



Berrien Springs Public Schools is committed to providing a variety of learning opportunities for students to navigate through our education system. Through online and blended learning, a variety of nontraditional learning environments, early/middle college, Career & Technical Education, our K12 one-to-one initiative, community resource learning, and numerous partnerships our school district is recognized as a creative and innovative school system. To many, we are a school district that is clearly meeting the learning needs of all students.

In our school district, there is evidence, but is there compelling evidence to support the belief we are meeting the needs of ALL student learners? As I have personally reflected on this question I cannot identify compelling evidence to support the belief that we are actually meeting the needs of ALL student learners.

My vision for our district is to be a school that embarks on a journey to transform our system of teaching and learning. Based on what we know from education research our best hope of meeting the learning needs of ALL students is to create a competencybased education system that provides a pathway toward personalized learning for every student.

How do we implement a competencybased education system? Before we answer the “how” it’s critical to understand the “why” and “what.” Our district staff, including Board of Education members, has been engaged in professional dialog and research during the past two years. During this time we have developed a deeper understanding of the “why” and the “what” relative to competencybased education. District staff have had a number of opportunities for personal conversation with several national advocates for competencybased education. Included in this group are Rose Colby, Chris Sturgis, Virgil Hammonds, Brian Stack, and Jonathan Vander Els.

With our current understanding of our students learning needs and our understanding of competency-based education, our district has begun the journey toward personalizing learning for every Berrien Springs Public Schools student. In an effort to realize a personalized learning system the district has begun to engage in a strategic planning process to modernize all aspects of our learning environments for our students, staff, and community. It is the district’s desire to align all aspects of the district including instruction, resources and decisionmaking processes.

During the month of September, the district took the first steps in this process by forming a steering committee that met to begin planning our next steps. Our district has begun work on defining what our modern learning environment at Berrien Springs Public Schools should look like in support of a personalized learning system. As we prepare our students to thrive in a global society now and beyond

their K12 experience, the district will need the help of all members of our school community to collectively define what

teaching and learning looks like in the 21st century. All voices will be needed in developing this new definition of teaching and learning. I want to hear from all stakeholders about what the modern learning environment should look like for all students at Berrien Springs Public Schools. Your feedback will help us immediately align the necessary resources to meet this critical and fundamental need while we establish the conditions for modern learning to scale across our school system.

Over the next few months, we will be spending time talking and thinking about what our vision for modern learning and personalized learning environments will look like for our students. I invite you to help us co construct our vision for modern learning. You will be hearing from me through periodic updates throughout this journey. I look forward to these important conversations and to hearing your individual thoughts as we continue to develop a modern school district where the learning needs of ALL students are met.

Yours in Education,
David Eichberg, Superintendent