help make this effort a success. The members of the Beacon City Public School’s community who stepped up to the challenge are listed below. Representing a variety of constituencies, these individuals gave up many hours of their own personal time to be part of this process, and Superintendent Landahl and the Beacon City Board of Education would like to thank them for their service to the district.

**Parents:** Tim Sanker, Alison Chi, Kelly Ellenwood, Jamie Mulligan

**Community Member:** Lorraine Hexstall

**Teachers:** Ron Hammond, Sarah Coleman, Jen Fisher, Lesli Tompkins, Anthony DiRusso, Catherine (Kate) Murray, Brian Antalek

**Teaching Assistants:** Samantha Creighton, Tracy Gida

**School-Based Administrators:** Cassandra Orser, Crystal Sessoms, Brian Soltish, Brian Archer, Elisa Correa-Soto

**Central Office Administrators:** Dr. Matthew Landahl, Erik Wright, Cecilia Dansereau Rumley

### **Setting the Foundations:**

Once formed, the group came together to tackle the tasks called for by the following planning process. For their first job in Phase I, the Strategic Coherence Planning Team framed a purpose statement and guiding beliefs to provide a foundation for this work in the district. Direct and focused, this new mission statement and beliefs to guide decision making will help support the ongoing work on behalf of all students the Beacon City School District:

## **Beacon City School District - Mission and Belief Statements**

**Meeting the challenge of preparing EVERY student for learning, life, and work beyond school.**

**In pursuing this Mission, we believe:**

- **the diversity of our community is a strength**
- **in providing an equitable education for all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, class, gender identity, sexuality, or disability.**
- **a culture of care, including ensuring a safe and supportive emotional environment for all, will help ensure the wellness of the entire school community.**

With the purpose clear, the group engaged in an extended study of the latest research regarding economic trends and the challenges of preparing students for a world that has seen an uncommon level of disruption and uncertainty. The primary focus of this work was to inform the creation of a “Profile of a Graduate.” This profile is used to highlight the skills and attributes the district believes are the most important for each student to acquire through their public-school experience and subsequently the focus all the improvement work to follow. Given the importance of this decision, in addition to their own thinking, the Strategic Coherence Planning team reached out to the broader Beacon City School District community to gather the perspectives of their constituents on what they believed these skills and attributes should be. More than 200 parents and staff used the Thoughtexchange platform to provide feedback to the planning group. The results of these exercises are depicted below for both the Cognitive Skills and Personal Attributes that the community believed were most critical to student success. In the charts that follow, the general skill and attribute category are listed in the left-hand column. The specific suggestion as well as it’s position in priority ranking of the top overall 20 ideas shared (the red numbers) are listed in the right-hand column.

Cognitive Skills	
General Focus	Thoughtexchange Thoughts – Rank (1-20)
1 Interpersonal Communication (speak, actively listen, write, produce)	Interpersonal communications – 2 Communicate an idea clearly in writing – 8 Understand conflicting point of view – 9 Oral and written communication – 19 Interpersonal communication - 20
2 Work Collaboratively and Independently	Independence and self direction as well as the ability to work in groups – 3
3 Problem solving	Problem solving and learning by doing hands-on projects – 7 The ability to problem solve – 14 Our students should be problem solvers - 17
4 Critical Thinking	Critical thinking skills – 10 Critical thinking – 12
5 Creativity and Curiosity	Creative, passionate, questioning and life-long learning – 11
6 Understanding of history and social justice	Our students should be prepared to participate in a meaningful way and to understand the struggle for social justice – 18

Attributes		
#	General Focus	Thoughtexchange Thoughts – Rank (1-20)
1	Emotional Intelligence	Empathy – 1 Empathetic – 4 Emotional Intelligence – 5 Social and emotional learning – empathy – 6 Empathy – 13 Empathy – 15 Social thinking curriculum school-wide - 16

Combining their own insight with the community feedback, each member of the planning team participated in a structured activity and had an equal voice in choosing these district priorities. The following five skills and five attributes along with their aligned indicators of success are results of this process.

## Beacon’s Most Critical Skills

### Communication

- Organize and articulate thoughts - write, speak or create media for a variety of purposes and audiences
- Use digital tools for a variety of purposes and audiences
- Actively listen, comprehend, and respond appropriately

### Problem solving (solving complex problems)

- Identify and frame problems with their associated consequences
- Understand and apply problem solving processes
- Implement and reflect on the effectiveness of proposed solutions

### Creative and Critical Thinking (divergent/convergent)

- Identify multiple perspectives, options, or pathways
- Apply novel or insightful notions
- Apply criteria and evaluate for a purpose
- Use evidence, logic and reason.

### Collaboration – Independence

- Work with others to accomplish tasks and solve problem
- Demonstrate metacognition of interpersonal skills
- Fulfill different roles in a variety of situations
- Demonstrate self-direction and initiative
- Overcome obstacles to success

### Digital literacy -

- Be a good digital citizen
- Practice effective search techniques
- Apply criteria and analysis processes for information validity
- Consistently use reliable and valid information in the service of learning

## Beacon’s Most Critical Attributes

### Empathy

- Kindness, care, and compassion for others
- Respect for persons and property
- Understanding of the circumstances and opinions of others

### Self-Regulation

- Self-awareness and emotional metacognition
- Ability to recognize and act to regulate reactions and shift actions

### Citizenship/Community

- Understanding that all members are part of a larger whole
- Demonstrates the relationship between rights and responsibilities.
- Contributes to the overall success of the community as a whole

### Curiosity, Wonder, Awe, & Imagination

- Generates questions and follows leads
- Investigates and creates
- Demonstrates a passion and energy for learning

### Adaptability/Flexibility

- Calm and positive when structures or patterns change
- Sees change as opportunity

## Reviewing the Current State and Collecting the

## Data:

With these Beacon City skills and attributes framed and the foundation of the successful graduate profile set, Phase II in the planning process began. This step was a data scan where each of the desired systems planning outcomes required for student success is compared to what is currently happening in the district and the gaps between what is happening now and what the district ultimately wants to create were defined. To accomplish this, the Strategic Coherence Planning Team organized themselves into working groups around five areas of focus, each of which represents the systems work required to sustain and drive improvement of student performance. The names of the Strategic Coherence Planning Team members as well as the other district or community volunteers who assisted them in their work in each of the five areas are listed below:

<b>Group One Goals for Learning</b>	<b>Group Two Teaching for Learning</b>	<b>Group Three Measures of Learning</b>	<b>Group Four Supporting Systems</b>	<b>Group Five External Factors</b>
Tracy Gida Sarah Coleman Erik Wright Brian Soltish Cassandra Orser	Ronald Hammond Tony DiRusso Samantha Creighton Kate Murray Crystal Sessoms	Jen Fisher Celia Dansereau Rumley Elisa Correa-Soto Anthony White	Brian Antalek Matt Landahl Jamie Mulligan Lesli Tompkins	Lorraine Hexstall Brian Archer Meredith Heuer

Once formed, each group was assigned with collecting data that would identify the status of the district as framed through the lens of the goals, measures, and practices required to meet the skill acquisition needs of students. Provided with guiding research questions in the planning materials, these groups worked over a ten-week period to collect information, identify what the district was already doing to meet these challenges, and finally to report back to their peers about what was needed to close the gap between what was desired and what was actually happening. For common frames of reference, each of the first four groups was additionally asked to provide a Likert scale style rating of the performance of the district for their areas of focus. A group's choices ran from a 0 that would indicate "no evidence" of the desired practice to a 4, which would show systemically improving performance. This scale is illustrated below:

<b>Score</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>0 –Not Present</b>	The Desired Coherence Outcome is non-existent

<b>1 - Beginning</b>	There may be some individual efforts or minimal group attempts, but there is no systemic evidence or process in place to support the existence of the Desired Coherence Outcome.
<b>2 - Emergent</b>	There have been systemic efforts to create the Desired Coherence Outcome, but its implementation is uneven and has yet to deliver meaningful changes in student or adult performance.
<b>3 - Proficient</b>	There has been a systemic effort to create the Desired Coherence Outcome and it is generally working. It is regularly creating evidence of meaningful changes in student and adult performance.
<b>4. Excellent</b>	There has been a systemic effort to create the Desired Coherence Outcome and it is functioning effectively. There have been meaningful changes in student and adult performance and there is evidence that data is driving further improvements in the system.

As Group Five dealt with only external data, they had no ratings to ascribe, rather they reported their findings as prioritized opportunities and challenges for the district in the following areas: Economics/Demographics, Mandates/Legislation (state/federal), Historical Achievement Data Trends, Changing Nature of Learning and Work in a Digital Age, Local Context – impact of the culture, environment, history of the Beacon City Public Schools, perceptions of the district and challenges/opportunities while moving the district forward, and any other data they thought would be relevant and helpful to the Strategic Coherence Planning Team.

Each Data Collection Group met several times over the ten-week data sampling period to complete their tasks. After an initial launch meeting where the scope of the work to be completed was shared, each team broke down their research tasks and assigned volunteers from the group to gather specific data, information and other items for everyone to consider as they contemplated the ratings for each indicator. In addition to hard documentary evidence (documents, work products, statistical data) some used interviews and surveys to inform their ratings as well. With all these data collected, the groups met to finalize their ratings and outline for their peers the main factors that supported their judgments. Finally, each group organized themselves to prepare to present their work to their peers at the reporting and analysis retreat (Phase III) which was held on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019. For reporting purposes in this version of the Strategic Coherence Plan, a grid of the summary ratings for each group is provided and then is immediately followed by the details of each indicator and a brief summary of the gap evidence that the Data Collection Group used to justify its rating.

## Data Scan Results:

### Outcome One: Goals for Learning

*The purpose of this outcome is to judge the degree to which the district has an aligned systemic process for setting and pursuing the Beacon City Student Success Skills from the district, building, and professional levels. The desired state is a goal-setting culture where the value is on high-leverage, skill-based student learning goals that are articulated and connected on a Pre-K to 12 basis. This aligned goal setting infrastructure is critical to eventual efforts to improve the identified district priority goals for learning. To ascertain the district's readiness to do this and the identify the current state of affairs, this group will be asked to judge four areas: 1. Context and Philosophy of current goal setting processes (goals are focused on student learning and not adult action while there is a commitment to accountability for what is learned and not what is simply covered or done), 2. The alignment of goal setting processes (are they systematically connected or completely independent from school to school or person to person), 3. Community knowledge and support of goals (does everyone know what they are and why they were selected), and 4. The alignment and availability of resources aligned with the goals (do available resources align with stated goals for learning).*

### Coherence Outcome One Findings Summary:

Indicator	0 Not Present	1 Beginning	2 Emergent	3 Proficient	4 Excellent
1. Goal Setting Context and Philosophy					
2. Goal Setting Processes					
3. Goal Setting Support and Engagement					
4. Materials and Resources					

### Coherence Outcome One Findings Detail:

## 1. Goal Setting Context and Philosophy (*Beginning*)

- A. *There is a cultural emphasis in the learning environment that favors evidence of learning over evidence of coverage and a teacher's progress through the curriculum. Timelines and calendars are less important than having every child grow and acquire the skills they need for success.*
- B. *A few critical, high leverage student learning goals (student critical and creative thinking for problem solving) dominate the dialogue and are the focus of planning and improvement systems, documents and efforts across the organization.*

### **Defining the Gaps – identify and describe the largest gaps between the outcomes described and the current practice.**

- Elementary- Data team meetings although not uniform, reading data tracking form and formative reading assessments
- Secondary- Middle school has started formative reading assessments (F & P in initial stages) and data tracking. Goal setting is not across the board for every student.
- The gap is wide in terms of implementation. At the secondary level, many conversations are Danielson Rubric Based opposed to student data based. (general conversations over individual students)
- We need to improve our system for gathering data and using the data to support individual student needs.

## 2. Goal Setting Processes – the annual district, building/course and professional goals are focused on high leverage student learning, clearly tied to a data-based need, and are aligned through the Pre-K to 12 system. (*Not Present*)

- A. *The school/district has a history and practice of setting a focused set of appropriate student learning goals and working consistently Pre-K to 12 to achieve them.*
- B. *Grade level and/or course curriculum materials have clear and manageable observable goals for student learning that are clearly described and are prioritized to encourage mastery for success (emphasis on engagement and learning) for all students.*
- C. *The school/district tries to ensure that annual professional learning targets and strategies for all staff are set through a process that is aligned with each adult's capacity to support the district's most important student learning goals.*

*D. The school/district ensures that annual school/district goals for performance are set through a process that is informed by an alignment with associated appropriate student learning goals and collective professional learning needs.*

**Defining the Gaps – identify and describe the largest gaps between the outcomes described and the current practice.**

- Currently, the district does not have a focused set of student learning goals. The APPR uses a district-wide SLO and individual teachers outside of the Regents exams are not developing goals to support the SLO.
- District focused goals should be set using newly implemented common assessments across the district. We need district, school, student and professional goals.

**3. Goal Setting Support and Engagement – students, parents, staff and other constituents are well informed regarding the rationale that inform the district’s student learning goals at every level. (Not Present)**

**Defining the Gaps – identify and describe the largest gaps between the outcomes described and the current practice.**

- We do not have common assessments or district set learning goals
- The focus has not been on student achievement

**4. Materials and Resources – instructional and assessment materials provided by the district show evidence of alignment and focus with the district’s critical student goals for learning. (Not Present)**

*A. Focused student goals for learning are consistent in all Pre-K-12 curriculum and program materials and have aligned expectations at the elementary, intermediate, middle and high school levels.*

*B. There are easily accessible electronic curriculum and instructional resources for staff, parents and community in all academic areas that support the implementation of the district’s student learning goals.*

**Defining the Gaps – identify and describe the largest gaps between the outcomes described and the current practice.**

- Organized, online curriculum information exists within different groupings and at different levels but is not public or aligned with any current district learning goals.
- Currently, the standards drive the curriculum.

## Outcome Two: Teaching for Learning

*The purpose of this outcome is to focus resources and attention on improving the capacity of a very small number of high leverage professional practices that have an impact on student performance. The inherent assumption is that the most important indicator of instructional success is the time students are engaged in rigorous, higher-order thinking course content activities. This element, when combined with a positive learning environment, are the two most powerful predictors of sustained/improved student learning. Accordingly, this group focused on the critical elements of teaching and learning practices and the quality of instructional feedback. To judge this, the three following areas were examined; 1. The existence of a unified vision of the characteristics of effective, higher order student engagement, 2. The use of digital learning resources to support rigorous instruction, and 3. The alignment of professional learning practices with these articulated priorities.*

### Coherence Outcome Two Findings Summary:

Indicator	0 Not Present	1 Beginning	2 Emergent	3 Proficient	4 Excellent
<b>1. Student Engagement in Rigorous Higher Order Thinking Activities</b>					
<b>2. Digital Learning Practices</b>					
<b>3. Professional Learning Practices</b>					

## Coherence Outcome Two Findings Detail:

### 1. Student Engagement in Rigorous, Higher-Order Thinking Activities (*Emergent*)

- A. There is a high degree of faculty (staff) and administrator knowledge/understanding of what student higher-order thinking, appropriate grade-level rigor, and true evidence of meaningful student engagement in learning look like.*
- B. The district's teacher/administrator evaluation processes focus primarily on the importance of student engagement and a positive learning culture (for example the student engagement and positive learning culture elements of the instructional practice rubric are weighted or prioritized to demonstrate their importance).*
- C. There is data and evidence that can be gathered from these processes to illustrate the degree to which all students are engaged in rigorous, higher-order thinking experiences in every classroom.*
- D. There is evidence that parents have had the opportunity to learn about what the district's expectations for instructional excellence are and are invited to be part of the conversation about how to maintain and support them.*

#### **Defining the Gaps – identify and describe the largest gaps between the outcomes described and the current practice.**

- A small survey (40) sent to faculty and staff found that the majority of people think we have a good start, but we could improve.
- There is a lack of a working or shared definition of what rigorous student engagement looks like
- Evaluation process does have a focus on engagement and positive learning culture, however, those aspects are not weighted enough and we need to fix that.
- There are data and evidence that can be gathered, but we could be doing a better job/need to get more evidence proving that we are engaging our students in higher order thinking and rigorous experiences (or the evidence isn't as strong as we would like it to be).

## **2. Digital Learning Practices – the degree to which students have appropriate, ready access to the most effective digital learning tools for the learning outcomes aligned with them. (Emergent)**

- A. The policy and practices of the district are aligned with a digitally supported learning environment where all stakeholders have ready access to age appropriate tools.*
- B. There is some degree of faculty (staff) knowledge and understanding of how to design and facilitate digitally supported instructional experiences for students that support rigorous, higher-order thinking and sustained engagement.*

### **Defining the Gaps – identify and describe the largest gaps between the outcomes described and the current practice?**

- Policy and practices are aligned and supporting within a digital learning environment, however, there are still gaps that exist in understanding how we use tools within this environment to most effectively support student learning.
- We need to have more training on how to effectively use these digital resources to improve student learning.
- We need more training on incorporating the digital resources we have been provided with.

## **3. Professional Learning Practices (Emergent)**

- A. Adult learning (district, building or personal) can be pursued through a variety of processes/strategies that are consistent with standards of professional learning (job embedded, aligned with developing capacity in high-leverage instructional strategies) and are explicitly aligned with the district's expressed priorities.*
- B. School/District professional learning plans are aligned school to school with the district's student learning goals and there is evidence or purposeful and focused intention to bring all of these plans together with a common purpose and focus.*

### **Defining the Gaps – identify and describe the largest gaps between the outcomes described and the current practice?**

- While there are various ways we can expand our learning, the district needs to come up with more ways that are aligned with the district's priorities.
- We are doing a decent job with this, but could use some improvement as related to the gaps that exist within alignment to student learning goals.

**Outcome Three: Measures for Learning –**

*The purpose of this area is to determine the degree which the district’s assessment practices support growth and accountability for the obtainment of the district’s vision of a successful graduate and its associated goals for learning. Following the maxim “what gets measured gets done,” this is an opportunity to judge whether the stated learning priorities of the district are aligned with its assessment infrastructure and culture. Critical to these relationships is the capacity of teachers and administrators to provide timely, helpful and accurate feedback for the improvement of student and adult performance. To determine this, group three will examine 1. Assessment philosophy and practice (including balance between formative and summative assessment resources), 2. Assessment capacity (the ability to effectively measure the things that matter most) 3. How data collection practices support priority goals for learning, and 4/5. How both professional measures and measures at the building and district level also support feedback for improved student and professional performance.*

**Coherence Outcome Three Findings Summary:**

Indicator	0 Not Present	1 Beginning	2 Emergent	3 Proficient	4 Excellent
1. Assessment Philosophy					
2. Assessment Capacity					
3. Performance Data					
4. Professional Measures of Learning					
5. School/District Measures of Learning					

## Coherence Outcome Three Findings Detail:

### 1. Assessment Philosophy (*Beginning*)

A. *There is a unified Pre-K to 12 assessment philosophy and system to implement it that is primarily focused on student growth and attainment of the district's primary learning goals.*

**Defining the Gaps – identify and describe the largest gaps between the outcomes described and the current practice.**

- No guiding document that lays out a coherent assessment philosophy – balance between formative and summative
- There is minimal evidence of a growth mindset – most of the focus is on grade and rank
- No consistent evidence of critical student goals that are aligned across the grade levels
- No consistent assessment focus – each level focuses on what it thinks is important
- Some teachers could offer student work showing higher order thinking
- No clear organized processes for common formative assessments

### 2. Assessment Capacity (*Emergent*)

A. *There is a system for capturing standardized and non-standardized student performance data related to the district's primary goals for learning.*

B. *There is some evidence of the effective use of data to inform improvement planning and changes in practice designed to increase student learning.*

C. *District staff can construct effective rubrics (measuring what you value), designing rubric aligned tasks (connecting it to instructional practice), and use scoring protocols (build capacity to consistently judge student work) to ensure that non-standardized measures are useful in the performance improvement process.*

**Defining the Gaps – identify and describe the largest gaps between the outcomes described and the current practice.**

- No clear-cut teacher/admin/school/district goals being connected to data around student learning
- We do have vehicles to communicate student progress (PowerSchool, 5-week notices/report cards, RtI, DRA/F&P).
- BCSD teachers use rubrics, however they may not be consistent across grade levels and courses.
- Rubric quality is inconsistent - some are task-oriented checklists rather than observing levels of skill competence.

- Some rubrics made to align with NYSDE initiatives.
- Rubrics may not be utilized by students to evaluate their own understanding.
- Many parents do feel well-informed about their child's progress.

**3. Performance Data: all appropriate performance data is easily accessible to all interested stakeholders and is reflective of district priorities. (*Beginning*)**

**Defining the Gaps – identify and describe the largest gaps between the outcomes described and the current practice.**

- Vehicles that communicate student progress are accessible to the stakeholders but do not necessarily reflect district goals.
- PowerSchool is used to communicate student performance (generally grades) but teachers could be encouraged to add other information.
- How things are evaluated are not being communicated with families and students .
- Pockets of evidence exist in the district.

**4. Professional Measures of Learning: The data collected and used as part of the teacher evaluation and support processes reflect current student performance on critical goals for learning and other established district student learning priorities. (*Beginning*)**

**Defining the Gaps – identify and describe the largest gaps between the outcomes described and the current practice.**

- Teacher evaluations do reflect student performance with district priorities.
- There is not a consistent language used across the District among the students, parents, teachers and staff.

**5. School/District Measures of Learning: The data collected and used as part of district and building improvement planning reflect current student performance on critical goals for learning and other established district student learning priorities. (*Beginning*)**

**Defining the Gaps – identify and describe the largest gaps between the outcomes described and the current practice.**

- Plans - #2 gap is in district structure.

- #3 Gap no formal protocol/procedure to vertically align student information as they go through the grades.
- Horizontal Maps do exist.
- No curriculum map for all subject areas.
- Extensive work K-5 consistency of curriculum ELA/Math.
- Last year first discussion of comparing syllabi.
- There is no professional time devoted to teachers to discuss student's data to inform and enhance teacher effectiveness.
- No Data teams to evaluate.
- We have no vision that defines the role & function of the purpose of assessment in BCSD.

**Area Four: Supporting Systems –**

*This group’s focus is on how the leadership and district support systems are structured to work together to facilitate the attainment of student learning goals. Do these systems consistently work together to enable a sustained focus on things that matter or are they consistently reactionary, disconnected, and moving from one strategic focus to another year after year? To determine this, judgments will be made on the current state of 1. Leadership and mission focus and systems coherence, 2. Policy and regulations, 3. Community engagement, and 4. Resource deployment.*

Indicator	0 Not Present	1 Beginning	2 Emergent	3 Proficient	4 Excellent
1. Leadership/Mission Focus					
2. Policy and Regulation					
3. Community Engagement					
4. Resource Deployment					

**Coherence Outcome Four Findings Detail:**

- 1. Leadership/Mission Focus- There is a well-articulated Mission (and other possible supporting statements) that guide not only regular goal setting and instructional improvement processes but also systems decision making and organizational evaluations. (Beginning)**

**Defining the Gaps – identify and describe the largest gaps between the outcomes described and the current practice.**

- There is a draft mission statement - "Preparing Beacon students for life, learning and work beyond school" but it is too new to have driven decision making or policy.

## **2. Policy & Regulation - The Board of Education works with the Superintendent to craft and apply policy that supports the district's pursuit of its Mission and critical goals for learning. (Emergent)**

**Defining the Gaps – identify and describe the largest gaps between the outcomes described and the current practice.**

- Matt Landahl attends all policy meetings and also meets with James Case-Leal (BoE Policy Sub-Committee Chair) who reviews the policies, so there is a system but it is not yet aligned with mission.

## **3. Community Engagement - The district's many stakeholders believe that they are meaningfully involved, engaged and respected by the leadership structures in the district. (Emergent)**

**Defining the Gaps – identify and describe the largest gaps between the outcomes described and the current practice.**

- Dr. Landahl gave the Beacon Community an opportunity to respond to a survey about the 2018-2019 budget. The following was asked:
  - programs and classes you would like added
  - extracurricular activities or clubs you would like us to consider
  - If we were able to add a second world/foreign language at the secondary level in the coming years, what language would you want us to add as an option for our students?
  - anything else you want us to consider as we make plans for the future of the district.
- There is a general sense in the community that the Board of Education and the district staff are accessible, tuned in, and responsive to the needs and interests of their community, and that parents and constituents, at times, feel welcome and that their opinions and concerns are respected and heard. However, there are not frequent opportunities for meaningful two way communication with stakeholders and key district decision makers.

**4. Resource Deployment – budgets and resources are developed and defended based on alignment with articulated goals for learning and demonstrated Mission-based need. (*Not Present*)**

**Defining the Gaps – identify and describe the largest gaps between the outcomes described and the current practice.**

- Frequent opportunities for the Beacon Community to listen to the budget presentation given by Dr. Landahl.
- While budget documents and presentations are clearly constructed and available to the Beacon Community, they could not have been in alignment with the district's mission because the mission was just created.

**Area Five – Local Context with Challenges and Opportunities**

**A. Town budget history, education budget history, economic prospects, enrollment history, enrollment projections.**

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax Cap</li> <li>• Heavily reliant on state aid</li> <li>• Population/student demographics changing quickly</li> <li>• Property tax being lost to religious exemptions</li> <li>• District overlaps 3 municipalities</li> <li>• Fast development - potential for a spike in student population</li> <li>• Fighting reputation of public education in general and Beacon, in particular</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for further collaboration with City (after school program)</li> <li>• Growth in tax base</li> <li>• Active community creating new opportunities for students (workforce and things like RAMP)</li> </ul>

**B. Changing Nature of Learning and Work in a Digital Age**

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital access for all students (1:1, wifi)</li> <li>• Supporting teachers to teach in this new age (technology)</li> <li>• Changing needs for our students joining the workforce and need for more opportunities locally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New instructional and learning programs to prepare students for 21st Century</li> </ul>

**C. Mandates/Legislation - responding to existing legislation, potential legislation at the local, state or federal level**

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No end in sight to new unfunded mandates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in balance of power in Albany</li> </ul>

#### D. Historical Achievement Data Trends - Trends, strengths, weaknesses

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declining student population (-415 over last ten years)</li> <li>• Special Education population stayed at 17-18%</li> <li>• Student demographics are changing significantly</li> <li>• Significant decrease in Free and Reduced Lunch student numbers-due to rise in housing costs</li> <li>• Minority/low-income parental engagement continues to decline as longer hours spent traveling to/from jobs and/or working multiple jobs due to lack of living wage job opportunities in Beacon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smaller class sizes</li> </ul>

#### E. Local Context

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing student demographics the past ten years.</li> <li>• The needs for our students joining the workforce have changed dramatically.</li> <li>• Declining student population diversity negatively impacts how prepared graduates are to compete and thrive in real-world multicultural/multi-ethnic post-secondary academic and work environments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From thought exchange: teachers well respected and trusted</li> </ul>

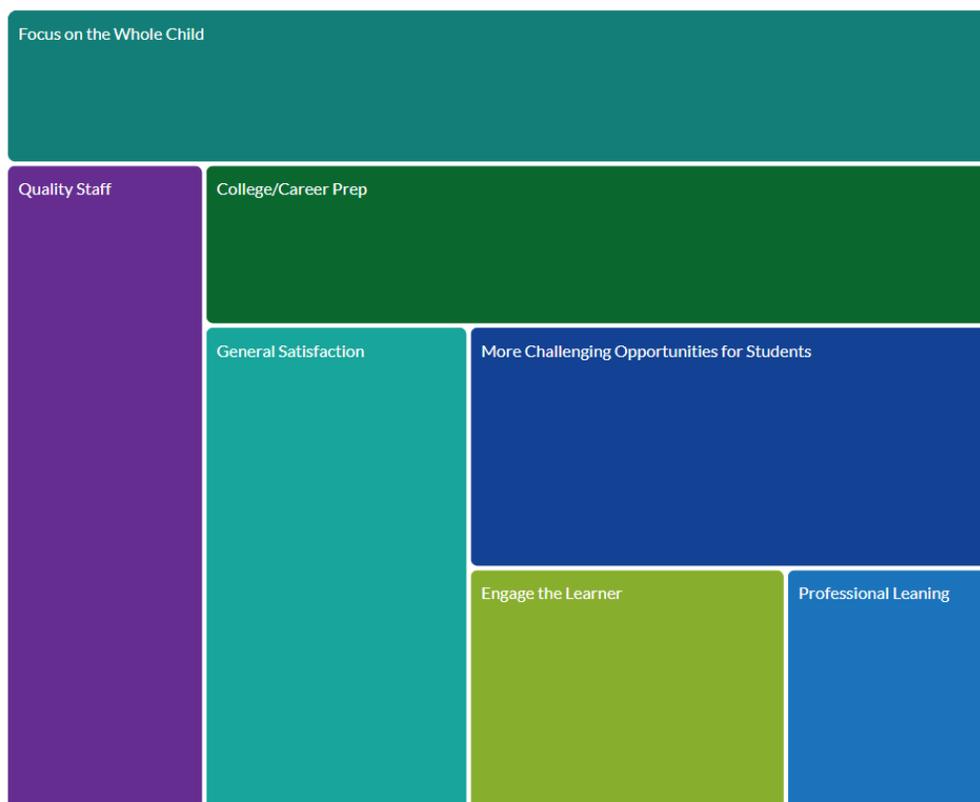
#### F. Climate Change

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School canceled more often, or for different reasons, warmer classrooms at start and end of year.</li> </ul>	

In addition to the topical research done by Group 5, the district again used the Thoughtexchange tool, this time to ask the broader Beacon City community about what they believed the district was doing well and those things that they wished would be improved. The display to the right is a graphical representation of the six most frequently identified issues represented by the 40 highest rated thoughts that came as a result of that process. Over 200 citizens and staff participated over a ten-day period in early January, 2019.

To summarize the findings, the respondents felt strongly that:

- the district should continue to focus on the development of the “whole child,” understanding that there is more to success than just grades
- the current Beacon staff is of high quality
- the district should try to offer a wide variety of college and career prep opportunities
- the district should try to raise the bar and provide for an increase in the number of highly rigorous and challenging student learning experiences
- the district should increase its ability to support professional learning – especially as it relates to creating even more engaging and relevant learning experiences for students.
- many people feel the district is headed in the right direction.



## Processing the Findings and Identifying Priority Strategic Actions

As the Data Teams presented their information at the Phase III retreat, each individual Strategic Coherence Team member was simultaneously charged with analyzing and synthesizing the information that was presented to them. All were encouraged to listen, reflect and ask questions as their peers presented and discussed their findings. To record their thinking, each member produced note cards with single observations on them in one of three categories of response:

- **Kudos** – these were areas that the participants felt the district had accomplished well – had systems that supported good practice in place and could inform future strategies as the district sought to improve in other areas.
- **Questions** – did the information presented raise further questions of practice or paint an incomplete picture where more data might be needed before conclusions about how to move forward could be drawn.
- **Concerns** – these were the areas where participants saw the most problematic gaps between the objective of aligned systems on student success and current district practice.

This process of having all the individuals on the full Strategic Coherence Planning Team screen and reflect on what was presented, the process design seeks to confirm what the teams found and identify further patterns of insight into what the most critical challenges facing the district are given the Mission and identified skills and attributes of student success. Those items that rise to the top in both the group and individual analysis inform decision-making about the strategic priorities for planning future work.

To find out what those items are, after the group presentations, all the individual's responses in the three categories mentioned earlier (Kudos, Questions, and Concerns) were placed in separate sorting spaces. The Strategic Coherence Planning Team was then randomly assigned to one of the three areas and then a facilitated Affinity Diagram sorting process was completed. This process involves viewing all of the contributions in each area and then finding the relationships between them. Cards representing the individual contributions of each team

member are then grouped into areas of commonality and then these groupings are labeled. Each of the sorting teams had an opportunity to assist and review the work of the other teams so that everyone had an opportunity to review all the reflections in each of the three groups. For the areas of Kudos and Questions, the themes identified are for context and to inform the work but do not carry the weight of determining what direction the district must go so they simply appear in list form. The order of the items does not imply a priority or importance, they are just listed in the order they were identified.

### **Kudos – Areas in Which the Data Demonstrated Systemic District Strength**

- A. Increasing diversity in the district.
- B. Lower class sizes.
- C. Access and capacity of PowerSchool.
- D. Developing data teams.
- E. Focusing on students as individuals.
- F. Sense of good student engagement.
- G. New mission statement.
- H. Teachers are positive and willing to help each other with technology.
- I. Shift to learning over grading culture.
- J. Groups took time to learn from the community.
- K. Faculty working together to align and compare curriculum.
- L. Community involvement – accessible resources.
- M. Our strategic planning groups did a great job!
- N. Positive attributes – current state of the district.
- O. Communication between district employees and the district.

### **Questions – Areas in which more information is needed...**

- A. How to support the teacher implementation of technology?
- B. How to align curriculum, grading, policies and practices across the BCSD?
- C. How to identify how changes in Beacon impact students?
- D. How to identify and assess student engagement?
- E. How do we optimize parent engagement?
- F. How does APPR shape student learning and professional growth?
- G. How many of the new positions are restored cuts?
- H. What are the ramifications of an entire district opting out of state testing?
- I. How can we balance district, building and individual needs?

Immediately after identifying the questions listed above, the Strategic Coherence Planning Team discussed their implications as it was important to explore them prior to the final retreat activity of identifying the priorities for future work. Having completed that discussion, the team proceeded to not only identify the themes of Concerns, but to further analyze them, synthesize and evaluate the list for priority action. First, there was a round of clarifying questions to be sure everyone was in sync on the meaning and implication of each item. Then items were combined through a unanimous consent process. If two items were implying the same gap or priority, they were placed together so that, in the end, the same priority would not be competing against itself. Those items that were combined and removed from consideration. Finally, a weighted voting process was held with each member having the same number of votes for the purpose of singling out those gaps and priorities that the district must focus on for future success. The results of this activity are displayed on the following pages. Red numbers represent vote totals, yellow highlighting indicates the highest rated items that will be used to focus future work. Blacked out items were combined with other selections (these blacked out numbers appear next to the item that accepted them).

## Concerns/Biggest Gaps

A. Lack of district-wide common goals for learning/curriculum maps (Benchmarks/goals/attributes) (D/Q) 74

B. Struggles and challenges of low-income families 15

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

E. Need for enhanced professional development (P) 55

[REDACTED]

G. Lack of clear assessment structure (common assessments/rubrics) (N, F) 30

[REDACTED]

I. Lack of common language (common skills, digital literacy, student engagement) (S) 16

[REDACTED]

K. Unfunded state mandates (C) 0

L. Declining population 0

M. Communication concerns – with stakeholders (J) 9

[REDACTED]

O. How much technology is too much? 0

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

R. How to identify and assess student engagement 61

[REDACTED]

T. Moving from a culture of grading to a culture of learning 22

U. Preparing students for a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce (H)

### Implementing Priority Strategic Actions

**Strategy One:** Create a common definition for rigorous student engagement and productive learning practices to guide professional reflection and continuous improvement.

**Indicators of Success:**

- District definition is based on researched best-practice to maximize student learning
- Teacher and administrator evaluation systems incorporate elements of the district definition
- Teacher and administrator evaluation systems reflect importance of student engagement.
- Teachers are offered the same productive feedback on their practice that students receive for the acquisition of their skills and attributes.
- Reliable evidence of current practice is used to guide professional learning

**Impacted Systems**

- Teacher and administrator evaluation processes
- Professional development planning and practices
- Annual Professional Performance Review definitions and results

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no district definition of rigorous student engagement</li> <li>• Teacher and administrator evaluation systems use only references based on the district instructional rubric</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an emerging district definition of rigorous student engagement</li> <li>• Teacher and administrator evaluation systems are being reconsidered to include the emerging district definition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District definition is in place, based on researched best-practice to maximize student learning</li> <li>• Teacher and administrator evaluation systems incorporate elements of the district definition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District definition is in place, based on researched best-practice to maximize student learning and is driving improvements in instruction.</li> <li>• Teacher and administrator evaluation systems incorporate elements of the district definition and are being used to provide feedback to teachers/administrators.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher and administrator evaluation systems do not value the importance of student engagement over any other indicator.</li> <li>• Teachers rarely receive focused feedback on student engagement</li> <li>• There is no reliable evidence from current practice that is used to guide professional learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher and administrator evaluation systems are being reconsidered to elevate the value and importance of student engagement.</li> <li>• Teachers occasionally receive focused feedback on student engagement</li> <li>• There is no reliable evidence from current practice that is used to guide professional learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher and administrator evaluation systems reflect importance of student engagement.</li> <li>• Teachers regularly receive focused feedback on student engagement</li> <li>• Reliable evidence of current practice is beginning to be collected and analyzed to guide professional learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher and administrator evaluation systems reflect importance of student engagement and is in practice.</li> <li>• Teachers are offered the same productive feedback on their practice that students receive for the acquisition of their skills and attributes.</li> <li>• Reliable evidence of current practice is used to guide professional learning</li> </ul>
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**Actions for Moving Forward:**

Step #	Action	Outcome	Who	When
1	A team of representative teachers and administrators who have been recognized as leaders in student engagement are identified and formed	An ad hoc design team is formed and has agreed to carry out the tasks in this strategy		
2	Existing documents and frameworks used to frame definitions of effective instruction are identified	External research phase is complete		
3	Research on best practice is reviewed	Research is reviewed and salient key elements have been identified.		
4	A definition is drafted and feedback sought	A working definition is shared among key constituent groups and appropriate feedback is considered.		
5	Definition is refined and finalized – models and exemplars aligned with definition are identified	A final version is published, shared with exemplars to demonstrate the definition,		
6	Definition is incorporated into existing district documents and frameworks	District documents have been updated with the final definition		
7	Redesigned frameworks go to Board for approval.	Board reviews and approves document changes that fall under their auspices.		
8	Professional learning and roll-out strategies are designed	Professional learning is underway to prepare staff to		

		use the new definitions.		
9	Implementation plans are implemented	New definition is working in district systems to improve teaching and learning.		

**Strategy Two: Build and deploy an assessment philosophy and infrastructure capable of supporting the continuous improvement of achievement of the Beacon City Student Success Skills.**

**Indicators of Success:**

- Beacon City measures what it values and values what it measures.
- Student work is routinely examined, and explicit feedback is provided for student skill improvement.
- Student work is routinely examined, and explicit feedback is used for instructional improvement.
- Students are capable self-assessors.
- Standards and expectations are vertically aligned with the Beacon City critical student skills.

**Impacted Systems/Groups:**

- Content Coordinators
- Grade Level Curriculum Coordinator
- Administrative Team (Both Central Office and Building Administrators)
- Beacon Teachers' Association

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is currently no systemic reporting on the Beacon City critical student skills.</li> <li>• Student work is rarely examined, and explicit feedback is provided for improving Beacon City critical student skills</li> <li>• Student work is rarely examined, and explicit feedback is rarely used for instructional improvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are plans for the systemic reporting on the Beacon City critical student skills.</li> <li>• Student work is occasionally examined, and explicit feedback is provided for student skill improvement.</li> <li>• Student work is occasionally examined, and explicit feedback is used for instructional improvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systems for reporting on the Beacon City critical student skills are being piloted and tested.</li> <li>• Student work is frequently examined, and explicit feedback is provided for student skill improvement.</li> <li>• Student work is frequently examined, and explicit feedback is used for instructional improvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beacon measures what it values and values what it measures.</li> <li>• Student work is routinely examined, and explicit feedback is provided for student skill improvement.</li> <li>• Student work is routinely examined, and explicit feedback is used for instructional improvement.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students may self-assess but it is not a systemic activity.</li> <li>• Standards and expectations are not aligned with the Beacon City critical student skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students have begun to practice self-assessment of skills but it is not a systemic activity.</li> <li>• Standards and expectations are aligned in a few areas with the Beacon City critical student skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students practice self-assessment of skills and there is evidence of efficacy.</li> <li>• Standards and expectations are aligned in many areas with the Beacon City critical student skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are capable self-assessors.</li> <li>• Standards and expectations are vertically aligned with the Beacon City critical student skills.</li> </ul>
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**Actions for Moving Forward:**

Step #	Action	Outcome	Who	When
1	Engage in dialogue with stakeholders to define the purpose, function, and outcomes of assessment practices currently used in the District and/or needed in the District.	Assessment inventory completed – data on how much time and in what areas they are applied.		
2	Assessment philosophy is defined and guidelines for application completed	Schools, grade levels and content areas have guidance on the appropriate use of time and assessment resources.		
3	Staff engages in professional learning and practice for the implementation of the new guidance for assessment	Faculty feel like they have the skills and knowledge they need to implement the new district guidance for assessment.		
4	Students are engaged in systemic self-assessment using district rubrics and standards.	Students can articulate how they are assessed for competence in the Beacon City student skills.		

**Strategy Three: Design and implement professional learning strategies, programming, and resources that build district capacity to support the Mission and Beacon City Student Skills and Attributes.**

**Indicators of Success:**

- Professional Learning is focused on the instruction and observation of the Beacon City Student Skills and Attributes.
- Professional Learning is ongoing, differentiated to meet the needs of the learner and includes/considers the entire stakeholder community.
- Professional Learning positively impacts student performance.

**Impacted Systems:**

- Current professional learning day planning process
- Professional Development Committee
- Curriculum teams/ curriculum development
- Curriculum committee
- Unions (BTA, CSEA, BTAA, BEAA, BPA)
- Curriculum Coordinators
- Students/ Families/ Stakeholders

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Learning is topical.</li> <li>• Professional Learning does not systemically include time for practice, reflection, and refinement.</li> <li>• Professional Learning impact on student performance is unclear.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Learning occasionally imbeds or focuses on the Beacon City student skills and attributes.</li> <li>• Professional Learning occasionally includes time for practice, reflection, refinement and allows for differentiation to meet the needs of the learner.</li> <li>• Professional Learning impact on student performance is used as a frame of reference for planning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Learning frequently imbeds or focuses on the Beacon City student skills and attributes.</li> <li>• Professional Learning frequently includes practice, reflection, refinement and allows for differentiation to meet the needs of the learner.</li> <li>• Professional Learning impact on student performance is being tracked and analyzed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Learning embeds the Beacon City student skills and attributes.</li> <li>• Professional Learning consistently includes practice, reflection, refinement and allows for differentiation to meet the needs of the learner.</li> <li>• Professional Learning measurably impacts student performance.</li> </ul>

**Actions for Moving Forward:**

<b>Step #</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>
<b>1</b>	Prepare faculty for upcoming change in professional learning process.	Creation of a sense of urgency/ buy in	E. Wright	
<b>2</b>	Creation of MOA that clarifies the responsibilities of all participants in the professional learning process.	Everyone is given an avenue to complete professional learning and the participation has been negotiated.	Board office and Union	
<b>3</b>	Survey faculty and staff regarding personal professional learning needs	Everyone has the opportunity to create their own professional learning plan	Building Administrators and E. Wright	

**Strategy Four: Revise and realign district curriculum frameworks/maps so that they incorporate a focus and commitment to the Beacon City Student Skills and Attributes.**

**Indicators of Success:**

- Creates a consistency for key terms related to Beacon City student skills and attributes, assessments, and rigorous student engagement.
- Aligned for vertical and horizontal integration of Beacon City student skills and attributes
- Focus on mastery and learning over coverage

<b>I – Present State</b>	<b>II – Beginning</b>	<b>III – Progressing</b>	<b>IV - Accomplishing</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No common definitions for key terms</li> <li>• No vertical and horizontal integration of Beacon City student skills and attributes.</li> <li>• Pacing and coverage are the primary concern in curriculum implementation discussions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common definitions for key terms are under consideration</li> <li>• Key K-12 expectations, thematic practices, instructional and assessment and resources associated with Beacon City student skills and attributes are being identified.</li> <li>• Discussions on the implications of differentiated pacing for mastery of key standards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common definitions for key terms are under consideration and are being vetted by constituent groups</li> <li>• Key K-12 expectations, thematic practices, instructional and assessment and resources associated with Beacon City student skills and attributes have been identified.</li> <li>• Key standards implementation for a focus on mastery as it relates to tiered instruction and the importance of learning over coverage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The district has identified, shared, and communicated common definitions for key terms, K-12.</li> <li>• Key K-12 expectations, thematic practices, instructional and assessment and resources associated with Beacon City student skills and attributes have been identified and vertically and horizontally integrated into district curriculum frameworks.</li> <li>• More students can master key standards resulting in reduced failure rates and fewer required remediations.</li> </ul>

**Impacted Systems:**

- Curriculum teams/ curriculum development
- Curriculum committee

- Unions (BTA, CSEA, BTAA, BEAA)
- Curriculum Coordinators
- Students/ Families/ Stakeholders

**Actions for Moving Forward:**

Step #	Action	Outcome	Who	When
1	Work on this strategy cannot begin without the results of significant portions of Strategy One, Two and Three.	As soon as alignment can be assured, work on this strategy will be mapped out and begin.		