

**Transylvania County Schools  
2012-2014 School Improvement Plan  
Section 6 Mid-Point Report**

**School: Brevard High School**

**Principal: Jason Ormsby**

**Date: December 16, 2013**

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**Mission and Vision**

**Mission Statement:**

Believe in Education, Honor All People, and Succeed in Life

**Vision Statement:**

Brevard High School's vision for the future is that the school will continue its long tradition of excellence and will be viewed both as a model school in our state and as a central point of pride in our community. The school itself is a community of stakeholders that fully supports each student in his or her academic and personal growth. Each year, every student exceeds goals in all measurable outcomes. Staff members work collaboratively to support student learning goals and

to provide high-quality classroom instruction that is relevant to learners at all levels. All students will graduate from high school and do so confident that they are well-prepared for the future. Furthermore, the community at large will rest assured that our graduates are leaders who will guide us into a promising future.

### **Introduction: General Comments**

Over the last five years Brevard High School's quest to be perceived as a "school of excellence in the eyes of the community" has yielded a number of successes such as being awarded the title of "honor school of excellence" for the 2009-2010 academic year, for 2010-2011 BHS earned recognition for having exceeded standards required by the federal government for "high growth" and was also awarded the title of "school of distinction" by the NC State Board of Education/Department of Public Instruction. For the 2011-2012 academic year, BHS achieved at a level of 90.4% proficiency; however, primarily because BHS did not meet expectations due to a slight decline in the five-year cohort graduation percentage and our inability to meet growth targets in English I and Algebra I End-of-Course exams, BHS received no recognition even though it met all federal targets.

With the advent of the 2012-2013 school year, the North Carolina ABC Accountability Results were to be reported using a new set of more stringent requirements that not only incorporated new growth figures but included a revised set of End-of-Course Exams, WorkKeys testing, a new Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rate, and an entirely new measure of student performance that utilized the ACT test in order to determine the "College Readiness" of all high school juniors in North Carolina. For BHS, the new accountability model results were mixed. While it exceeded the rest of the state with respect to the ACT Minimum Composite Score (BHS: 76.1%, State Average: 58.5%), ACT WorkKeys Score (BHS: 78%, State Average: 67.3%), the 4-Year Cohort Graduation rate (BHS: 90.6%, State Average: 82.5%), 5-Year Cohort Graduation rate (BHS: 87.8%, State Average: 83.1%), and met all 15 Federal Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) targets (100%); it met only 34 out of 42 (81%) State AMO Targets, which along with a score in the performance composite of 56.3% proficient on all EOG/EOC tests combined, means that BHS just missed meeting expected growth (-.24%).

Viewed cumulatively, these numbers reveal that BHS exceeded statewide performance in a number of areas, and met all of the Federal AMO Targets, but that it still has a significant amount of work to do with respect to meeting and exceeding expected growth estimates and State AMO Targets. The emphasis on student academic growth, rather than measures of student proficiency in a given subject area, means that the new school accountability model is analyzing individual and aggregate student performance in an entirely different manner from the way that performance has been measured over the last ten years. Generally, and as a caveat to the foregoing analysis, years in which a new orientation in testing or a new series of standardized tests are introduced tend to have a negative impact on individual student scores and, concomitantly, the aggregate scores of individual schools. A publicly available overview of the

data concerning BHS' performance that employs the measures contained in the new accountability model and that provides a detailed look at the selected aggregate data found above may be found online at the following address: <http://www.ncaccountabilitymodel.org/>.

This summary of BHS' performance data brings us to an analysis of the five goals established in the 2012-2014 School Improvement Plan, which has as its primary purpose enhancing student growth both personal and academic, encouraging student achievement, and cultivating the perception that BHS is an "honor school of excellence" and a "central point of pride in the community."

### **Progress Report and Summary of Results**

#### **• Goal 1: Globally Competitive Students**

The district's first strategic priority states, "Transylvania County Schools will produce globally competitive students." Our goal at BHS is students will meet or exceed proficiency goals in all measurable academic outcomes and graduate from high school -- college or career ready. To achieve this goal, six action steps were developed.

**Goal 1 focuses on producing globally competitive students which BHS has defined as all students will meet or exceed proficiency goals in all measurable academic outcomes and graduate from high school, college, or career ready. Six action steps were created as indicators to show effectiveness.**

#### **Action Strategy 1**

**BHS will develop a school wide preparatory strategy for the suite of ACT tests that BHS administers -- the PLAN, ACT and WorkKeys assessments.**

BHS currently administers the PLAN test to all 10th graders, the ACT to all 11th graders and the Work Keys to all 12th graders. All 10th graders take the PLAN test in October. Upon their return, the results will be distributed and discussed to help students and parents interpret the results. The PLAN results indicate their current progress, if they are on track to achieve their future goals, and how they can improve. Their junior year, all juniors take the ACT test in March. This test indicates college readiness and can be reported for college admission. Some teachers have implemented study sessions prior to this test. According to the 2012-2013 ACT data, 76% met the minimum composite of 17. In classroom guidance, students learn the importance of this test, the structure of the test itself, and what their scores mean. They are also encouraged to take the test again during their senior year to improve their scores. Last year, of the seniors who took the WorkKeys test, approximately 78% scored a silver or better. Using this suite of tests given at these grade levels, BHS students will continue to develop yearly to become career and college ready.

### **Action Strategy 2**

**PLTs, iPLTs, and staff meetings will be used to collaborate, create, and catalogue Best Practices to facilitate investigative and independent learning.**

Each department meets weekly as PLTs (professional learning team). Goals are created annually within each PLT. Staff meetings are held as needed. Student Services also meet twice a year with each department to collaborate.

### **Action Strategy 3**

**Student Services will educate students of requirements of graduation and their individual progress towards graduation in relation to their college and career goals.**

Beginning in 2012, all students meet with Student Services in the fall for classroom guidance. The requirements for graduation are reviewed each year in each grade level. Students create and continue to reflect on their four year plan. The students also investigate their post secondary plans each year focusing on exploring, planning, researching and acting on their desired path after high school. As students progress year to year they will increase their knowledge of the requirements for graduation and the connection of graduation and developing their post secondary plans. The classroom guidance is designed to provide guidance curriculum aligned with the ASCA National Model and NC Guidance Essential Standards. In 2011-2012, the 4 year graduation cohort rate was 86.2% which has increased to 90.6%. The 5 year graduation cohort rate was 87.0% and has also increased to 87.8%.

### **Action Strategy 4**

**BHS will develop formative assessments, provide interventions, and inform students of their progress.**

Throughout the 2012-2013 school year, formative assessments and interventions were discussed in bi-weekly staff meetings. Classroom teachers are continuing to assess their students using formative assessments to identify their progress at multiple checkpoints. Progress reports are given every quarter and with the new Power School system, it will soon be possible for students and parents to access grades at any time through a parent portal.

### **Action Strategy 5**

**BHS will develop a school-wide plan to address soft skills / workplace readiness.**

The SC (Steering Committee) and SIT have explored and discussed how this could be employed throughout the school. It has been stated that teachers could implement some activities and lessons to address career readiness. Also, through the classroom guidance lessons, career readiness could be included each year. It has been identified that the importance of soft skills and workplace readiness is needed for all students. In SC meetings and among staff, the ways

BHS could implement this step is being explored and updated continuously. In classroom guidance, it will be an added component to each grade level in accordance to the college/career portion.

#### **Action Strategy 6**

**Brevard High School, subject to the availability of funds and identified instructional needs, would transfer funds from its State textbook allotment for the purchase of instructional supplies, instructional equipment, or other classroom materials pursuant to the provisions of NCGS 115C-105.25(b)(2).**

Due to funding not being forthcoming, BHS utilizes the 1:1 initiative to provide supplemental materials for the classroom. While textbooks have not been purchased in recent years, the teachers have continued to accommodate this challenge with technology and other sources.

Overall, our goal of producing globally competitive students can continue to be illustrated through our test scores, graduation rate, and direction of our students post high school.

#### **• Goal 2: 21st Century Professionals**

**Brevard High School staff members will work collaboratively to support student learning goals and to provide high-quality instruction that is relevant to learners at all levels.**

**Action Strategy 1: Professional Learning Teams (PLTs), Interdepartmental Professional Learning Teams (IPLTs), and staff meetings will be used to collaborate, create, and catalogue Best Practices to facilitate investigative and independent learning.**

During the 2011-2012 school year, BHS implemented a SMART lunch program to allow students to receive extra help, to have enrichment opportunities, to attend club meetings, and to make up time for absences. While SMART lunch provides copious opportunities for students, it also carves out time for teachers to collaborate, reflect, and refine teaching practices to ensure student engagement, achievement, and success. Now each department makes up a Professional Learning Team (PLT), and these PLTs meet once a week to create departmental goals to promote student learning in a more cohesive and collaborative way.

While not every department created a formal list of Best Practices, most departments used PLT time to brainstorm, discuss, and create activities, procedures, and grading practices that will positively impact the learning outcomes of all BHS students. Here is a brief list of what each department has been doing in their respective PLTs:

#### Guidance:

- 3 foci for students: academic; personal / social; college / career readiness.
- Classroom guidance for every grade, each with a grade-appropriate instruction and focus.

- A significantly revised registration timeline to give parents and students more time to make informed decisions about students' high school experience, including a Curriculum Fair (Nov), parent presentation for 8th grade students, a tour of BHS for rising 9th graders.
- Worked with BMS to create a program, Everything High School, to further ease the transition from middle school to high school.

#### Math:

- created "Back to Basics" weekly units to help students do math without calculators
- created common assessments
- reviewed and refined Math 1 pacing guides for all teachers
- collected resources for new standards not contained in textbooks

#### Science:

- created a Moodle repository accessible to all district teachers, focused on new NC Science Essential Standards
- worked to improve students' competence in scientific literacy as measured by the science section of the ACT
- generated common rationale and instructional methods for new honors science curriculum

#### English:

- created common assessments for all grade levels, including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry assessments
- work continues on reviewing and revising Senior paper rubric to reflect discussions between BHS and Brevard College
- revised the grading system among all department members, especially focused on the new Common Exams and student research papers
- collaborated with district English teachers to create standardized, general pacing guides and a Moodle repository for materials.
- created and reviewed Best Practices for vocabulary instruction

#### Foreign Language:

- worked diligently to align new standards with "I Can" statements so that students can self-assess their learning
- created a consistent grading policy between French and Spanish

#### CTE:

- working to create a database / booklet of Best Practices
- critique one another's assessments and classroom management

#### Social Studies:

- coordinating honors course portfolios
- exploring different elective options for the department
- working to create a definitive pacing and content guide for US History

#### Fine Arts:

- recording all rehearsals and performances; emailing them to students for critiques
- Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator are used for graphic design

#### PE:

- finding ways to track calories burned during exercise
- creating a common rubric for grading

From this list, it is easy to see that BHS teachers have benefitted greatly from their respective PLTs. Also, there is clearly a common thread that runs through all these myriad activities--a focus on teacher growth and, in turn, a focus on student learning. Furthermore, in reference to Action Strategy 2, many PLTs are using their time to create common rubrics and similar, if not identical, grading philosophies, which may lead to a more aligned grading philosophy for the entire school.

In addition to the work that each department does during PLT time, BHS has also started conversations interdepartmentally, which occur once a month during IPLTs (Interdepartmental Professional Learning Teams). Last year this time was used to discuss the new teacher evaluation system created by the NC legislature and NC Department of Public Instruction. Because of the monumental changes, this exercise took up a significant number of IPLT meetings; however, this allowed for district and school level personnel to collaborate in discussing teaching, student learning, and how teachers can continue to improve instruction and their methods for doing so, thereby being evaluated fairly. Some of these meetings were also focused on reflecting and revising both individual teacher and school-wide grading philosophies, though this will be discussed under Action Strategy 2, as well as the use of staff meetings for this same issue.

#### **Action Strategy 2: Examine different grading philosophies to create an overall philosophy for grading practices at BHS**

The 2012-2014 SIP asked that we, as a faculty, begin learning about, discussing, and creating a grading philosophy for ourselves and perhaps for each department and even for our entire school. BHS' previous principal, Mr. Jeremy Gibbs, facilitated eight of these conversations, using videos by Rick Wormeli, a former teacher and national educational consultant, and various activities to help us better understand how procedural rules can negatively affect student grades and, in some cases, their learning outcomes.

A survey of faculty attitudes concerning these conversations and activities indicated there were some mixed feelings about the exercise; however, a majority believed they were helpful and many departments continued, and/or would be willing, to continue these conversations. Fifty-four percent of the respondents to the survey reported that they were somewhat satisfied or satisfied with these conversations and 30% were neutral. Even more telling, 82% of respondents reported they found the activities somewhat helpful or helpful in reflecting on and refining their own grading philosophies and practices. The previous percentages, combined with the 69% of the faculty wanting to continue these discussions, show the BHS faculty continues to be interested in learning, exploring, discussing, and refining individual, departmental, and institutional grading philosophies. Finally, a majority, 55% believe these activities should occur during PLT meetings, while 18% want them during IPLT meetings and 27% prefer faculty meetings.

In conversations and through the survey results, we see that some departments created common grading practices, if not overarching philosophies. For example, Social Studies and English created department-wide grading practices. Social studies did so by continuing the conversations started by Mr. Gibbs and generating consensus during their PLT meetings, and English created a common breakdown of grades regarding research papers, Senior Projects, homework, and a general list of Best Practices for grading. Generally speaking, our conversations and activities benefited a plurality of the faculty, with several departments trying to find continuity among grades and classes in order to ensure fairness, to provide reasonable opportunities for students to improve their grades, and to alleviate students' confusion when promoted to the next grade or class.

Link to grading philosophy survey results:

[https://docs.google.com/a/tcsnc.org/forms/d/15K4NwUwJMkTO-7XnijzzZDTx-8M23OY\\_-HEROhrbVvk8/viewanalytics](https://docs.google.com/a/tcsnc.org/forms/d/15K4NwUwJMkTO-7XnijzzZDTx-8M23OY_-HEROhrbVvk8/viewanalytics)

### **Action Strategy 3: Mini-workshops organized around PLTs to provide support for literacy instruction**

During the 2011-2012 school year, BHS tested every student's reading abilities to determine their personal literacy competencies, as well as to gain a better understanding of the general reading levels of all BHS students. This test revealed that a significant portion of BHS students read below their potential and that BHS faculty needed, and continues to need, strategies for improving students' reading comprehension and fluency.

Because of these findings, several BHS faculty members attended a hybrid course dealing with basic strategies to improve literacy. This course was based off of Joan Sedita's *Keys to Literacy*. Then, each of the attendees worked with a department to explain, discuss, and provide materials to assist in using these strategies on an early release day. The topics covered included top-down



topic webs, two-column notes, categorizing, text structure, and question generation. The teacher leaders who delivered this workshop felt the strategies were beneficial for student learning, easy to implement, and grounded firmly in recent literacy research.

Link to Keys to Literacy activities, worksheets, and templates:

<https://drive.google.com/a/tcsnc.org/#folders/0B7eGkFn9xQpcNjgzd2FtQVdyZEE>

#### **Next Steps:**

- Continued learning and leadership either from county level, school admin, or teacher leaders
- Conversations, survey to determine percentage of teachers using some of these strategies
- Need to administer the literacy tests again and evaluate the data
- Media Center Coordinator plans on working initially with Biology and World History to begin a Silent, Sustained Reading program (SSR). MC will locate and procure sets of books for each subject and classes will meet for 30-45 minutes per week for reading. After a specified number of sessions, students will engage in activities (reflection journal, discussions, etc.) to enhance reading comprehension.

#### **Action Strategy 4: Meaningful technology integration (support, collaboration, and innovation)**

Due to changing technological expectations from institutions of higher learning, to the nation's educational indicators, particularly the implementation of 21st Century Skills, and to the 1:1 county initiative, BHS recognizes the importance of providing the best instruction possible, using technology as a teaching aid, research tool, and a way for students to create and deliver non-traditional assessments and projects.

To achieve these goals, the county has granted a full time IT position to BHS, and teachers have access to troubleshooting and CEU opportunities. Having a full time IT person allows teachers to have tech support at nearly any point of the school day, making online teacher activities run more smoothly, with the advice of a trained professional. In addition to onsite tech support, Chris Williams and Erik Wahus provide CEU opportunities every semester. Last year, the IT department provided 3 CEU opportunities and offers at least one each semester to facilitate teacher learning outcomes by promoting student engagement, media literacy, and access to a wide range of online applications. Combining the numbers from last spring and this fall, 18 BHS faculty received technology CEU credits. IT generally facilitates instruction by the faculty when they employ some of the following applications:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Google Drive</li> <li>● movie maker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Discovery Ed</li> <li>● Microsoft Office</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● wevideo</li> <li>● Moodle</li> <li>● Campus Pack</li> <li>● SAS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NCWise</li> <li>● PowerTeacher</li> <li>● photo story</li> </ul>
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Working within departments, mainly in PLTs, and in conjunction with the MC, individual BHS departments frequently employ technology to engage student learning, to encourage investigative and independent learning, and to assess student growth. Also, BHS uses technology to review school-wide trends in attendance and discipline. The following technologies, and the skills gained from them, are used in nearly every department to enhance the learning experience:

- College / Career Readiness and exploratory websites to prepare students for the future.
- Data tracking for attendance and disciplinary issues.
- Moodle 2
- Desmos Calculators
- Various presentation technologies
  - Prezi
  - Google Presentation
  - Slide Rocket
- Student research
  - media literacy
  - engage individual student curiosity
- Video lessons and the flipped classroom approach
- Online virtual science labs
- Scientific interfaces
- Student collaboration via Google Docs
- Distance learning technologies
- Quizlet (testing)
- Elements (testing)
- Google forms for surveys
- Movie Maker for commercials and newscasts
- Elmo
- Tutorials online
- Tablets instead of a mouse
- AutoCAD (2D drafting)
- Inventor and Revit (3D modeling)
- 3D printing

### **Action Strategy 5: Collaborative new vision for Media Center**

With the introduction of the 1:1 program by Transylvania County schools and students' continuous access to the internet with all of its myriad resources, it became necessary for the BHS faculty and Media Center Coordinator to refine the services provided by the Media Center (MC). While the MC formerly served as a computer lab, research center, and library, some of these roles would, and have, certainly changed. For these reasons, faculty and MC personnel are working with faculty to create a Media Center that meets the changing needs of both faculty and students.

Therefore, the MC has begun offering its space as a quiet place for students to work during lunch and offers individual help to students, focusing primarily on researching skills and technology assistance, with an average of 28 students per day during SMART lunch. Furthermore, MC personnel conduct IT and MC surveys at the beginning and ending of each school year, as well as attend each department's PLT meetings each month, to better understand faculty and student needs their services. Mr. Durant and Mr. Wahus constantly discuss MC decisions with faculty to make sure they are meeting faculty expectations, as well as offering new and innovative teaching resources, regarding purchasing new equipment and software, changing the MC layout to promote its new vision, and providing instruction and troubleshooting for students and teachers.

Link to Media Center student usage data:

<https://docs.google.com/a/tcsnc.org/spreadsheets/ccc?key=0ArPPe4ewyzqhdGlnWi1LbmhpQ3g1ekRoWUx4Rk1pVkE&usp=sharing#gid=0>

In short, BHS faculty and administration have carved out time during the school day to further teachers' knowledge of new strategies to support student learning. Whether during SMART lunch, IPLTs, or hybrid workdays, it is clear that administrators, on both the school and county levels, have encouraged teacher leadership and have made the necessary decisions to support it. We hope that this trust and professional respect will continue to allow teachers to research, explore, discuss, implement, and share well-researched strategies in order to encourage student *and* teacher growth.

#### **• Goal 3: Healthy, Responsible Students**

The district's third priority states that, "**Transylvania County Schools' students will be healthy and responsible.**" To implement this priority in our school, Brevard High School has articulated the following goal: "**BHS students are provided with the tools and support necessary to make positive decisions and BHS graduates are well-prepared to be productive members of society.**" To accomplish this goal, BHS has identified three action strategies.

**Action Step 1 requires staff to track the discipline incidents and number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions to ensure a decrease in incident rates.**

Staff will use incident reports to continually update data on the number of suspensions. During the 2012-2013 academic year, administration at Brevard High School issued both In-School Suspension and Out-of-School Suspension 110 times. Brevard High School aims to decrease the collective number of In-School Suspensions and Out-of-School Suspensions by 10% for the 2013-2014 school year. This means Brevard High School would report no more than 99 issued suspensions for the academic year. For the purpose of presenting meaningful data, we have combined the number of In-School and Out-of-School suspensions because of an administrative change that has resulted in a greater number of students assigned to In-School Suspension rather than Out-of-School Suspension. To reduce the number of suspensions issued this year, administration and the In-School Suspension staff member have made several changes to the structure of suspension. Firstly, fewer Out-of-School suspensions have been issued to ensure that the time students spend in suspension is both monitored and meaningful. The In-School Suspension staff member works with students assigned to suspension about healthy choice making and safe ways to channel negative emotions such as frustration and anger. Looking forward, Brevard High School's school counselors could help reduce the number of suspensions by providing small group counseling for students identified as at-risk for poor choices and unhealthy behaviors. In these groups, students will practice skills needed to express frustration appropriately.

**Action Step 2 requires staff to implement the Transylvania County School's attendance plan.**

The attendance plan, which can be found at:

([http://www.transylvania.k12.nc.us/board\\_of\\_education/policies\\_regulations/student\\_attendance\\_policy/](http://www.transylvania.k12.nc.us/board_of_education/policies_regulations/student_attendance_policy/)) aims to achieve an increase in daily attendance. Brevard High School aims to increase daily attendance to a 97.3% average daily attendance for the 2013-2014 academic year. During the 2012-2013 school year, Brevard High averaged 95% daily attendance. This plan requires that students miss no more than five class periods in any given class without making up time to receive credit for that course. A student must make up the amount of time that they have missed in the course, beyond 5 classes, in order to receive credit for that class. Students are responsible for scheduling make-up time with their teachers. Students may only make up time for a specific class with the course's teacher, unless that teacher grants permission for the student to make up time with another staff member. The school advocate is responsible for tracking attendance and making contact with students and parents when students exceed the five class period limit. Currently, parents/guardians are contacted whenever a student misses a class period/school day. Parents/guardians are mailed a letter when their student misses 3, 5, and 5 days in a particular class. In the 2012-2013 academic year, 22 lost credit for a course they would have earned a passing grade for had they satisfied the attendance/time recovery requirement. This

year, we hope to reduce that number by 10% to 19. Brevard High School intends to decrease that number by meeting with all students who have missed 5 or more days. Currently, student services staff and administration meets with all students who miss five or more classes in any given period. When meeting with students, staff help students formulate a plan to make-up owed time. Additionally, students are encouraged to attend SMART lunch tutorials to make up time owed. The structure of SMART lunch allows students time to eat and socialize for half of the allotted lunch time and attend SMART lunch tutorials offered by teachers in different departments during the other half of the lunch period. Students are afforded make-up time and additional academic support during tutorials. Looking forward, Brevard High School teachers will keep an attendance log for each of their classes. Students will be responsible for signing the attendance log for each class period they miss when they return to class after an absence. Thus, students are encouraged to take responsibility for each class period they miss and have a greater awareness about their collective number of absences.

**Action Step 3 mandates Brevard High School to offer programs for students and parents to address risky behaviors and arm students to make wise decisions in potentially dangerous situations as well as promote character development.**

Brevard High School has several programs designed to fulfill this mission. In student's freshman year, they are required to participate in a semester-long program called Safe Dates, where they learn skills needed to develop positive relationships with peers, are empowered as bystanders to confront bullying, and identify signs of potentially unsafe relationships. Each year, the student services staff provides classroom guidance to each grade level to empower students to formulate goals and learn decision making skills relevant to their academic year. Student services staff provides education in the personal/social, academic, and career domains during each delivery. Each year during classroom guidance, student services provides classes with the four year planning model. Here, students are encouraged to "think backwards;" meaning that students will identify future career goals first then work backwards and pinpoint what steps they must take in order to realize that aspiration. The documents generated by students in classroom guidance identify goals, decision making, and career aspirations. These documents are stored in portfolios maintained by student serves and serve as evidence of student accountability and responsibility in making wise choices. Student services will additionally provide individual counseling support for students at-risk to make poor choices. Staff is encouraged to refer students at-risk for making poor academic or behavioral choices to individual counseling. School counselors will track the number of students referred for individual counseling support and offer individuals assistance in developing coping skills and decision making evaluation. Student services will train upperclassman leaders to facilitate informative freshman sessions during SMART lunch that provide students with skills necessary to succeed in high school to empower them with the tools to make decisions that will assist them in achieving their goals. The Mediation Center in Brevard will provide student mediators with the necessary training to facilitate healthy conflict resolution among contentious students. Student services will document

mediation training as well as the number of peer mediated sessions. Last year, 5 different conflicts were mediated by peer leaders. This year, peer leaders have designed a campaign to increase the number of referrals made to peer mediation. Brevard High School Peer Mediation Team has set an intention to double the number of conflicts mediated to 10 for the 2013-2014 academic year. Peer leaders are meeting individually with teachers to educate them about peer mediation and encourage them to sign a pledge promising to make appropriate referrals. Looking forward, Brevard High School would like to create a student advisory board to address bullying as part of a school wide effort. Here student leaders would pledge to demonstrate a commitment to improving the student climate of Brevard High. Students would be charged with educating peers about various elements of bullying, addressing sources of oppression within the school, and completing a bystander intervention course.

- **Goal 4: Leadership**

**Goal: BHS will be perceived as a model school that employs innovative instructional methods, utilizes effective assessment techniques, and analyzes relevant data in order to increase student achievement and enhance academic growth, which will be measured annually.**

The District's **fourth priority** states that "Leadership will guide innovation in Transylvania County Schools". Keeping this priority in mind and determining what this would look like in practice with "Leadership" being the central point of the priority, BHS developed a comprehensive goal that summarizes essentially what Brevard High School will be perceived to be -- a model school. The goal is written that, "BHS will be perceived as a model school that employs innovative instructional methods, utilizes effective assessment techniques, and analyzes relevant data in order to increase student achievement and enhance academic growth, which will be measured annually." This goal establishes that there is an expectation for what BHS will be, and how it will attain this goal.

The School Improvement plan includes 5 Action Strategies that will be implemented and evaluated. These strategies are in tune with Goal one in that they are clearly established and are working towards the common goal of a model school that is guided by leadership.

The action strategies that were written include: first, provide teachers with exposure to new techniques and best practices; second, Student Services department will continue to keep students updated about their graduation requirements and will further educate students about college and career goals; third, Student Services Department will systematically analyze the relationship between course offerings, student interest, career/college readiness, and growth in student academic performance; fourth, Conduct periodic tests of student reading levels and literacy in classroom setting; and fifth, Staff will engage in PLT and IPLT meetings that have as their focus assisting students with becoming independent learners.

**Action Strategy 1: Provide teachers with exposure to new techniques and best practices.**

The first action strategy of “Provide teachers with exposure to new techniques and best practices,” was given a timeline to be organized during the remainder of the 2012 school year and to implement teacher walkthroughs and IPLT meetings beginning January 2013. Teachers at Brevard High School were given the opportunity to do classroom walkthroughs of teachers in different subjects. There was positive feedback from this process given the exposure to different teaching practices. Teachers found they were able to take what they learned from a teacher in a different discipline and adapt it to their own classroom. This gave them a broader understanding of the different teaching styles used in Brevard High School. It also offered teachers to be able to see areas where students they taught excelled in different classes, allowing the teachers to be able to relate to the student based on how they performed in a different class. Over the next year teachers and staff will continue to participate in IPLT meetings. The Administration and Student Services PLTs continue to meet weekly for their IPLT to discuss ongoing school related matters and student concerns.

**Action Strategy 2: Student Services department will continue to keep students updated about their graduation requirements and will further educate students about college and career goals**

The second action strategy stating that, “Student Services department will continue to keep students updated about their graduation requirements and will further educate students about college and career goals,” was set to begin in January 2013. Student Services did implement this through classroom guidance with all grade levels and will continue classroom guidance each year. Student Services meets with every student through classroom guidance during the fall of each school year. Classroom guidance has developed into a comprehensive program that every student participates in and builds upon the previous year. Students are exposed to different elements of Academic, Social/Emotional, and Career guidance. Through Classroom Guidance students are encouraged to set goals and determine what actions they will need to take to reach their goals. This year Student Services has implemented a portfolio for classroom guidance that students will contribute to throughout the four years they participate in classroom guidance. The portfolio will be used each year and will help students see their progression through high school in relation to their goals. Students will work on different elements each year that are related to academics, social and emotional, and career guidance. For the coming year Student Services will continue to evaluate the delivery and effectiveness of classroom guidance and adjust as needed. Student Services has already adjusted the format in which classroom guidance is delivered this year; from a traditional lecture to small groups. The change in delivery method has already proven to be more engaging and student response has indicated it is more effective.

**Action Strategy 3: Student Services Department will systematically analyze the relationship between course offerings, student interest, career/college readiness, and growth in student academic performance.**

The third Action strategy that, “Student Services Department will systematically analyze the relationship between course offerings, student interest, career/college readiness, and growth in student academic performance,” was given a timeline to start in January 2013 and would be evaluated by the continuation of existing services. Student Services does continually evaluate course offerings in relation to student interests and relevant job markets post graduation. Through BHS’s collaboration with BRCC, many different college courses have been offered in relation to new programs being offered at BRCC.

To ensure students are taking the correct courses, guidance counselors meet with all students during registration to determine what courses students need to take to fulfill graduation requirements and also what electives students are interested in taking. The guidance counselors also meet with all eighth grade students. In addition, students and parents are given a chance to schedule meetings with their respective counselor to determine four year plans.

Previously stated in Action Strategy 2, student services offers classroom guidance to all high school students. Students participate in classroom guidance throughout their entire high school career and learn about career and college goals, academics, social/emotional and career guidance.

**Action Strategy 4: Conduct periodic tests of student reading levels and literacy in classroom setting.**

The fourth action strategy, “Conduct periodic tests of student reading levels and literacy in classroom setting,” was set to be implemented during the current School Improvement Plan, 2012 - 2014. This Action Strategy indicates that staff will be provided with literacy training from the Director of the Media Center and the Administration. This Action strategy was carried out when all students were given a literacy test to gain an understanding of what literacy means at Brevard High School for the student body as a whole. It was determined that many students read below their potential. Because of these findings several BHS staff attended a hybrid course focusing on strategies for increasing literacy. The course was designed around Joan Sedita’s *Keys to Literacy*. Staff that attended the workshop then met with departments during an early release day to discuss what they learned. Topics included top-down topics webs, two column notes, categorizing, text structuring, and question generation. Teachers felt that these topics were beneficial.



**Action Strategy 5: Staff will engage in PLT and IPLT meetings that have as their focus assisting students with becoming independent learners.**

The final action strategy states that “Staff will engage in PLT and IPLT meetings that have as their focus assisting students with becoming independent learners.” This action strategy was set to be carried out during the 2012 -- 2014 School Improvement Plan and would be evaluated by ACT measure of student growth, other value added measures of student growth, and an improvement in the five-year cohort graduation rate. The ACT measure of student growth reflects the overall composite score by students. Given that the 2012-13 school year was the first year that the test was administered, and the only data available is from the 2012-13 school year, it is difficult to evaluate trends in student performance. 76.1% of Brevard High School Juniors scored a composite score of 17 or better. This score was above both the district and state composite score of 67.9 and 58.5. The percentage of students that scored above both the district and state averages is essentially the only data that can be compared. The 2013-14 school year will provide the opportunity to compare data and provide a better representation of where Brevard High School students stand relative to the district and the rest of the state and where they need to improve.

Brevard High School did see an improvement of the five-year cohort graduation rate. The 2011-12 school year five-year cohort graduation rate was 87.0% and the 2012-13 five-year cohort graduation rate was 87.8%. Brevard High School had a five-year cohort graduation rate that was slightly above both the district and state averages. The district reported a five year cohort graduation rate of 84.6 and the state reported a five-year cohort graduation rate of 83.1 The increase in the five-year cohort graduation rate is a direct result of efforts made by faculty and staff to assist students in completing high school. Early interventions, referrals to the county’s alternative school, Davidson River School, PEPs, attendance meetings, counseling, parent contacts, and many more efforts all contributed to an increase in the five-year cohort graduation rate. Brevard High School will continue to focus on all of the different kinds of interventions mentioned above, and will continue to evaluate how we use available resources, in school and online, for credit recovery both here and at Davidson River School.

**• Goal 5: 21st Century Systems**

The single priority of goal five of the 2012-2014 School Improvement Plan is that **“BHS will create systems and processes that effectively engage students, staff, families, and the community in the educational process so that the school becomes a central point of pride in the community.”** In pursuit of this goal, three primary action strategies were implemented. The first action strategy called for an analysis of the academic teams and processes within BHS in order to maximize efficiencies and streamline processes. The second action strategy was the continued cultivation of meaningful partnerships with Blue Ridge Community College and

Brevard College. The third strategy was to create and implement a strategic marketing plan for BHS that utilized available resources from the school and the community.

The **first action strategy** called for the administrative team at BHS to survey the staff in order to determine the needs of each academic department and to determine how each department would be able to structure their time during each day in order to maximize instructional time and to enhance the use of a Professional Learning Team (PLT) within each department. This process extends back over the last two-and-one-half years to the implementation of the SMART Lunch program, which initially was employed to enhance student academic growth and provide them with a time to get academic assistance that they might not be able to get outside of the regular school day. From there, with the input of the previous principal, Jeremy Gibbs, and the current principal, Jason Ormsby, the decision was made to reduce the number of mandatory faculty meetings from four or more per month, to one meeting per month or for meetings to take place on an as-needed basis. Presently, planning time for teachers is protected and meetings have been reduced to the point where efficiencies have maximized with respect to faculty meetings. Generally the principal meets with the instructional leadership team (the department heads and administrative staff) every other week. From there the department head interacts with the other members of their department in a weekly PLT meeting where current issues are discussed and issues of concern are raised. Restructuring the meeting process in this way has significantly reduced the amount of time that teachers spend in meetings where time was not being used either efficiently or effectively.

The **second action strategy** called for BHS to cultivate or extend meaningful partnerships with Brevard College and Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC). It was the belief of the School Improvement Team (SIT) that these partnerships could offer students at BHS a greater range of courses that would receive college credit and enable students to reduce the amount of time that they would actually need to complete their college degrees or to acquire training in certain job skills. With respect to the partnership with BRCC, students at BHS have the opportunity to participate in a Dual Enrolment program either through online classes, face-to-face classes at the Brevard Campus of BRCC, or face-to-face courses that are taught on the BHS campus like Mechatronics and Criminal Justice. These classes and others have been initiated over the last few years with the idea that BHS students, with some planning and forethought, could conceivably graduate from high school and transition to college as a junior. The reality is that very few high school students graduate and then actually enter college as a junior, but it is possible. Most are exposed to a number of college-level courses where they receive credit that will transfer to other colleges or they participate in a program that will ultimately prepare them for a career in a field such as automotive technology.

The partnership with Brevard College is much less developed than the one with BRCC. Since Brevard College is a private college, the cost of tuition, fees, and books tends to discourage the average BHS student from taking course at BC. As a consequence, discussions with BC about an

Early College program have not advanced nearly as far as the programs that link BHS students with BRCC. Thus, while there are a number of interactions between BHS and BC such as the grading of writing tests by BC students and teachers or BC education students coming to BHS to observe classes or to perform their student-teacher internships, it is not likely that the relationship will extend much further than it already does unless funding sources for BHS students to take classes at BC are found.

The **third action strategy** calls for BHS to create and implement a strategic marketing plan using available school and community resources. In essence, this strategy calls for BHS to “manage its brand” in Transylvania County. This will first need to be done by increasing student achievement and academic growth based upon the criteria measured by the new state accountability model and according to strategies contained in goals 1-4, second by providing the students at BHS with more opportunities to provide service to both the school and the community at large, and finally, by managing the perception of the school held by the community at large.

One of the most discussed aspects of managing the perception of BHS in the community begins with enhanced communication among its various stakeholders. The process of communication between the faculty and staff of BHS and the parents of current students as well as the parents of prospective students has been the central focus of this goal in the past year. Regular calls home by the principal, along with the principal’s blog, has served to keep more parents informed about important events occurring on the BHS campus or events that will be taking place in the near future. In addition, greater emphasis has been placed on teachers contacting parents early in the semester, either through some form of written communication (a note or e-mail) or via a phone call. Discussions conducted with parents and community members within the broad confines of the School Improvement Team meetings over the past 16 months generally highlighted the importance of the initial contact made by the school with the parent. For example, the teachers in the Social Studies department all send home some sort of written communication on the first day of classes each semester in which they provide the parents of their students with their contact information and request contact information from the parents as well as any information that the parents feel the teacher should be made aware of at the beginning of classes. This fosters an atmosphere in which the parents feel that they are partners in the educational process of their children rather than mere observers of that process.

Other connections to the community may be enhanced through social media like Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, and Instagram. These connections would help to shape the choice made by parents when considering whether to homeschool their children, have their children attend a private or parochial school, or entrust their children to the public school system. This point is underscored when one considers the salience of the anecdotal evidence that suggests significantly more children have turned to BHS this year than were being homeschooled than at any time in the recent past. Finally, as social media becomes even more ubiquitous, the

community will also be turning to these sources of social media for information about BHS. If we do not avail ourselves of these outlets, we will allow others to shape the community's perception of BHS rather than shaping those images ourselves.

Other activities that have helped to shape both student and parent images of BHS have been the recent Curriculum Fair, Open House, Freshman Year Experience, Freshman Orientation, Senior Project meetings with both Seniors and their parents, the weekly meetings with freshman to assist them in being integrated into the high school and the demands that come with being a high school student, and finally the Staff Tailgate parties that Mr. Ormsby initiated at the home football games this year. These activities all have an impact on the perception that students, parents, and community members hold of BHS. Along with the factors noted above in Goals 1-4, we need to further extend and formalize strategies that will enhance the image of TCS in general, and BHS specifically, in the minds of the community. With the current tenor of the NC State Legislature, and its proclivity to spend more taxpayer money on private/charter/parochial schools, BHS must redouble its efforts to shape positively its image in the community.

Perhaps the biggest impediment to the creation of a well-coordinated and comprehensive marketing strategy that would help to brand BHS in the community is the lack of a single person who is responsible for creating an integrated plan and ensuring that it is properly integrated and maintained. Since BHS, like the TCS system as a whole, has a very flat management structure, it would be very difficult to find a single person within the school system that would have the time to be solely responsible for the creation and implementation of such a plan.

### **Reflections and Lessons Learned**

#### **Globally Competitive Students**

By evaluating the available data, one can conclude that it is evident that there has been several positive initiatives implemented at BHS to address goal 1. Through the continued focus on Blue Devil Pride and high expectations, BHS students are rising to meet and exceed academic outcomes and graduate high school. Through the ACT suite of tests, students are continuing to show growth by increasing their knowledge of the tests and being prepared by Student Services and teachers. The use of PLTs are producing stronger and more effective departments who are constantly seeking ways to create and improve their instructional best practices. Student Services is evaluating their guidance lessons and aligning them to the ASCA National Model and NC Guidance Essential Standards to produce data and show effectiveness to support and educate all students. This includes adding components to address soft skills and workplace readiness throughout the school wide curriculum. The curriculum is being refocused and redesigned this year in reflection of the needs of the students.

## **Next Steps**

### **Globally Competitive Students**

We will continue our efforts to improve the college and career readiness of all our students. Goal 1 seeks to improve the steps BHS takes in reaching academic success and career readiness. The action steps described above are indicators of how BHS can strive to meet and exceed this goal. However, it has been evident that students are continuing to show growth in this area and BHS wants to continue this trend to produce globally competitive students through a rigorous and relevant curriculum, assessments that evaluate knowledge and use of technology to enhance students knowledge and skills to be lifelong learners. The members of the SIT have an integral role to play in helping shape the education of students now and in the future.

### **Summary**

Brevard High School has and will continue to work toward “Excellence” in the eyes of the community with regards to all aspects of the “Complete Student”. With new, more stringent, State reporting requirements, BHS met and exceeded target goals in the ACT Minimum Composite Score, ACT Workkeys Score, the 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate, the 5-Year Cohort Graduation Rate, Federal Annual Measurable Objective Targets, but only met 34 out of 42 State Annual Measurable Objective Targets. Even with the many successes that we have achieved these finding reveal is that BHS has work to be done to meet and exceed the expected growth estimates and State Annual Measurable Objective Targets.

In order to meet the demands that our State places on the School Systems of North Carolina, but more importantly the Community’s expectations, from their Schools, our district has created goals to work towards to meet the needs of our students. These goals include: 1) Globally Competitive Students, 2) 21st Century Professionals, 3) Healthy and Responsible Students, 4) Leadership, 5) 21st Century Systems.

Goal 1 focuses on producing globally competitive students that will meet or exceed proficiency goals in all measurable academic outcomes and graduate from high School college or career ready. In order to achieve and measure these goals, BHS will administer the PLAN, ACT, and WorkKeys assessments as well as other formative assessments that can provide data to be used to meet the individual student’s needs. We will continue to use PLT’s to collaborate, create, and catalog Best Practices for the benefit of the individual student. We will continue to develop and improve on plans to address soft skills and workplace readiness.

The focus of Goal 2 is to continue the support of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Professionals. Time is built in during the week that provides opportunity for staff to meet in PLTs (aligned by departments) that discuss Best Practices, brainstorm, create activities, etc. for the benefit of student achievement. Literacy instruction is aligned with each subject but discussion continues to best meet the needs of students at both ends of the spectrum of their abilities. The integration of mini-technology

workshops continue to be offered, to the staff, to stay abreast of current changes, needs, strategies, etc. to better use the technology that our students have at their disposal.

The focus of Goal 3 is to ensure that students will be healthy and responsible when they graduate. To help students become the productive citizens of our society, policies and procedures on behaviors and attendance have been developed to hold students accountable with the expectations they grow and learn from any consequence they receive to become positive members of society. BHS will provide educational opportunities for our students that teach skills in positive relationship, empowers bystanders to confront bullying, etc. Student Services provides counseling for individuals as well as develop programs that focus on their high school experience, choosing careers, etc.

Goal 4 focuses on the leadership within the school providing innovative ideas that perceive BHS as a model school. Through PLTs, Student Services, and the 1:1 initiative, new ideas on student learning and student's ownership of their learning have been developed. The continued development of literacy within all classrooms and how it is integrated in the subject continues to be developed and implemented.

The focus of goal 5 is to develop a 21<sup>st</sup> Century System that creates a sense of excitement in Brevard High School starting with the students, the families, and even extending to the community as a focal point of achievement and pride for Transylvania County. BHS will continue to develop partners such as Blue Ridge Community College and Brevard College for the benefit of our students. The reduction of loss instructional time will continue as a focus for our school as well as providing students more opportunities to receive extra help from teachers by reducing after school staff meeting by using technology (email, principal's report) to provide information to staff. Through weekly email and phone calls to parents with events and information on the happenings at BHS, we are hopeful that this communication will help inform our community.

We have had great achievements here at Brevard High School over the years, but the BHS staff knows that in order to be the "School of Excellence" that our community expects, we need to continue to come up with innovative ideas that will ensure the success of each student at all levels. The future is bright for Brevard High School as we are developing new ideas to improve literacy within our classrooms, in the process of creating field trips that will help develop soft skills and workplace readiness, continue to build "Blue Devil Pride", increase high expectations for our students as well as our staff, to mentioned a few. We understand that, in addition to the many innovations that have been made at our school in the recent past, we must continue to develop and refine the various means of communicating with our students, our parents, and our community. Through the help of our School Improvement Team we hope to achieve our goals and become the central point of pride for this great community. "Go Blue Devils"