

Bay-Arenac
Community
High School

School
Improvement
Plan
2009 - 2012

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Bay-Arenac Community High School is proud to submit this School Improvement Plan. With the assistance of parents, students and staff we have collectively developed a working plan that will enable our students to achieve academically, personally, and professionally to become successful adults. The following people deserve to be noted for their outstanding support and input throughout the process of developing this plan.

Ryan Donlan	Superintendent	Rick Sochacki	Chairperson
Sandy Miner	Teacher	Nancy Stender	Resource Room Coor
Sue Fournier	Finance Director	Kelly Rase	Parent
Oz Rase	Parent	Ron Stachowiak	Board President
Tammy O'Shea	Community Rep	J.R. Watson	Business Rep
Shane Cherwinski	Student	Rob Vasquez	Student

Mission

Our Mission is to provide a positive community for students to participate in learning the skills necessary for attaining personally meaningful lives which are economically productive and socially responsible.

Needs Assessment

Our School Improvement Committee, comprised of school staff members, parents, board members, community members and students, met throughout the 2006-2007 school year, led by School Improvement Coordinator Rick Sochacki. This committee helped drive the school improvement process by prioritizing school improvement goals and implementation strategies. During the planning process staff, students, and parents were surveyed using the MDE outline.

These surveys are done yearly in the spring with data being gathered and reported to the School Improvement Committee. The survey of community members is done in April. We distributed the survey to 70 community members with names derived from Board Members, Staff and also consisted of many Community leaders. Unfortunately, less than 5% of those surveys were returned. What we found to be successful was an open invitation from staff to community members that they knew personally. These community members came and visited our school to learn about what we do with students. At that time we surveyed all who were in attendance. We analyzed the data and found that community members said our methods of communicating information to the public were not necessarily beneficial. The majority of community members would rather be invited to the school and told what is happening than to receive brochures or other written reports. We have taken it upon ourselves to distribute our data in both fashions. We have also included our results from the Northwest Evaluation Association and MME/ACT for academic achievement. The final survey we performed was done as a research process and is explained in that section. The items that scored lowest or had the largest drop will be used to develop goals in this plan. We will also show how the funds from Title Ia, Title IId, and other sources of income are incorporated to provide better educational services to the students of Bay-Arenac Community High School.

Staff Survey

	05-06	06-07
I have worked with students to develop or explore their future plans.	57%	60%
I have made connections with the staff who provide extended learning opportunities to my students	71%	60%
I modify classroom instructional practices based on student achievement data.	71%	60%
Data is used extensively when setting goals and student objectives.	43%	60%
I frequently use research-based instructional strategies.	43%	60%
My school coordinates community resources to reduce barriers to student achievement.	57%	60%
Our school has a process for identifying students with advanced learning needs.	43%	60%
I have worked to develop partnerships with other schools, educational institutions organizations	57%	60%
The environment at my school is orderly and supports learning.	57%	60%

The staff survey shows that there are 3 major areas to improve upon:

- Additional academic support from sources outside of our school
- Using data to assist in developing academic strategies
- Enhancing the school environment for increasing student involvement in their educational process

Student Survey

	04-05	05-06	06-07	
I have support for learning at home.		64%	88%	49%
My parents have worked with the school to help it improve.		55%	65%	34%
I feel connected to many students in my school.		91%	92%	64%
I have used the arts to demonstrate what I have learned in classes like math, language arts or social studies.		68%	69%	43%
In have learned about the importance of the arts.		82%	58%	32%
My parents are active in school events.		55%	50%	30%
We have practiced our school's emergency response procedure in the last year.		86%	73%	53%
My school has programs in place to help me if I am falling behind.		86%	81%	64%
I get frequent feedback from my school on how well I am mastering the Standards.		77%	81%	64%
Students help to make decisions about matters that affect them.		95%	73%	57%
My school is doing a good job of preparing me to continue my education at more advanced levels.		73%	81%	66%
My standardized test results are given to me in a <u>way that</u> is clear and understandable.		86%	73%	62%
I work with adults in the school to create plans for meeting my educational goals.		59%	73%	64%
If most students aren't doing well on classroom tests, my teachers will change the way they are teaching.		55%	69%	62%
My teachers tell me how I can Improve to reach academic standards.		100%	69%	64%
I have the opportunity to learn in settings other than at school, like college courses or business mentorships		91%	65%	64%
My parents know what is going on in the school		55%	65%	64%

The student survey shows that the following need to be improved

- Parent participation in school and academics
- School safety plan
- Planning and communicating expectations and results
- Outside sources for academic success are needed

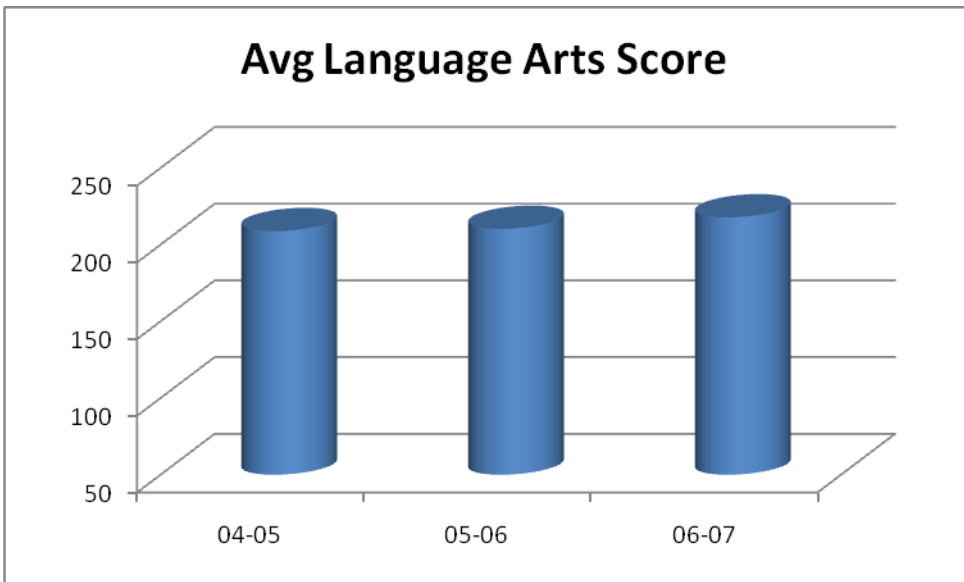
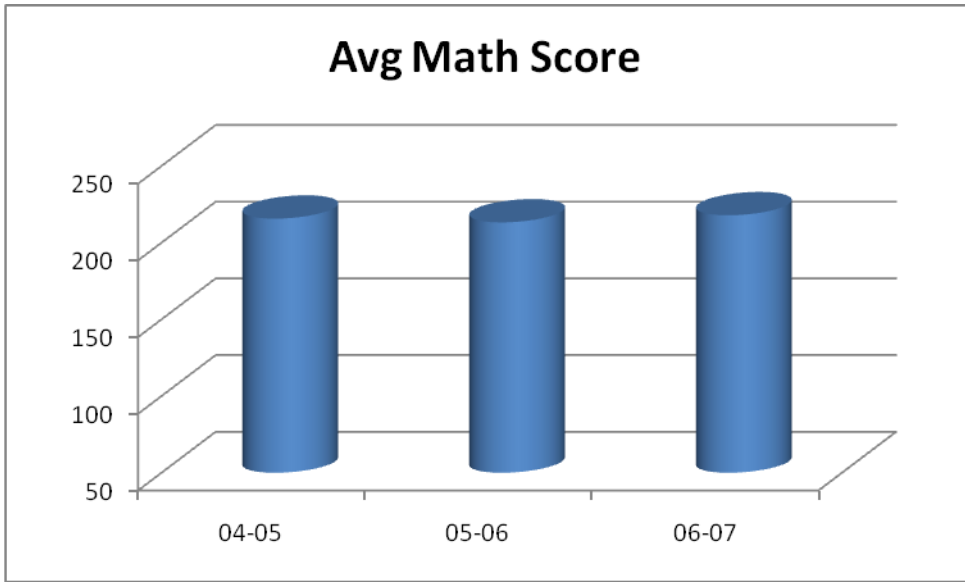
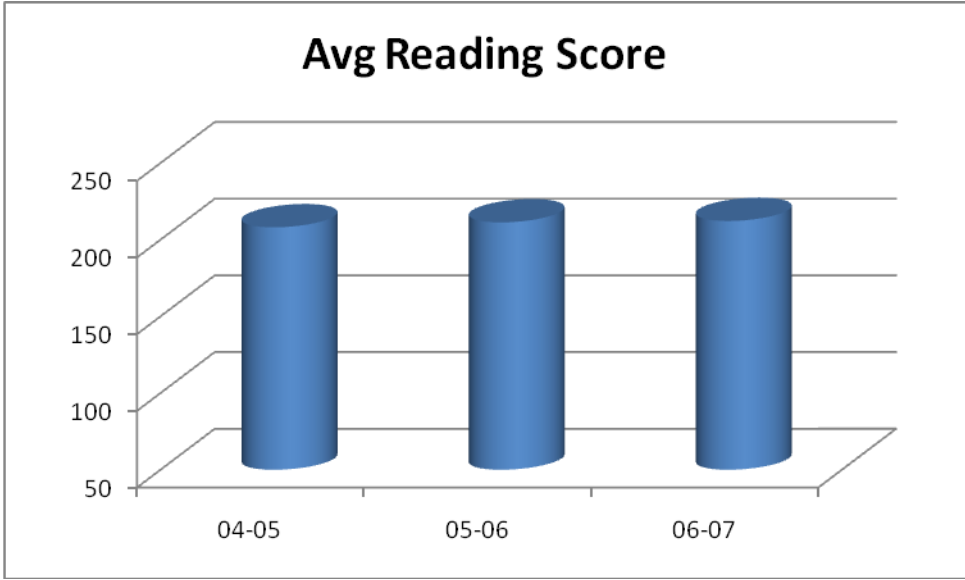
Parent Survey

I know what to do in the event of an emergency at school.	73%	61%	-12%
My child's standardized test results are given to me in a way that is clear and understandable.	63%	64%	1%
Career awareness/exploration is frequently part of the homework my child brings home.	59%	64%	5%
I know how my child's school compares academically with similar schools in Michigan.	72%	68%	-4%
I have a clear understanding of how students are performing academically at my child's school.	69%	71%	2%
Our community actively provides resources and services in support of the school's programs.	69%	71%	2%
My child has access to advanced learning and talent development activities.	72%	75%	3%
I feel my child is prepared to succeed on state academic tests.	66%	75%	9%

The Parent survey showed that the following items need improvement

- Safety plan
- Clear communication of student performance and test
- Community involvement and career awareness

Academic Results

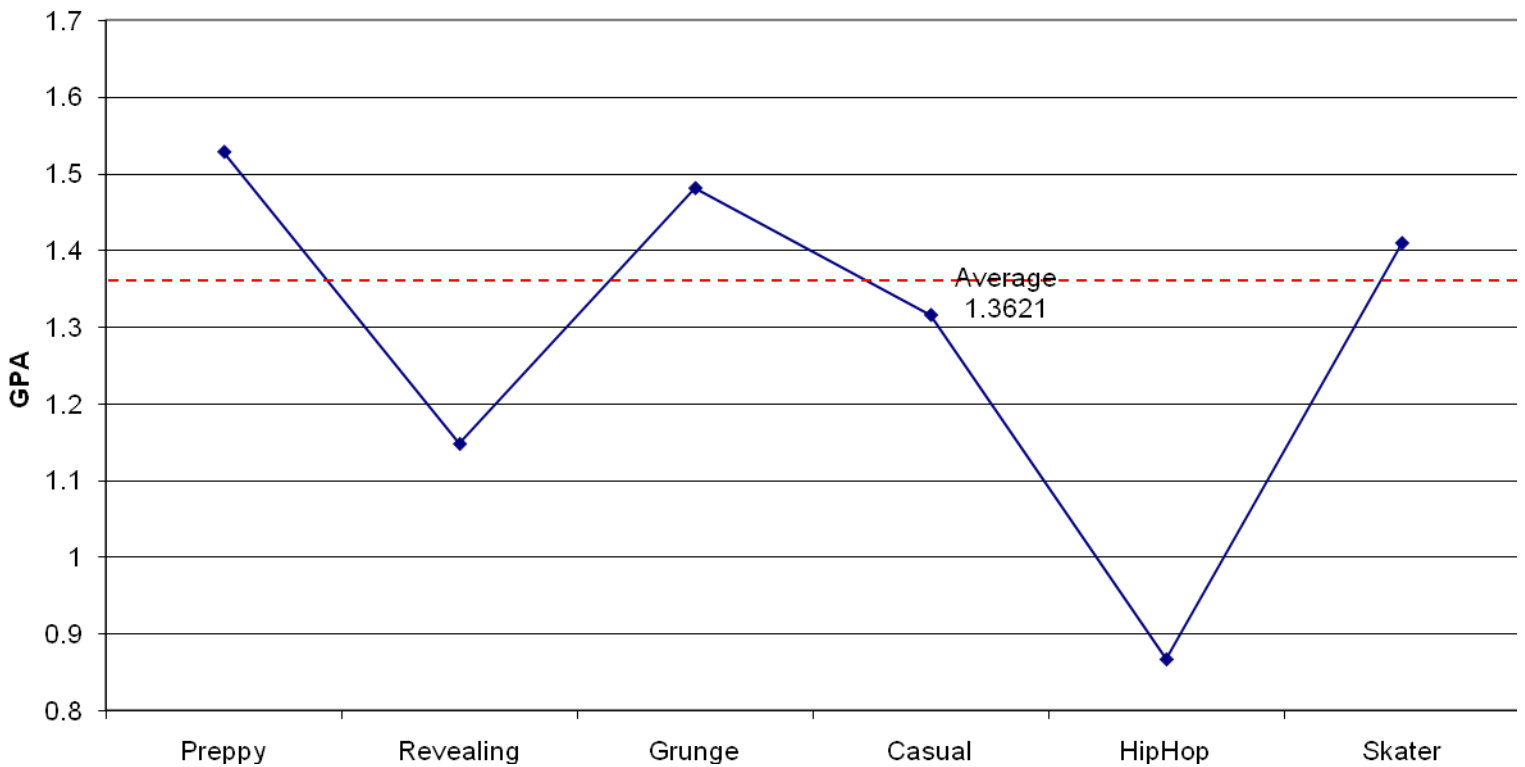


Data from NWEA Normative Assessments

Academic data from Northwest Evaluation Associates shows insignificant gains in all areas, MEAP results concur. We also did a survey where we asked students the type of dress styles in our school, then as a staff we categorized students into each type using the definitions gathered from students. We compared that to individual grades over a period of time. The hypothesis of this research was to correlate that students who dressed well got better grades. We found this hypothesis was untrue and that our grades were very poor overall. At this point we knew that we had to make radical changes in our school and prove that our students can achieve higher standards.

Dress Styles Survey

Average GPA per Fashion Category



Needs Assessment Summary

The common concern with every group that we surveyed was communication in some way. Using that information we implemented a tremendous research campaign and Professional Development opportunities. We began with *Failure Is Not an Option* by Alan M. Blankstein this helped to gain ideas on the concept that all students can and will succeed. This did not resolve our issue there was still a missing link and as a staff we pondered and struggled with issues of self-esteem, motivation, and teaching/learning styles. What we found through open discussions that it is not what we communicate but how it is communicated. Some students were bored by some staff presentations of academic content while others listened intently to the same presentation. This did not relate to learning styles, self-esteem, or academic abilities. We believe that the problem goes beyond those boundaries. We used research from Dr. Taibi Kahler called Process Communication Model (PCM) and discovered that if we communicate with students based on their personality we can meet their needs in the classroom and in the community.

We know that student retention, learning styles, classroom behavior, absenteeism, past academic success and performance standards are just some of the challenges we face daily. In order to become a positive influence on student behavior and academic success we must better understand the students we deal with daily. Using research from Prairie View Process our plan is to increase student “self-efficacy” or belief in oneself to improve academic achievement. Self-efficacy encompasses the abilities, self-esteem and intrinsic motivation issues we have been unsuccessfully dealing with in the past.

The following plan will provide the steps we will take to ensure that our staff, students, parents, and community are have the necessary skills to achieve greater academic competence. Using the research and techniques that are outlined above along with vigilant monitoring and evaluation of the plan and processes we will see greater improvement in student’s academic accomplishments and we will see continued growth in the self-efficacy.

Schoolwide Reform Strategies

Using the data gathered from the surveys the committee prioritized the following reform strategies and plans to implement each.

Outside Academic Support and Community Involvement/Career Awareness

BACHS welcomes the support of the community toward our school. We are especially proud of the relationship developed with the American Chemical Society. Our work experience coordinator has increased our association with local colleges tremendously. Yearly we have a minimum of 3 colleges in the school to speak with students on the courses they offer. We also attend the career exploration expo at our local community colleges. The number of mentors that come in and work directly with students has also increased with several from the Masonic Temple. Mentors have also been assisting in Social Studies by relating their personal stories that reflect history. Many of these mentors have also donated a large number of books to our library.

Using data to assist in developing academic strategies

The teaching staff will receive the raw data of students levels after each testing period which is typically twice per year. They will also be provided comparison of multi-year progress reports in each curricular area tested. The administration will also use the data to design classes and schedules to divide students into level appropriate classes and discern students who may need additional support in any given subject area. Administration will also provide teachers with actual grade comparisons of their classes at the end of each semester. This data will be compared with previous semesters/years data allowing staff to assess which strategies and techniques worked best with our student population.

What we have found and need to focus on the most would be the students that are taking the ACT/MME tests this year. Especially those students who are struggling with the concepts that they will need to successfully complete the exams. These students will be identified using the data from NWEA and teacher oriented assessments. Our plan is to obtain a highly qualified para-professional to work with these students in small groups and/or individually

Enhancing the school environment

To enhance our school environment, BACHS has gone to great extent with research based programs and self-designed models that we believe will improve student achievement. We examined a variety of programs and found some that will fit the needs of our students, parents and staff. With communication being a major issued in our needs assessment, we are training our staff with Process Communication Model (PCM). This model was developed by Taibi Kahler and it has been used world-wide to assist with effective communication. From the PCM model another model was developed that is directed at effectively communicating with students. This model is called Process Teaching Model and was developed by Dr.'s Joe and Judy Pauley. Their research shows that when communicating with students to keep them

from distress or to motivate them to accomplish difficult tasks, they will learn at a much faster rate. combined with Conflict Resolution and Consensus building to give students a positive way to maneuver difficult situations and gain self respect, will result in higher academic gains.

The Process Teaching Model will be used in combination with a Conflict Resolution Process and Consensus Building Process developed by Bob Chadwick of Consensus Associates. These processes will give students the tools they need to effectively work through conflict and promote self-efficacy.. Our plan to evaluate student's self-efficacy will come from Prairie View Process Solutions. They have developed an assessment that will evaluate self-efficacy in students using a simple to understand tool called the Capabilities Awareness Profile.

The final piece of enhancement was developed by addressing some issues of our school. Using the data from the Dress Styles Survey, staff also noted that many students do not eat breakfast, and are not ready to accomplish the daily tasks of class work. To remedy this BACHS staff put together the "Corporate and College Model. Simply put, students will come to school as if they were going to work. Dressed appropriately and with the mindset that they will attend college. College is more defined as meaning attending college or trade school, joining the military or other career oriented path.

We so firmly believe that these processes and models will result in academic achievement that we applied for a Dissemination Grant from the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Charter Schools, to research and evaluate our data and compare it with other schools that have similar demographics as BACHS. We were extremely fortunate to be selected to receive this grant and are currently training the other schools and our staff on the processes.

School safety plan

Our safety plan which was developed with the assistance of the homeland security staff will be reviewed with students 4 times each year. BACHS will meet all state requirements for drills and lockdown procedures then allow for staff and student input on the effectiveness of each drill. We also participate in a multi-school evacuation effort in collaboration with private and public school systems in our area.

The safety committee staff will also meet with parents and local Public Safety staff specifically to discuss the implementation of our safety plans and the roles that each person has in case of an emergency situation.

Planning and communicating expectations and results

On a yearly basis students will develop a plan in cooperation with their school advisor and parents. This plan will encompass appropriate behaviors, if necessary, and levels of academic achievement. This plan will be evaluated and revised on a yearly basis. Students and parents develop a educational development plan and revise yearly. The graduating students at BACHS will be part of a school developed class called "Senior Symposium". This class has specific requirements including a research paper, portfolio of their school achievements, and their plan for year 13 and 14 of their school careers. This combined information is then presented to parents and the Board of Directors of our school at a normal Board meeting.

We will also yearly have a special meeting for parents whose students have taken the MME/ACT test and the NWEA test for the purpose of understanding the scores and reading the results.

Highly Qualified Staff

All of our teaching staff is currently highly qualified as required by the No Child Left Behind Act. The two para-professionals on our staff are also highly qualified as one has a 4-year degree in education, and the other mastered the testing required in the Act. We will pursue highly qualified teachers in the future by offering a signing bonus if necessary. Typically being a small charter school we have little turnover and have never had a problem getting new staff members that are highly qualified.

Professional Development

Dues and conference fees to curricular entities in each of the curricular areas allowing staff to be aware of the most up to date and newest innovations in each subject area. These conferences will be paid for from Title IId.

Training will be provided on Process Communication Model to all staff from the Charter School Dissemination Grant from the Michigan Department of Education.

Science/chemistry curriculum training and other professional development will have financial support from grant provided by the American Chemical Society

Science/earth science curriculum will obtain additional training opportunities with funds for a grant provided by the AT&T Foundation; this grant also included funds for training in Consensus Building and Conflict Resolution.

Math subjects are being provided extensive professional development with a county wide grant called H2F2MPLC in collaboration with Central Michigan University.

Parent Involvement

In addition to the mandatory representation on committees and representative on our Board of Directors, we provide a wide range of opportunities for parents to be involved in our school. When a student is accepted into our school the student and parent meet with an administrator to go over the student handbook and expectations of the student and what the parent and student expect from our staff. This meeting leads into the new parent orientation which is offered every semester. At this orientation parents (and students if they choose to attend) are given information regarding: history of our school, our management style (open door policy, encouraging parents to visit any time) school safety plans, conflict resolution process, and many other informative topics.

Each semester we also hold Student Success Conferences, these are similar to Parent/Teacher Conferences, but we invite students also so that they can personally show parents their progress. A Curriculum Night is held yearly where parents can attend to hear about the individual classes students will be attending. We are also planning to offer parents training in on-line assignment and attendance information.

We have reformed our “skipping policy” to include parents. When a student skips a class, all of that student's classes are “closed” until their parent or other loved one can attend a meeting that gives the student the opportunity to explain his/her actions. This policy has reduced the skips in our school by over 80% in the last year.

Our plan for the future is to involve parents in training on Process Communication Model and how it can help them become better parents.

Community Involvement

We currently have extensive community relations with several organizations who assist our students in academic achievement and help improve our community. We have a variety of mentorship programs in place and are always looking for new connections in our community. The most current mentors are from the American Chemical Society, the Orton Gillingham Reading Program, and several Social Studies experts in our community.

BACHS is proud to be part of the Neighborhood Watch program and has hosted meetings at our building, and along with our yearly open-invitation to visit our building we have an excellent relationship with neighbors and nearby schools. Our staff and students are continually encouraged to participate in community events and we have an outstanding connection with the Public Safety and Court System in areas where we serve students.

Decision Making

From our beginning as a school all teachers have been included in the decision making process. Assessments have been no different. Currently all we use Northwest Evaluation Association to gain insight into new students' abilities and used this data to appropriately place them in classes. The data is distributed to all teachers in several formats allowing them to more effectively design lessons that will enable all students to achieve success. Several methods of in class assessments have been used by teachers to evaluate student's progress. These assessments will be used in determining eligibility for Targeted Assistance through Title I.

We are an individual charter school and decisions are made at staff meetings by gathering input from all and obtaining consensus.

Curriculum

Curriculum Alignment

All content area staff members represent Bay-Arenac Community High School in Bay-Arenac ISD curriculum development activities for English, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science and are actively involved in the area-wide generation and dissemination of HSCE's from the Michigan Department of Education. They consider developmental needs of students, as well as their instructional readiness, and develop unit and lesson plans, framed by the HSCE's, to guide instruction and increase academic skill attainment. Our school's Curriculum Council representative is our lead teacher who serves as a watchdog on curriculum alignment for the School Leader. She also recommends appropriate professional development activities toward that end. The School Leader evaluates each teacher, in part, on his/her ability to deliver HSCE-aligned instruction.

Curriculum Evaluation/Revision

Bay-Arenac Community High Staff is very involved with Bay-Arenac ISD curriculum consultants in identifying any changes or adaptations to the High School Content Expectations, and works with content area curriculum committees on a cyclical basis to make changes and improvements to existing curriculum documents, as well as to evaluation and recommend changes for the future, in order to meet the needs of 21st century students in an evolving curriculum. Most particularly, BACHS teachers, over the last two years, have been retrofitting our old curriculum to meet the demands of the rigorous Michigan Merit curriculum, under the watchful eye of our lead

teacher, who also serves as our Curriculum Coordinator. BACHS teachers meet weekly to adjust and monitor the instructional applications of any curricular modifications taking place, as our curriculum is more of a living entity than a document that stays static over the course of any given school year. Summative evaluation of teachers' work on curriculum takes place bi-annually in their evaluations by the school leader.

Alternative Assessment

Staff members at BACHS understand the need for authentic assessment to be utilized with our student population – especially with the recent training in the Process Communication Model, which has applications in lesson design and in authentic assessment evaluation. The expectation for all instructional staff is that authentic assessment, which transcends and augments traditional assessment mechanisms, will be used with all students in all grade levels – maintaining an equity of access and assurances of accountability.

Student selection process for Title I

Students are evaluated on academic achievement through the use of both common metric assessments (MME and NWEA tests) and teacher-constructed context-bound assessments. Context-bound assessments are both formative and summative in nature, and guide instruction at Bay-Arenac Community High School. High School Content Expectations at each grade level, and in each content area, are the expected benchmarks of BACHS student achievement. Students with the lowest scores on these assessments in combination with data from Staff Interventionists; conflict resolutions and social work services data, show us the students that are most at-risk for failure and are determined eligible for Title I services.

Academic Achievement

Technology is one of the most well used tools to assist in the education of our students. With the assistance of the many grants we have received every core academic subject uses technology in different fashions. Presentation software is a skill all students will learn and use in many classes. The basic production tools are also necessary in every academic area.

With the assistance of the Bay-Arenac ISD Curriculum Coordinator each of the following strategies for academic improvement are aligned with the benchmarks of the Michigan Core Curriculum and the BACHS curriculum.

English Language Arts

Goal: To increase Reading and Language Usage Scores on the NWEA by 30%

After analyzing data from MME and ACT and NWEA it was determined by staff that writing skills need to be addressed. English Language Arts staff has and will continue to be provided quality Professional Development from a variety of sources including Bay-Arenac ISD, Michigan Association of Public Schools Academies, and Saginaw Valley State University. We will incorporate the model “Writers Workshop” using the 6 traits of writing. BACHS will provide substitutes from Title IId for staff to attend workshops and receive guidance from the Bay-Arenac ISD writing specialist and include students in writing workshops provided by this resource.

Mathematics

Goal: To increase NWEA Math scores by 30%

BACHS is currently working with Central Michigan University H2F2MPLC grant project and receiving intensive professional development along with access to internet based instruction, Gizmo projects and several other resources. The purpose of this grant is to design a community-based math research team to develop programs that are research-based and statistically sound. We are implementing the resources and techniques from H2F2MPLC to achieve greater results on ACT/MME and NWEA tests. Staff is continually evaluating the achievement gains in math to the other schools involved in project and gathering other successful ideas. Our math teacher is working with teaching mentors provided by grant to obtain other strategies relating to subject content.

Science

Goal: To increase scores on NWEA by 25%

BACHS has developed a great relationship with the American Chemical Society who are assisting in doing a variety of classroom and school wide projects with chemistry. We are also part of an initiative, funded by the ACS to collaboratively develop a multi-county Science Curriculum. Science teachers are being provided with professional development through ACS along with two other area charter schools as part of a community effort to improve science teaching strategies. An additional grant was received from ACS to video tape actual lab chemistry experiments done by actual scientists in real laboratories with the intent to distribute the videos to other schools. The ACS has and will continue to provide many professionals to mentor our students at our school.

The science staff also will begin an experiential learning of Earth Science provided by funds from AT&T grant. These funds from this grant will purchase the equipment to assist in water quality assessments, weather forecasting and wildlife rescue efforts. Title IId will assist in providing professional development for the science conference.

Social Studies

BACHS will provide students with more hand-on projects to assist in learning the required benchmarks in Social Studies. Implementation of technology into the curriculum will be a major focus in this area. The projects will include internet based research and reporting, along with student created multimedia presentations.

Additional Assistance

All students have a 7th period on their schedules as long as a student is meeting the guidelines of each academic class they may leave early or finish after 6th hour. If they are falling behind they have the option of being placed into the 7th hour class period. All of our teachers planning period is during this time so that they are available to any student that needs additional support. Some students, due to disciplinary reasons or by request of parent are placed into the 7th hour as a mandate.

We also have a variety of tutoring options available for students. They can obtain a pass to the resource room where the coordinator can assist them in with class work. When a student has a specific area of difficulty they can be referred to the Plato learning system to help them obtain the

skills they lack to complete a required course. (if a student in a math class has difficulty with dividing fractions, they can be placed in the computer lab with programming designed to assist them in remediating the skills necessary to complete the required math class)

Throughout the school year our students are given many opportunities to work with mentors in the community. They range from job shadowing to actually working with technicians on a job site. This program has been highly successful and we are attempting to secure additional mentors to work with our students.

Each student has the option of signing up for additional courses or credit recovery in the computer lab using the Computer Assisted Instruction program called Plato. The courses offered with this system are aligned with the Michigan Curriculum Benchmarks and cover all of the Core Curriculum courses.

Obtain a new staff position, using Title I funds, to assist targeted students that will be taking the ACT/MME testing and that qualify for Title I services. This position will help students in test taking skills then provide assessments and prescriptive educational plans that will support students in achieving higher scores on the tests. This position will also coordinate with parents as to how they can help their child achieve greater success in their educational experience.

Yearly our students will attend local community colleges to tour campuses and learn about courses available and how to register. Several colleges and universities visit our campus each year to provide students with information on their courses.

Review Process

This plan will be reviewed frequently at our staff meetings to be sure that the needs of the students being serviced and the goals of the plan are met. The NWEA tests and ACT/MME scores will reflect the success of the goals for academics. A reduction in the number of conflict resolutions along with the Capabilities Awareness Profiles will show the success of the Process Communication Model. All data will be gathered and distributed to the staff and interested parents students and community members for evaluation of the plan. Changes and adaptations will be made to this school improvement in accordance with the data.

Implement Process Communication Model	Pre and Post CAP profiles, reduction in the number of conflict resolutions
English Language Arts	Pre and Post NWEA assessment scores
Mathematics	Pre and Post NWEA assessment scores
Science	Pre and Post NWEA assessment scores
Social Studies	Staff designed pre and post assessments will be developed

All other short term goals will be evaluated yearly by the School Improvement Team and the plan modified as necessary.